

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

**RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES  
(SHORT COURSE)**

**J125**

For first teaching in 2016

**J125/01 Summer 2022 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

### Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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## Paper 1 series overview

J125/01 is the GCSE Religious Studies Short Course paper, which covers religion, philosophy and ethics as they relate to Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The paper has three sections, Section A covers beliefs and teachings, Section B relationships and families, and Section C dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes. Each section contains three questions, one on each of the three religions. In Section A each question contains five parts, parts (a)-(d) are AO1 questions relating to knowledge and understanding, while part (e) is an essay question with 3 marks available for AO1 and 12 for AO2, analysis and evaluation. There are also 3 marks available for SPaG. Candidates are required to select two questions from Section A. Each question in Section A has a maximum of 30 marks, not including SPaG.

In Sections B and C there are four parts to each question (a)-(d) and, once again, there is a total of 30 marks available for each question. No SPaG is given in Sections B and C. Parts (a) and (b) assess knowledge and understanding (AO1) while (c) assesses analysis and evaluation (AO2) and part (d) is an essay question with 3 marks available for AO1 and 12 for AO2. Candidates select only one question from each of Sections B and C (giving a total of four questions on the paper). They must select one of the two religions on which they have answered in Section A for Sections B and C. The total available marks for the paper is 126.

Most candidates performed reasonably well on this paper and almost all were able to finish in the time allowed. Some candidates are spending too much time and space on short answer questions, leaving themselves with less time to focus on the questions that attract higher marks. Many candidates limited the marks they could achieve for essay questions because they gave very brief responses, sometimes only two or three sentences. The vast majority of candidates answered on Christianity and Islam. Where a candidate attempted the questions on Judaism it was invariably because they had committed a rubric violation and attempted all nine questions on the paper. Where this happened, candidates displayed virtually no specialist knowledge of Judaism and had clearly not been taught the Jewish part of the specification. Typically, they gave identical responses in Section A to the Christian paper, for example saying that Jews believed that the Messiah was Jesus Christ and that he was the Son of God. For this reason, no commentary has been provided on the Jewish questions as there is insufficient material on which to base a report.

Overall, Section C was the least well answered, and the section in which candidates were most likely not to give a response to a question. Many candidates lacked a clear understanding of the terms used in the questions and so struggled to give a clear response.

Understanding of the impact of religion on the public, political and social lives of both religious and non-religious people was often limited and superficial, and this was disappointing. Many candidates had very little comprehension of the complexity and diversity of belief within a religion, and assumed that all Christians were strict and believed, for example, that the world was created in six days. In Question 1(e), for example, over half of the candidates did not know what was meant by 'apocalyptic beliefs'.

Having said this, there were some excellent responses, and some candidates were able to use their knowledge and understanding confidently and skilfully in order to construct an argument. Most candidates gave responses that were well matched to the number of marks available, writing short responses to parts (a), (b) and (c) in Section A. However, candidates who did not do as well often gave very short responses, some only wrote one or two sentences for the essay questions, which carried half of the marks available for the paper.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• followed the paper rubric and attempted all parts on their chosen questions</li> <li>• read the question carefully and focused their response on the general question throughout</li> <li>• gave a carefully constructed argument in essay questions, critiquing and evaluating the points they used rather than just stating them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attempted all nine questions on the paper in a rushed and cursory way</li> <li>• did not attempt some question parts, typically the essay questions</li> <li>• did not read the question carefully and gave a general response about the topic or veered off the point of the question.</li> </ul>

### Follow the rubric

It is very important that candidates follow the rubric and answer two questions from Section A and one from Sections B and C, and that they answer all parts of those questions. Some are attempting to answer every question on the paper which inevitably reduces the mark they achieve.

## Section A overview

Section A deals with the beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Each question has five parts (a-e) with parts (a), (b) and (c) being short response questions, each with 3 marks, (d) asking for a more developed response for 6 marks, and (e) being an essay question with a total of 15 marks, with an extra 3 available for SPaG. Parts (a)-(d) are AO1 questions (knowledge and understanding). Part (e) has 3 marks available for AO1, and 12 for AO2, analysis and evaluation. Candidates are required to choose any two questions from Section A. Almost all candidates answered Questions 1 and 2 (Christianity and Islam). Where candidates answered Question 3 (Judaism) it was because they had made a rubric violation and attempted all nine questions on the paper. In these cases, all the responses, and particularly the Question 3 responses were short and superficial, displaying no specialist knowledge of Judaism. For this reason, no commentary has been provided on Question 3 as there is insufficient evidence on which to base one. Where candidates did answer on Judaism, they generally displayed no knowledge of the differences between Christianity and Islam, for example suggesting that Jews believe that the Messiah is Jesus Christ and that he is the Son of God.

Candidates generally displayed reasonable knowledge in this section and were able to answer most questions well, although there was some uncertainty about transcendence and immanence (part (d)) and less than half of the candidates understood what was meant by 'apocalyptic' ideas (part (e)).

### Question 1 (a)

#### 1 Christianity

- (a) Outline what Christians mean when they describe God as a judge. [3]

Candidates generally performed well on this question with the great majority gaining full marks. Most spoke of the fact that God will judge everyone on the Day of Judgement or after death, deciding whether someone will go to heaven or hell. Some referenced Biblical material such as the parable of the sheep and the goats, and some referred to the belief that God is omniscient and so uniquely placed to judge fairly since he sees people's motives as well as their actions.

### Question 1 (b)

- (b) Outline **one** Christian belief about the Messiah. [3]

Most candidates gained full marks here. Most related the Messiah to Jesus and then described the role of Jesus as saviour, atoner, and Son of God. All of these approaches were credited so long as candidates had made the association between the Messiah and Jesus. Some knew that Messiah means 'anointed' and implied that Jesus was both 'chosen' and a king. Candidates were asked for 'one belief' so if the response went on to a second belief then no further marks could be given, however, if there was a clear link so that the second idea could be taken as a genuine continuation of, or second example of the same idea then full marks could be given.

## Question 1 (c)

(c) Describe what some Christians mean by original sin.

[3]

Most candidates were able to gain full marks on this question, although common misconceptions were that original sin refers to a sin that cannot be forgiven, or the first sin committed by an individual. Most referred to the Fall and went on to explain that the result of this is that everyone is born sinful and in need of atonement. It was possible to gain full marks with a good description of the story of Adam and Eve.

## Question 1 (d)

(d) Outline the Christian belief that God is both transcendent and immanent.

[6]

The majority of candidates were able to gain Level 2 for this question, and marks in Level 3 were quite rare. The best responses were balanced with detail on both transcendence and immanence and were able to use Biblical material to back up their points. Many used the Trinity as a way into the question, claiming that the Father was transcendent and the Son immanent, opinion was divided on the Holy Spirit, but as either interpretation can be supported, both were credited. Most correctly stated that transcendence meant that God was beyond the concepts and limitations of space and time, while immanence meant that God was intimately connected with the world and could have a personal relationship with humans. Some responses gave a good account of transcendence but struggled to give more than a line or so on immanence, occasionally failing to understand the term at all and linking it with judgement. A small minority of candidates clearly did not recognise the terms and guessed. A common misconception was that the terms were connected to the forgiveness of sin. Very few candidates addressed the paradox in God being both transcendent and immanent, terms which would appear to be mutually exclusive.

## Question 1 (e)

(e) 'The apocalyptic ideas of the Early Church were wrong.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Analyse and evaluate the importance of points of view, referring to common and divergent views within Christianity
- Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar

**[15]**  
**[3]**

This question was not well answered and was the worst answered question on the paper. Over half of candidates did not know what was meant by the term 'apocalyptic' although the phrase 'apocalyptic ideas of the Early Church' does appear on the specification. Many candidates wrote a response based on their perception of the general beliefs of the Early Church as they perceived them, and why these might be wrong. Common ideas were that the Early Church was opposed to homosexuality and abortion and treated women badly. Responses that showed no understanding of the nature of apocalyptic ideas could not gain any credit. Some candidates interpreted 'Early Church' as the medieval church and wrote about ideas/teachings/artistic depictions of hell and judgement in the medieval church and how these may have been used to frighten and control people in contrast to more modern understandings of God as loving and benevolent. This was taken to be a reasonable, if unexpected reading of the question and as such could be given up to full marks. Another unexpected but acceptable approach to the question was to take 'wrong' in the moral sense rather than the factual sense intended, and effectively write a response based on theodicy, discussing whether a benevolent God would allow the events of Revelations to take place. Again, this approach could be given up to full marks.

### Assessment for learning



Make sure that the full specification is taught and that candidates are familiar with all specialist terms and language used in the specification.



Exemplar 1

I agree with this statement because the apocalypse is something that would bring suffering and pain.

~~If Christians in~~ God is said to be; benevolent, omniscient and omnipotent, if the apocalypse were to come, this would disregard these qualities of God.

~~It makes the~~ This interruption of God's qualities - concerning evil and suffering within the apocalypse - can be seen through ~~It~~ makes' inconsistent triad', where ~~he~~ states that if God was benevolent and omnipotent, he would want no evil into the world, and be powerful enough to change the reality; but evil and suffering exists, so this means he can't see the evil and suffering, this can be said with his other qualities too.

Exemplar 1 shows part of a response to the question. This response takes the view that a benevolent God would not allow the apocalypse to happen. The response clearly shows that the candidate knows what is meant by 'the apocalyptic ideas of the early Church' and then goes on to argue that these ideas are morally wrong and then goes on to argue for this using the inconsistent triad and the Augustinian and Irenaean theodicies. This is an unexpected but valid reading of the question and as such can be credited.

Question 2 (a)

2 Islam

(a) Outline what Muslims mean when they describe Allah as just. [3]

The majority of candidates gained full marks on this question with candidates talking about the omniscience of Allah meaning that he always judges fairly, without bias and with full knowledge of the circumstances leading to people's actions. Many also talked about the Day of Judgement. A small but significant minority of candidates claimed it meant there was 'just' one God and wrote about tawhid. This was not seen as a valid interpretation of the question and responses such as this did not gain any marks.

## Question 2 (b)

(b) Outline **one** Islamic belief about Muhammad (PBUH).

[3]

Most candidates were able to gain full marks on this question, most commonly by stating that Muhammad (PBUH) was the last prophet, the seal of the prophets and responsible for the dictation of the Qur'an. Candidates were asked for 'one belief' so if the response went on to a second belief, then no further marks could be given. However, if there was a clear link so that the second idea could be taken as a genuine continuation of, or second example of the same idea then full marks could be given. The dictation of the Qur'an was seen as a development of the idea of Muhammad as the last prophet since it was the final revelation of Allah to mankind and so the response that Muhammad was the last prophet and responsible for the Qur'an as the last revelation of Allah could gain full marks. However, some candidates started by saying that Muhammad was the first prophet. Since they were asked for one belief, if the first thing they wrote was incorrect then nothing they subsequently wrote could gain credit even if it was correct.

## Question 2 (c)

(c) Describe **one** Islamic belief about the role of angels (malaikah).

[3]

Once again, most problems arose here because candidates had been asked for one belief, and so a second belief could not be credited if their first did not gain full marks. For example, some explained that angels are messengers of Allah and then went on to talk about the roles of recording angels. If there was not enough detail for 3 marks in the first idea then they could not receive further credit for the second. Some mentioned that angels were made of light and had no free will. While this is not a 'role' of angels as such it could be credited as a development of the idea of their role as messengers (since it means they deliver the words of Allah absolutely reliably) or as recording angels (as they are unbiased).

### Read the instructions for the question carefully

If the question calls for **one** teaching or belief then no further marks will be given if a second idea or belief is introduced, so concentrate on one idea and give examples or develop it as much as you can.

## Exemplar 2

2	C	The role of angels is so important as angels help guide people who are lost or need assistance in life. They are always judging you, like God, and justifying your actions. On the day of judgement, when you die, angels will decide whether you deserve to go to heaven or hell.
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Exemplar 2 shows that it is important to stick to one idea if asked about one teaching or belief. The candidate's first response, which must be the one credited, is that the role of angels is to help and guide people. The response goes on to talk about the role of angels in judgement, but as this is a new idea it cannot receive any marks.

## Question 2 (d)

(d) Outline the Islamic belief that Allah is both transcendent and immanent.

[6]

The majority of candidates were able to gain Level 2 for this question, although marks in Level 3 were quite rare. The best responses were balanced with detail on both transcendence and immanence and were able to use material from the Qur'an to back up their responses. Most correctly stated that transcendence meant that Allah was beyond the concepts and limitations of space and time, while immanence meant that Allah was intimately connected with the world and could have a personal relationship with humans. Some candidates discussed the idea of tawhid as it relates to the greatness and uniqueness of Allah as evidence for his transcendence. Some responses gave a good account of transcendence but struggled to give more than a line or so on immanence, although many candidates used the quotation about Allah being closer than the jugular vein as evidence of his immanence. A small minority of candidates clearly did not recognise the terms and guessed. A common misconception was that the terms were connected to the forgiveness of sin. Very few candidates addressed the paradox in Allah being both transcendent and immanent, terms which would appear to be mutually exclusive.

## Question 2 (e)

(e) 'Belief in the Day of Judgement is the most important belief in Islam.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Analyse and evaluate the importance of points of view, referring to common and divergent views within Islam
- Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar

[15]

[3]

This question was generally much better answered than Question 1(e), with the majority of candidates having a confident grasp on the teachings about the Day of Judgement and its significance within Islam. Knowledge of the teachings about the Day of Judgement was generally good and detailed with candidates describing the role of the various angels and also commenting on Barzakh. Many suggested that it could be seen as the most important belief as every action in a Muslim's life was leading up to this moment, which would decide their eternal fate. A common, and valid, approach, was to contrast the Day of Judgement with tawhid in terms of its importance, and most did this competently, pointing out that the Qur'an repeatedly stresses the importance of tawhid and that rejecting to tawhid leads to shirk, which cannot be forgiven. Thus, if tawhid is not upheld then the Day of Judgement will inevitably lead to condemnation. The strongest responses were genuinely evaluative, rather than just stating different arguments with little further comment. These responses tended to argue that tawhid was more important than the Day of Judgement since it was this that ultimately determined one's fate. Some responses also discussed the significance of belief in predestination and its significance to judgement for different groups of Muslims, suggesting that if one's fate was already decided then the Day of Judgement became less important. Some also suggested that morally, Muslims should be more concerned with doing good for its own sake or out of love of Allah, rather than out of a fear of judgement. This, together with Questions 4(d) and 5(d), was the best answered of the essay questions on this paper with many candidates able to use their knowledge confidently in order to construct a robust argument.

## Question 3 (a) – (e)

### 3 Judaism

- (a) Outline what Jews mean when they describe G-d as a judge. [3]
- (b) Outline **one** Jewish belief about the Messiah. [3]
- (c) Describe **one** Jewish belief about the role of Moses. [3]
- (d) Outline the Jewish belief that G-d is both transcendent and immanent. [6]
- (e) 'There is no resurrection of the body.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Analyse and evaluate the importance of points of view, referring to common and divergent views within Judaism
- Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar

[15]

[3]

## Section B overview

Section B focuses on relationships and families. Candidates choose one out of the three questions to answer. Each question has three parts ((a)-(d)) with (a) and (b) focusing on AO1 (knowledge and understanding), (c) on AO2 (analysis and evaluation) and (d) being an essay question with 3 marks available for AO1 and 12 for AO2. Each question has a maximum of 30 marks, and there is no SPaG mark in this section.

Candidates generally performed well on this section and had a good grasp of the knowledge, and sources of wisdom and authority required. Candidates were aware of some of the key differences between different denominations or traditions within religions but sometimes struggled with the nuances. Specifically, candidates often characterised Roman Catholics as 'strict' and Protestants as more lenient but with little understanding of the philosophies or beliefs that underlie these differences. The great majority of candidates answered Question 4 on Christianity with few attempting Question 5 and almost none Question 6. There is therefore comparatively little evidence available on Question 5, the commentary has, therefore, been incorporated into Question 4 as an additional comment, since there is not enough evidence to support a full commentary. As elsewhere, there is no commentary on Question 6 as there is insufficient evidence available.

### Question 4 (a)

#### 4 Christianity

(a) Outline **one** Christian teaching about equality.

[3]

This question was well answered on the whole, with most candidates able to achieve full marks. Most candidates went for the underlying belief that everyone is equal, and that discrimination is therefore wrong. Many backed this up with the idea that all are children/creations of God. Some gave the teaching that all are equal and then backed this up with one or more Biblical quotations, while some took a slightly different approach and argued that the Bible teaches that men and women are not equal. Where this was adequately supported it was credited. Again, candidates were asked for one teaching and so could not be further credited if they moved on to a new idea. This was less of an issue than in some other questions as different quotations could be seen as examples of a single idea. Those candidates, however, who started by saying that everyone is equal and then said that some Christians believed they were not, generally got fewer marks as they could not be credited for a second idea. Candidates often referred to egalitarianism or complementarianism.

A similar pattern was followed on Question 5 with most candidates suggesting that all are equal because all were created by Allah, however few candidates were able to support this with quotations or teachings from the Qur'an. Surprisingly, no candidates discussed the concept of the Ummah as a basis for equality.

#### Assessment for learning



Make sure that responses are of an appropriate length for the number of marks available. Three-mark questions should have one to three sentences while 15 mark questions need responses that are much longer and more detailed to meet the requirements of the top level descriptors. Leave enough time to write enough for the essay questions.

## Question 4 (b)

**(b)** Describe what Christians might believe about the purposes of marriage.

**[6]**

Most candidates gained Level 2, but many struggled to go beyond this, generally because they did not focus on the 'purpose' of marriage but described it in more general terms. Some suggested that as a purpose of marriage was to reproduce, same sex marriage was rejected. This is a valid point that was fully credited. However some made this the main focus of their response, discussing homosexuality at length. This missed the point of the question and so limited the marks that could be given. The most successful responses addressed the issues of reproduction, sex, and companionship. Some suggested that marriage brought a couple closer to God and that he is a third partner in every marriage. While this is not strictly a purpose of marriage it was credited as it is clearly foundational to a Christian understanding of marriage. Many spoke of Christian marriage as a sacrament. Some commented on the idea that marriage is for life and cannot legitimately be dissolved. This limited the marks that could be given when it became the main focus of the response as this is not a purpose of marriage.

The idea of procreation and as the proper place for sex was also discussed on Question 5. Few candidates gave quotations from the Qur'an or the Hadith as a basis for their comments and very few mentioned the fact that Muhammad said that by marrying Muslims fulfilled half their religion. Some wrongly suggested that Islam considers marriage to be a sacrament.

## Question 4 (c)

**(c)** Explain why Christians might have different attitudes towards contraception.

**[6]**

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer.

Most candidates gave a reasonably accurate account of different Christian views on contraception. Many stated that Roman Catholics are strongly opposed to contraception in all artificial forms, and the reasons for this were usually well explained with candidates referring to Biblical teachings such as 'be fruitful and multiply' and explaining that contraception potentially interferes with the will of God. Most were aware that Protestant denominations take a less strict view of contraception, but the reasons for this were not well-understood. The stronger responses talked about 'the most loving' thing to do sometimes being the use of contraceptives but did not go much beyond this. Some claimed that Protestants used contraceptives to prevent pregnancy before marriage since sex outside marriage is acceptable. While there are Christians who hold this opinion, it is not the usual Protestant position and did not demonstrate sound understanding. Very few candidates got to the heart of the matter by explaining why Christians differ, for example through different opinions on what is most important and different interpretations of Biblical teaching. Stronger responses made a distinction between different forms of contraception (those that prevent the sperm from meeting the egg and those which expel a fertilised egg) and were able to explain the reasons for these different responses. For some, however, this led to the main focus of the question being on abortion rather than contraception, which limited the mark that could be given.

On Question 5 candidates experienced similar issues and most were not aware of the differences between Christianity and Islam and therefore gave an almost identical response to those for Question 4, which was less accurate for Question 5. Islam is more tolerant of contraception in a wider range of circumstances than some forms of Christianity. Again, some answered on abortion rather than contraception.

## Question 4 (d)

(d)\* 'Christian women should be able to do anything men can do.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs and teachings within Christianity
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Christianity.

[15]

This was the best answered essay question on the paper and there were some excellent responses. Most candidates were able to give a good account of the different opinions within Christianity on the roles of women. They used the terms 'egalitarianism' and 'complementarianism' accurately and with relevance to the question. Many mentioned contradictory Biblical teachings and some pointed out that the disciples were all men. Most candidates suggested that modern attitudes towards the role of women have their roots in the patriarchal world of the time of Christ. The strongest responses gave a genuine discussion, critiquing the arguments they used, for example by suggesting that although women had limited agency on the world of the New Testament, Christ came to challenge this. Less successful responses were based on candidates' opinions and tended to be short, with little or no reference to Christianity or Biblical teaching.

Most candidates who attempted Question 5 omitted this part making it difficult to comment. Some made reference to the importance of the role of Khadijah, while pointing out that women cannot be imams. A very few made reference to cultural differences between different Islamic countries.

### What is an evaluative response?

In AO2 questions, the strongest responses are genuinely evaluative and discursive. Do not just state the arguments on each side of the debate but discuss them and compare them to each other, suggesting which arguments are stronger or weaker and why. It is always good if you can introduce a counter-argument. Finish with a conclusion that gives a reasoned judgement on the question and, if possible, introduces something new that has not already been said. Explain why you have reached your opinion in as much detail as you can.



## Exemplar 3

		Jesus, Catholics would argue was a man and
		led, so we should follow his example, <del>as a</del> <del>to</del>
		counter, some theologians have argued he was
		just <del>followed</del> <sup>following</sup> the conventions of the time.
		And yet, Jesus came to break down barriers,
		disregarding Jewish law and <sup>often</sup> preaching to
		Women.

This excerpt of a good response demonstrates genuine evaluation. It follows a paragraph in which the candidate has discussed various Christian ideas about the ordination of women. The Catholic argument that Jesus was a man so priests should also be men is given and then the candidate offers two counter arguments to this point, showing its potential weakness and moving towards the candidate's conclusion that Christian women should be able to do whatever men can do. First that the attitude of Jesus was shaped by his time and that it would probably be different had he lived today, and secondly that Jesus came to break down the existing barriers that the church is seeking to re-establish. This paragraph is therefore a good example of what is meant by analysis and evaluation.

## Question 5 (a) – (d)

## 5 Islam

- (a) Outline **one** Muslim teaching about equality. [3]
- (b) Describe what Muslims might believe about the purposes of marriage. [6]
- (c) Explain why Muslims might have different attitudes towards contraception. [6]

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer.

- (d)\* 'Muslim women should be able to do anything men can do.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs and teachings within Islam
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Islam.

[15]

## Question 6 (a) – (d)

### 6 Judaism

- (a) Outline **one** Jewish teaching about equality. [3]
- (b) Describe what Jews might believe about the purposes of marriage. [6]
- (c) Explain why Jews might have different attitudes towards contraception. [6]

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer.

- (d)\* 'Jewish women should be able to do anything men can do.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs and teachings within Judaism
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Judaism.

[15]

## Section C overview

Section C focuses on Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes. Candidates choose one out of the three questions to answer. Each question has three parts ((a)-(d)) with (a) and (b) focusing on AO1 (knowledge and understanding), (c) on AO2 (analysis and evaluation) and (d) being an essay question with 3 marks available for AO1 and 12 for AO2. Each question has a maximum of 30 marks, and there is no SPaG mark in this section.

This section is generally the weakest, with many candidates not grasping the ideas and issues that are addressed here. Understanding is often superficial, and candidates struggle to explain the impact of religion or non-religion on public, political and social life in the UK. In this section, candidates often have a simplistic understanding of religious people, often characterising them homogeneously as people who reject science and have very strict beliefs regarding moral issues.

The great majority of candidates answered Question 7 on Christianity with few attempting Question 8 and almost none Question 9. There is therefore comparatively little evidence available on Question 8, the commentary has, therefore, been incorporated into Question 7 as an additional comment, since there is not enough evidence to support a full commentary. As elsewhere, there is no commentary on Question 9 as there is insufficient evidence available.

**Make sure that candidates attempt all parts of their chosen question.**

Leaving out parts of a question, particularly parts (d) and (e) in Section A, and (d) in Sections B and C will significantly affect the number of marks gained. Anything that is written may gain some marks and so it is always worth attempting the question.

### Question 7 (a)

#### 7 Christianity

(a) State **three** beliefs that might be held by Humanists.

[3]

Responses were identical for Question 7 and Question 8. Most were able to gain full marks. Negative responses (Humanists do not believe in God) were credited, as were ethical responses (Humanists believe women should be able to have an abortion). Some, however, did not know what a Humanist is and gave religious responses (Humanists believe God created the earth). The best responses showed specific knowledge of Humanism, using the idea that humans must rely on themselves and their reason for their moral compass, rather than on divine teaching or revelation.

## Question 7 (b)

- (b) Describe the impact that Christianity as the established religion might have on some Christians.

In your response you must consider the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse, but mainly Christian.

[6]

Many candidates struggled with this question. Most did not understand what was meant by 'established religion' and answered from the standpoint of Christianity being the majority religion in the UK. While this was accepted as a reasonable reading of the question, it did result in very different responses and made it more difficult for candidates to reach the higher levels. Responses most commonly revolved around why Christians might find it easier to find a church to attend or a school to send their children to, and that it was easier to celebrate their religious festivals as national and school holidays tended to coincide with them. Less successful responses discussed the idea of Christians feeling better about themselves or more confident in evangelism because they were in a majority. Some suggested that this confidence might lead to negative feelings or discrimination towards other religions. As candidates did not grasp the idea of established religion, most did not comment on different Christian denominations and the impact that the institutional primacy of the Church of England might have on them. Stronger responses showed awareness that Christian bishops (but not necessarily that these are Anglican) sit in the House of Lords and so that Christianity has an impact on the law to an extent that other religions do not.

On Question 5, candidates actually found it easier to answer, as they could see the impact that living in a Christian majority country might have on Muslims. Some talked about feelings of exclusion or isolation and underrepresentation in the House of Lords and government more generally. Some talked about the danger that this could lead to extremism and ways in which this could be avoided.

## Question 7 (c)

- (c) Explain why Christians might disagree with people who have no religion.

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer.

[6]

This question was generally well answered with a significant minority gaining Level 3. There were a number of different valid routes that candidates took into the question. Some approached the question philosophically, suggesting reasons why Christians believe in God and so disagree with those who do not. Others took a more psychological approach, suggesting that Christians did not understand how people could live without a religion as it gave a sense of meaning and purpose to life and hope for life beyond death. Others took a more ethical approach and discussed differences of opinion that Christians might have with non-religious people over issues such as homosexuality, abortion, or euthanasia. All of these approaches were valid, and candidates were able to interpret the question in any reasonable way.

Responses to Question 8 generally followed a similar pattern to those to Question 7, with candidates using a variety of valid approaches to the question.

## Question 7 (d)

(d)\* 'Religion has no place in a secular society.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs and teachings within Christianity
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Christianity.

[15]

The quality of responses to this question tended to depend on whether candidates understood the idea of a secular state. Most confused the idea to some extent with secularisation and said that a secular state is one in which there is a decreasing amount of religion. More successful responses understood that a secular state is one that separates religion from the state and the formulation of law, giving religion a private rather than a public role, but not necessarily seeking to eradicate it. Very few candidates suggested that a secular state could actually be beneficial for religion since all religions are equally protected by law. Some did refer to the situation in France where public symbols of religion in the workplace are banned. Some saw this as a good thing while others saw it as a breach of liberty but did not explicitly refer to religion as a human right. Candidates made use of statistical and census data and generally used it to good effect. Some candidates discussed Karl Rahner's idea of anonymous Christians, although most did not have a firm grasp on the concept. Others discussed religion as a basis for identity, either personal or national, with reference being made to the monarch as head of the Church of England and Defender of the Faith. Many talked about the benefits that religion can bring to society, through charity work and positive values, although others suggested that it held society back, holding outdated views about such issues as abortion and the role of women. Generally, where candidates had a fair understanding of the question, responses were thoughtful and discursive, although some were extremely short, and many candidates omitted this question completely.

Responses to Question 8 were of a very similar nature to those in Question 7, with candidates taking a variety of approaches, and using similar arguments. Some discussed the role of Islam in secular society, discussing issues of extremism, but also of community and charity work.

## Question 8 (a) – (d)

### 8 Islam

(a) State **three** beliefs that might be held by Humanists. [3]

(b) Describe the impact that Christianity as the established religion might have on Muslims.

In your response you must consider the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse, but mainly Christian. [6]

(c) Explain why Muslims might disagree with people who have no religion.

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer. [6]

(d)\* 'Religion has no place in a secular society.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs and teachings within Islam
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Islam. [15]

## Question 9 (a)

### 9 Judaism

(a) State **three** beliefs that might be held by Humanists. [3]

(b) Describe the impact that Christianity as the established religion might have on Jews.

In your response you must consider the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse, but mainly Christian. [6]

(c) Explain why Jews might disagree with people who have no religion.

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer. [6]

(d)\* 'Religion has no place in a secular society.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs and teachings within Judaism
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Judaism. [15]

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