

GCSE Religious Studies webinar Your questions answered

GCSE Religious Studies in the spotlight: results insights webinar resource

Autumn 2019



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How to use this resource

This webinar resource booklet collates and summarises all of the questions asked during the *GCSE Religious Studies in the spotlight: results insight* webinar. Here you will find detailed responses to all of your questions from our subject experts – including those unanswered on the day. We have grouped related questions into themes and put the questions and answers into tables to make this resource as concise, clear and accessible as possible.

For any questions asked that are not related to results insights, or for any further questions, you can get in touch with your subject team.

For extra information on results:

- join our Heads of Curriculum for a [video breakdown of GCSE results](#)
- access our free Enhanced Results Analysis tool. We've created [two-minute tutorials](#) to show you how
- navigate to [e-AQA](#) to download the full report on the exam for a detailed breakdown
- book onto one of our [Feedback events](#) for a detailed view of results, student answers and examiner commentaries.

A01 questions

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
Can the AO1.2 'influences' questions include explanation of how the beliefs affect the person's thoughts and emotions as well as actions?	Yes, the AO1.2 strand of the Assessment Objectives for GCSE Religious Studies looks to assess knowledge and understanding of the 'influence on individuals, communities and societies.' Therefore, in these questions students can explain how the belief could impact upon thoughts, emotions, faith, actions and so on.
Does the reference in a 5-mark question have to be a quote?	<p>No, as stated in the Teaching Guides (to be found under the 'teach' tab on each specification page): 'The 'reference' to teachings or writings can either be paraphrased, or can be a direct quotation. Students do not need to cite references in their answer'.</p> <p>The reference chosen does need to be relevant to the question, for example: 'Christians believe... this is because it says in the Bible...'</p> <p>The teachings can be drawn from a range of sources, as stated in the Teaching Guide.</p>
Do students lose marks for writing a wrong citation with a quote?	No. There is no way to 'lose marks' as the mark scheme is applied on a point-by-point basis in the AO1 questions (and levels applied to the whole answer in AO2). A correct quotation, in the correct context, would be credited even if the cited reference was inaccurate.
Is the wording of 2-mark questions changing?	No, as shown in the sample papers and as stated in the Teaching Guides, the 2-mark questions will always assess AO1.1 and will include the command 'Give/Name two...'

<p>In the 4-mark 'main religious tradition of Great Britain' questions can the answer use two Christian denominations?</p>	<p>Yes. As stated in the Teaching Guide: 'these questions will not appear in every examination series, but when they do it is required that one of the views given must be explicitly Christian. The second viewpoint could be another contrasting Christian view, or a view from another religion (or in Spec A, Theme C, a non-religious view)'.</p>
<p>In the 4-mark contrasts questions on Spec A Themes, do the two views have to be from two religions, two denominations, or two different perspectives?</p>	<p>As stated in the Teaching Guide: 'in these questions, students can refer to two denominations or schools of thought from within a religion, or two different religions'.</p> <p>In these questions, 'contrasting' is taken to mean 'different.'</p> <p>As the questions ask for 'contrasting beliefs,' it is acceptable for students to include contrasts in terms of the overall response to the issue itself or the beliefs about it. The 8062/2A Report on the Exam confirms this: 'contrast could be in terms of belief or issue...'</p>

A02 questions

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
<p>Do students have to write three paragraphs and include a certain number of quotes?</p>	<p>There is no 'right' way to approach and structure these questions. There is no requirement to refer to a certain number of teachings, or to make a certain number of points. Any references to religious teachings can be paraphrased, as in other question types. Students don't need to cite references in their answer.</p> <p>The Teaching Guide suggests that three paragraphs may be helpful – agree, disagree, conclusion – but a variety of other approaches were seen by examiners and were all perfectly valid.</p> <p>You can see examples of answers that got 12/12 in 2018 for each unit within the 'assess' tab of each spec page on the website.</p>
<p>Do 'judgements' need to be included throughout the answers?</p>	<p>Evaluative judgements can be included throughout the answer, or in the conclusion. Judgements on the arguments are essential in order to reach Level 4.</p> <p>Our Teaching Guide suggests that phrases like 'this argument/evidence is robust/strong/weak/inconclusive/insubstantial/convincing because...' may be useful here. However, the answers can be phrased however the student wishes.</p> <p>You can see examples of answers that got 12/12 in 2018 for each unit within the 'assess' tab of each spec page on the website.</p>
<p>Can 12-mark answers include more than one religion, or non-religious views?</p>	<p>As the Teaching Guide states in Component 1 papers (and also Spec B religions papers), answers must remain focused on the religion specified for study (eg Hinduism, Catholic Christianity etc). Due to the nature of the</p>

	<p>evaluative statements in Component 1, non-religious views or contrasts with other religions will not be relevant here. In Component 2 (Themes), non-religious views and/or a variety of religious perspectives could be included where relevant (although not required).</p>
<p>Why are some 12-mark questions more difficult than others?</p>	<p>It is the nature of the specification content that some topics may be perceived as being more challenging than others. This does vary depending on a student's own preferences too. However, all our questions go through the same process of checking and revisions, and during standardisation the senior examiners examine numerous answers in order to appropriately finalise the mark schemes. We also examine item level data carefully following the summer series and we will review how students did on each question; this will help inform future question setting.</p>

Resources and general queries

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
Can we see our students' question marks and overall marks on e-AQA?	<p>Yes. Using our Enhanced Results Analysis tool (accessed via e-AQA) you can see student performance on each question, but also overall and compared to other centres. The data is also downloadable. You can find out how to do this via written instructions and videos here:</p> <p>aqa.org.uk/contact-us/secure-services/enhanced-results-analysis</p>
How will students who have scribes be marked for SPaG?	<p>GCSE RS exams are marked online, so answers are marked in the same way for all students.</p> <p>Students should communicate their answer fully to the scribe. Access arrangements can be finalised via your Examinations Officer, and you can find more information here:</p> <p>aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/special-requirements/access-arrangements/spelling-punctuation-and-grammar-marks</p>
Can we see sample student responses?	<p>Yes. There is a full set of 2018 student responses, with examiner comments, available in the 'assess' section of the spec webpages. These cover every option and show a range of marks.</p> <p>You will also be able to see 2019 examples in the Feedback on the Exams events next month; the materials from this course will then be available via e-AQA in the new year.</p>
Which terms can be used in exam questions? Will they come with the English translations?	<p>As the Teaching Guide states: if a subject specific term is listed in the specification, then it could be used as part of any question in the examination. The 1-mark questions could relate to terms from any part of the specification, as well as those in the subject-specific vocabulary and other related topic</p>

	<p>words. If the term appears in brackets on the specification, a 2-, 4-, 5- or 12-mark question stem would also include the English translation. For example in Buddhism, <i>anicca</i> is not in brackets, so no translation would be given; whereas (<i>skandhas</i>) would be referred to as ‘the five aggregates’ in a question.</p> <p>You can find all the key terms from the specification in the subject-specific vocabulary lists (under the ‘teach’ tabs of each spec webpage). These have been fully updated for September 2019.</p>
<p>Why did students get different SPaG marks on each paper?</p>	<p>SPaG marks are awarded using the same marking criteria across papers (aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062/scheme-of-assessment). However, each 12-mark answer will be assessed individually, so marks may differ between questions depending on student performance in each answer.</p> <p>Furthermore, during grade awarding the achievement across papers is balanced accordingly and the grade boundaries reflect this. We are also looking closely at all the achievement across papers in our review process this term.</p>

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