

## Moderation Feedback - Central

**Assessment Panel:**

**RMPS**

**Qualification area**

**Subject(s) and Level(s)  
included in this report**

**Religious Studies – Standard Grade Investigation**

## Central Moderation

### General comments on central moderation activity

As in previous years, I would wish to express my gratitude to the staff of SQA for their preparedness and support throughout the moderation activity.

Approximately 10% of presenting centres were sampled.

As with last year, on the whole a good range of issues for investigation was evident, insightful work had been undertaken by many candidates and this had been acknowledged in the grading by their presenting centres. Many centres had made full use of the comments boxes on the flyleaf and included appropriate evidence to support the grades allocated for planning and conduct of the investigation. Moderators value the effort teachers take over the comments on the flyleaf and find them of exceptional help during the moderation exercise. The supporting evidence is also of considerable value during moderation.

Despite previous comments, there are still some centres who permit candidates to investigate a topic (which produces a descriptive report) rather than investigate an issue (where differing, often conflicting, viewpoints are presented, analysed, assessed and a personal conclusion is reached and justified). There are still a considerable number of centres which appear to encourage the investigation of issues which are covered during delivery of the Course - eg abortion. Moderation reveals that these consistently do not receive as high an award as investigations which explore issues outwith the 'Standard' Grade syllabus. This is so because candidates appear to concentrate on the factual aspects and tend not to look at the issues involved.

Diaries which actually show the material collected prove to be helpful in moderating the conducting phase of the investigation.

### Specific issues identified

As indicated above, and commented on before, the topic of abortion does not appear to lead to a good report. Candidates tend to produce a, at times graphic, descriptive essay rather than exploring the issue of abortion. There is also little evidence in many reports to indicate that more has been done than repeat taught Course content. I would wish to continue to discourage the selection of this topic.

Some reports provided interesting reading but, at times, it was difficult to identify what made them a Religious Studies report as opposed to any general investigation. Candidates should be encouraged to investigate the religious aspects of the issues explored. The tendency to ignore the religious element was particularly notable with Foundation candidates.

While referencing the internet is slowly improving there are still a considerable number of candidates who fail to identify their sources and resources. Particularly, candidates should be taught to source direct quotations and to produce what might be considered a traditional bibliography.

It continues to be clear that a considerable proportion of candidates have difficulty expressing ideas in their own words. Moderators would suggest that internal assessment makes specific reference to

the lack of use of own words when completing the flyleaf, and to grade appropriately. On more than one occasion moderators detected paragraphs in reports which were of a different linguistic style and which consistently used 'American' spelling, the rest of the report did not.

It was clear to moderators that the wider the range of religious views on an issue the better the final report and the candidate's conclusion. When a religious issue is being explored candidates should, therefore, be encouraged to consider more than Christianity.

## Feedback to centres

The moderators:

- Commend centres on the variety of issues selected for investigation and would continue to discourage investigations on issues which would be covered in detail in normal course work. Centres which permit (and indeed encourage) topics such as abortion should read carefully the second paragraph of section 2.7 of the Arrangements document.
- Remind centres that the report should investigate an issue and that clearly different stances on that issue should be explained in reports.
- Would encourage the clear identification of the religious and or moral components of the issue being explored.
- Have noted considerable 'lifting' from class text books and internet sites without acknowledgement and would encourage either sourcing as a quotation or appropriate grading and comments on the flyleaf.
- Would encourage candidates to give full personal conclusions with supporting reasons which take account of the various viewpoints outlined in their report.