



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES: ROUTE B
GCSE (NEW)**

SUMMER 2018

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Component	Page
Component 1: Foundational Catholic Theology	1
Component 2: Applied Catholic Theology	6
Component 3: Judaism	9

RELIGIOUS STUDIES: ROUTE B

GCSE (NEW)

Summer 2018

COMPONENT 1: FOUNDATIONAL CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

General comments

This was the first year any candidates were entered for this new specification in Religious Studies. This new GCSE is clearly more demanding than the one it supersedes yet, despite much anxiety surrounding the reform, the response of candidates indicates that they have really risen to the challenge. The paper was clearly accessible and allowed a full range of marks for all questions.

Some candidates clearly found some questions more challenging than others (this will be explored below). Those candidates who struggled often did so because they were not prepared well enough for the specificity of some of the questions, particularly those that were dealing with topics or concepts which are new to GCSE Religious Studies. There will always be the possibility that some questions will focus specifically on particular named sources; teachers should ensure students are prepared for this possibility. Additionally, it is perhaps worth focusing on those topics or concepts which, because of their novelty, are unlikely to already be stored in their memory from Religious Education learning in earlier key stages. Remember if it's on the specification a question can be asked about it; indeed, at some point everything named in the specification will be examined.

At the same time, where students had been well prepared, the quality of responses indicates that across the full ability range candidates had engaged very well with the new content. It was impressive to see how many of them, again across the full range of abilities, were able to make connections between different areas of the specification in a way that showed a grasp of the coherence of each area of study. It was also pleasing to see the extent to which the assessment allowed the most able to fully demonstrate what they were capable of. The quality of some of the responses to the longer questions was stunning and unprecedented in the recent history of the public examination of Religious Studies.

General comments on question types

Definition questions (a)

Any response to these questions that is accurate and complete will gain the full 2 marks. For example if in response to the question on omnipotence, candidates had simply written "all-powerful" this would gain them full marks. There is no need to develop the definition or to provide an example, as long as the answer is accurate and complete. Often candidates gained the full two marks in their first few words or full sentence and spent more time than they needed to in answering these questions.

Describing questions (b)

For full marks candidates need to give full descriptions, including the use of subject specific vocabulary and a reference to a source. It is expected that candidates provide a paragraph length answer for these questions. One good reference to a source is sufficient to give access to the full range of marks. Also, in those questions where the questions ask candidates to describe a source, the use of sources is implicit in any response that accurately answers the question. It is worth noting that the b) questions that asked candidates to describe the contents of a specific source were often not as well answered as the other question types.

Explaining questions (c)

To gain the full range of marks, candidates needed to be able to give accurate descriptions and refer to relevant sources accurately. Without reference to sources, candidates were unable to access the higher bands. Answers that were purely descriptive rather than explanatory also meant that some candidates were writing lengthy answers that were not allowing access to the highest bands. Descriptions become explanations when the answer explains how a source influences a belief, or how a belief influences a behaviour.

Evaluation questions (d)

For access to the full range of marks, candidates needed to provide more than one point of view; demonstrate good knowledge and understanding; use relevant specialist vocabulary accurately; use sources to explain how beliefs arise and how these beliefs influence behaviour; evaluate the quality of arguments for different points of view; formulate a judgement. Answers were marked by finding the best-fit to the banded descriptors.

At level 5 (13-15 marks), students were writing evaluatively, using sources and specialist vocabulary to assess the quality of arguments and to arrive at a judgement. Some student responses were excellent explanations but they were not writing evaluatively or arriving at a judgement. Note, arriving at a judgement means that it must be possible for the examiner to identify which arguments the candidate thinks are strongest and (most importantly) why they think so. It can be done in a conclusion but does not need to be. Furthermore, just because a candidate had written a conclusion did not necessarily indicate that they had successfully formulated a judgement.

Finally, it was noticed by many examiners that candidates had been drilled to respond to these questions using writing scaffolds. These were frequently written in the margin or in a preceding plan. There is nothing wrong with using such frames but they are not guaranteed to produce answers that access the full range of marks. There is no magic structure that will help students to write evaluatively, since the quality is not dependent on the shape of the answer but on what students filled this shape with. Moreover, there were indications that sticking rigidly to such a structure may be beneficial for lower ability students but was sometimes hindering more able candidates. For example, many candidates had clearly been told to include non-religious worldviews in all evaluation answers. This worked well for the d) question in Origins and Meaning but often led to contrived responses to other questions where a non-religious response weakened the response over all. Candidates were not penalised for this but it did mean the quality of the argument was sometimes affected by the attempt to include a point of view that was not obviously relevant to the question. Writing good evaluative answers depends on teaching skills, not scaffolds.

Question Specific Comments

Origins and Meaning

Q1. (a) (i) What do Catholics mean by ‘omnipotence’?

All answers that were accurate and complete gained two marks, even those not written in full sentences. Two marks were awarded if the candidate included the phrase “all-powerful” in their answer. Indeed, if all they had written was “all-powerful” they would get full marks. Almost all candidates who attempted this answer gained full marks for it. Candidates who gained only one mark, tended to refer to God’s power without reference to its limitlessness.

A very few students muddled omnipotence with omniscience and were unfortunately unable to be credited with anything.

(ii) What do Catholics mean by ‘stewardship’?

All answers that were accurate and complete gained two marks, even those not written in full sentences. In case the key idea was the reference to the duty to care for creation/the world/the environment. Almost all candidates who attempted this answer gained full marks for it. Candidates gained only one mark if they referred to caring for something in general but did not refer to the environment.

(b) (i) Describe St Catherine of Siena's teaching about being made in the image of God.

This was the first very specific question that caused difficulty for those candidates who had not been prepared for specific questions on sources. Nevertheless full credit was given if a student was accurately able to describe St Catherine’s teaching without direct reference to the source. They could also gain some marks for a good generic answer on *imago Dei* that did not refer to any of the key ideas in the St Catherine source.

(ii) Describe what two of the symbols in the ‘Tree of Life’ apse mosaic in St Clemente in Rome represent.

This was another very specific question but almost all students answered this one very well. Two symbols were asked for and two needed to be described in order to gain access to the full range of marks. Up to three marks was awarded if only one symbol was described. Please note also that Alpha and Omega are one symbol, not two.

(c) (i) Explain from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism or two Christian traditions, teachings about the origins of the universe.

Most candidates compared Catholic beliefs about the origins of the universe with literalist accounts. If they were able to explain why these different Christian denominations disagreed about the origins of the universe by referring to sources they were able to access the full range of marks. Most candidates answered this question very well. Where candidates compared Christian and Jewish views the two parts of the answer tended to be similar. This is an inevitable feature of asking the question in this way and candidates were given full credit if the two perspectives were accurately explained even if this made the response repetitious. Some candidates including Catholicism, Christianity and Judaism. They were not penalised for doing so but it did tend to mean that each of the three was less well developed than if they had only given two perspectives as the question required.

(ii) Explain from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism or two Christian traditions, how the Bible is interpreted.

The expected response here was a contrast within Christianity but if a contrast with Judaism was made, credit was given. Many of the responses were repetitious but the question was not about the origins of the universe but was asking candidates to explain why different groups interpret the Bible differently. The key concept here was to compare their different views of the meaning of inspiration and what it meant for the Bible to be a revealed text and how this influenced how they read the scriptures. Candidates found this more difficult than the previous question as a rule but there were still many very good responses.

(d) ‘Only Humanists have a duty to care for the environment.’ Discuss.

In this question, candidates could not gain full marks if they did not include a non-religious worldview. However, the importance of this had clearly been well-drilled. Very, very few candidates made this error. This may also have been because the question specifically required them to refer to humanists. Answers were very broadly of two types: those that focused on the idea that ONLY humanists had a duty to care; and those that compared different points of view and how they interpreted their duty to care for the environment. Both approaches gained full access to the range of marks. This question was well answered by the majority of students.

Good and Evil

Q2. (a) **What do Catholics mean by ‘conscience’?**

As before, any answer that was complete and accurate gained two marks. To be a complete response it needed to refer to decision making and knowledge of right and wrong. Candidates gave a range of different ways these could be successfully put together into a fully creditworthy response. Most candidates gained full marks for this question.

(b) **Describe what St Augustine taught about the origin of evil.**

As before with St Catherine of Siena, if a candidate gave a good answer to the question of where evil comes from but had not covered St Augustine's ideas, some credit was still given. Fewer candidates were thrown by this question than by the Catherine of Siena question, perhaps because most teachers will have referred to St Augustine by name when using his arguments to address questions around the problem of evil.

(c) **Explain from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism or two Christian beliefs about the Incarnation.**

This proved a challenging question for some candidates. Christians don't have different views on the Incarnation, therefore credit was also given where a candidate had given two equally good explanations of Christian beliefs on the Incarnation, even if they were repetitious. At the same time, there were many superb answers to this question that drew on Jewish monotheistic beliefs and referred to the Shema as a reason for rejecting the Incarnation and the accompanying doctrine of the Trinity. Some candidates clearly did not know what was meant by “incarnation” as a concept. This was as surprise given how central this doctrine was to this unit of study.

(d) (i) **‘Suffering is not always evil.’**

This was the question that produced the best quality evaluative responses, perhaps due to its centrality to the unit of study or the simplicity of the question. Candidates often included non-religious worldviews in their response. In this case, their inclusion usually improved the quality of the answer, with many showing excellent knowledge and understanding of Hume, Mackie and Singer and the best candidates were able to provide quotations from these atheist thinkers. Equally, some students gave superb answers by referring to Christian and Jewish responses using Pope John Paul II's *Salvific Doloris* and the book of Job.

(ii) **‘Having statues in churches is against the Ten Commandments.’**

The vast majority of candidates coped with this question very well and clearly knew the commandments (not a surprise given that it is on the Judaism Component of this specification, which they will all have studied). Most were able to accurately cite the relevant commandment on the making of graven images. Most of the student responses to this question were excellent. Some students unfortunately misread the question as “status” not “statues”. Even if their answer to a question about status in the Church was a good one, it was difficult for students to gain any credit since they were not giving a response that related to the question.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES: ROUTE B

GCSE (NEW)

Summer 2018

COMPONENT 2: APPLIED CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

The general comments on this component do not differ significantly from the comments on Component 1. It was a paper that allowed access to the full range of marks for all candidates and it indicated that students had really risen to the challenge of this more demanding GCSE. For the important, generic comments on the different question types please see the Principal Examiner's report for Component 1: Foundational Catholic Theology. The generic comments on question types apply equally to both Components.

Life and Death

Q1. (a) What do Catholics mean by the 'Magisterium'?

Of all the a) questions across both components, this was the one candidates struggled with the most. It is a difficult word but it is clearly a requirement that candidates commit its meaning to memory in order to gain the marks for these simple knowledge recall questions. Any answer that was complete and accurate gained full marks. In this case "teaching authority of the Church as exercised by the Bishops and the Pope" was what was required. Full marks were given for accurately defining the term with reference to the teaching authority of the Church (even without reference to bishops and the Pope). Two marks were also given for defining it as the authority to interpret scripture and tradition. Only one mark was given for reference to the Bishops and Pope without reference to their teaching authority.

(b) Describe Catholic beliefs about the resurrection of the body.

Some candidates gave general responses about life after death without reference to the resurrection of the body as a distinctive Christian belief. Credit was still given for this but full access to the range of marks was not. Candidates could access the full range of marks if they described Jesus' resurrection or if they described the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body for all believers.

(c) Explain three features of a Catholic funeral rite

This question was very well answered on the whole. The question was looking specifically for reference to the rite, and not just to things that happen at about the time people have a funeral. So credit was given for explanations of the symbols or words used in the funeral rite, but not for the reception afterwards. Importantly, some candidates limited their response by only describing the rite, rather than explaining it. For the answer to move beyond description it needed to explain why certain actions are performed, symbols used or words said by referring either to beliefs about life after death or to the source that informs that belief.

(d) i) "Euthanasia is never acceptable." Discuss

As with the question on Component 1 that related to the problem of evil, this was the second question that reproduced the best responses from candidates, perhaps because teachers are very used to teaching euthanasia in an evaluative way. Candidates drew on a full range of

points of view: Catholic, Jewish and non-religious. Even though a non-religious perspective was not required in this part of the examination it usually added to the quality of the responses.

ii) “There is no such thing as purgatory.”

In contrast to the euthanasia question, candidates seemed to struggle with this question’s specificity. There were some good answers that were generic evaluations of beliefs about life after death. Credit was given for such responses, but if none of the arguments related to the question of purgatory specifically, then the marking was capped. It was difficult in this response for candidates to find relevant ways of showing how beliefs influence behaviour (although some of them managed it very well) but remember, influence can also refer to the influence of sources on beliefs, as well as beliefs on behaviour.

This was one of the questions where the scaffolds teachers had taught that required the inclusion of non-religious worldviews tripped candidates up. Atheists have no view on purgatory particularly so it was difficult for them to provide a relevant non-religious point of view on this question.

Purgatory is an obvious point of dispute between Catholics and other Christians and ought to have provided teachers with a good opportunity to explore the reasons for these different specific beliefs. It is also worth noting that many candidates had clearly been taught an erroneous view of the doctrine as some sort of second chance saloon, or a middle point from which those who died could either be demoted to hell or promoted to heaven, or as the place where those who are not good enough for heaven or bad enough for hell are sent. These are all false understandings of the doctrine: the Catholic belief is that those in purgatory are already saved but not yet purified: all those in purgatory are on their way to heaven. In Catholic understanding, with the exception of the saints, most will require the purifying experience of purgatory and even the very wicked can go to heaven if they repent before they die.

Sin and Forgiveness

Q2. (a) (i) What do Catholics mean by the 'Eucharist'?

Full marks were given for those candidates who defined Eucharist as “thanksgiving”, equally to those who referred to the body and blood of Christ. One mark was given for only referring to bread and wine. Most candidates gained full marks for this question.

(ii) What do Catholics mean by 'relativism'?

After the a) question on purgatory, this was the second least well answered a) question. Again, this is perhaps a new word for GCSE and teachers would do well to make sure the less familiar words in the glossary are well understood. However, most candidates who answered this question gained full marks for it.

- (b) (i) **Describe Pope John Paul II's teaching on capital punishment.**
This was another source specific question but of all these kinds of question, this one caused the fewest difficulties. Most candidates were able to accurately describe the teaching of John Paul II on capital punishment, and gained access to the full range of marks, even if they could not quote directly from *Evangelium Vitae*.
- (ii) **Describe Catholic teaching on the nature of the Church.**
This question was seeking a description of the four marks of the Church referred to in the specification . All four were not needed to access the full range of bands. Two fully explained were sufficient to gain access to the full range of marks. At least half of the candidates did not answer the question in this way but rather gave very good answers about the nature of the Church without reference to the four marks. For example, they described it as the body of Christ with reference to St Paul's analogy of the body in 1 Cor 12. They were given access to the full range of marks in this case. Some candidates gave answers that described church buildings and very limited marks were given for this.
- (c) (i) **Explain how Catholic beliefs about salvation influence the design of churches.**
This question was looking for an explicit connection between beliefs about salvation and how these are expressed in the architecture and internal features of a Church. This question was very well answered by most candidates. As with the St Clemente question, it suggests that students have been engaged by the new forms of expression part of the GCSE and it has remained in their memory.
- (ii) **Explain Catholic teaching about the importance of evangelisation.**
Along with the purgatory question, candidates found this a difficult question. Again, this is new terminology and some candidates did not know the meaning of the word. Other candidates described different ways of evangelising but did not explain why it was important. The best responses described what evangelisation is and explained why it is important by reference to the teachings of Jesus and Pope Francis.
- (d) **“A loving God would not condemn anyone to Hell.”**
Candidates generally took this question in one of two ways:
1. They disagreed with the concept of Hell because it's contrary to the love of God
 2. They questioned the coherence of God and the afterlife in general, and so rejected the idea of Hell in passing

The second of these responses gained a limited number of marks. The inclusion of non-religious worldviews here tended to add little to the answers. However, most candidates gave very accomplished responses to this question.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES:

GCSE (NEW)

Summer 2018

COMPONENT 3: OPTION 4 JUDAISM

This was the first year of this particular specification and therefore no comparisons with previous years' performances are available. The report should be read in conjunction with the mark scheme which contains the assessment criteria and indicative content for each question.

It was pleasing to see how many candidates had engaged with the exam paper and were able to apply relevant skills to the demands of each question. There were many examples of candidates high-lighting relevant key words in questions to help them focus on the demands of the question and also plan their timing for each unit to ensure the appropriate time is allowed for the final 'd' questions.

There were many pleasing aspects of candidates' responses. Of particular note was their recognition of the diversity of views held within Judaism. Virtually all candidates referred to differences between Orthodox and Reform with some candidates recognising the breadth of diversity within each tradition and making insightful references to Charedi and secular Jews. Such distinctions were often used in responses to question 2d demonstrating a sophisticated awareness of implications of diversity for Jewish identity. There were a few instances of references to 'reformed' Jews rather than Reform Jews. Some candidates made specific reference to 'observant' Jews making appropriate connections with how their observances of the Torah and Talmud impacted on their daily life.

Responses demonstrated an engagement with many of the issues of the specification. Candidates generally were very confident in their explanations of pikuach nefesh, mizvot and kashrut. Many relevant references were made to yetzer ha tov and yetzer ha ra and the importance of the shekhinah. Candidates wrote more accurately and confidently when the question was asking them to respond to an issue found only in Judaism e.g. kashrut; Pesach. Confusions arose when the issue or concept was relevant to both Judaism and Christianity e.g. Creation, the after-life and the Messiah. There was some considerable confusion regarding basic understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Despite some sophisticated 'd' type answers, the same candidates were expressing, in other responses, that Jesus was the Messiah Jews were waiting for; that at Pesach Jews expect Jesus to enter their homes and that the Shekhinah was the Holy Spirit. There were a minority of responses that used parables and the life of Jesus as evidence for particular questions. In question 1b some candidates considered they needed to write a comparison between Christianity and Judaism with some concluding that in Christianity God made the world better than God made it in Judaism. Nowhere in the paper are candidates required to make any reference to or comparisons with any religious traditions other than Judaism.

Many responses incorporated effective use of sources of authority. References were made to Maimonides; the beth din; Torah and Talmud with many candidates able to qualify their responses with references to different interpretations of the Torah and Talmud.

It was evident that many candidates had engaged with the concept of 'living Judaism' and there were examples of candidates relating their learning to contemporary situations such as mitzvah day, the role of the eruv, recent discussions regarding alleged political anti-Semitism and contemporary discussions regarding the preparation of kosher meat.

Demands of Questions

As the demands of each type of question are distinct it is appropriate for this first year of the specification to consider candidate performance in each type of question before scrutinising responses to individual questions.

- (a) These questions are always based on the key concepts for each unit. Candidates are required to give a definition of one of the key concepts for the unit. Generally these were answered well. Many candidates had appeared to have learnt a set definition while some wrote from their own understanding in their own words. Either is acceptable. Often candidates supported their definition with an example. It is important to remember that in addition to answering 'a' questions the use of key concepts can be credited, where used appropriately, as part of the criteria for 'b', 'c' and 'd' questions which require the use of 'religious/specialist terms'. This cross transference of knowledge was not always evident in candidates' responses.
- (b) These questions require candidates to select and then describe relevant information using specific religious language to respond to the question. For some candidates the length of their responses were in excess of the amount of marks awarded and this occasionally impacted on candidates being able to give 'd' questions the amount of time warranted and the ability to finish the paper. Candidates are expected to refer to a source of authority, where relevant. For some questions e.g. 1b, a reference to a sacred text might be more relevant than others. References to sources of authority do not need to be confined to sacred texts. Relevant sources of authority could include references to God; the Torah; beth din; rabbis; Talmud; Maimonides ; the prophets; conscience; family ; the Haggadah etc.
- (c) These questions require an explanation of a particular issue or concept important in Judaism. Within the explanation candidates are expected to use a range of appropriate specialist language including relevant key concepts and appropriate sources of authority. Candidates are not expected to make any judgements or evaluations but are expected to be able to explain rather than just describe.
- (d) These questions require an extended piece of writing and carry half the marks for each of the unit. It was pleasing to see that many of the candidates were aware that the response requires a quality of argument which incorporates selection of relevant evidence rather than an opportunity to 'describe all you know'. Many different structures were being used to support candidates' answers and there was evidence of planning, including the use of mind-maps, in preparation for the responses. It is important that if a formulaic structure is used, that candidates don't write to the formula and ignore the demands of the questions. Candidates are not expected to make reference to any other religious or non-religious traditions in their response in addition to Judaism.

Many responses included analysis and judgement although they were often underdeveloped. This was particularly the case when candidates had focussed on breadth of content rather than depth of argument and analysis. There is no set formula for the demonstration of these skills. Some candidates began each paragraph with a connection to the preceding argument e.g. 'Further evidence for this argument would be' or 'On the other hand some Orthodox Jews would consider this contradictory because...'. Some candidates made reference to each point in terms of it being a perceived strong or weak argument. For this to be creditworthy an explanation must be given as to **why** it would be considered a weak or strong argument rather than a reiteration of the point made. There were some excellent responses in which candidates had selected three or four areas for discussion and used those as a foundation for their argument and analysis.

Specific Question Analysis

- Q1. (a) This was very well answered with most candidates being able to define how a covenant is an agreement with an appropriate example.
- (b) Most candidates engaged with the question but sometimes responses were limited to a narrative of the Creation story in Genesis. It was pleasing to read the responses which recognised God's ongoing role as Creator as evidenced through the celebration of Shabbat and Rosh Hashanah. Some candidates gave an involved discussion regarding literal and non-literal interpretations of the Creation story. Such responses sometimes strayed from the demands of the question about beliefs of God as Creator. The question asked for a description about Jewish beliefs about God as Creator but some candidates continued their description with reference to Christian beliefs. Such further responses gained no extra credit
- (c) Most candidates were able to offer some of the different beliefs about the Messiah with a significant minority recognising that for many Jews beliefs about the Messiah are not a key focus of the religion. Answers were particularly effective when they began with this context before going on to explain some of the many beliefs. Some candidates made reference to teachings of the Tenakh but some interpretations of passages are not common in Jewish belief and reflected Christian understanding of the Messiah. A significant minority explained that Jews were waiting for the Messiah but that the role would be fulfilled by a second coming of Jesus. There were a significant number of responses which made appropriate reference to the teachings of Maimonides and the differences between Orthodox and Reform interpretations.
- (d) The question required analysis and evaluation regarding the importance of the afterlife in Jewish belief. It was unfortunate that some candidates limited their responses to an explanation of Jewish belief regarding the afterlife, instead of an evaluative discussion. There were, however, some excellent responses to this question with candidates referring to the emphasis within Judaism on current life and fulfilling the mitvot. Many candidates applied relevant knowledge from the specification as part of their argument e.g. judgement and Rosh Hashanah; the importance of pikuach nefesh; reference to funeral rites and wording of prayers such as the Amidah. References to beliefs about the after-life in Christianity and non-religious traditions were not creditworthy.

- Q2. (a) Candidates could describe the Torah (as in the first five books of Moses) or the sefer Torah/Torah scroll (as used in worship in the synagogue). Most candidates made reference to the first five books of Moses with some naming them (or at least those they could remember). A minority confused the Torah with the Siddur or prayer book. More candidates failed to respond to this question than 1a and it was evident that many candidates were unclear regarding the relationship with the Torah and the Bible.
- (b) Some candidates limited their answer to descriptions of the seder meal with little or no recognition of the importance of the removal of Chametz and the role of the synagogue. It was disappointing that few candidates referred to the Haggadah and important celebrations such as the asking of the four questions. A minority of candidates referred to an empty plate and the door being left open for Jesus to return! Some candidates seemed unsure of what Pesach was and either failed to answer the question or wrote about Succoth or Rosh Hashanah.
- (c) The majority of candidates engaged with this question, applying their knowledge and understanding from the specification. Some candidates began their response effectively with a generic statement regarding the importance of the home for worship and values or as a place of sanctuary and peace. They then continued to explain two or three particular examples such as Shabbat; keeping Kashrut; the placing of the mezuzah cases; festivals or initiation rites.
- Many candidates used a comprehensive range of religious language to explain the importance of the mezuzah; kosher kitchens; brit milah; sitting shiva and celebration of festivals. It was evident that candidates had engaged with their learning about the mezuzah although descriptions reflected a misunderstanding regarding what they looked like and what was in them. Some referred to the Bible being inserted in them. There were some confusion regarding the mezuzah and tefillin.
- A minority of responses were very general with explanations limited to the importance of the home for security with no application of areas they had learnt from the specification as a whole.
- Q2 (d) Although this was the final question it was disappointing to note the number of candidates who did not attempt a response. For a minority it was evident that they had mis-timed their previous responses and ran out of exam time.
- The vast majority of responses recognised what was meant by 'keeping kosher' with a number beginning their analysis by referring to kosher not just being about dietary rules and regulations. Candidates were well informed about kosher diets. They recognised the differences between Orthodox and Reform; were able to refer to Leviticus; discussed the role of ritual slaughter and also the importance of other important features of Judaism, especially Pikuach Nefesh. It was unfortunate that their understanding was often not expressed in terms of an analysis to respond to the question. Sometimes candidates wrote a significant response focussing on whether Jews should keep kashrut but failed to focus any discussion regarding whether Jews **have to** keep kosher to be Jewish. There were, however, some very sophisticated and insightful responses with thorough consideration of the question. Such responses analysed the importance of keeping kosher in comparison to keeping the ten duties or commandments; being born of a Jewish mother and, most frequently, references to Pikuach Nefesh.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk