



## External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Religious Studies
Level(s)	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

# Comments on candidate performance

## General comments

Overall the marking team stated that the majority of candidates appeared to have a good grasp of the course content and responded accordingly. A significant number of candidates demonstrated a high level of understanding of the concepts of the course, and many insightful and detailed answers were given.

Some questions requiring specific KU of religions were less well answered than the Christianity and Issues of Belief and Morality sections by some candidates.

Most candidates responded well to questions, with only a very few leaving blank questions.

At Credit level there were some excellent responses, and candidates responded well to the variety of different of questions. On the whole candidates seemed to be placed at the appropriate levels.

Once again candidate responses to Evaluation questions were consistently of a high standard throughout all levels.

Some candidates seemed to be lacking in the very basic levels of KU, especially after two years of study — however this did seem to be limited to candidates that appeared to be presented from 'Core' RME classes. This will be referred to again in the report.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

The source question (2a in Foundation paper) produced good quality answers, and it was encouraging to see that sources did appear to be better known by the majority of candidates.

Question 2d in the Foundation paper was well answered by most of the candidates, and the standard of evaluation answers throughout the Foundation paper was consistently good.

Despite the fact that many candidates seemed to get confused with the birth ceremonies KU questions, the vast majority answered the generic evaluation questions on birth well (4c, 6c, 8c) at Foundation level.

The Issues of Belief and Morality section in the Foundation paper was well answered, and candidates seemed to relish the opportunity to deal with the questions of life-after-death and war — it was especially encouraging to see candidates use information gained from other subjects to answer the questions on war (this also happened in the Credit paper).

Candidates' answers to question 1c and 1d in the General paper demonstrated a good understanding of an important practice within Christianity, as well as relating the teaching to actions.

Where candidates clearly understood the concept of Incarnation, the answers to questions 2a, 2b and 2c were extremely well explained and evaluated.

Despite the problem with Zakat at Foundation level, the candidate responses to the Shahadah question (6a) at General level displayed a very clear understanding of this crucial teaching within Islam, and candidates are to be congratulated for their quality answers. This also applies to the candidates who answered questions 8a and 8b well in the Judaism section of the General paper. Whilst these Sukkah questions seemed to be difficult for some of the candidates, for those who were well prepared the chance to give quality answers was taken.

Question 1a in the Credit paper was very well answered by many candidates. This question was broadly interpreted by candidates and it was encouraging to see them develop their answers and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

At Credit level the generic birth ceremonies evaluation questions (4b, 6b, 8b) were answered very well by most candidates, despite the fact that they seemed to struggle with the KU question.

Once again the Belief and Morality section of the Credit paper allowed candidates to demonstrate their learning and their skills. The life-after-death questions (9a and 9b) were extremely well answered, and candidates used information that they had obviously collected from media as well as their classrooms. Candidates expressed their opinions well and supported them with thoughtful and reflective comments contained in detailed answers.

The war questions (10a and 10b) were responded to in a variety of different ways by candidates, and it was encouraging to see candidates bring in specific knowledge that they had from their history lessons as well as up-to-date information gained from media sources and their own reflection and discussion with their contemporaries.

### **Areas which candidates found demanding**

Question 3d in the Foundation paper was poorly answered by many candidates. This was a bit concerning as this concept is crucial within Hinduism. Whilst the amount of marks lost was not significant within the paper overall, it does suggest a failure of some candidates to be able to evaluate key religious concepts.

The generic birth questions at Foundation level (questions 4b, 6b, 8b) produced some very confusing answers that clearly demonstrated a lack of knowledge of basic facts of a studied religion.

Many candidates did not seem to have a basic grasp of the idea of Zakat according to the answers given in question 5b of the Foundation paper.

Throughout the Foundation paper some candidates seemed to have difficulty giving a second reason for their answer, and therefore limited the possible marks they could get.

Question 1a in the General paper was poorly answered by a fair number of candidates. This suggests a lack of knowledge of one of the key sources for the Christianity part of the course. Some 'wild guesses' were made by some candidates!

Answers to question 2a in the General paper demonstrated a lot of confusion between the terms 'incarnation' and 'reincarnation'. This is something that centres need to take note of — if these terms are not understood by candidates, follow-on questions become more difficult for them.

It was obvious from the extremely poor answers to the Navaratri question (4c General paper) that this festival is either not taught, or was misunderstood by just about every candidate. Random answers about 'any' Hindu festival appear to have been the norm.

The Sukkah question (8a General paper) was poorly answered by quite a few candidates, yet at the same time well detailed answers were given by many others. The issues with questions 2a, 4c and 8a in the General paper appeared to be more prevalent with candidates who were sitting the exam having just had Core RME instead of timetabled certificate classes.

Question 2a in the Credit exam was extremely poorly answered by many candidates. A 'Christian' wedding seemed to be perceived as 'any' wedding that candidates had knowledge of.

Quite a few candidates seemed to struggle with relating the concept of Dharma to society as a whole in question 3b. However this is surely something that Credit candidates should be able to do if they had studied a concept over two years.

The generic KU questions on birth ceremonies (4a, 6a, 8a) in the Credit paper also seemed to cause problems for many candidates as they could not 'explain' the things that happened. Instead, they merely produced lists of things that happened, which was not what was asked for.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

Once again centres are to be congratulated for preparing the vast majority of candidates well. It was also obvious by the quality of answer that candidates were, on the whole, presented at the appropriate level.

Candidates responded well to the structure of all levels of exam and to the question types. Many candidates, especially at Credit level, clearly sought to structure their answers, and this enabled them to give full answers and gain marks. This is obviously down to the good work of subject teachers spending time on helping candidates prepare for exams and encouraging them to 'think through' answers.

Some candidates appear to struggle with the difference between 'describe' and 'explain'. It would be useful for centres to clarify this to their candidates with reference to each subject and the attached exam.

Source questions did appear to be better answered by candidates this year, and centres should be encouraged by this and seek to continue this improvement with their candidates next year.

There was a reduction in the number of Foundation candidates who completed all sections of the exam paper, which is encouraging as it suggests that centres are teaching the correct exam technique.

This situation where candidates attempt all optional sections appears to be limited to candidates who were sitting the exam having only studied Core RME, and it appears to be clear that the candidates themselves did not have enough knowledge of the religion they had studied to be able to deal with specific questions with confidence. Centres are encouraged to think again about this practice.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

STANDARD GRADE

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2011</b>	1707
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<b>Number of resulted entries in 2012</b>	1569
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## Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	17.5%
Grade 2	22.9%
Grade 3	15.0%
Grade 4	16.2%
Grade 5	13.1%
Grade 6	9.7%
Grade 7	2.0%
No award	3.5%

### Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
KU	36	29	20	36	22	15	30	16	12
EV	36	27	20	36	22	16	30	18	14