



GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
TYSTYSGRIF ADDYSG GYFFREDINOL

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (NEW) AS/Advanced

JANUARY 2009

Unit	Page
RS1/2 CS	1
RS1/2 ETH	4
RS1/2 PHIL	8
RS1/2 BS	11
RS1/2 ER	12
RS1/2 WR	16

Statistical Information

This booklet contains summary details for each unit: number entered; maximum mark available; mean mark achieved; grade ranges. *N.B. These refer to 'raw marks' used in the initial assessment, rather than to the uniform marks reported when results are issued.*

Annual Statistical Report

The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
General Certificate of Education
January 2009
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

Principal Examiner: Mr Karl Lawson B.A., Head of RS Denbigh High School.

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1/2 CS	86	90	52.9

Grade Ranges

A	70
B	59
C	48
D	38
E	28

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

Principal's Report – RS1/2 CS – January 2009

General

Overall the paper differentiated well, and I saw a candidate get full marks for one question (not for the whole paper). In general weaknesses revolved around 1) a lack of focus on the question set, 2) an inability to get beyond stating opinions to formulating an argument, 3) relatively little being written given the extra time allowed.

- Q.1**
- (a) Responses varied enormously. Some candidates were able to mention more than one religion in their answer, but most focused on Christianity. Weaker candidates did not get beyond the statement that Christians used to treat animals badly (because Augustine and Aquinas said they had not souls and were for human use) but now Christians are 'more moral' and treat animals better, in fact don't hurt them at all! Stronger candidates were able to bring out the problems for religious believers in weighing animal rights against human well-being.
 - (b) Weaker candidates did not consider the different ways that humans might use or need animals. They simply saw the statement as an accusation. (you 'use' animals, you are a 'user'). Stronger candidates were able to reflect the diversity of views and arguments used by religious believers with regard to a range of issues. Thus a religious believer might be a vegetarian, but accept testing on animals for medical progress, and another be a meat eater, but not accept hunting or testing for cosmetic purposes etc. There was evidence of the use of scholarship, but sometimes this was not used as well as it could have been to answer the question. For example, the views of Singer and Linzey were rehearsed, but not linked to the question. (Singer was often erroneously presented as a Christian).
- Q.2**
- (a) Many candidates' answers tended to generalise about the show rather than concentrating on specific instances relating to religious beliefs and practices. Better candidates tended to choose three or four specific examples of how religion is portrayed, with popular exemplars such as the Springfield church and Krusty the Clown's Jewish identity being cited. Erroneous material was, however (and somewhat surprisingly) also common. Centres would be well advised to concentrate on one or two episodes when delivering this aspect of the specification in order for candidates to properly engage with the religious material in an accurate way in future questions. The teacher's guide lists seven such suitable episodes, if centres are unsure of what material is most suitable.
 - (b) Many of the issues relevant to the first part of this question also applied to this evaluation – with candidates often repeating information without making any attempt to evaluate it. This issue is clearly highlighted in the specification is well discussed in books and articles on the show.

- Q.3** (a) There were a variety of responses, in terms of quality, here. Candidates' answers seemed to confuse secularisation with multiculturalism (possibly linked but not same thing, as implied in answers) no understanding of secularisation as a shift in the sources of authority in society, and in the centrality of religions within institutions (education, government, etc). Many candidates thought it was all to do with church attendance. A few candidates managed to address the question in an adequate way and gave full responses that included the classic indicators of secularisation – but these answers were in the minority.
- (b) The majority of answers, as alluded to in 3a, showed that candidates had little or no understanding of the question, ie distinguishing between beliefs and practices. Responses were generally disappointing.
- Q.4** (a) This was well received as a question and demonstrated that centres had fully got to grips with this area. Students were able to rehearse the major features of Jung's understanding of religion relatively well. Weak answers simply missed numerous topics which had obviously been taught. Strong answers covered the collective unconscious, archetypes, individuation (and the development from youth to old age in terms of spirituality), the idea of God as psychic reality and Jung's agnosticism.
- (b) Weak answers focused on stating whether or not the student themselves had 'liked' Jung's argument ('he needs to do much more than that to persuade me'). Strong answers examined Jung from the point of view of religious belief (some excellent answers questioned what Jung would do with the notion of Jesus as understood in Christianity), from the point of view of science and logic (no proof, a circular argument) and engaged with the problem of psychologism.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
General Certificate of Education
January 2009
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

Principal Examiner: Mr. Andrew Pearce, B.D. 14-19 Co-ordinator Pencoed Comprehensive School

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1/2 ETH	391	90	49.2

Grade Ranges

A	69
B	58
C	48
D	38
E	28

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

General Comments.

It appears that the examination with its 'open choice' of questions was accessible to candidates. Some candidates however, failed to recognise the 'key terms' in each question and simply wrote all they knew about a topic. They would be well advised to make use of the new glossary of terms available from the WJEC website which would help them to overcome this problem. A small minority of candidates also spent a disproportionate amount of time answering part (a) of each question and subsequently left themselves with little or no time to answer part (b) of each question. Many candidates are also neglecting to put the numbers of the questions that they are answering on the front page of their scripts and this adds to the administrative burden of examiners as well as being a rubric infringement on the behalf of the candidates.

- Q1.** (a) Stronger candidates explicitly drew comparisons between the theory and absolutist laws contained within sacred texts. They were able to set Aquinas' work into context, explaining how he expressed his own belief that God made the world with a sense of order and purpose (as outlined in the primary/secondary precepts) which reflects God's will and which most religious believers would agree with. Some impressive answers explained how Aquinas' concept of interior/exterior acts recognised the religious idea that the motive for committing an act was as important as the act itself. These candidates also recognised that the concept of real/apparent goods reflected the religious belief in everything being designed to fulfil God's purpose and that this was also linked to humankind's capacity to sin. Almost all candidates were able to explain Natural Law as an ethical theory to some degree, but weaker candidates failed to directly address the question and simply wrote all they knew about Natural Law.
- (b) Again stronger candidates explicitly focused on the question and recognised that absolutist theories such as natural law might not lead to fairer society because they fail to consider people's emotions, the situation, the consequences of a particular act and what Aquinas consider 'natural' others might consider to be an 'unfair' basis for basing decisions on. Others successfully argued that absolutist theories do provide a clear cut, universal and timeless set of rules that everyone could live by. They also stated that Natural Law's precepts included 'to live in ordered society' which would tend to promote fairness. Weaker candidates simply attempted to outline the strengths and weaknesses of the theory.

- Q 2.** (a) Stronger candidates carefully selected information which demonstrated the consequential nature of Fletcher's theory. For example they successfully placed Situation Ethics within the context of legalism and antinomianism. They also showed an awareness of how Fletcher's fundamental and working principles were based on this approach and used examples or evidence to support their statements. Weaker candidates simply wrote all they knew about Situation Ethics. One common feature was the use of Fletcher's example of Mrs Bergmaier 'sacrificial adultery', but often this example was not used to directly address the question.
- (b) Stronger candidates often referred to the religious aspects of agapé such as Jesus' example of breaking laws in the name of love as opposed to the absolutists aspects of religious teachings. Others referred to the 'pros' and 'cons' of its consequential, subjective and relativistic approach. Some candidates failed to achieve the higher levels due to their lack of exemplification or reasoning to support the statements they made. It was evident that weaker candidates did not have a real grasp of what agapé love means particularly when referring to how different people could interpret it.
- Q.3.** (a) Stronger candidates were able to explain what the term 'Act' utilitarianism means, as well outline the main features of the theory including the principle of utility, its' focus on the quantity of happiness and the seven criteria of the hedonic calculus. Comparisons were then made with Mill's form of Utilitarianism which focuses on the quality of the happiness and his division of pleasures into 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures. Some of the highest scoring answers reflected the scholarly debate on whether Mill was a 'Rule' utilitarian and if he was, whether he was a 'strong' or 'weak' rule utilitarian and what these terms meant. Many successfully demonstrated their understanding of both 'Act' and 'Rule' utilitarianism by using examples. Weaker candidates often confused Utilitarianism with Situation Ethics, showed a limited knowledge and understanding (if any) of parts of the hedonic calculus - extent, duration, purity and richness were particularly misunderstood. These candidates also often misunderstood 'Rule' Utilitarianism and believed it was based on religious or absolutist rules. A description of the difference between 'strong' and 'weak' rule utilitarianism can be found in Jones, Cardinal and Hayward's 'Moral Philosophy : a guide to ethical theory' on pages 84/85.
- (b) There were some excellent responses which focused on the question. Stronger candidates debated whether the intention of Utilitarianism to avoid pain could be reconciled with a religious belief in the value of suffering or attempted to link the 'greatest happiness' principle to Jesus' Golden Rule. Most candidates explained that Utilitarianism removes the need for God, that religious believers would not accept morally repugnant acts and that religious believers would not allow a minority to suffer, but evidence and reasoning were often limited. Weaker answers involved listing the strengths and weaknesses of Utilitarianism, but with little focus on the question set.

- Q.4.** (a) There were very few candidates who answered this question, although there were some centres who had obviously focused on this section of the specification. Most candidates answered from the Christian or Muslim religious traditions. Stronger candidates referred to the diversity which exists within some world religions, the sacramental nature of a marriage, sacred texts, the wedding vows and the married partners' union reflecting Christ's union with the Church. Many candidates that answered from the Muslim perspective referred to the expectation to marry and the cultural and social benefits that would ensue from that. Weaker candidates often explored other areas of sexual ethics from the specification but failed to link this information to the question or made erroneous statements such as 'the Catholic religion says...' They also often showed no awareness of any diversity within a religion or made generalisations or inaccurate statements such as Catholics see the purpose of marriage as reproduction and Anglicans are liberal and approve of premarital sex.
- (b) The best answers considered in a thoughtful way how and why marriage is still important to religious people. They were also able to mention how other factors such as a greater social acceptance of sex outside marriage/cohabitation together with the decline in the number of religious believers might support the statement given. Weaker candidates tended to give one or two statements without any supporting evidence or reasoning, such as civil ceremonies are now available for gay or lesbian couples.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
General Certificate of Education
January 2009
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

Principal Examiner: Mr Karl Lawson, B.A., Head of RS Denbigh High School

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1/2 PHIL	199	90	51.2

Grade Ranges

A	69
B	58
C	48
D	38
E	28

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

Principal's Report – RS1/2 PHIL – January 2009

General

The additional time within the new examination meant that answers, perhaps unsurprisingly, tended to be more comprehensive than had previously been the case. The general standard was good, particularly in the arguments for God's existence. Candidates should also try to avoid common mistakes with both spelling and grammar, eg. existAnce, believe/belief, arguEment, Irenaeus (various), prove/proof, must of been' being the examples most commonly seen. Centres will also find it useful to remind candidates that the change to 30 marks from the previous 10 is not a demand to write three times as much (causing some candidates to run out of time within their papers) but rather is a revised assessment mechanism, as noted in the recent INSETs.

- Q.1**
- (a) Aquinas's three ways, as one would expect usually "drove" the answer. The most general weakness thereafter was a lack of mention / appreciation of Aquinas' rejection of infinity as being the plank on which the three arguments are based, and a lack of appreciation that the Uncaused cause etc. was God. Cause & Change / Motion - were often confused (in detail or examples of dominoes and marble swapped) or frequently merged into each other. A few candidates only referred to Aquinas, thereby limiting their marks, but most referred to Leibniz and the kalam argument (although understanding often appeared weak on the latter). Some candidates then began to evaluate the argument - which was salvaged to 1b.
 - (b) The majority of candidates went for a list of why the cosmological argument is unconvincing. It was salvage that could begin to rebalance the answer, or a brief mention of strengths seemingly added on at the end. The concept of assessment seemed less apparent except by those candidates who again clearly rejoiced in this question and truly assessed at length meriting top level marks. It was refreshing to see the return of philosophers, rather than a concentration on the Big Bang and various other scientific aspects.
- Q.2**
- (a) A decent use of Paley's analogy, including actually using the analogy to get to the main point ie the relating of the watch to the world. The aesthetic principle was generally well explained. The anthropic principle could have been a little longer. For both, candidates need to remember to mention why these arguments are relevant to this question ie so what if we appreciate art? Why does this help our case in arguing for a designer? Some mentioned probabilities, but there is more scope here in future sessions. It was interesting to see that many candidates were using the intelligent design arguments 'irreducible complexity' argument alongside the old 'stock in trade', however, this also often fell foul of the 'did not properly relate it to God' shortcoming that tends to plague these answers.
 - (b) William of Ockham abounded. Again, criticisms were more comprehensive than good aspects. Candidates need to be wary of presenting a basically AO1 set of material in part b questions. Hume was used quite well, but it would have been useful to see more breadth with regard to his extensive set of arguments against. Pleasingly, few conflated design with creation.

- Q.3** (a) The types of evil were done poorly. There was little more than a mention of moral and natural, with both of these almost being “throwaway” sentences, lacking explanation or exemplification. Similarly, the problem of evil was generally restricted to the inconsistent triad. Centres would do well to highlight that innocent and animal suffering could be used in both parts of the question and could be used to good effect when referring to the creative and sustaining power of God. The understanding of omniscience remained the weak link of God’s character. Too many candidates inappropriately brought in theodicies as the answer to evil which was not asked for. This particularly involved Augustine’s theodicy - otherwise not required on this paper but irrelevant to the question.
- (b) There was much retelling of the theodicy without analysis. Where there was some analysis, the “meaty” points in favour or against were lacking and many candidates just wrote about free will. Looking at mark schemes for the old specification, will give great ideas.
- Q.4** (a) An account of the mystic’s life was not the thrust of the question, nor was an explanation of James’ types. However, a few attempted to describe events in her life and “hang them” on to James’ types and these read pretty well. A vague explanation of what an experience may be like is clearly inadequate. On the few scripts where an answer was attempted, it would appear that this question was attempted by those who did it as a last resort rather than a positive choice.
- (b) It seemed that a few were thinking on their feet as if they had never had to consider this question before, where the Specification clearly says that they should. The main thrust of the answers concerned drug-induced states and ideas concerning whether these were similar to mystical experiences. Most said that if someone was known to use drugs then that would cancel out their mystical claim from the start. This was therefore the poorest level of assessment answers to any of the questions set.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
General Certificate of Education
January 2009
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

Principal Examiner: Rev. Gwynn ap Gwilym, M.A. (Wales), M.A. (Oxon.). M. Phil (Wales), Language Office for the Church in Wales

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1/2 BS	5	90	51.8

Grade Ranges

A	69
B	58
C	48
D	38
E	28

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

There were too few candidates to give a meaningful report.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
General Certificate of Education
January 2009
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

Principal Examiner: Mr. Huw Dylan Jones, B.D., Head of Religious Studies, Ysgol Y Berwyn, Y Bala.

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1/2 ER	242	90	53.0

Grade Ranges

A	70
B	59
C	48
D	38
E	28

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

RS1/2 ER – January 2009 – Examiner's Report

Generally the overall standard was good which demonstrates clearly the high standard of teaching of this module in most centres. Although a number of papers were very poor, there were many excellent papers at the top end of the scale which showed great depth of knowledge and understanding. Better candidates certainly benefited from having more time and most candidates benefited from being given a free choice of questions rather than having to answer a compulsory question. However some weaknesses seem to have been transferred from the old to the new specification with some candidates choosing to describe instead of explaining and answering how instead of why. Other candidates failed to answer the question as set while others did not read the question carefully enough.

There were very few rubric infringements and there was a vast improvement in candidates noting on the front cover which questions they had attempted.

Buddhism

- Q.1** (a) Surprisingly a substantial number of candidates misinterpreted this question and gave very informed answers on the life of the Buddha. Those that answered the question correctly did so very well referring to various relevant aspects such as the caste system, reincarnation, Karma and duty. The best answers also referred to the concept of God/Brahman, sacrifice and other various traditions from that period. It was clear that many candidates made good use of the 'Buddhism for AS students' textbook.
- (b) Generally candidates had been prepared well by centres and used words such as 'accepted', 'rejected' and 'adapted' in their answers. The level of knowledge was good but at times the reasoning was a little weak and confused especially when discussing reincarnation/rebirth
- Q.2** (a) This was a very popular option. The answers were well structured with many answering in three distinct paragraphs – one for each mark of existence. There was a good level of knowledge and explanation of anicca. However there was some confusion with anatta and more detail was expected in the explanation of dukkha. Although there was an improvement in candidate's understanding of the concept of anatta some are still misunderstanding the meaning of atman and anatman – a permanent soul and no permanent soul – aspects which are clearly presented in the book 'Buddhism for AS students'. Many good and relevant examples were used to explain the Three Marks of Existence such as a flower, candle, film strip.
- (b) Generally this question was well answered with candidates giving informed and reasoned arguments. The better candidates referred to a number of the Buddha's teachings such as the Three Refuges, the Eightfold Path, Meditation and the Four Noble truths which give the religion a more positive outlook.

- Q.3** (a) Those who chose to do this question generally gave answers of a high standard. There was a good level of knowledge and understanding when discussing the four parts and a clear structure to the answers. However some candidates rushed over the first three so as to give a detailed answer on the fourth. This was not a question on the Eightfold Path. There was good use of terminology – magga, tanha, nirodha etc and very good use of new and contemporary examples.
- (b) A number of candidates found opposing the statement difficult and listed different teachings within Buddhism. Although an attempt was made to explain them they did not refer in enough detail why they are important.
- Q.4** (a) The answers showed that the candidates who chose this question had a clear understanding of meditation. Some centres had obviously prepared their candidates well and the answers demonstrated a clear structure with a general introduction on meditation and then a paragraph each explaining samatha, vipassana and zazen. Some answers were excellent and showed a level of knowledge and understanding associated with A2. However other candidates referred to puja in their answers and generalised on meditation.
- (b) Candidates found this question challenging and only those who had a sound understanding of the purpose of meditation in Buddhism were able to get to grips with the question. Many referred generally to Buddhism being a religion that allows people to escape from the realities of life rather than focusing on meditation.

Hinduism

- Q.1** (a) Generally the responses to this question were good. Centres had prepared candidates well and there were references to the various features of Shaivism – the belief in Shiva as supreme god of the Trimurti, forms of worship, the Vedas , sacred ash etc. However weaker candidates described only the main features of Shiva. There were also one or two examples of candidates who confused Shaivism and Vaishnavism.
- (b) There was a vast range in quality of answers to this question. Better candidates gave balanced and reasoned answers clearly showing why Vaishnavism and Shaivism could on the one hand be considered as religions in themselves and on the other why they could be considered as aspects of Hinduism as a whole. However weaker candidates found it difficult to go beyond stating that Shiva and Vishnu are Brahman or got so confused in trying to argue both sides that they completely lost their focus on the question.
- Q.2** (a) Answers tended to be superficial although the vast majority were able to explain correctly the meaning of karma and reincarnation. However the higher scoring candidates were able to refer to things that are associated with karma and reincarnation such as varnashramadharma, dharma, Brahman etc. For example stating that karma is the cause and effect of different actions, good or bad, is correct but an example is needed of what a good or bad action is based on relevant sources.

- (b) Again the responses to this question varied greatly in terms of quality. Weaker candidates gave answers which were one-sided referring to Hindus living in fear of negative karma which would lead to a poor reincarnation. Able candidates pointed out that high moral standards were not the result only of belief in karma but also other religious teachings and social norms. Some mentioned that the link between karma and morality is called into question by the use of karma to justify the persecution of untouchables and other unfortunates.
- Q.3** (a) The more able candidates answered this question well showing the link between the relationship between Rama and Sita with the devotee and his/her god in a satisfactory way. References being made to love, devotion, loyalty and duty. They also referred to Rama and Sita as role-models – Rama as ideal son, husband and king, perfect avatar of Vishnu and Sita as ideal woman and wife. However the weaker candidates simply retold the Ramayana story of Rama and Sita.
- (b) On the whole candidates responded well to this question and were able to give balanced answers. Many referred to individual goddesses and their relevance to Hindu women today. The more able candidates were able to argue that although goddesses do play a substantial role in Hinduism they are in many ways subservient to their male counterparts.
- Q.4** (a) In general responses to this question were only satisfactory with a number of candidates ignoring the word ‘importance’ in their answers and simply describing the festivals. Many gave answers such as ‘festivals are important in Hinduism such as Divali. Divali is’ Although they had a good level of knowledge about the festivals in terms of history, tradition, celebration etc they did not refer to the importance of these festivals to the Hindu community.
- (b) Although there were some well balanced, highly detailed answers to this question, a number of candidates failed to give two sides to the argument. This was disappointing as the answers given in disagreement with the question were good.

Sikhism

There was an insufficient number of scripts to obtain any helpful conclusion regarding performance.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
General Certificate of Education
January 2009
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

Principal Examiner: Mr. P. Jacques, B.A. Dip. R.S., Visiting Lecturer, University of Sunderland and University of Durham.

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
RS1/2 WR	133	90	48.2

Grade Ranges

A	67
B	57
C	47
D	37
E	28

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

PAPER RS 1/2 WR

Introduction to Western Religions

SECTION A: Introduction to Islam

General

Although there were very few centres submitting candidates, examiners reported a satisfactory level of achievement in the first examination of this new specification.

It is important that candidates read the whole question before putting pen to paper. Parts (a) and (b) require candidates to demonstrate different skills and use basic information in a different way – there is no credit to be gained from rewriting the same material in both (a) and (b).

The greater choice of questions and the lack of a compulsory question appears to have worked in the candidates favour.

- Q.1**
- (a) Most candidates failed to address the main issue of the question i.e. examination of the Qur'an and Sunna as the basis of shari'a law. Examples of basic rules of shari'a found in the Qur'an were few and far between. Some candidates correctly mentioned kindness to parents, no shameful acts and the idea that Muslims should dress modestly. Only a minority of answers reflected the importance of the emphasis of shari'a on the general welfare of people.
 - (b) Many candidates gave a good list of the attributes of Allah but there were few comments about whether these were 'beyond human understanding', which is what the question asked!
- Q.2**
- (a) Although nearly all answers reflected good knowledge about the Night of Power and the hijrah but only the better candidates were able to reflect on the importance of these events to Islam.
 - (b) Answers to this question were generally weak with little evidence of debate or evaluative skills.

- Q.3** (a) This was a popular question which candidates answered with confidence and clarity. Most responses mentioned the mosque as a place of worship, a place of education, the basis of Muslim social life, for matters of Islamic law, for rites of passage ceremonies etc. Candidates who did not achieve good levels of response wrote about the features of the mosque rather than its role in Islam.
- (b) There were many good answers built on the sound knowledge base established in (a) demonstrating excellent evaluative comment. Candidates skilfully debated the following issues:-
- The importance of praying together at the mosque.
 - Permanent reminder of Allah in the community and a religious identity.
 - Practicality of getting to the mosque.
 - Comparison and importance of the pillars.
 - Muhammad's teaching about any 'clean place' being a mosque.
- Q.4** (a) Although this was a popular question, responses were generally weak with only a few answers relevant to the question. Too many candidates wrote about rites of passage ceremonies and vaguely about roles of people within the family unit.
- (b) Some candidates were able to write about the strength of family life in Islam and the controversy and tension that exists between religious traditions and secular culture. Others wrote about the mosque and the Qur'an sustaining Islam but in general, responses were weak.

SECTION B: Introduction to Judaism

General

Examiners reported a very pleasing level of achievement on the first examination of this new specification. Although the standard varied throughout the cohort there was evidence of sound knowledge, relevant understanding and good evaluative skills. Many candidates were able to draw on a range of background reading and could use relevant quotations.

It is important that candidates read the whole question before putting pen to paper. Parts (a) and (b) require candidates to demonstrate different skills and use basic information in a different way – there is no credit to be gained from rewriting the same material in both (a) and (b).

The greater choice of questions and the lack of a compulsory question appear to have worked in the candidates favour.

Q.1 (a) Many candidates merely retold the story of Moses – with inaccurate details! Some responses treated the question as an evaluation of the respective roles of Moses and Abraham as the founder of Judaism! Those answers that focussed on the actual question were generally of a poor standard with little relevant understanding.

(b) There were some excellent answers to this question. The majority were able to emphasise the 'burden' of keeping all the laws, leading a disciplined life, Torah observance being an example to other nations, obedience etc. They were then able to write freely about the privilege of selection, God's care and concern, freedom and the promises for the future.

Q.2 (a) Although there were many answers of a high standard to this question, it was of some concern that candidates gave examples of practices that were not mitzvot but just tradition e.g. sitting shiva, Bar Mitzvah. However, the better responses gave more accurate detail of mitzvot and considered their observance and importance.

(b) Many candidates answered 'kashrut is not vital' but were unable to support their stance with sound evidence – mostly discussing the difficulty of keeping kashrut today. Only the better responses debated 'true religious practice' i.e. study of the Torah, worship at synagogue, celebrating festivals, keeping Shabbat etc. and concluded that kashrut was not an obstacle to the observance of these practices. Some were able to develop the importance of kashrut as a way of discipline, to the wider issue of the covenant people as those set apart with a particular attitude towards life and God.

- Q.3** (a) A very popular question with some outstanding responses showing accurate and precise detail of both beliefs and practices. Candidates who failed to do well here showed only a superficial knowledge and basic account of the Seder plate without reference to the Haggadah, the preparations or the significance of the celebrations. Weaker responses also concentrated on the history of Pesach and stories from the life of Moses as well as confusing Shabbat practices with Pesach!
- (b) There were many high quality answers with candidates sensibly debating the importance of past events in Judaism. Good answers emphasised the relevance of history, tradition and festivals as a means of carrying the religion forward – the past as a basis for the present. On the other hand, the better candidates were also able to stress the importance of living in changing times and cultures, the centrality of the Torah and the need for tolerance and empathy towards various beliefs and practices.
- Q.4** (a) Some candidates failed to read the question carefully and did not explain both the practice **and** importance of marriage. Other responses confused the practices of Judaism with those of other religions. However, there were some really good answers demonstrating accurate knowledge and sound understanding of both practice and importance.
- (b) Most candidates were able to write fully about the role of the mother in the shaping of Judaism. The better responses demonstrated the importance of the mother in the family unit and her influence on the religious upbringing of children. However, too many were content to compare this with the influence of the father alone, rather than extend the debate to include the importance of the synagogue, rabbinical decisions, the centrality of the Torah and Jewish traditions.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk/exams.html