

Study of Religion General Senior Syllabus 2019 v1.2

Subject report 2020

February 2021

ISBN

Electronic version: 978-1-74378-115-9



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Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Background | 2 |
| Purpose | 2 |
| Audience and use | 2 |
| Report preparation | 2 |
| Subject data summary | 3 |
| Subject enrolments | 3 |
| Units 1 and 2 results | 3 |
| Units 3 and 4 internal assessment results | 3 |
| Total results for internal assessment | 3 |
| IA1 results | 4 |
| IA2 results | 5 |
| IA3 results | 6 |
| Units 3 and 4 external assessment results | 6 |
| Final standards allocation | 6 |
| Grade boundaries | 6 |
| Internal assessment | 7 |
| Endorsement | 7 |
| Confirmation | 7 |
| Internal assessment 1 (IA1) | 8 |
| Examination — extended response (25%) | 8 |
| Assessment design | 8 |
| Assessment decisions | 10 |
| Internal assessment 2 (IA2) | 14 |
| Investigation — inquiry response (25%) | 14 |
| Assessment design | 14 |
| Assessment decisions | 15 |
| Internal assessment 3 (IA3) | 20 |
| Investigation — inquiry response (25%) | 20 |
| Assessment design | 20 |
| External assessment | 22 |
| Examination — short response (25%) | 22 |
| Assessment design | 22 |
| Assessment decisions | 23 |

Introduction

The first summative year for the new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system was unexpectedly challenging. The demands of delivering new assessment requirements and processes were amplified by disruptions to senior schooling arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant the new system was forced to adapt before it had been introduced — the number of summative internal assessments was reduced from three to two in all General subjects. Schools and the QCAA worked together to implement the new assessment processes and the 2020 Year 12 cohort received accurate and reliable subject results.

Queensland's innovative new senior assessment system combines the flexibility and authenticity of school-based assessment, developed and marked by classroom teachers, with the rigour and consistency of external assessment set and marked by QCAA-trained assessment writers and markers. The system does not privilege one form of assessment over another, and both teachers and QCAA assessors share the role of making high-stakes judgments about the achievement of students. Our commitment to rigorous external quality assurance guarantees the reliability of both internal and external assessment outcomes.

Using evidence of student learning to make judgments on student achievement is just one purpose of assessment. In a sophisticated assessment system, it is also used by teachers to inform pedagogy and by students to monitor and reflect on their progress.

This post-cycle report on the summative assessment program is not simply being produced as a matter of record. It is intended that it will play an active role in future assessment cycles by providing observations and findings in a way that is meaningful and helpful to support the teaching and learning process, provide future students with guidance to support their preparations for summative assessment, and promote transparency and accountability in the broader education community. Reflection and research are necessary for the new system to achieve stability and to continue to evolve. The annual subject report is a key medium for making it accessible to schools and others.

Background

Purpose

The annual subject report is an analysis of the previous year's full summative assessment cycle. This includes endorsement of summative internal assessment instruments, confirmation of internal assessment marks and external assessment.

The report provides an overview of the key outcomes of one full teaching, learning and assessment cycle for each subject, including:

- information about the application of the syllabus objectives through the design and marking of internal and external assessments
- information about the patterns of student achievement in each subject for the assessment cycle.

It also provides advice to schools to promote continuous improvement, including:

- identification of effective practices in the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessments
- identification of areas for improvement and recommendations to enhance the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessment instruments
- provision of tangible examples of best practice where relevant, possible and appropriate.

Audience and use

This report should be read by school leaders, subject leaders and teachers to inform teaching and learning and assessment preparation. The report is to be used by schools and teachers to assist in assessment design practice, in making assessment decisions and in preparing students for external assessment.

The report is publicly available to promote transparency and accountability. Students, parents, community members and other education stakeholders can learn about the assessment practices and outcomes for General subjects (including alternative sequences and Senior External Examination subjects, where relevant) and General (Extension) subjects.

Report preparation

The report includes analyses of data and other information from the processes of endorsement, confirmation and external assessment, and advice from the chief confirmer, chief endorser and chief marker, developed in consultation with and support from QCAA subject matter experts.

Subject data summary

Subject enrolments

Number of schools offering the subject: 88.

| Completion of units | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Units 3 and 4* |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Number of students completed | 3291 | 3332 | 3370 |

*Units 3 and 4 figure includes students who were not rated.

Units 1 and 2 results

| Number of students | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Not rated |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|
| Unit 1 | 3195 | 89 | 7 |
| Unit 2 | 3234 | 93 | 5 |

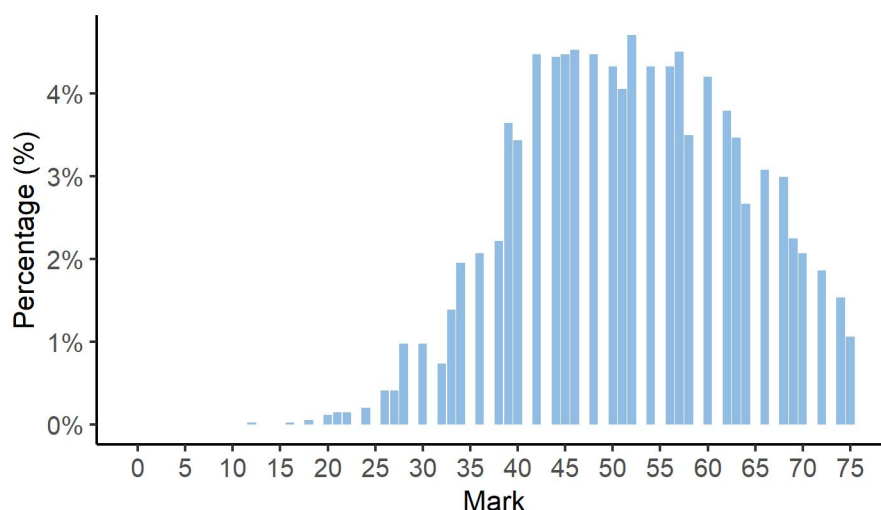
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment results

2020 COVID-19 adjustments

To support Queensland schools, teachers and students to manage learning and assessment during the evolving COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the QCAA Board approved the removal of one internal assessment for students completing Units 3 and 4 in General and Applied subjects.

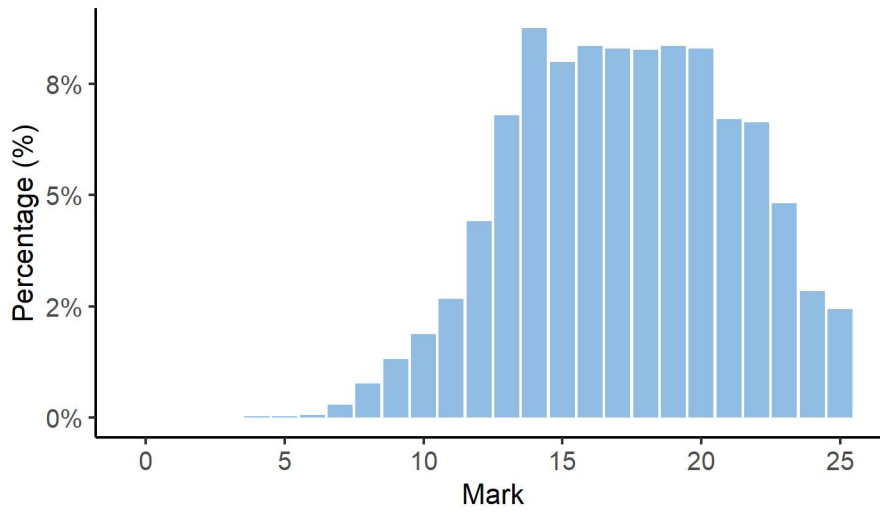
In General subjects, students completed two internal assessments and an external assessment. Schools made decisions based on QCAA advice and their school context. Therefore, across the state some instruments were completed by most schools, some completed by fewer schools and others completed by few or no schools. In the case of the latter, the data and information for these instruments has not been included.

Total results for internal assessment

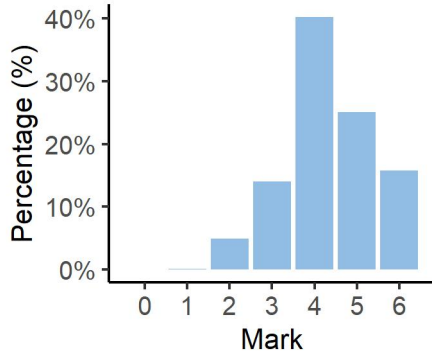


IA1 results

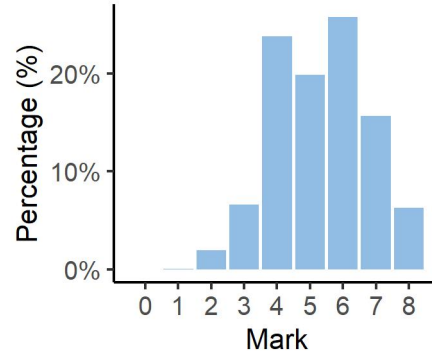
IA1 total



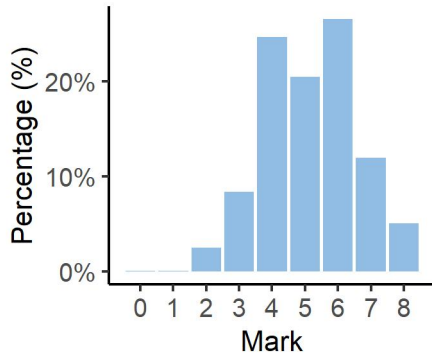
IA1 Criterion 1



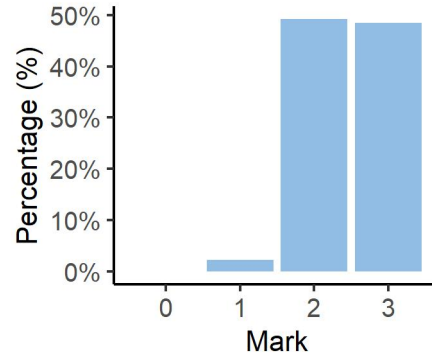
IA1 Criterion 2



IA1 Criterion 3

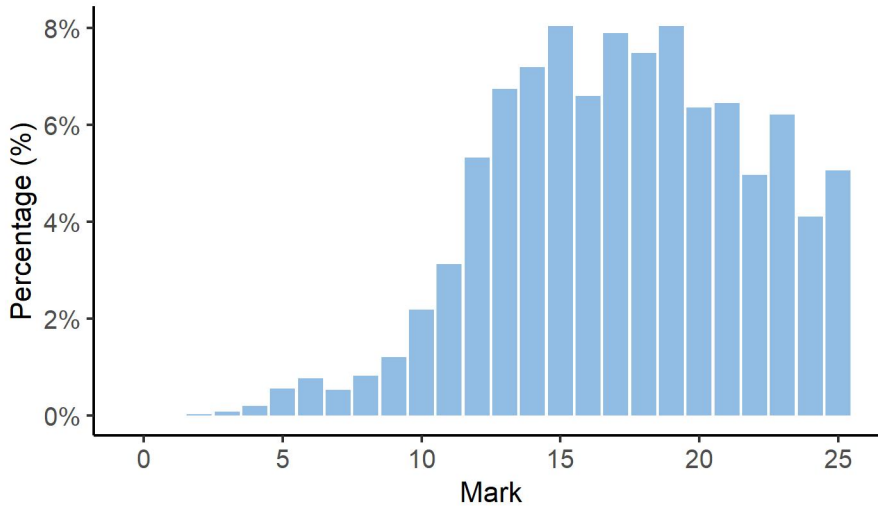


IA1 Criterion 4

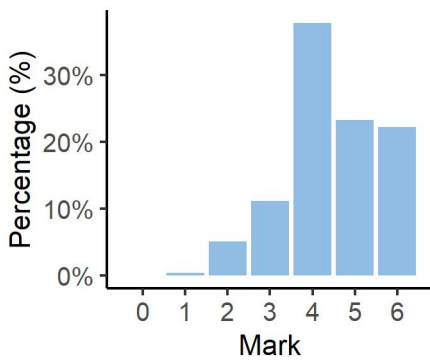


IA2 results

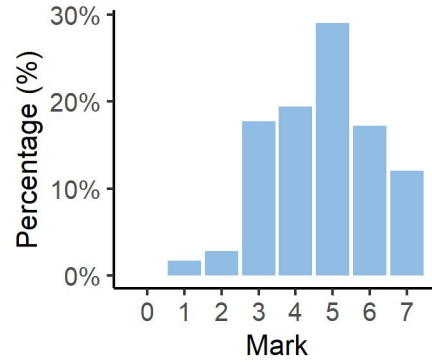
IA2 total



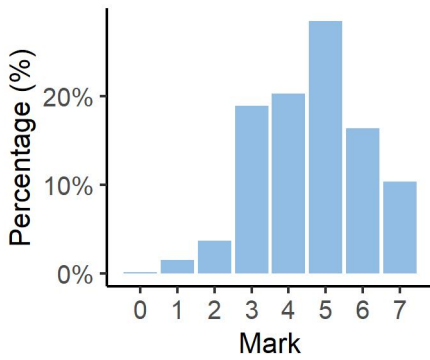
IA2 Criterion 1



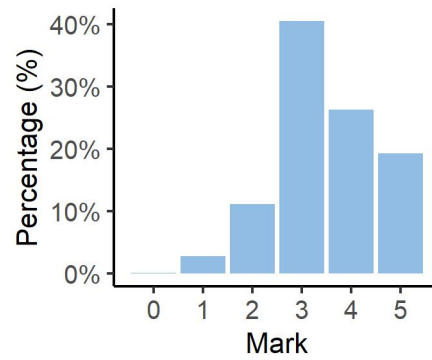
IA2 Criterion 2



IA2 Criterion 3



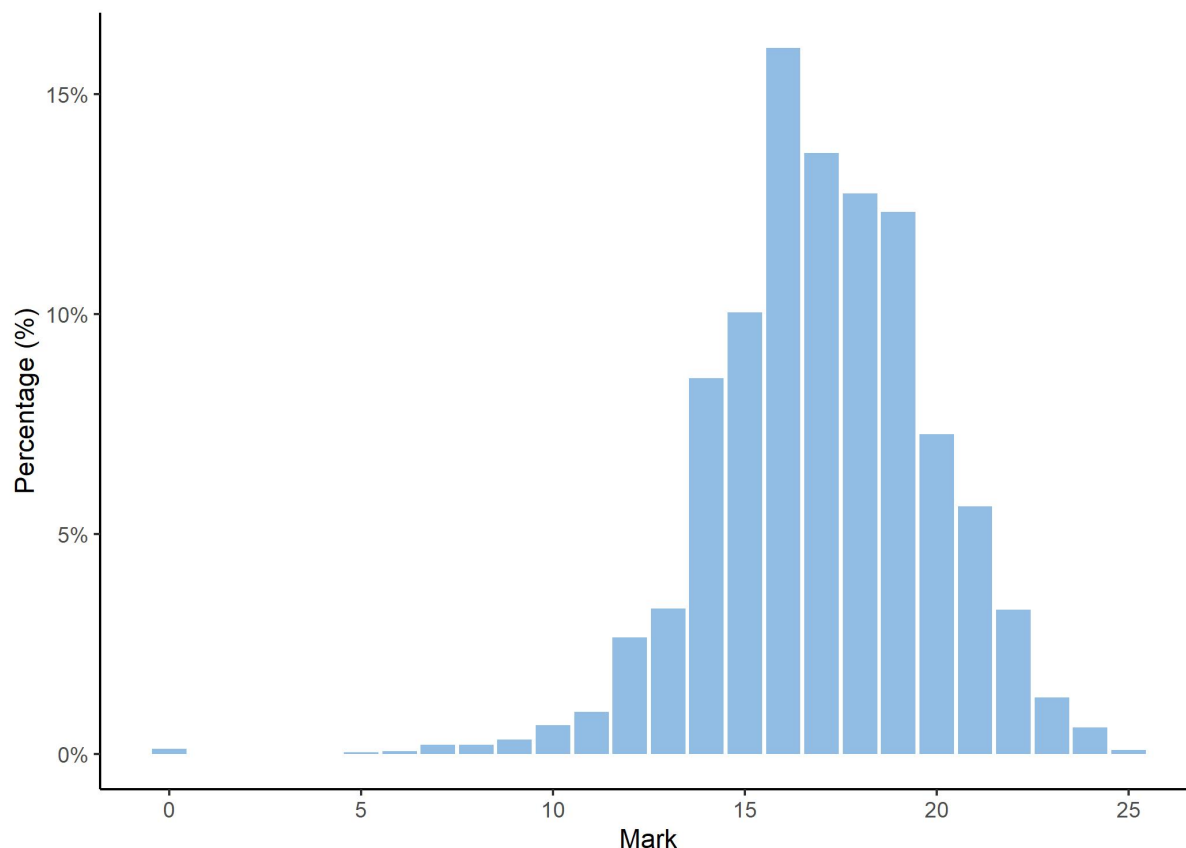
IA2 Criterion 4



IA3 results

Due to COVID-19 pandemic adjustments, there were insufficient student responses to this instrument to provide useful analytics.

External assessment results



Final standards allocation

The number of students awarded each standard across the state are as follows.

| Standard | A | B | C | D | E |
|--------------------|-----|------|-----|----|---|
| Number of students | 819 | 1693 | 789 | 56 | 0 |

Grade boundaries

The grade boundaries are determined using a process to compare results on a numeric scale to the reporting standards.

| Standard | A | B | C | D | E |
|----------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Marks achieved | 100–80 | 79–60 | 59–42 | 41–18 | 17–0 |

Internal assessment

The following information and advice pertain to the assessment design and assessment decisions for each IA in Units 3 and 4. These instruments have undergone quality assurance processes informed by the attributes of quality assessment (validity, accessibility and reliability).

Endorsement

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. These attributes are categorised further as priorities for assessment and each priority can be further broken down into assessment practices. Data presented in the assessment design sections identifies the reasons why IA instruments were not endorsed at Application 1, by the priority for assessments. An IA may have been identified more than once for a priority for assessment, e.g. it may have demonstrated a misalignment to both subject matter and to the assessment objective. Refer to the quality assurance for detailed information about the assessment practices for each assessment instrument.

Total number of items endorsed in Application 1

| Number of items submitted each event | IA1 | IA2 | IA3 |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Total number of instruments | 89 | 89 | 89 |
| Percentage endorsed in Application 1 | 70 | 46 | 30 |

Confirmation

Confirmation is the quality assurance process based on the attribute of reliability. Teachers make judgments about the evidence in students' responses using the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) to indicate the alignment of students' work with performance-level descriptors and determine a mark for each criterion. These are provisional criterion marks. The QCAA makes the final decision about student results through the confirmation processes. Data presented in the assessment decisions section identifies the level of agreement between provisional and final results.

Number of samples reviewed at initial, supplementary and extraordinary review

| IA | Number of schools | Number of samples requested | Supplementary samples requested | Extraordinary review | School review | Percentage agreement with provisional |
|----|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | 88 | 593 | 83 | 26 | 12 | 97.1 |
| 2 | 88 | 631 | 190 | 22 | 17 | 97.18 |

Internal assessment 1 (IA1)

Examination — extended response (25%)

The focus of the technique is one of the social–ethical issues identified in Unit 3 Topic 1 and the religious–ethical responses of two world religions to this issue. The examination assesses a range of cognitions to a provided question, scenario and/or problem by using unseen stimulus material. The assessment requires students to demonstrate analysis of perspectives from two of the major world religions that form and inform religious–ethical responses to a social–ethical issue, and evaluate and draw conclusions about the significance of religious–ethical stances made by adherents to a social–ethical issue.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment — validity practices

| Validity priority | Number of times priority was identified in decisions* |
|-------------------|---|
| Alignment | 12 |
| Authentication | 0 |
| Authenticity | 1 |
| Item construction | 6 |
| Scope and scale | 11 |

*Total number of submissions: 89. Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that featured:

- alignment to the syllabus specifications for this technique that were explicit in the task instructions. This includes directing students to use the stimulus material in their response
- stimulus items that conformed to the syllabus specifications in that they were related to the two world religions nominated as well as the identified social–ethical issue from Unit 3 Topic 1.
- stimulus that provided sufficient specificity within and across religious traditions to enable students to demonstrate the upper performance level descriptor of Differentiating and analysing
- an opportunity for students to demonstrate the required assessable objectives and performance-level descriptors of the ISMG. In particular, the Evaluate and draw conclusions objective about the significance of religious–ethical stances made by adherents to a social–ethical issue.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- identify a social–ethical issue from the list in the Unit 3 Topic 1 syllabus subject matter: asylum seekers, capital punishment, employment and work, environment, refugees, slavery, war. However, once the social–ethical issue has been identified, it is possible to narrow the scope of the task to direct students to particular contexts or aspects of the issue. For example, the social impact of climate change is an aspect of the environment as a social–ethical issue or human trafficking within a particular place and time falls within the social–ethical issue of slavery
- provide a variety of relevant stimulus materials that include written and visual texts to allow students to demonstrate their own understanding of the ways the two world religions inform ethical decision-making about the chosen social–ethical issue. For example, stimulus to support a question on the social–ethical issue of capital punishment might include a written extract from a sacred text about forgiveness, a graph of the socio-economic status of death-row inmates, a political cartoon about the issue or an extract from a magazine about capital punishment
- include a succinct set of stimulus material that allows students to demonstrate the full range of performance-level descriptors within the conditions of time and word length.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment — accessibility practices

| Accessibility priority | Number of times priority was identified in decisions* |
|------------------------|---|
| Transparency | 1 |
| Language | 1 |
| Layout | 0 |
| Bias avoidance | 0 |

*Total number of submissions: 89. Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that featured:

- clear instructions that consistently used terminology from the objectives and ISMGs so that students had no doubt about what cognitions must be demonstrated in the response. This was evident in tasks that outlined the cognitions required in the response, e.g. describe, demonstrate understanding, differentiate, analyse perspectives, evaluate and draw conclusions, and create an analytical essay
- language that was free from confusing jargon and tautology. There was a consistency in the language so that students could identify the social–ethical issue and the objectives being assessed in the task. For example, consistently only using the term ‘capital punishment’ to describe the social–ethical issue across the paper rather than using other terminology interchangeably, such as ‘death penalty’.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- include stimulus material that does not contain distractors, but rather focuses clearly on either the two world religions or the social–ethical issue. Stimulus material, while unfamiliar, should be able to be used in the response. That is, it should enable students to demonstrate their own knowledge using the ideas or concepts in the stimulus. For example, including a visual text that does not provide information related to either of the two world religions or the social–ethical issue could lead students to spend unwarranted time trying to use the stimulus in the response.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and final results

| Criterion number | Criterion name | Percentage agreement with provisional | Percentage less than provisional | Percentage greater than provisional |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Describing and demonstrating understanding | 97.29 | 2.53 | 0.18 |
| 2 | Differentiating and analysing | 96.2 | 3.62 | 0.18 |
| 3 | Evaluating and drawing conclusions | 96.67 | 3.21 | 0.12 |
| 4 | Creating | 98.23 | 0.29 | 1.47 |

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- making judgments about the Describing and demonstrating understanding criterion there was a clear understanding of the characteristics and qualifiers in the performance-level descriptors at different performance levels. For example, at the upper performance level a response includes *detailed* identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response, that is, they demonstrate attention to the fine points of the religious teachings to explain the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response. The syllabus glossary defines key qualifiers
- in the Creating criterion there was a clear understanding of the importance of the question or hypothesis as a driving element in the response. The upper and mid performance-level descriptors for this criterion both include the requirement for ideas or arguments to be related to the question or hypothesis, with the upper performance-level descriptor including the additional qualifiers of *succinctness* and *logic* in the response.

Sample of effective practices

The following is an excerpt from a response that illustrates the characteristics for the criterion at the performance level indicated. The sample may provide evidence of more than one criterion. The characteristics highlighted may not be the only time the characteristics have occurred throughout the response.

Demonstrating and describing understanding (5–6 marks)

- distinguishing features of religious traditions that inform religious ethics are correctly identified, comprehensive and relevant
- detailed explanations of the ways in which the two religious traditions inform ethical decision-making processes
- inaccuracies within explanations are not significant to the response

Within Hinduism, there is little doctrine which explicitly outlines how Hindus ought to act in response to ethical dilemmas. In regards to the asylum seeker crisis, it is therefore difficult to provide a definitive ethical response of all Hindus. However, through core beliefs, rituals and religious writings ^{it can be seen that} of the religion, Hindus are encouraged to ^{demonstrate} show compassion towards asylum seekers.

One of the core beliefs of Hinduism is the pursuit of social and universal ^{which is achieved} harmony through maintaining good karma and balance within society. ✓

As a result, as seen in source 3, 'hospitality is fundamental to Hindu culture' ✓ ~~of Hindu~~ with neglecting the needs of others believed to incur many sins (the Heart of Hinduism). ✓

Many Hindus would therefore be inclined to provide care for asylum seekers, not wanting to create bad karma, which is believe to disrupt balance in society affect the future lives of an individual. ✓ This compassionate response is further supported through various Hindu ^{stories} which demonstrate hospitality.

being offered to those in need. An example of this is the Ramayana, which is a fairly universal Hindu text. The Ramayana is an epic, which tells the story of Sita's kidnapping and during the story, Sita takes pity on a begger. Being an exemplar of the ideal qualities of a Hindu woman, Sita acts as a guide for how Hindus ought to respond to those who are in need. However, this is not a duty for all Hindus as the concept of Dharma teaches Hindus that they have a specific role in society and which they are always required to uphold. As a result, if a certain group in society is not required to demonstrate care towards asylum seekers or respond in a certain way to other ethical decisions, they will be less inclined to do so, prioritising their Dharma. This belief has a large influence upon the ethical-decision making of Hindus and thus, although ~~para~~ despite encouragement from within the religion to show compassion to asylum seekers, the core belief of Dharma means for many it is not a requirement.

In the case of Islam, ethical frameworks are much more explicit, being clearly outlined in many religious writings. When responding to asylum seekers, Muslims are required to extend protection and care, which is a response inferred by the rituals, core beliefs and sacred writings of the religion. Within Islam there are a number of rituals which reflect this including Hajj (pilgrimage) and Sawm (fasting) which are two of the five pillars of Islam. These rituals allow Muslims to experience a sense of hardship and provide them with an understanding of the needs of the less fortunate. Charitable giving is also quite significant within Islam, with rituals such as Zakat (alms) and Aqiqah, a birth ritual where a baby's head is shaved and the weight of the hair in silver is donated to the poor, reflecting the Islamic consciousness of the needs of the less fortunate.

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG in this IA, it is recommended that:

- when making judgments for the first descriptor in the Differentiating and analysing criterion, teachers note that at the upper performance level *thorough* and *accurate* differentiation requires not only precise and exact identification of the differences between the two world religions, but also must include all that is required to determine what makes them distinct from each other

- consideration is given to the qualifiers for the second descriptor in the Differentiating and analysing criterion regarding the analysis of perspectives from the two major world religions. The upper performance-level descriptor requires that the analysis is logically thought out and presented with justification, while the 5–6 performance-level descriptor requires that the analysis is *considered* or formed after careful thought. This means that broad generalisations about religious perspectives cannot be awarded this descriptor, but rather match the descriptor of *some* analysis of perspectives from two major world religions
- the third descriptor in the Differentiating and analysing criterion refers to the use of stimulus. When students apply their knowledge of religious teachings to the stimulus, they are able to make effective use of the stimulus in their responses.

Internal assessment 2 (IA2)

Investigation — inquiry response (25%)

This assessment is an investigation into a specific contemporary ethical issue identified in Unit 3 Topic 2: Ethical relationships. The assessment requires students to analyse the perspective of one of the five major world religions to the contemporary ethical issue, and evaluate and draw conclusions about the influence of religious ethics on an adherent's response to the issue. Students investigate the chosen issue and devise their own hypothesis, which forms the basis of their analytical essay.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment — validity practices

| Validity priority | Number of times priority was identified in decisions* |
|-------------------|---|
| Alignment | 45 |
| Authentication | 0 |
| Authenticity | 4 |
| Item construction | 1 |
| Scope and scale | 0 |

*Total number of submissions: 89. Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that featured:

- a relevant context that identified the subject matter from the topic that has been taught, and provided a clear overview and framework for the assessment task. For example, the context established that students had examined the ethical teachings of a world religion and considered the diverse perspectives across religious traditions within that world religion before beginning their investigation, thereby drawing on the subject matter of Unit 3 Topic 2 and specifying to the chosen world religion
- an explicit statement of the response genre that aligned to the syllabus specifications
- a task of appropriate scale that specifies the world religion. The student investigation represents approximately 15 hours of the time allocated to this topic. Teaching and learning can focus on developing understandings about the nominated world religion before students engage with the assessment and begin their own more focused investigation
- the specific contemporary ethical issues from Unit 3 Topic 2: beginning and end of life, body image, interpersonal conflict, medical technologies and substance abuse. Schools often extended the list of examples to include more options that fit within the contemporary ethical issues specified in the syllabus, e.g. interpersonal conflict, such as domestic violence, cyberbullying, discrimination.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- develop scaffolding that aligns with the requirements from the specifications and assessment objectives to be demonstrated, rather than subject matter to be covered in the response. These could be simple statements such as 'in consultation with your teacher, devise your own hypothesis about the influence of Hindu ethics on an adherent's response to your chosen contemporary ethical issue'.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment — accessibility practices

| Accessibility priority | Number of times priority was identified in decisions* |
|------------------------|---|
| Transparency | 0 |
| Language | 1 |
| Layout | 0 |
| Bias avoidance | 0 |

*Total number of submissions: 89. Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that featured:

- appropriate use of the sections provided in the Endorsement application (context, task, authentication strategies and scaffolding).

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- have clear and consistent instructions using language from the syllabus so that students understand what is required in a response. This includes removing instructions about teaching and learning strategies such as the use of research booklets or annotated bibliographies as these are not assessed.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and final results

| Criterion number | Criterion name | Percentage agreement with provisional | Percentage less than provisional | Percentage greater than provisional |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Demonstrating understanding | 97.48 | 2.49 | 0.03 |
| 2 | Analysing | 95.2 | 4.65 | 0.15 |
| 3 | Evaluating and drawing conclusions | 96.89 | 3.11 | 0 |
| 4 | Considering, organising and creating | 99.14 | 0.24 | 0.62 |

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- making judgments about the Demonstrating understanding criterion, there was a clear understanding of the characteristics and qualifiers used in the performance-level descriptors at each different performance level. *Thorough* understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected includes all that is required to explain the ways in which the religion informs adherents. The syllabus glossary defines key qualifiers
- for the Considering, organising and creating criterion, there was an understanding that the cognitions in the descriptors focus on use of sources, conveying ideas and arguments, and adhering to, or following, genre, language and referencing conventions.

Sample of effective practices

The following is an excerpt from a response that illustrates the characteristics for the criterion at the performance level indicated. The sample may provide evidence of more than one criterion. The characteristics highlighted may not be the only time the characteristics have occurred throughout the response.

Demonstrating understanding (5–6 marks)

This response demonstrates:

- thorough understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected
- detailed identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response
- consistently accurate identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response.

Please note student samples have not been corrected for spelling or grammar.

Traditions within Buddhism, form and inform religious-ethical principles, to which an adherent is influenced in response to a contemporary ethical issue; eating disorders. Perspectives in this religion shape the approaches taken by followers to understand the significance of teachings in their individual lives to prevent and end suffering. As an important aspect, Buddhists recognise practical life in expression to 'The Middle Way'. With this, a sense of self-identity, or 'Nonself', is created in terms of the likeness to what is required and expected of a believer ("The Four Noble Truths", 2009). Body image is then depicted as an internal association to which many ideas are moulded in essence to religious foundations. Key philosophies embedded throughout Buddhism embrace the connection between the physicality and the spirituality of a person as they move from a state of suffering to ease. Overall, certain Buddhist conventions underpin the methods taken by adherents as they respond to the subject of body image in relation to eating disorders.

"In Buddhism, it is said that the illusion of a self is the source of all suffering" (Rabgye, 2018). Identity is an everchanging, impermeant part of each human. Consequently, the concept of persona is but a configuration of interactions between the inner and outer connections of an individual (Rabgye, 2018). Mental formations, in respect to body image, invite the idea of a person only fitting one certain phenomenon, however, in Buddhism, it is expressed that there is no self at all. And therefore, identity relies in the nonattachment to physicality and the separation between the body and the mind (Rabgye, 2018). This is known as "Anatta" in Buddhism and is described as the idea that a person is more than their personality or 'self' which in turn allows adherents to discover that their worth does not rely on their physical appearance ("Anatta", 2020). This influences an individual's ethical decision-making process

so they may avoid eating disorders (and suffering) as a whole from the very beginning by using these traditions for the better of themselves. Correspondingly, ‘The Three Universal Characteristics of Existence’ provide essential knowledge needed to go about daily life (“What is Buddhism”, 2011). Anitya (impermanence); all things change and transform. Dukkha (suffering); nothing in reality is faultless, there will always be stages of boredom and unhappiness. Anatman (no self); humans are made up of only thoughts, feelings, ideas, body, and awareness (“What is Buddhism”, 2011). With these ethical principles, adherents then utilise their perspectives on themselves and their lives to respond to their potential eating disorder issue, to then take approaches towards a healthier lifestyle.

The distinctiveness of an individual is discovered subjectively and in return, all existence is accordingly rid of any considerable reality (Wayne, 2016). To combat suffering, ‘The Middle Path’ is a notion in Buddhism that expresses the evasion of two ends of extremes (Bajzelj, 2017). The resistance to endure immoderate self-indulgence results in the comfortability and balanced life of an individual. Sound mental beliefs formed by ‘The Middle Path’ allow adherents to make decisions based upon their own life practices, so they avoid both gluttony and ascetism. The relationship between a person and their body is then of great importance in relation to ‘The Middle Path’ belief. The Buddha conveyed that there are four types of body image: healthy positive, unhealthy positive, healthy negative and unhealthy negative (Bhikkhu, 2014). Essentially, given this, a person’s shaped identity describes and determines their long-term happiness (healthy) or suffering (unhealthy) when viewing their body image, especially if said person has an eating disorder.

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG in this IA, it is recommended that:

- teachers note that the use of sources in the response does not require that students validate sources, rather for the upper and mid performance-level responses, students are required to use valid or authoritative sources. The use of research booklets and annotated bibliographies are for teaching and learning rather than a requirement to demonstrate the first descriptor of the Considering, organising and creating criterion
- the analysis of perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent’s response to the contemporary ethical issue be investigated thoroughly to develop well-reasoned arguments

- for the Evaluating and drawing conclusions criterion, teachers note that discerning judgments require drawing conclusions about the significance of religious–ethical stances by adherents that are selected for value or relevance to the social–ethical issue
- in the Considering, organising and creating criterion, evidence that a student has devised their own hypothesis and presented the ideas or arguments related to their hypothesis is required at both the mid and upper performance levels.

Internal assessment 3 (IA3)

This assessment is an investigation into the ways in which religion has interacted with the nation–state through one example that is selected from the list provided in Unit 4 Topic 1: Religion and the nation–state. The assessment requires students to analyse the perspectives that influenced religion’s interaction with the nation–state within the context selected, and evaluate and draw conclusions about the interaction between religion and the nation–state, and its influence on shaping society’s response within the context selected. Students investigate the chosen religion and nation–state relationship, and devise their own hypothesis, which forms the basis of their analytical essay.

Investigation — inquiry response (25%)

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment — validity practices

| Validity priority | Number of times priority was identified in decisions* |
|-------------------|---|
| Alignment | 19 |
| Authentication | 0 |
| Authenticity | 10 |
| Item construction | 4 |
| Scope and scale | 42 |

*Total number of submissions: 89. Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that featured:

- a context statement that clearly articulated relevant subject matter from Unit 4 Topic 1, and established an overview and framework for the investigation. For example, the context statement for a task investigating anti-Semitism in Russia from 1903–1906 might clearly identify that students have explored key Jewish concepts including the Covenant, the Diaspora and exile, as well as significant cultural understandings and historical events in Russia that led up to the identified time period, such as the assassination of Tsar Alexander II and the ensuing pogroms of Odessa, Kiev and Warsaw
- a topic that aligns to the syllabus subject matter by being developed from the list provided in Unit 4 Topic 1: Religion and the nation-state. For example, Buddhism in Vietnam during the 1960s.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- clarify the context for the investigation by providing only one example of a religion–state relationship from Unit 4 Topic 1 within a set time period for this relationship, thereby establishing an appropriate scale for the investigation
- only include directions that align with syllabus specifications and assessment objectives. Remove any directions that require students to complete activities that are not assessed in the ISMG. For example, students are not required to ‘validate sources’ nor is there a specific number of sources that is defined in ‘diverse range’ of sources.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment — accessibility practices

| Accessibility priority | Number of times priority was identified in decisions* |
|------------------------|---|
| Transparency | 1 |
| Language | 1 |
| Layout | 0 |
| Bias avoidance | 1 |

*Total number of submissions: 89. Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that featured:

- layout that was clear and direct, with the context, task, scaffolding and authentication strategies clearly delineated. This ensured that students knew where to find the information they needed for the different elements of the instrument
- language was clear and consistent with no repetition of information or alternative wording for directions, e.g. the scaffolding elements only appeared once and were straightforward.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- ensure that key language is jargon-free and with context-specific terminology preferably from the specifications and assessment objectives to ensure clarity. For example, avoid using terms such as ‘theocracy’ or ‘kritarchy’ to describe particular religious nation-states and instead replace with a context specific phrase that allows students to understand the focus of the assessment.

Additional advice

Due to COVID-19 pandemic adjustments, there were insufficient student responses to this instrument to provide useful analytics.

External assessment

Examination — short response (25%)

Assessment design

Assessment specifications and conditions

Students were required to respond to a number of short items related to Unit 4 Topic 2: Religion and human rights. The items allowed students to use their understandings of the five major world religions in order to explain the ways religious traditions have formed and informed perspectives on human rights. In particular, there was a focus on the influence of religion on human rights. Unseen stimulus materials were provided with the examination paper.

Conditions

- Time: 2 hours plus 15 minutes planning time
- Length:
 - written paragraph responses: 50–250 words per item (800–1000 words in total)
- No notes allowed.

Stimulus specifications

- Stimulus materials will reflect the subject matter within Unit 4 Topic 2: Religion and human rights.
- Stimulus materials will be succinct enough to allow students sufficient time to engage with them.
- Stimulus materials will be presented in written texts or visual texts, e.g. excerpts from sacred texts and religious writings, reference books, journals, media articles, illustrations and images, religious art, cartoons, diagrams, graphical representations, tables.

Short response

- consists of a number of items that ask students to respond to
 - short items requiring sentence or short paragraph responses
 - unseen stimulus materials
 - ideas and information
- where applicable, students are required to write in full sentences, constructing a response that may have one or several paragraphs so that ideas are maintained, developed and justified

The assessment instrument consisted of one section. Questions were derived from the context of the subject matter from Unit 4 Topic 2: Religion and human rights. This assessment was used to determine student achievement in the following assessment objectives:

1. describe the distinguishing features of religious traditions that shape views on human rights
2. demonstrate understanding of the ways in which religious traditions inform understandings of human rights
3. differentiate between perspectives of religious traditions on human rights

4. analyse perspectives on human rights within and across religious traditions
5. evaluate and draw conclusions about the influence of religion on human rights
6. create responses that communicate ideas or arguments related to religion and human rights, within sentences and short paragraphs.

The stimulus was selected from a range of authoritative religious texts and other sources about human rights issues, and was designed to elicit responses that targeted specific objectives and subject matter knowledge. There were 11 stimulus items that presented perspectives from the five world religions. The stimulus material was designed to elicit unique responses to short-response items through the application of a range of cognitions.

Assessment decisions

Overall, students responded well to the following assessment aspects:

- understanding and applying of instructional terms such as 'describe', 'explain', 'differentiate', 'analyse' and 'evaluate'
- using and analysing stimulus to identify, examine and consider religious characteristics to ascertain a range of views, and provide reasons for such views
- using their understanding of the ways in which the teachings of the five world religions inform understandings of human rights and responses to human rights by adherents.

Effective practices

The following samples were selected to illustrate highly effective student responses in some of the assessment objectives of the syllabus.

Short response

Assessment objective: Demonstrate understanding

Item: Question 2

This question required students to choose to explain how the Hindu cyclical world view aligns with the belief that 'everyone has duties to the community' (Article 29, Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Students were provided with an extract from the Hymn of Purusha as Stimulus 3.

Effective student responses:

- identified characteristics of a Hindu cyclical world view
- provided a clear explanation of how these characteristics aligned with Article 29
- effectively used Stimulus 3 to support reasoning.

Student sample of effective response

This excerpt has been included to:

- illustrate a high-level response that identifies characteristics of Dharma
- present a response that carefully selected distinguishing features of how Dharma reinforces the cyclical world view of Hinduism and Article 29.

Demonstrate understanding (5 marks)

In Hinduism, each adherent has a unique dharma. This dharma is based upon their ~~caste~~ varna and is the right action^{that} the adherent must follow. Each varna has different responsibilities however, they all are important^{to society}. Stimulus 3 highlights that despite the fact that each varna is different they are all needed. The "Brahman [are the feet], both [the] arms [were] made by the Rājanya. ~~the~~ thighs became the Vaisya, from his feet the Śūdra" (stimulus 3). No matter which caste a person is in or the caste they will be reborn into, this cyclical worldview emphasises^{that} everyone is important. Thus, since each individual has a unique dharma, 'everyone has duties to the community'^(Article 29) and are all necessary aspects of society. Therefore, the Hindu cyclical world view aligns with the belief that 'everyone has duties to the community' (Article 29).

Assessment objective: Differentiate

Item: Question 4

This question required students to differentiate between the Islamic and Buddhist belief in the right to equal respect as described in Stimulus 6 by using Stimulus 4 and 5 and a relevant religious teaching from each religion.

Effective student responses:

- perceptively identified and explained the different perspectives of Islamic and Buddhist beliefs about the 'right to equal respect'
- identified relevant teachings from Buddhism and Islam to provide an explanation of the relationship between the teachings and the 'right to equal respect'

Student sample of effective response

This excerpt has been included to:

- illustrate a high-level response which perceptively identifies and explains the different perspectives of Islam and Buddhism about why people deserve respect by including the discerning selection of characteristics of the chosen teachings
- demonstrate precise and detailed explanations of the relationship between the 'right to equal respect' and both the Islamic teaching about free will and the role of karmic consequences in achieving nirvana for Buddhist adherents.

Differentiate (4 marks)

Excerpt 1

Mohammed Kamali stated that the dignity of a man is created through his unique ability to discern between right or wrong (Stimulus 4). This is a manifestation of the Islamic teaching of the gift of free will. Muslims believe that free will is a gift granted to ~~the~~^{humanity} by Allah, which means adherents have the ability to sin but also repent and get closer to fulfilling the Greater Jihad. Muslims believe that this unique gift of free will is one of the reasons why humans should be given the right to equal respect, as no other animal can discern right or wrong. This is starkly contrasted with Buddhism. The Nirvana Sutra ~~teaches~~^{teaches} Buddhist adherents that all life is capable of achieving Nirvana (enlightenment) and for that reason, all life should be treated with utmost respect, not just humans (Stimulus 5). This is an example of the Buddhist teaching of karmic consequences, which states that the way one acts dictates the consequences faced in the next life (good acts create good consequences and vice versa).

Excerpt 2

Whilst Islam believes that humanity's gift of free will from Allah is the primary reason as to why humanity has the right to equal ~~respect~~^{respect}, Buddhists believe that all life has the right to equal respect and that one should respect all life ^{including humans} in order to accumulate positive karma on the path to Nirvana. Ultimately the differences ^{can relate} ~~come down~~ to the differing world views of linear (Islam) and cyclical (Buddhism).

Assessment objective: Analyse

Item: Question 5

This question required students to use Stimulus 8 to draw conclusions about how a Christian adherent might respond to the privacy issue in Stimulus 7.

Effective student responses:

- provided an explanation of a relevant Christian teaching
- provided links between a teaching and a valid Christian response to the privacy issue in Stimulus 7
- used Stimulus 8 to justify conclusions.

Student samples of effective responses

These excerpts have been included to:

- illustrate a high-level response that provided a detailed explanation of relevant Christian teachings about the sacredness of human life
- present a response that provided credible links that establish convincing reasoning as to why the sacredness of human life supports a valid or legitimate Christian response to Stimulus 7 by identifying how and why the teaching supports a right to privacy (Excerpt 1)
- demonstrate effective use of Stimulus 8 to justify conclusions by identifying how Kant's statement about how every person "exists as an end in himself" reflects Christian ideas about the sacredness of each human life and how the implantation of a camera would be a violation of human dignity (Excerpt 2).

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Analyse (3 marks) | Excerpt 1 <p>experience these activities". This could be seen as a positive, however, not only could this practice "infringe on a person's right to privacy," it also dehumanises and devalues disregards the value of life that people with disadvantages and disabilities have. Christians believe that all people are made in the image of God, therefore, they are sacred and have value and dignity. The notion that people must experience life through another goes against that teaching.</p> |
| Analyse (4 marks) | Excerpt 2 <p>employed by any will whatsoever." ^{Kant, through his values} "Christianity clearly teaches that humans should not be used or exploited for the means of others, as this detracts from each individual's inherent dignity, and the choice they should be afforded as to what parts of their life they wish to share. Thus, this issue described privacy issue would be viewed by Christians as a clear violation of human dignity, as it demonstrates a lack of respect for people and their rights.</p> |

Assessment objective: Evaluate and draw conclusions

Item: Question 6

This question required students to analyse Stimulus 9, 10 and 11 to evaluate the extent to which Jewish teachings have informed Elie Wiesel's beliefs and how these align with the statement that 'everyone has duties to the community' (Article 29, Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Effective student responses:

- provided explanations of two relevant Jewish teachings that appeared to have informed Elie Wiesel's beliefs
- used the stimulus to support reasoning
- drew insightful and reasoned conclusions about how Jewish teachings align with Elie Wiesel's support of the statement that 'everyone has duties to the community'
- organised a response that had one or several paragraphs so that ideas were maintained, developed and justified to suit the purpose of the item.

Student samples of effective responses

These excerpts have been included to:

- illustrate a high-level response that provided detailed explanations of the Jewish teachings about the sanctity of life and divine justice in a succinct, purposeful and fluent paragraph (Excerpt 1)
- present a response that provided insightful and reasoned conclusions about the relationship between the two Jewish teachings and Elie Wiesel's beliefs by explaining the characteristics of the Jewish teachings that were identified in the stimulus (Excerpt 2).

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Evaluate and draw conclusions (4 marks)</p> | <p>Excerpt 1</p> <p>of caring for creation. Jews believe that, on the basis of being made in the "Divine Image" (Genesis 1:26-27), all ^{human} life is sacred, and they teach of the importance of respecting that sacred nature. This teaching is reflected in Elie's statement that creation is God's, and has been "entrusted" to humans to not "repudiate" (Stimulus 11). Moreover, the sanctity of human life. Furthermore, Elie Wiesel's beliefs are also underpinned by Jewish teachings surrounding divine and human justice. Jews are taught that God is the ultimate source of authority, and humans have a responsibility to carry out this authority and God's will on earth, which as described by sacred text (Tanakh), often involves social justice and the protection of human rights. This teaching clearly informs Elie Wiesel's belief that it is humans' obligation to denounce and expose [war] in all its hideousness, due to the violation of human rights that it leads to, specifically the forced labour and mass genocide of the Jewish people that it led to in World War II, ^{an event} which</p> |
|---|--|

Excerpt 2

hopes of preventing them from ~~mass~~ happening ^{in the future.} again. Wiesel emphasises that in order to prevent others going through the same horrors he did in the holocaust it is critical that the memories are shared ^{with all} (stimulus 9). ~~Human~~ ^{Human} life is so important that the "era of evil and darkness" must be shared ^{in order} to protect future generations ^{from similar tragedies} (stimulus 9). ~~this~~ This aligns with the statement that ^{everyone} "everyone has duties to the community" because every single person is obligated to stand against ~~oppos~~ persecution and war. This will ensure that human life is protected.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that when preparing students for external assessment, teachers consider:

- practising deconstructing questions to ensure that students are familiar with recognising what is required in the response. A successful response required careful selection of relevant teachings and characteristics so that explanations described religious teachings in detail, revealing relevant facts and making links between religious teachings and responses to human rights' concepts by providing detail about one or two relevant religious teachings according to the question
- the use of stimulus to support reasoning and relevant teachings. Students needed to ensure that their use of the stimulus not only supported reasoning, but also aligned with the chosen religious teachings. High-level responses used stimulus to prove their reasoning successfully by using religious teachings that were relevant and pertinent to the question and the stimulus
- practising developing credible links between religious teachings and human rights' responses by adherents. Successful responses developed convincing reasoning as to how and why teachings supported a response to the stimulus and question.