

## WORLD RELIGIONS

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 13	14 - 25	26 - 40	41 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70 - 100

### Standard level internal assessment

#### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 22	23 - 30

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of marks were at grades 5 and 6. Some candidates still struggle to produce a properly research-oriented study. Candidates need to ensure they choose an appropriate research question and focus their answer on that question. The question must generate a genuine enquiry rather than just showing knowledge and understanding. Candidates need to be clear about their research methodology. They need to situate their research within a review of appropriate literature presented in their preliminary research and provide sufficient critical reflection and evaluation. Good studies typically recorded high marks for critical reflection and evaluation and depended upon sufficient preliminary research having been undertaken. It is important that teachers give candidates sufficient grounding in the nature of research. Samples were presented on a variety of topics but there was variation in suitability of the topics chosen and research question presented.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

#### Criterion A Rationale and preliminary research

The majority of candidates in the sample achieved between 3–5 marks but there was significant variation among candidates across the entire mark range. This was due to some candidates not choosing an appropriate research question and wide variation in the understanding of “preliminary research”. There was a tendency to only be subjective in presenting the rationale and to mistake preliminary reading for research.

**Criterion B Plan for study**

Most candidates achieved 2–3 marks in the sample. The plans for study were generally adequate. Some candidates were not linking the plan for study to the research question and rationale / preliminary research in a clear and progressive fashion.

**Criterion C Summary of significant findings**

Most candidates achieved between 3–4 marks in the sample. The most significant weakness lies in candidates not making strong links between the two earlier criteria and this one. This is due to candidates not fully understanding the methodology of research design.

**Criterion D Critical reflection and evaluation**

For many candidates in the sample this was the weakest criterion pointing to a lack of understanding of criticality and evaluation. This was often directly related to poor initial research questions. There was a wide variation in marks achieved. Teachers need to be clear as to exactly what is required in this criterion and communicate that to their candidates.

**Criterion E References and compliance with format**

Most candidates achieved 2–3 marks in the sample for this criterion but there was a tendency to over-rely on internet sources. Also, the academic quality of many sources was not strong enough and too many candidates' reference lists were brief, consisting of 3 or 4 citations. Candidates did not always cite interviews they had conducted.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates need to be made aware of the overall design of a short research project and how that differs from writing an essay. In this respect they should specifically be made aware of:

- What constitutes a good research question.
- The difference between preliminary research and reading around a subject.
- The protocols and methodology of interviewing.
- Presenting significant findings rather than just reporting on an interview or summarizing information obtained.
- How to write a critical evaluation.

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 50

### General comments

All candidates followed the rubric.

The best answers clearly and succinctly identified specific points in the answer, relating to the question set, which were each worthy of a mark.

There was evidence that some candidates did not read the demands of the question set carefully enough. Comments below indicate where there were some difficulties apparent in candidates' answers to the question set.

Generally, the level of performance was similar to the previous year.

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Some candidates need to read the questions set more carefully. Since the questions rely on close textual reading and relating that to specific concepts it is important they develop this skill rather than writing more descriptive answers. This applies more specifically to part (b) of each question. Some candidates' range of knowledge was limited and this meant that significant aspects of the answers were not directly addressed. Candidates also need to be aware of when terms are used figuratively in a passage as well as literally.

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Generally candidates were well prepared in relation to the Sikh, Christianity and Taoism questions. Overall, knowledge and understanding were adequate in relation to most questions set.

### The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

#### Question 1 Hinduism

Some candidates made reference to Brahman in part (a), which was inappropriate. In part (b) some candidates were not aware of the concept of avatar and misunderstood the phrase "I manifest myself on earth".

**Question 2 Buddhism**

In part (a) some candidates did not understand “the Tathagata only shows the way” as meaning that Buddhists have to follow the way for themselves.

**Question 3 Sikhism**

In part (b) candidates failed to mention that only God can bring about liberation.

**Question 4 Judaism**

In part (a) some candidates failed to demonstrate a figurative understanding of the phrase “in His image”.

**Question 5 Christianity**

In part (a) some candidates failed to demonstrate an understanding of “resurrection of the body” beyond the resurrection of Jesus and some candidates confused the terms “body” and “soul”.

**Question 6 Islam**

This question was generally not well answered. In part (a) candidates failed to address the importance of imagery in the term janna (Garden) as a depiction of Paradise in Islam. In part (b) answers were not sufficiently focused on Allah’s omnipotence, as opposed to his other qualities.

**Question 7 Taoism**

Generally speaking candidates answered with a sufficient understanding of the question in parts (a) and (b).

**Question 8 Jainism**

Few candidates answered this question. The answers were satisfactory.

**Question 9 Baha’i Faith**

In part (a) candidates encountered difficulty in the distinction of knowledge of the essence and knowledge of the qualities of a thing. In part (b) answers were of variable quality.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates need to be reminded of the need for focused answers to each question and the number of marks available. This will help them develop the technique of including relevant points in an economical way rather than writing more discursively at greater length. Candidates also need to be helped to develop the sort of textual reading that enables answers that show insight into the main concepts in the text to which the question refers. Effectively, this involves the development of candidates’ religious literacy as well as providing information.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 27	28 - 40

### General comments

All candidates followed the rubric.

As with the 2008 examination, distinctions in grades awarded clearly identified the difference between high quality answers that approached the question conceptually (grade 7) and answers that showed detailed knowledge and understanding (grade 6). More emphasis has to be placed on candidates gaining a conceptual awareness to achieve the highest grades.

As with the 2008 examination, there was a clear correlation between higher quality answers and candidates who showed the capacity to speak the language of the tradition in a precise fashion.

Few candidates answered open-ended questions, in contrast to last year. These questions were not well answered.

Again as with last year, some candidates used inappropriate terminology when referring to branches of a tradition, referring to them as sects.

Some candidates offered long answers that were not clearly focused on the demands of the question set in relation to higher skills such as analysis.

There was evidence that candidates lacked understanding of a socio-anthropological approach to the study of religion (see question 1 below) which limited their ability to answer the question set.

There was evidence that candidates sometimes lacked a coherent conceptual awareness of a religion (see question 2 below) which limited their ability to answer the question set.

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Some candidates showed a tendency to write without specific enough attention to the question set and provide general information on the religion in question, for which they received no marks. In some cases candidates found difficulty in relating the key concepts in the religion to the theme and practices which were the focus of the question. Where the concept was not sufficiently understood, as in some answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 candidates' views can be erroneous. In some cases candidates' answers revealed a lack of depth, detail and critical evaluation, for example, as in some answers to questions 5 and 6. Answers to the open-ended questions, 4 and 8, tended to lack rigour and critical discernment.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Some candidates appeared well-tutored in basic knowledge and understanding in core areas of the curriculum, this needs to be translated into the exercise of higher level skills and broader knowledge in relation to specific questions set.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

### **Question 1 Hinduism**

Candidates who answered this question lacked a knowledge of purity and pollution as it affected the everyday lives of Hindus in relation to the distinction between varna and jati. This proved to be a demanding question. This suggests that a broader understanding of approaches to religion is required by candidates.

### **Question 2 Buddhism**

Candidates who answered this question lacked the conceptual awareness of the religion required to obtain higher grades. There was a tendency to equate Buddhist concepts with more generic ones within the candidates' own cultural experience.

### **Question 3 Sikhism**

Candidates who answered this question lacked a sufficient understanding of the Sikh concept of "Guru".

### **Question 4 Open-ended question**

Few candidates answered this question. The answers given were not of high quality.

### **Question 5 Judaism**

This was generally a poorly answered question with candidates having little or no understanding of differing Jewish responses to the Holocaust. In one case the approach taken was un-academic and subjective.

### **Question 6 Christianity**

Responses to this question varied in quality. Some candidates did not fully recognize the demands of the question in relation to detail, evaluation and analysing the principles upon which different approaches to biblical interpretation were based.

### **Question 7 Islam**

Answers to this question lacked attention to the detail of the question set. The majority of answers were poor or mediocre.

**Question 8 Open-ended question**

Few candidates attempted this question. Responses were adequate but showed little critical reflection and often lacked detailed application of subject knowledge. One response based on Islam was misinformed.

**Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates**

This was the second year of examinations in the World Religions Pilot curriculum. Six schools were involved. The overall quality was lower than that for 2008 with fewer candidates achieving the higher grades, especially in relation to performance in paper 2. Too many candidates are not answering questions with a conceptual approach, signalling that a greater teaching and learning emphasis needs to be placed on religious literacy and worldview analysis. Teaching should emphasize the importance of understanding religious concepts specific to a particular religion on their own terms.

**Overall comments**

The new pilot curriculum based on conceptual understanding is making greater demands on both candidates and teachers. Teacher development has been undertaken in 2008–9, as in previous years. The results of the May 2009 examination suggest that this should continue with further emphasis on teaching and learning based upon the acquisition of conceptual understanding; incorporating a socio-anthropological approach and improving candidate performance in Internal Assessments by addressing the assessment criteria.