

Please read in conjunction with the information provided in the introductory section above.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES TEST SPECIFICATION

1 AIMS

The AEA in religious studies should require candidates to demonstrate a greater depth of understanding than required at advanced level and apply their understanding in critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

The award should encourage candidates to:

- acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of aspects of the varied and dynamic nature of religion;
- develop an understanding of the interrelationships between people and their beliefs and practices;
- acquire and apply skills necessary for the pursuit of the study of religion;
- clarify and develop their own values and attitudes in relation to the study of religion and to religious issues and questions;
- sustain their interest in and enjoyment of religious studies.

2 CONTENT

The AEA in religious studies will require candidates to demonstrate their abilities to apply and communicate effectively their understanding of aspects of the nature of religion.

Candidates will be required to:

- understand, evaluate and appreciate aspects of the nature of religion, using appropriate knowledge and conceptual frameworks;
- understand the connections between different elements of their study of religion and the contribution these make to understanding aspects of human experience;
- be aware of recent ideas and approaches in their chosen areas of study of religion;
- articulate independent opinions and judgements on the significance of various elements of religion, informed by knowledge and understanding of one or more areas of the study of religion;
- generate and synthesise these insights and apply knowledge gained from the Advanced GCE specification content.

3 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE

The AEA in religious studies will assess candidates' abilities to apply and communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding of religion using the skills of critical analysis, evaluation, creativity and synthesis.

4 SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

Supervision and duration of assessment

External assessment in religious studies is a single three-hour examination under controlled conditions. Up to 30 minutes can be allowed for reading. The examination will comprise two elements, equally weighted:

- close reading and understanding of textual material. It should include a range of unfamiliar texts from various contexts that have been selected to reflect the areas of study within the Advanced GCE specification for religious studies. It should facilitate comparisons and connections on broad themes related to the nature of religion that raise issues of debate or interpretation, allowing candidates to apply and communicate the knowledge, understanding and skills gained from their chosen areas of study of religion;
- one additional question from a choice reflecting the areas of study within the Advanced GCE specification for religious studies, which invite critical analysis, synthesis of information and ideas, and evaluation of fundamental issues raised in religious studies.

5 PERFORMANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Distinction

Candidates:

- deploy effectively a range of carefully selected, detailed, relevant and almost totally accurate knowledge of aspects of the nature of religion;
- demonstrate in depth a clear understanding of the connections between the areas they have studied and their contribution to and links with aspects of human experience;
- show a facility in clearly explaining the relevance of recent ideas, methods and approaches in the study of religion;
- evaluate competently and articulate insights and independent thought, using technical language and terminology naturally and accurately throughout their work;
- sustain an effective and perceptive analytical approach to issues concerning the nature of religion and synthesise ideas in coming to well-reasoned conclusions;
- show a very mature approach to the study of religion, with sophisticated, concise and elegant expression, construction and quality of language, which enables them to communicate with clarity and precision.

Merit

Candidates:

- deploy carefully selected, relevant and almost totally accurate knowledge of aspects of the nature of religion;
- demonstrate a clear understanding of the connections between the areas they have studied and their contributions to and links with aspects of human experience;
- show a broad awareness of recent ideas, methods and approaches in the study of religion;
- evaluate and articulate insights and independent thought, using technical language and terminology naturally and accurately throughout their work;
- analyse effectively issues concerning the nature of religion and can synthesise these coherently;
- show a maturity of approach to the study of religion, with sophisticated and elegant expression, construction and quality of language, which enables them to communicate with clarity and precision.