



**Standard Grade 2012
Internal Assessment Report
Religious Studies**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Standard Grade qualifications in this subject.

Standard Grade

Titles/levels of Standard Grade qualifications verified:

Pupil investigations of issues related to belief or morality — F/G/C levels.

General comments

Once again the verification team were very pleased with the high standard of work demonstrated in the majority of the sampled candidate work. Topics such as: Is suicide a sin? Is it morally right to have pets? Can and should homosexuals be changed? Does the media affect young people? Is animal testing wrong? There was once again an increase in the number of candidates who chose to do investigations on Course topics such as abortion and euthanasia.

This element of Standard Grade Religious Studies is one that candidates, on the whole, thrive on when given the correct support. Candidates demonstrated good skills of planning and investigating throughout the majority of reports.

There were a number of investigations that contained unsuitable images and this issue will be referred to again later in the report.

There were also a number of reports that were, on the whole, descriptive works which displayed little or no true reflection from the candidates.

Administration of assessments

Centres are encouraged to once again read the Extended Grade Related Criteria (GRC) for the investigation as it contains useful information to help centres when they start the investigation process. This is mentioned, as it is obvious that some centres do not seem to have instructed their candidates that the investigation should have been about an issue of morality or belief and that the report should be an investigative report and not just a descriptive one.

Internal verification processes for most centres seem to be secure. However, there were some centres that sent in very little evidence to support the grades they had estimated. Once again, the Extended GRC would help in recognising what sort of evidence should be sent in for verification.

SQA strongly recommends that every centre ensures that each candidate's investigation is internally verified.

Areas of good practice

Some centres had produced lists of suitable topics for their candidates to choose from. Whilst there is no real limit to the areas that candidates can choose from, this practice means that the centre can ensure that it has suitable resources for each candidate.

Proformas were used by some centres to help candidates structure their investigations and this is to be commended.

One centre encouraged candidates to choose an area of study and then generate a series of questions that could be asked and thus helped candidates to grasp from the beginning what they were expected to do in the investigation. This helped the candidates with their title, which was in the form of a question, and therefore almost ensured that they were indeed investigating a true issue of belief or morality.

The development of questions was shown to be used by several centres and this is key to a good investigation as it shows the candidates from the outset that this is not merely a report that describes a topic but rather it is one that investigates, challenges, questions and forces some level of reflection from them and others.

There were several good examples of centres helping candidate's structure a record of work and this was useful when it came to verifying the grades that centres had allocated.

Another centre had their candidates complete a 'What makes a Good Investigation' booklet as part of the report process. This was an excellent idea as it meant that the candidates had an understanding (in their own words) of the Extended GRC — this also meant that teachers could use this completed booklet as a basis for discussion about what was needed to further develop any investigation.

It was encouraging to see the number of centres that had obviously encouraged their candidates to use as wide a variety of resources as possible and to record their use of them. This is to be encouraged as it helps candidates to collect as much useful information as they can and allows them to get access to a variety of different viewpoints.

Specific areas for improvement

Centres are reminded that they should, from the outset, make sure that candidates know that there has to be evaluation and reflection throughout the report as it is not just a descriptive report, rather it is an investigation about an issue of belief or morality.

Section 2.7, paragraph 4 of the Standard Grade Arrangements for Religious Studies reminds centres that 'the teacher must ensure that the topic is truly an "issue", ie something on which there are different viewpoints, and not a topic which merely lends itself to description'.

Religious viewpoints should naturally come in a Religious Studies investigation and indeed for many candidates this will help give them a focus for the start of their investigation.

For candidates to get a Credit grade in the investigation they need to show evidence of analysing viewpoints on several aspects of a complex issue as well

as producing a comprehensive and lucid report of the investigation that includes analysis of other people's viewpoints.

Centres have to send in evidence to support any grades they are claiming and this evidence must include some sort of 'diary' or record of the investigation. The final report is only part of the evidence and candidates should be encouraged to keep a record of their activities as part of the investigation process.

There were a number of images that centres allowed candidates to include in their final investigations that the verification team deemed to be inappropriate. This mainly happened with material on abortion. Centres are strongly advised to provide guidance and discretion when candidates want to include emotive pictures.

Issues such as abortion and euthanasia are part of the Standard Grade Course and as such are taught in class. This means that if a candidate decides to choose either of these issues as the basis of their investigation they have to make sure that they clearly demonstrate that the report is based on their own investigation and reflection and not just a rehash of what they were taught in the class. Again reference to Section 2.7 paragraph 2 makes this clear 'If the topic arises from an issue studied in one of the (Course) Units the teacher should ensure that the topic is sufficiently different from what has been taught to enable proper assessment of the pupil's personal planning and conducting of the investigation'.