



## External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	<b>Religious Studies</b>
Level	<b>Standard Grade</b>

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

The majority of candidates seem to have been presented at the correct level and performed accordingly. Centres are to be congratulated on this and are encouraged to continue to ensure that candidates are presented at the level that is appropriate for their ability and knowledge.

In general terms, all papers would appear to have been well handled by the majority of candidates. Once again, the Evaluation sections of all papers encouraged candidates to perform well and their answers were articulate and clear with well-developed points throughout.

Centres had, on the whole, prepared their candidates well for the exam and this enabled them to maximise their marks throughout. The General paper in particular seemed to suit all candidates and this was encouraging as in the past this has not always been the case.

However, the concern about candidates' Knowledge and Understanding (KU) in certain areas of the Course continues to be an issue with Markers. Basic information of source texts, or indeed of key celebrations within a religion, was missing at all levels. There is no doubt that candidates from centres that present whole cohorts through core RME time were lacking in basic knowledge of Christianity, but many other candidates demonstrated poor KU in Sections B, C and D of the exams. Further reference to this will be made later in the report.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

The majority of Foundation candidates gave good performances in the Christianity and Issues of Morality sections of the paper. The questions in the Christianity section do not seem to have caused many problems for the candidates and, in particular, answers to Questions 2 (a) and (d) demonstrated good clear thinking that was obviously based on sound knowledge.

The General paper, on the whole, performed very well and candidates appeared to revel in the openness of the majority of questions. Question 1 (a) was interpreted in a wide number of ways, all of which the Markers found valid, and this gave the majority of candidates a very positive start. Positive marking of Questions 1 (b) and (c) also allowed candidates to demonstrate a good sound knowledge of some key Christian teaching. Once again, the Evaluation questions were extremely well answered and candidates demonstrated reflective thinking throughout their responses.

In the Issues part of the General paper, Questions 10 (a) and (c) were opened up by the candidates in a wider way than expected and this demonstrated to the Markers that candidates felt comfortable with the style of question as well as the content of the question.

Credit candidates performed extremely well with Questions 1 (b) and 2 (b), and their responses demonstrated a clear grasp of the idea of symbolism in religion as well as the effect religion can have on society.

Question 9 (a) in the Credit paper produced some excellent structured answers. Indeed some candidates gave such detailed answers that it was obvious that this area has been well taught by many centres, which is encouraging and to be commended.

Once again the Morality questions in the Issues section of the paper were handled very comfortably by candidates and many gained high marks here. Question 9 (b), which was an attempt to expand the type of question that we have on this topic, performed well and the Markers observed many different and valid approaches to the answering of this question.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

The Holi questions (4a) at Foundation and Credit level were not well responded to by the majority of candidates. These were basic questions which the Markers believe should have been well within the knowledge of the vast majority of candidates who had studied Hinduism.

Likewise the Shabbat questions at Foundation (8c) and Credit (8a) were also very poorly answered. Indeed many of the candidates seemed to confuse Shabbat with Pesach at Credit level and the Shabbat items with communion at Foundation level. The Markers are of the opinion that this was because of a lack of knowledge of Judaism, which should not occur after two years of study.

The area of the General paper that produced poor marks was the generic questions on marriage ceremonies (4a, 6a, 8a). The vast majority of candidates seemed to have little specific knowledge of the marriage ceremony within the religion that they had studied. Very generic 'wedding' answers were given with little connection to the specific religion. This was a disappointment to the Setters and the Markers as this was a question that should have produced a good source of marks for the candidates. Once again, this suggests a lack of knowledge about basic practices within a religion.

Question 1 (a) in the Credit paper appears to have caused difficulties for many candidates either because they lacked knowledge of the actual story or because they merely retold the bits of the story they did know without actually explaining the significance of these events. This suggests either a lack of knowledge of the source material or a very basic grasp of some of the points of the story with no real time spent on discussing the importance of the events within the religious tradition and beliefs.

Whilst Question 9 (a) gave some excellent answers at Credit level, there were still many candidates who did no more than state the phrase 'the Big Bang' and then went on to give an explanation of evolution. This was not what the question was asking and at Credit level it is disappointing when candidates do not seem to remember any of the scientific theories about how the world/universe began that they should have been taught throughout the Course.

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

### **General**

Centres are to be congratulated for presenting the vast majority of candidates at an appropriate level and for preparing them well for the exam.

Centres are once again encouraged to look at how they teach the source materials for each of the religions that they study as well as to review the candidates' knowledge of such sources.

There was an increase this year in the number of Foundation candidates who answered all the sections in the exam paper. Several candidates from the same centres did this on numerous occasions. Centres are once again encouraged to spend time explaining to candidates exactly what sections they should attempt in the exam.

Most candidates who were presented at F/G level after being put through the Standard Grade Course during core RME did not perform as well as other candidates. They were especially lacking in knowledge of Christianity and this brought their overall marks down. Centres which use core RME for this purpose should once again think through if they are doing these candidates a disservice by this practice.

# Statistical information: update on Courses

## STANDARD GRADE

Number of resulted entries in 2010	1,566
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	1,707
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## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	13.0%
Grade 2	22.1%
Grade 3	19.9%
Grade 4	17.9%
Grade 5	11.4%
Grade 6	8.6%
Grade 7	2.9%
No award	4.3%

### 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		Found-ation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
KU	36	29	20	36	25	18	30	16	12
EV	36	27	20	36	25	19	30	18	14