

GCSE  
**RELIGIOUS STUDIES (SHORT  
COURSE)**

8061/2 Christianity  
Report on the Examination

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8061/2  
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## General comments

Entries for this qualification saw a pleasing increase to just under 15,000, the highest entry this specification has attracted. A huge majority of overall entries chose Christianity as one of their two 'faiths' options along with the compulsory themes unit. Most of these entries chose Islam as their other 'faith'.

Standards of work varied as expected. The whole range of marks from twenty seven to zero was awarded and the mean mark was around fifteen. It was clear that the large majority took their examination seriously, had learned the content effectively and revised their learning prior to the examination. Many answers were a pleasure to read in all questions.

The standard of achievement was slightly higher in AO1 than AO2 but the difference was not easily noticeable. Almost as many students were awarded three marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) as those who were awarded two marks. Roughly 20% of students were awarded either one mark or zero marks with most of those earning zero, writing little or nothing in their response. Handwriting is not considered when awarding a SPaG mark but poor handwriting did provide examiners with some challenges.

A proportion of students submitted word processed examinations. It would be helpful if such submissions were printed with a font size of at least 12. Each of the three units that comprise the whole qualification should be printed and submitted on separate pieces of paper with a header to identify the unit. This would greatly assist the scanning and marking process.

## Question-based comments

### 1.1

Around 80% of students were able to correctly identify 'Ascension' as the term used to describe Jesus' return to heaven. Resurrection was the most popular incorrect answer. A very small number ticked two or more boxes and scored zero marks, even if the correct answer was one of the ones that they ticked.

### 1.2

Only around a third of students scored the full two marks to this question. Atonement was not well known, many preferring to give beliefs about sin instead. Some students made several vague points rather than restricting themselves to two points as the question requires. In such instances, only the first two points were eligible for marks to be awarded.

### 1.3

This question required selecting two of the means of salvation (eg law, works, grace and Spirit), writing about them, giving further detail of an influence and possibly including an example. Many students chose to write just a vague paragraph, often including the original sin of Adam and Eve, forgiveness and Jesus' role in salvation. It was often difficult to pick out two distinct ways that believing in salvation influences Christians from the answer presented. Without inclusion of an influence for each of the two points, only a maximum of two marks can be given.

As two influences of believing in salvation are required, it is much better to write just two clear answers presented separately with a brief point about salvation and then showing clearly how this influences Christians. Including an empty line between the two responses would provide greater clarity.

**1.4**

Around 40% of students scored four or five marks on this question which required an explanation of two beliefs about the Trinity. Of those who scored four marks, a significant proportion missed out on the fifth mark either by not including reference to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in their answer, or providing such a reference but not attributing it to any source, eg the Bible, Genesis. The large majority showed some knowledge of the Trinity although some answers lacked clarity. For a question on such a complex belief, it is pleasing to report that it was generally well known. As above for 1.3, it would have been helpful to both students and examiners if the two detailed beliefs had been presented in two separate paragraphs rather than being mixed up together.

**1.5**

Around 60% of students were awarded either level 2 or 3 with similar numbers in each level. Around 12% were awarded level 4. Considering the complexities in the statement, this was pleasing.

Some answers focused on whether God is loving; others concentrated their thoughts more on whether God would allow suffering. Either approach was creditworthy with answers considering both often earning more marks. Many of the best answers successfully considered suffering caused by humans alongside suffering caused by nature.

Some lower scoring responses considered God causing suffering rather than allowing it to happen. This is not what the statement asked. Others argued that suffering was proof that God does not exist in the form Christians believe, often including reference to the inconsistent triad, to rule out the idea that God is all loving and consequently, believing He doesn't exist.

Many students used a taught format in their answers, often consisting of two or three arguments in favour, two or three arguments against, mention of religion and with a conclusion at the end that summarised the points made. This seemed to be helpful to some lower achieving students. Some higher achieving students, whose evaluative skills are better developed, wrote excellent answers without reliance on a strict format. They often gave detailed, logical reasoning to support the statement, balanced with logical reasoning to support a different point of view, not necessarily opposing, with thoughtful reasoned comment about the merits of each case. They often reached evaluative conclusions throughout the answer rather than just in a short final paragraph.

**Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)**

About 80% of the cohort scored either 2 or 3 marks. Not all of these scripts were easy to read due to handwriting issues, but the spelling, punctuation and grammar performance was above the threshold performance descriptor. SPaG performance for some of those students who used a word process, was affected by keying errors.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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