

GCSE

Religious Studies (Short Course)

8061/2 Paper 2 Christianity

Report on the Examination

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General comments

Most centres have again prepared students well for this exam and are clearly linking topics to teachings, giving strong religious foundations to answers. This was demonstrated with the best students providing a coherent and holistic, wide-ranging knowledge of the religion, used specialist language freely and appropriately, and made excellent use of a wide range of directly pertinent teachings to support the points they made. The articulation of arguments and evaluations were done well. The weakest students lacked in all of these areas but were still able to show a level of knowledge of the religion. Most students were able to attempt all questions on the paper.

Some questions used key terms which a number of students struggled with. Centres must remain vigilant in covering every element of the specification to give students the best chance to recognise all key terms and thus be able to attempt all questions with confidence. This year, ‘the oneness of God’ proved a difficult term for some, as did the phrase ‘means of salvation’, a phrase from the specification.

Some centres are teaching students to write ‘Christian scriptures teach...’ as an introduction to a teaching. This does not achieve the ‘Source of authority’ mark. For this mark, the source must be named, eg The Bible, Jesus said etc; when the source is named, with its relevant and appropriate teaching, the mark is gained. Those centres teaching students to write ‘Christian scriptures/texts...’ are limiting students to four out of the five available marks.

1.1

This question tested key knowledge. A few students had problems giving a correct answer; this could have been because of the use of the word ‘means’ in the question (see above).

1.2

This question again tested key knowledge. On the whole students were able to identify two beliefs about heaven with this being the question that most student attempted in the exam. The topic gave the opportunity for a wealth of correct answers.

1.3

This question was the most difficult for many students. They found it hard to write about ‘the oneness of God’ and particularly how it influences Christians. This is on the specification but is often taught as part of the Trinity, which was reflected in the mark scheme. Students either understood that this was about God as the only God, or they went quite off track with some centres interpreting ‘oneness’ as Christians being united together.

It is crucial in this question to show how belief influences Christians, how what a Christian believes affects what they say/do/think/feel/believe. Where centres directly focus on this assessment objective in their teaching, their students find it easier to score well on the question. Those students who focus only on explaining the belief could not gain more than half the marks available.

Where students had learnt about Islam, they got this confused with tawhid and wrote about that, which lost marks. Some students stated that it made them good people which was too vague to be credited.

1.4

This question was answered well, with many centres having taught about the crucifixion to a good standard. There was a good use of John 3:16.

A significant issue for the question is the use of ‘Christian scriptures/texts’ as the name of the source of authority – it is not sufficient. This question relies on the naming of a relevant source of belief, teaching or authority to gain full marks, on top of providing two beliefs, each explained. Failing to name a source cost students the extra mark. It was a shame for many centres who had some great quotations from scripture but because of the lack of naming of the source of belief they lost that fifth mark.

1.5

This essay question was about the existence of a loving God comparing it with the existence of evil and suffering. Many centres were able to recognise this with a good understanding of the terms omnibenevolent/ omnipotent/ omniscient being used and the inconsistent triad as a counter argument. Some students also used the existence of heaven and hell to counter the belief in an all-loving God. John 3:16 was also used well to answer this question.

There were a few students citing attitudes towards sexuality as a reason for God not being loving which was sometimes done well but often not accurately.

Students lost marks when they attempted to use atheist as a counter argument which could not be credited. For the Christianity paper, it important for centres to teach that they need to focus only on what Christian believers would argue not anyone else. There were also a few Qur’an quotes that were included here which also could not be credited.

This question was answered well with most students having something to say; however the statement used the term “it is right to believe,” and this had to be clearly addressed for responses to gain L4 marks. Some students wrongly argued whether God was loving in the face of evil rather than whether Christians should believe God was all loving, changing the route of the evaluation. Students who explain in good detail and exemplify the points they make gain better marks; using appropriately applied teachings and references also improves marks. Those students who weigh up the evidence, explaining why one point of view is stronger than another (more persuasive, compelling, etc) usually do better.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.