

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

iGCSE

iGCSE Religious Studies (4425)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information please call our Customer Services on + 44 1204 770 696, or visit our website at www.edexcel.com.

If you have any subject specific questions about the content of this Examiners' Report that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our Ask The Expert email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/>

Summer 2009

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Edexcel Ltd 2009

Contents

1.	Paper 1: Beliefs and Values	1
2.	Paper 2: The Religious Community	5
3.	Statistics	9

Paper 1: Beliefs and Values

General Comments

There were some excellent scripts, which contained good responses to questions in all sections of the paper, and in which candidates showed thorough knowledge of the topics, particularly from the perspectives of Christianity and Islam.

Overall, candidates performed better in questions requiring knowledge (Sections A - D parts (a) and (b)) than in those requiring understanding (Sections A - D part (c)) or evaluation (Section E).

The specification requires knowledge/understanding of, and the ability to evaluate, non-religious viewpoints (see pages 4 and 9 of the Specification and page 2 of the Teacher's Guide). Two questions (6 (c) and 14) referred specifically to the attitudes of non-religious people (to changing patterns of relationships between the sexes and adultery). The responses to these questions indicate that many candidates are not aware that, as with religious people, there is no one attitude/response to issues that is typical of all non-religious people. Centres should ensure that students appreciate that non-religious beliefs and values are diverse and include a range of responses to fundamental questions of life.

The questions in Paper 1 are generic ones, which can be answered from the standpoint of one, or more than one, of the six major religions, although there are four questions where candidates are asked to answer from the standpoint of only one chosen religion. Sections A-D assess AO1 (Knowledge) and AO2 (Understanding). Each section contains two three-part questions, of which candidates must answer all parts of one question. Part (a) tests AO1, and relates to definitions of key words for the particular section; part (b) also tests AO1, requiring candidates to outline or describe a religious (or non-religious) belief(s), teaching(s), or practice(s). Part (c) questions assess AO2, and require candidates to explain a religious (or non-religious) belief(s), teaching(s), or practice(s). Section E assesses AO3 (Evaluation), and consists of eight questions, of which candidates must answer two. Questions take the form of controversial statements, relating to the beliefs, teachings and practices covered in the previous sections. Candidates are asked whether they agree with the statement, and to give reasons for their opinion.

Sections A-D

There was continuing evidence that candidates are studying the key words for Sections A - D part (a) questions. There were many accurate or partially accurate responses to those questions, even from candidates whose performance was weak in other parts of the paper.

Section E

There were some impressively argued responses to Section E questions, which were well supported by religious/moral evidence and/or examples and took full account of the alternative point(s) of view. However, other responses, although they were well argued, and referred to religious/moral evidence and/or examples, could not go beyond Level 2 because they did not refer to another point of view. There were also responses which did not appreciate the difference between opinions supported by reasons and mere assertion. Centres should refer to pages 9, 16 - 17 and 26 -27 of the Teacher's Guide, which cover Section E questions, and ensure that their students are aware of the level descriptors for these questions (see page 9 of the Teacher's Guide), and, in particular, of the importance of giving reasons for their opinions and referring to an alternative point of view. A small number of Section E answers did not refer to a named religion.

Section A

Question 2 was slightly more popular than Question 1.

Question 1

In general, candidates were able to define 'moral evil' and to outline religious beliefs about the soul. In part (c), some candidates evaluated the issue of whether or not human beings should be held responsible for their actions, or merely argued/asserted that they should be, instead of explaining why some people believe that human beings should be held responsible for their actions.

Question 2

Many candidates identified 'materialism' as (over) concern with material possessions instead of the definition in the specification. In 2(b), candidates tended to focus on general views about why human beings should take care of the planet, rather than outlining teachings about human responsibility for the planet from a chosen religion. Responses to part (c) were often descriptive not explanatory.

Section B

Question 3 was much more popular than Question 4.

Question 3

Generally, candidates showed good knowledge of 'euthanasia'. Part (b) answers were not always related to the teachings of a chosen religion. In part (c), there were some well thought out explanations, but also a lot of descriptive responses which did not always focus on the actual question.

Question 4

Those who attempted the question were generally able to define 'liberation'. In part (b), candidates seemed hazy about 'religious nurture', which made it difficult for them to outline three examples of it. Part (c) responses tended to look at both sides of the question, or even state/explain why people should believe that God exists, instead of explaining why some people cannot decide whether or not God exists.

Section C

Question 5 was much more popular than Question 6.

Question 5

Part (a) was generally quite well answered, although some candidates confused 'nuclear' and 'extended' family. Part (b) was also quite well answered, particularly in relation to Christian teachings. There were some good, thoughtful explanations in response to part (c).

Question 6

Part (a) was quite well answered. A few candidates interpreted part (b) as a question about celibacy, and gained appropriate credit. In part (c), answers tended to be descriptive and/or to condemn the immorality of non-religious people, instead of explaining how they are responding to changing patterns of relationships between the sexes.

Section D

Questions 7 and 8 were equally popular.

Question 7

There were some good responses to part (a), but some candidates defined 'gender bias', instead of giving examples of it. There were some good answers to part (b), particularly in relation to Christianity and Islam. Part (c) answers tended to give general explanations about why human rights are important, rather than explaining why religious people should defend them.

Question 8

Part (a) was generally quite well answered. There were some good responses to part (b), but other answers tended to outline the nature/benefits of a multi-faith society, rather than two religious teachings which help to support a multi-faith society. In part (c), there were many rather weak, descriptive answers, in which explanations were not developed.

Section E

Question 9

This was a very popular question, which attracted some well-argued, balanced responses, but also a lot of one-sided answers.

Question 10

Very few candidates chose this question, but there were some thoughtful responses to it.

Question 11

This was not a very popular question. There were some powerfully argued responses which took account of an alternative viewpoint, but also some one-sided ones.

Question 12

A small number of candidates chose this question. There were some balanced responses.

Question 13

A popular question which drew reasoned evaluations that referred to another point of view, but also responses that relied on mere assertion.

Question 14

This was a popular question, which attracted some well-argued responses. However, there were many one-sided responses, based on the view that those who lack religious beliefs must also lack moral values or virtues.

Question 15

This was not a very popular question, and those candidates who attempted it did not seem clear about how to approach it.

Question 16

This was quite a popular question, with some reasoned evaluations, which balanced the obligation of some religious believers to try to convert others against the need to show respect for different religious beliefs, and to avoid giving offence.

Paper 2: The Religious Community

General Comments

There are six sections in Paper 2, each containing five questions which are specific to one of six major religions. Candidates are required to answer two questions and may answer on the basis of a study of either one or two of these faiths. Each question is divided into two parts which assess the candidate's knowledge in part (a) (AO1) and understanding in part (b) (AO2). The purpose of Paper 2 is to assess knowledge and understanding of faith, practice and tradition in the religious communities of one or two of six world religions.

Section 1 - Buddhism

No candidate attempted questions from this section.

Section 2 - Christianity

This was a popular section and there was a wide range of marks gained by candidates here. As has been the case in previous years, candidates generally performed better on part (a) than part (b).

Question 6

This was a popular question. Part (a) was answered well and candidates showed a pleasing knowledge of a wide variety of traditions from different Christian denominations. However, candidates should be reminded that to reach level 4, they are required to have an answer with a coherent structure - lists of facts do not fulfil this requirement.

Question 7

This was a less successfully answered question. In particular, several candidates did not gain marks here because they had misunderstood what was meant by "authority" and "conscience".

Question 8

This was an unpopular question which was only answered by a few candidates. Whilst answers showed a good general knowledge of Jesus' teaching, the specific knowledge of teachings in the Sermon on the Mount was less obvious.

Question 9

This was a popular and generally well answered question. All candidates showed an impressive knowledge of the events surrounding the Resurrection, although in part (b), a few candidates did not gain marks by writing about Jesus' miracles in general rather than one healing miracle as specified in the question.

Question 10

Another popular and generally well answered question. As expected, a wide range of different places of worship were outlined in part a. It was pleasing to note that candidates did succeed in outlining significant differences (based on differences in faith and practice in the community) rather than differences in design. All the candidates showed that they knew the significance of Bethlehem as a place of Christian pilgrimage, although some would have gained more marks by developing their answers beyond a simple statement that Bethlehem was Jesus' birthplace.

Section 3 - Hinduism

As in previous sessions, this section was less popular than others although those candidates that did choose to answer these questions did so effectively.

Question 11

There were some good answers to this question which showed a clear knowledge and understanding of the significance of images in Hinduism.

Question 12

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 13

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 14

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 15

In parts (a) and (b), candidates showed a clear understanding of the place of the temple in Hinduism. No candidate chose to write about a specific temple known to them (although this would have been acceptable), candidates chose instead, to write generic accounts of the nature and purpose of temples in Hinduism.

Section 4 - Islam

As with section 2, section 4 was a very popular section for candidates. There was a wide range of marks obtained by candidates here.

Question 16

Most candidates scored well on part (a) here, giving a good account of different traditions and practices associated with marriage in Islam. Part (b) was answered less successfully with some candidates simply describing the ceremonies referred to in the question rather than explaining their significance.

Question 17

This was one of the most successfully answered questions on the paper. All candidates showed a good knowledge of the principles of ijma and qiyas, and clearly understood the importance of the Shar'iah in Islam.

Question 18

As with question 17, there were some very good answers here, showing that most candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of haram and zakah. However some candidates did not gain marks in part (a) by simply listing foodstuffs.

Question 19

This was a popular and straightforward question which was generally answered well. Candidates showed a good knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the Prophet's departure from Makkah. However, as in other questions, some candidates did not gain marks in part (b) by giving an account of events which took place at Madinah rather than explaining its significance.

Question 20

Generally a very well answered question with candidates showing familiarity with the interior features of Mosques and the significance of practices associated with the hajj.

Section 5 - Judaism

This was a less popular section on this year's exam.

Question 21

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 22

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 23

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 24

Part (a) was answered very successfully here with all candidates showing a good knowledge of the events surrounding the birth of Moses. Part (b) was less successfully answered and some candidates would have gained marks by accompanying their general descriptions of the prophets with a more explicit account of why they were important.

Question 25

This was the more successful of the two questions attempted in this section. Candidates showed a pleasing knowledge, not only of the symbols contained in a synagogue, but also a knowledge of which specific symbols reflect the authority of the Almighty.

Section 6 - Sikhism

As with Section 5, this was a less popular section although it was answered effectively.

Question 26

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 27

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 28

This was a successfully answered question although as in previous questions, answers to part (a) were generally stronger than to part (b).

Question 29

All candidates showed a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the contribution of Guru Gobind Singh towards the development of Sikhism. Equally in part (b), all answers showed a good understanding of the role of the Gurus in Sikhism.

Question 30

No candidates attempted this question.

Statistics

iGCSE Religious Studies (4425) Grade Boundaries

Option 1 (paper 1 & paper 2)

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall boundary mark	84	70	56	43	34	25	16	7

Note: Grade Boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject depending on the demands of the question paper

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel UK Regional Offices at www.edexcel.org.uk/sfc/feschools/regional/
or International Regional Offices at www.edexcel-international.org/sfc/academic/regional/

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel-international.org/quals
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at www.edexcel.org.uk/ask or on + 44 1204 770 696

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH