

Study of Religion subject report

2021 cohort

February 2022

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Introduction

Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, Queensland's education community can look back on 2021 with satisfaction at having implemented the first full assessment cycle in the new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system. That meant delivering three internal assessments and one external assessment in each General subject.

This report analyses that cycle — from endorsing summative internal assessment instruments to confirming internal assessment marks, and designing and marking external assessment. It also gives readers information about:

- applying syllabus objectives in the design and marking of internal and external assessments
- patterns of student achievement.

The report promotes continuous improvement by:

- identifying effective practices in the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessments
- recommending where and how to enhance the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessment instruments
- providing 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
- assist in assessment design practice
- assist in making assessment decisions
- help prepare 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 (AS) and Senior External Examination (SEE) subjects, where relevant) and General (Extension) subjects.

Report preparation

The report includes analyses of data and other information from endorsement, confirmation and external assessment processes. It also includes 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 completion

The following data includes students who completed the General subject.

Note: All data is correct as at 17 December 2021. Where percentages are provided, these are rounded to two decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Number of schools that offered the subject: 86.

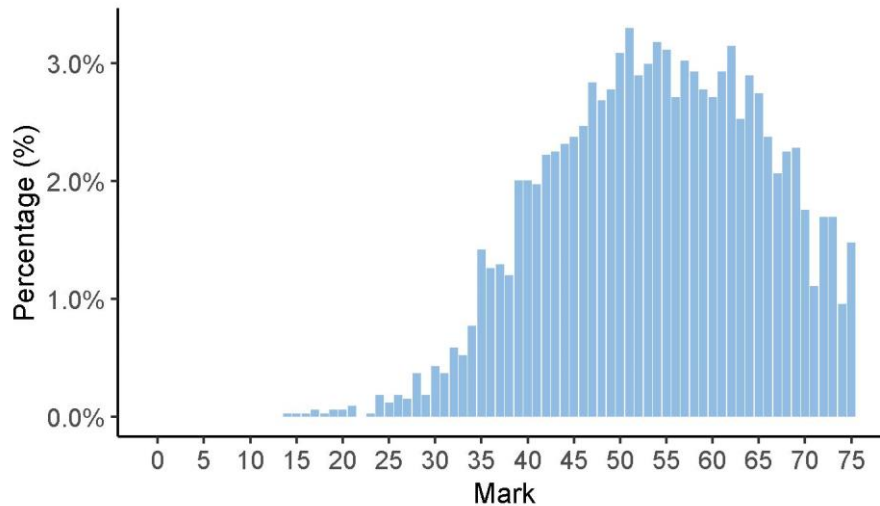
Completion of units	Unit 1	Unit 2	Units 3 and 4
Number of students completed	3692	3401	3236

Units 1 and 2 results

Number of students	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Unit 1	3493	199
Unit 2	3307	94

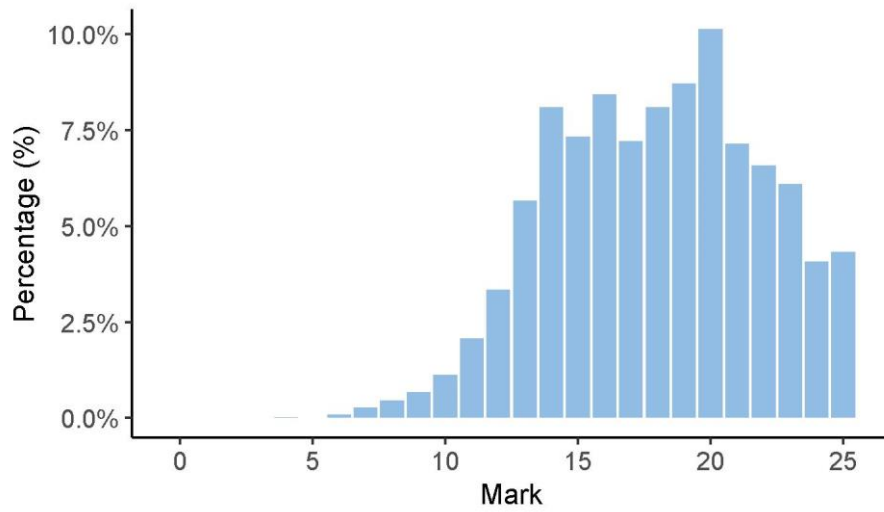
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results

Total marks for IA

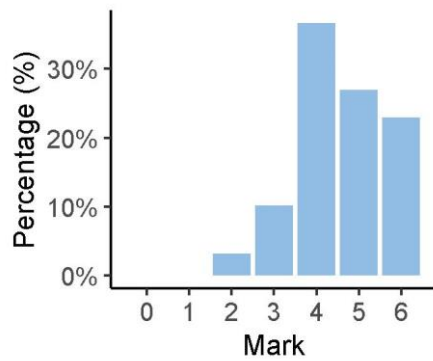


IA1 marks

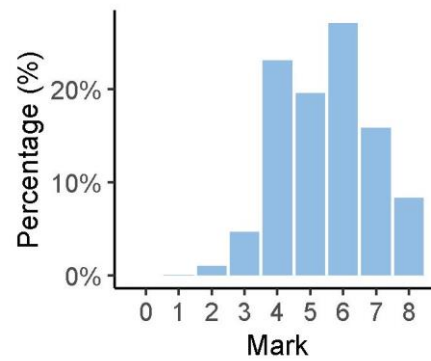
IA1 total



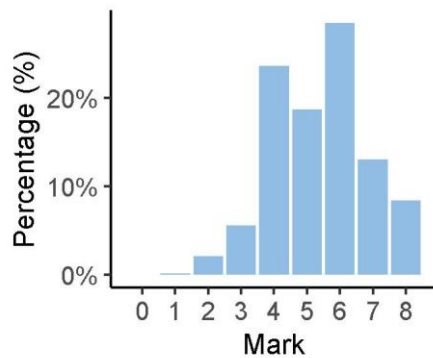
IA1 Criterion: Describing and demonstrating understanding



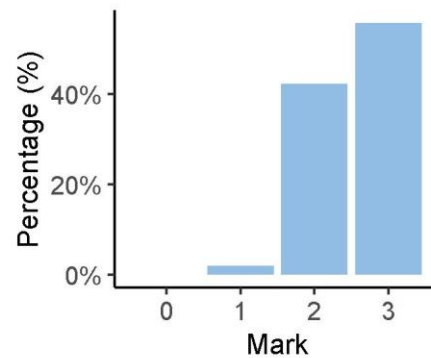
IA1 Criterion: Differentiating and analysing



IA1 Criterion: Evaluating and drawing conclusions

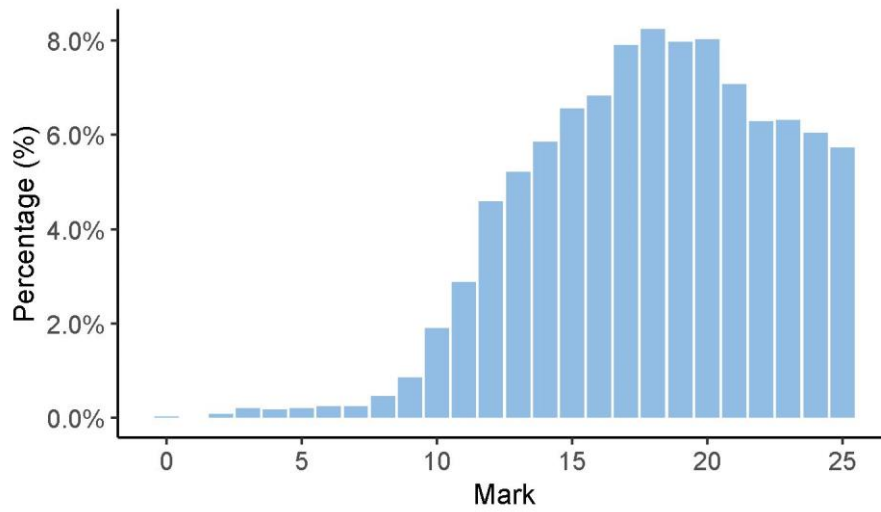


IA1 Criterion: Creating

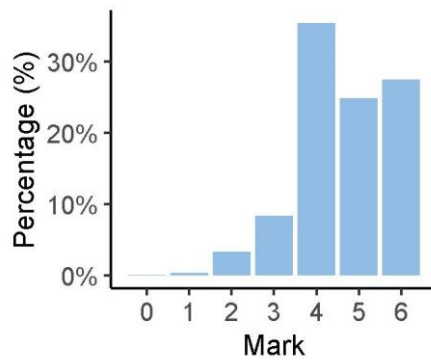


IA2 marks

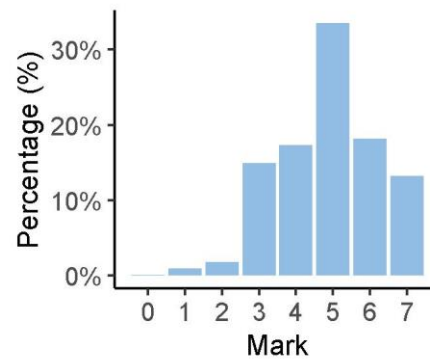
IA2 total



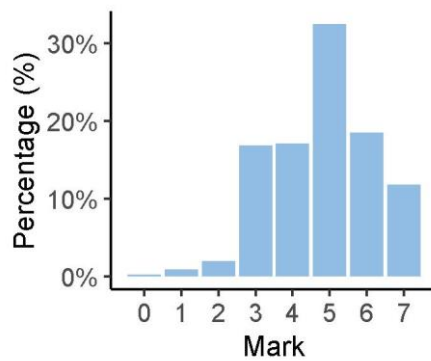
IA2 Criterion: Demonstrating understanding



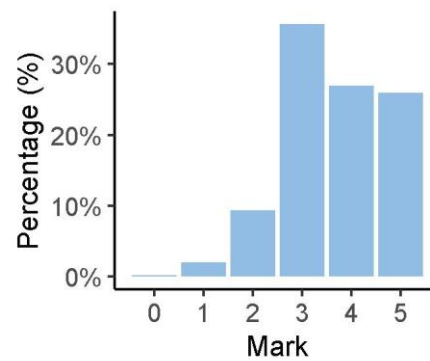
IA2 Criterion: Analysing



IA2 Criterion: Evaluating and drawing conclusions

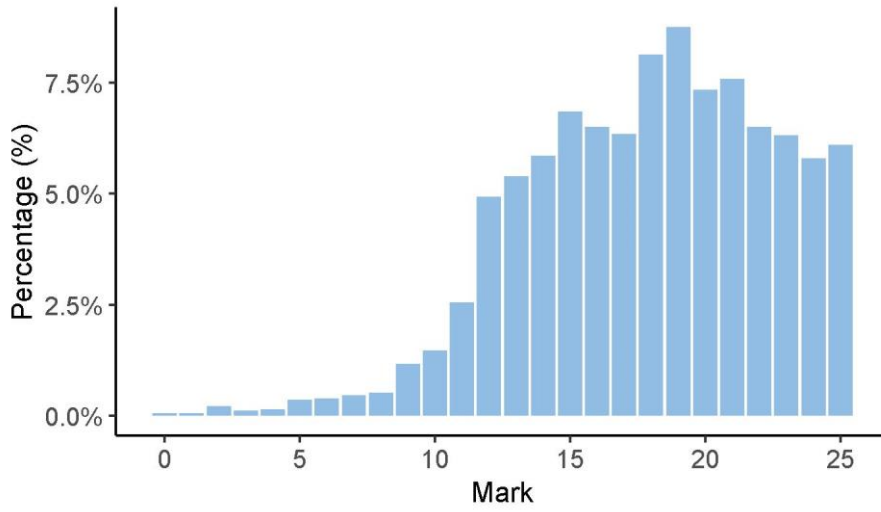


IA2 Criterion: Considering, organising and creating

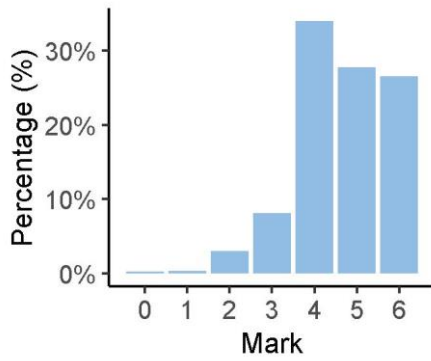


IA3 marks

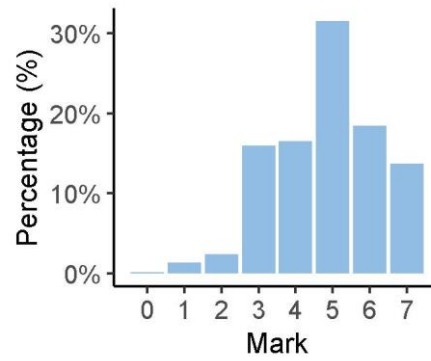
IA3 total



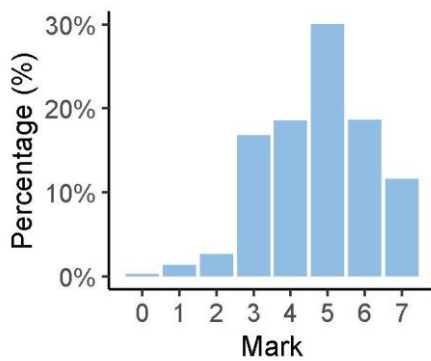
IA3 Criterion: Demonstrating understanding



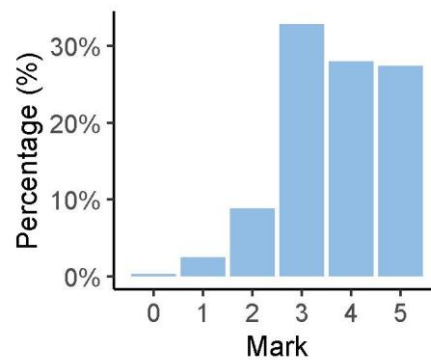
IA3 Criterion: Analysing



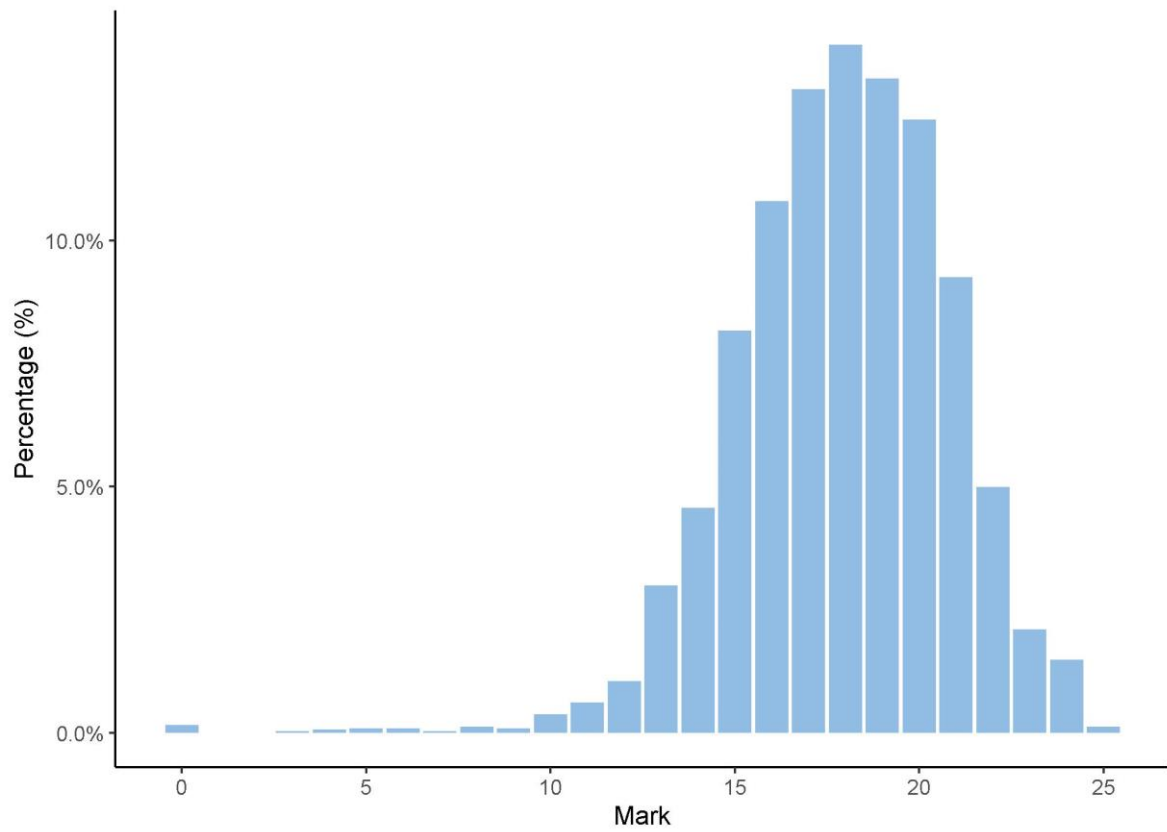
IA3 Criterion: Evaluating and drawing conclusions



IA3 Criterion: Considering, organising and creating

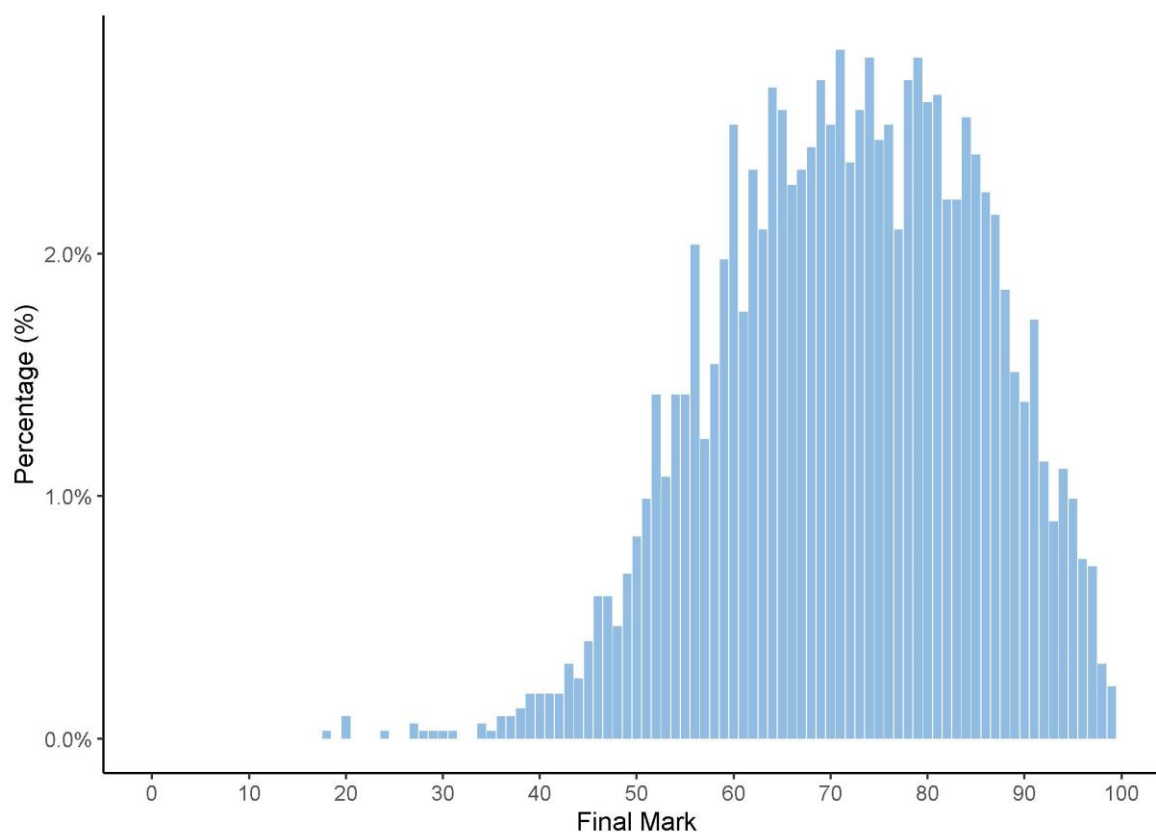


External assessment (EA) marks



Final subject results

Final marks for IA and EA



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	100–82	81–62	61–43	42–18	17–0

Distribution of standards

The number of students who achieved each standard across the state is as follows.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Number of students	856	1635	697	48	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 section 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 the subject matter and the assessment objective/s.

Refer to the quality assurance tools for detailed information about the assessment practices for each assessment instrument.

Percentage of instruments endorsed in Application 1

Number of instruments submitted	IA1	IA2	IA3
Total number of instruments	86	86	86
Percentage endorsed in Application 1	23%	30%	51%

Confirmation

Confirmation is the quality assurance process based on the attribute of reliability. The QCAA uses provisional criterion marks determined by teachers to identify the samples of student responses that schools are required to submit for confirmation.

Confirmation samples are representative of the school's decisions about the quality of student work in relation to the ISMG and are used to make decisions about the cohort's results. If further information is required about the school's application of the ISMG to finalise a confirmation decision, the QCAA requests additional samples.

Schools may request a review where an individual student's confirmed result is different from the school's provisional mark in one or more criteria and the school considers this result to be an anomaly or exception.

The following table includes the percentage agreement between the provisional marks and confirmed marks by assessment instrument. The Assessment decisions section of this report for each assessment instrument identifies the agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks by criterion.

Number of samples reviewed and percentage agreement

IA	Number of schools	Number of samples requested	Number of additional samples requested	Percentage agreement with provisional marks
1	86	626	189	77.91%
2	86	648	245	81.4%
3	86	653	215	67.44%



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 the application of 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 priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	43
Authentication	0
Authenticity	6
Item construction	17
Scope and scale	18

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 86.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- constructed items appropriately to allow students to demonstrate the assessment objectives by providing task directions as either statements or questions that captured the intent of the assessment objectives. These instruments made it clear in the wording of the task that student responses should focus on how beliefs, practices and perspectives within the religious traditions influence the ethical decision-making processes of adherents in response to the social–ethical issue
- provided scaffolding that accurately stepped out the processes required to demonstrate the assessment objectives, without leading to predetermined responses. This allowed students to develop arguments and responses that were uniquely their own.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- provide stimulus items that include information related to two of the five major world religions and the social–ethical issue, as well as at least one visual text in the form of an illustration, an image, a piece of religious art, a cartoon, a diagram, a graphical representation, or a table
- select stimulus items that allow students to be able to demonstrate understanding of the ways religion informs ethical decision-making processes as required by the Describing and demonstrating understanding criterion. Stimulus should not provide detailed distinguishing features of religious traditions that inform religious ethics, but rather succinct information that allows students to demonstrate their own understanding of the ways religion informs ethical decision-making processes.

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 priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	8
Language	0
Layout	4
Transparency	1

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 86.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used language that was appropriate to the technique and topic and avoided the use of jargon and colloquial language that could cause confusion. Assessment instruments were free of errors, modelling accurate spelling, grammar, punctuation and other textual features
- ensured the task description and scaffolding aligned with the specifications and provided instructions that accurately clarified what was required to demonstrate the objectives and ISMG.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- select stimulus items that offers a balance of perspectives and avoids presenting a biased point of view about either a religious tradition or the chosen social–ethical issue.

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 confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Describing and demonstrating understanding	94.19%	3.49%	2.33%	0%
2	Differentiating and analysing	82.56%	13.95%	3.49%	0%
3	Evaluating and drawing conclusions	87.21%	11.63%	1.16%	0%
4	Creating	95.35%	1.16%	2.33%	1.16%

Effective practices

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

- making judgments for the Describing and demonstrating understanding criterion, the distinguishing features of religious traditions that inform religious ethics and the differing qualifiers used for these descriptors were considered, e.g. at the upper performance level, responses identify features correctly and comprehensively, meaning including nearly all elements that were relevant to religious responses to the social-ethical issue
- for the Evaluating and drawing conclusions criterion, consideration was given to how the three descriptors in each performance level work together and build on each other. The first descriptor relates to making judgments about the religious–ethical stances concerning the social–ethical issue. These judgments are supported by arguments (second descriptor) and these arguments are established in relationship to the question or hypothesis (third descriptor). At the top performance level, arguments are *consistently* established across the response in relation to the question or hypothesis
- responses matched to the second descriptor of the Creating criterion focused on demonstration of the features of an analytical essay. The analytical essay is the specified genre for the presentation of ideas and arguments related to the question or hypothesis in this technique.

Samples of effective practices

The following are excerpts from a response that illustrates the characteristics for the criteria at the performance level indicated. The excerpts may provide evidence of more than one criterion. The characteristics identified may not be the only time the characteristics have occurred throughout a response.

This student response excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate detailed and relevant explanations of Buddhists teachings that provide distinguishing features of the Three Jewels and their relationship with the Four Noble Truths and karma. This extract is from the first body paragraph of the analytical essay.

<p>Describing and demonstrating understanding (5–6 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>Excerpt 1</p> <p>A Buddhist perspective and response to the environmental crisis, while not influenced by a creator deity, would include all humans displaying peace, harmony and compassion for the interdependent natural world and creatures (Stimulus 3). This perspective would be sculpted by the Three Jewels, notably Buddha’s teachings prescribed in the Dharma. Apart from some vague monastic laws, Buddha does not teach specifically on climate change because it was not a concern in his context. However, his teachings have been reinterpreted to be more relevant to contemporary adherents. Buddhists would teleologically focus on future consequences of current behaviours. For instance, at the essence of Buddha’s teachings are the Four Noble Truths, which inspire adherents to commit themselves to alleviating global suffering for future advantage. According to the Four Noble Truths, the Three Poisons (greed being one) are negative mental factors which inflict suffering by hindering enlightenment and environmental sustainability. However, adherents teleologically follow a way to cease suffering (Samsara): the Noble Eightfold Path. The fourth practice within the Eightfold Path is Right Action: adherents believe environmental actions will invoke good karmic conditioning that will continue to work in rebirth. So, by not harming and advocating for the ecosystem (Stimulus 4), adherents will benefit their own future and the environment. Buddhists further improve their karmic conditioning through practicing abstention from taking life (Ahimsa) and loving kindness (Metta) (Stimulus 2), due to the believed inherent equality of all creatures, interdependence of nature and teaching of possible animal rebirth in the wheel of life (Stimulus 3). Right Livelihood calls Buddhists to have an ethical occupation and daily life, which fully respects their surroundings. This teaching inspires adherents from all castes to promote equality and conservation through their professions.</p>
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This student response excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate an effective and thorough summary of the major judgments and arguments used to support the hypothesis proposed in the response.

<p>Evaluating and drawing conclusions (7–8 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discerning judgments are made about the significance of religious–ethical stances made by adherents to the social–ethical issue judgments are supported by thorough and justified arguments arguments are consistently established in relationship to the question or hypothesis 	<p>Excerpt 2</p> <p>Despite different beliefs and practices that underpin adherents’ responses, Buddhist and Jewish environmental perspectives are remarkably similar. Both are inspired by the sacred texts and teachings of relative ancient powers. Moreover, both faiths emphasise intergenerational justice, that present generations must care for the future planet. They commit to living humbly, by conserving resources, avoiding excessive consumption and waste production (Stimulus 3, 6). These core beliefs and practices serve to inspire adherents’ social-ethical response to the environment to such a significant extent that it is impossible to say an adherent stands independent on their faith on this issue.</p>
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Practices to strengthen

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

- it is noted that the first descriptor of the Evaluating and drawing conclusions criterion, at the upper performance level, requires *discerning* judgments, i.e. making thoughtful and astute choices about the significance of religious–ethical stances related to the social–ethical issue
- consideration is given to the qualifiers for the second descriptor of the Evaluating and drawing conclusions criterion regarding supporting judgments with arguments. The upper performance-level descriptor requires that the arguments used to support the judgments are both *thorough* and *justified*. This means that they provide reasons to support or prove the arguments and include all that is required to accomplish this in the context of this technique. The support for arguments has an attention to detail that is not evident at the mid and lower performance levels
- judgments about the third descriptor for the Evaluating and drawing conclusions criterion at the top performance level must ensure the arguments are consistently established in relationship to the hypothesis and developed across the response.



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 perspectives within one of the five major world religions that influence responses to the chosen 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 priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	43
Authentication	0
Authenticity	4
Item construction	5
Scope and scale	25

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 86.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- allowed students to develop their own unique responses by providing a range of examples for the contemporary ethical issues that students may choose to investigate
- followed the conventions of item construction and provided clear instructions to inform students about the processes needed to demonstrate the assessment objectives
- used checkpoints to appropriately guide students in the development of their responses and to provide opportunity to demonstrate the characteristics of the ISMGs and not elements outside of the scope of the technique.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- use the exact wording for the contemporary ethical issue as provided in the syllabus Unit 3 Topic 2: Ethical relationships in the task description, i.e. beginning and end of life, body image, interpersonal conflict, medical technologies, substance abuse. Students investigate these issues through the choice of a specific example. It is recommended possible examples for investigation are also provided in the task to support students to make appropriate choices that will allow them to demonstrate the full range of performance level descriptors in the ISMG
- identify one world religion to investigate in the task so as to provide a task of appropriate scope and scale. This will allow the whole class to engage in teaching and learning for the nominated world religion, before students begin the 15 hours of time allocated to their own investigations.

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 priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	2
Layout	0
Transparency	1

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 86.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used the appropriate sections in the Endorsement application to create tasks that had logical layouts and were free from distractors such as bolded or italicised text
- avoided bias and inappropriate content in both the task description and context statement to allow students to fully engage with the assessment without being compromised.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- clearly distinguish between a contemporary ethical issue and the examples used to explore the issues. Examples can be selected from Unit 3 Topic 2: Ethical relationships, or additional examples can be identified in the task with the correct contemporary ethical issue, e.g. beginning and end of life examples could include additional examples to those listed in the syllabus (reproductive technologies, palliative care) such as surrogacy or euthanasia. Additional examples need to be matched to the appropriate contemporary ethical issue
- provide transparency by ensuring that the assessment objectives are clearly articulated and align with the requirements for the ISMG. When alternative wording is used for cognitions, they still need to convey the same meaning as outlined in the syllabus objectives' explanatory paragraphs (Section 1.2.1) and glossary.

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 confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Demonstrating understanding	94.19%	4.65%	1.16%	0%
2	Analysing	88.37%	10.47%	1.16%	0%
3	Evaluating and drawing conclusions	86.05%	12.79%	1.16%	0%
4	Considering, organising and creating	93.02%	4.65%	2.33%	0%

Effective practices

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

- for the Demonstrating understanding criterion, there was a clear understanding of the characteristics and qualifiers at the upper and mid performance level for the second descriptor. Responses matched to the upper performance level demonstrated *detailed* identification and explanation of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response which included many of the parts or facts and great attention to the fine points or characteristics and features
- judgments made for the first descriptor of the Considering, organising and creating criterion focused on the use of sources in response to the hypothesis. This included correctly matching responses to the mid performance-level descriptor that requires use of *valid* primary and secondary sources. At the upper performance level, a *diverse range* of valid primary and secondary sources are used.

Samples of effective practices

The following are excerpts from a response that illustrate the characteristics for the criteria at the performance level indicated. The excerpts may provide evidence of more than one criterion. The characteristics identified may not be the only time the characteristics have occurred throughout a response.

This student response excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate a skilful combination and use of primary and secondary sources about both the ethical issue and religious viewpoints on the issue
- to show detailed explanations of the key religious beliefs and ethics related to the worth of human life and how this underpins a response to euthanasia for Islamic adherents.

<p>Demonstrating understanding (5–6 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Excerpt 1</p> <p>The Islamic ethical teaching of the value placed upon human life and significantly, the sanctity of it is foundational and universal amongst differing schools of jurisprudence. However, as the <i>Tawhid</i>, promotes “unification and oneness of God”, Islam cherishes the diversity of views in ethical matters (Morrissey, Taylor, Bailey, Mudge & Rule, 2016). Significantly, this value toward numerous ethical views is utterly inviolable as it enacts unconditional submission to Allah, an obedience which must be upheld by Muslims to follow the ‘Straight Path’; a guiding moral and ethical criterion (British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d). Through the literalist interpretation of the central Islamic sacred text, the Qur’an fails to recognise an adherent’s right to die voluntarily, an approach which upholds the utter inviolability of human life. In submission to Allah, schools of jurisprudence which provoke a literalist approach believe in the ideology that humans, in the eyes of their God, regards individuals with greatest of respect, tasked to be the noblest amongst his creations (Shah, 1996). Alternatively, the Qur’an directly informs the Muslim belief that every life has its own set length. The Qur’an, invested with divine authority, states that “The knowledge of (the final hour) is with my Lord, none but he can reveal when it will occur... All of a sudden it will come to you” (Surah 16:61). Substantially, this influences the <i>fard</i> (duty) of adherents to forbear life, whilst being ready to face Allah and repent to him for sinful actions as an opportunity to rise to higher ranks of spirituality by abiding by his decree</p>
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This student response excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate detailed explanations of the key religious beliefs and ethics related to the issue.

<p>Considering, organising and creating (4–5 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a diverse range of valid primary and secondary sources is used effectively in response to the hypothesis descriptor/s 	<p>Excerpt 2</p> <p>(Basics to Islam, n.d.). Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, denotes this belief, implicitly expressing that enduring <i>greater jihad</i> (spiritual struggle) of life allows “sins of a person fall like leaves of a tree” (Book 75, Hadith no.2). This prominent belief ultimately influences adherents to accept suffering in life, regardless of its impact upon the quality of it as a means expiation of sins and submission to Allah in the belief they will not be left alone after a proclamation of their faith (Goldburg, 2020). These foundational teachings oblige Sunni Muslims to enforce a deontological approach to end-of-life matters, calling upon their <i>fard</i> as adherents to preserve the inviolability of life. Therefore, opposing the practice of euthanasia is the morally appropriate approach regarding upholding universal Islamic teachings.</p> <p>Sunni Muslims hold a strict adherence to Quranic teachings and condemn euthanasia due to key religious beliefs, explicitly the sanctity of human life when approaching this ethical issue. Sunni Muslims are literalists through their exhibition of strong loyalty to scriptural texts within their <i>Ash’ariyyah</i> theology, recognising the Qur’an as the precise words imparted to Muhammad (Britannica, n.d.). They believe that the repentance of humans as beings of sin, is solely dependent on submission to Allah (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994).</p>
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Practices to strengthen

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

- consideration is given to the written form of the response as an analytical essay because this affects two criteria
 - for the Considering, organising and creating criterion, the third descriptors of both the upper and mid performance levels require that responses adhere to the genre conventions for an analytical essay. The use of sub-headings and images are not required in an analytical essay
 - for the third descriptor in the Evaluating and drawing conclusions criterion, the upper performance level requires arguments to be consistently established across the response in relation to the hypothesis. A report or case study does not facilitate the development of arguments and a hypothesis across the response

- consideration is given to the qualifiers for the first descriptor in the Analysing criterion regarding the analysis of perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue selected. The upper performance-level descriptor requires that the analysis includes all that is required and with attention to detail; 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 matches the descriptor of some analysis of perspectives within a world religion
- ISMGs are annotated in full to show how evidence has been matched to the descriptors. This supports the application of the 'best-fit' approach to determine marks.



Internal assessment 3 (IA3)

Investigation — inquiry response (25%)

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 to 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.

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 priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	28
Authentication	0
Authenticity	5
Item construction	2
Scope and scale	15

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 86.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- followed the conventions of item construction, including providing clear instructions in the scaffolding and checkpoints that aligned with the processes necessary to complete a unique response
- provided a succinct overview of the subject matter covered from Unit 4 Topic 1: Religion and the nation–state in the context section of the assessment instrument.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- specify the correct religion–state relationship as the focus of the investigation, ensuring that the nation–state is taken from the list provided in Unit 4 Topic 1: Religion and the nation–state
- provide appropriate scale for the task by identifying one religion–state relationship and limiting the timeframe of this relationship. This will allow students to demonstrate the full range of descriptors within the conditions of the technique. The student investigation represents approximately 15 hours of the time allocated to this topic, and the scale of the task needs to reflect this.

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 priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	5
Layout	0
Transparency	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 86.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- consistently used clear language that clarified that the focus of the task is on a specific religion–state relationship
- provided clear instructions and cues that aligned clearly with the specifications, assessment objectives and ISMG. Effective tasks did not direct students to provide elements outside of the task requirements such as annotated bibliographies or research booklets; rather, they focused on the assessment objectives and devising a hypothesis as the focus of the inquiry.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- contain a context statement and/or task directions that do not bias students explicitly or implicitly towards a particular perspective about the religion–state relationship being investigated.

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 confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Demonstrating understanding	84.88%	12.79%	1.16%	1.16%
2	Analysing	74.42%	22.09%	3.49%	0%
3	Evaluating and drawing conclusions	68.6%	29.07%	2.33%	0%
4	Considering, organising and creating	91.86%	8.14%	0%	0%

Effective practices

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

- responses matched to the first descriptor at the upper performance level of the Demonstrating understanding criterion contained all the information required to demonstrate a *thorough* understanding of the ways in which religion has interacted with the nation–state within a particular context
- judgments about the second descriptor of the Demonstrating understanding criterion were made based on a clear understanding that responses at the upper performance level require *detailed* identification and explanation of the religion–state relationship and interaction. This involved recognising and providing accounts of the ways in which the specified religion and nation–state have responded to each other; in particular, how the religion sought to shape or was shaped by the social, cultural and political context
- in the third descriptor of the Demonstrating understanding criterion, responses matched to the upper performance level provided evidence of *consistently* accurate explanations of the religion–state relationship and interaction across the response
- responses at the upper performance level for the Evaluating and drawing conclusions criterion demonstrated evidence of arguments related to the hypothesis that were *thorough* and *justified*. The use of the analytical essay genre supports the establishment of arguments throughout the response.

Samples of effective practices

The following are excerpts from a response that illustrate the characteristics for the criteria at the performance level indicated. The excerpts may provide evidence of more than one criterion. The characteristics identified may not be the only time the characteristics have occurred throughout a response.

These student response excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate a high level of understanding of the ways in which Buddhism has interacted with the nation–state of Myanmar, by identifying and explaining the specific responses and interactions between Buddhist groups, individuals and the Myanmar government following the 1962 military coup. This is particularly evident in the explicit details about the influence of

characteristics of the Four Noble Truths that lead to non-violence and a measured response to political actions by Buddhist adherents and communities

- as it establishes justified arguments that relate to the hypothesis about the interactions between the Myanmar government and Buddhism in response to the 1962 military coup. The arguments are thorough because they include detail of Buddhist teachings that support the religious responses to the interactions, as well as the government responses.

<p>Demonstrating understanding (5–6 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thorough understanding of the ways in which religion has interacted with the nation–state within a particular context • detailed identification and explanation of the religion–state relationship and interaction • consistently accurate explanations of the religion–state relationship and interaction are evident in the response <p>Evaluating and drawing conclusions (6–7 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discerning judgments are made about the extent to which the interaction between religion and the nation–state has shaped society’s response within a particular context • judgments are supported by thorough and justified arguments • arguments are consistently established in relationship to the hypothesis 	<p>Excerpt 1</p> <p>Theravada Buddhism is the sect of Buddhism prominent in Myanmar, commonly referred to as the traditions of the elders; it is very literal in its practice. An understanding of the core beliefs of Buddhism is crucial when considering the response of Myanmar citizens to the socialism introduced by general Ne Win in 1962. Translated as suffering or anguish, dukkha is what is identified by the Buddha in his Four Noble Truths as the fundamental problem with human existence. The Second Noble Truth identifies that in order to cease dukkha one must cease tanha (cravings). Tanha is a broad concept, not limited to: craving pleasures of the senses; a fixed sense of self; to avoid suffering or the reality of rebirth (The British Broadcasting Corporation, 2021). Whilst cravings do provide great temptation, they also create great opportunities for adherents to put their faith into practice. Through implementing the core teachings of Buddhism, in particular the Ten Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path, we see the potential for adherents to overcome tanha, and in turn, dukkha, reaching a state of enlightenment and becoming ‘Arhats’; people who have gained true insight into the nature of reality (The British Broadcasting Corporation, 2021). The main goal of a Theravadin Buddhist is to become an ‘Arhat’ and <u>reach a state of enlightenment; this is at</u> the core of all they do.</p> <p>Excerpt 2</p> <p>One of the Five Lay precepts that has significant weight when analysing the interactions between the Buddhist faith and the nation-state in 1962 is the principle of non-injury. The principle of non-injury recognizes that life is conditioned by suffering and so where possible one must aim to cause minimal harm and suffering to others. This sentiment is reflected in the teaching of Samma kammanta (right action) found in The Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path determines that to act the ‘right way’, one must aim to lead a peaceful life, promoting moral, honourable, and peaceful conduct, abstaining from the destruction of life and acts of dishonesty. Contrary to this, however, <u>Ne Win’s</u> socialist agenda of 1962 began to conflict</p> <p>Excerpt 3</p> <p>Taking these factors into account, it’s fair to conclude that as a population with a large percentage identifying as of Buddhist faith, that the society of Myanmar would not agree with the actions of the nation-state as governed by Ne Win. It can be assumed that the Noble Eightfold Path followed by all adherents of Buddhism and The Ten Precepts, followed in part (the first five precepts), by the Buddhist laypersons and in full by the Bhikkhu, would inform the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the Myanmar society to both a similar and significant extent. Informed by the principle of non-violence and a deep understanding of ‘right action’, it’s evident that the Bhikkhu did react to the manipulation of their faith, but that they took time calculating a response that would cause minimal harm and suffering to others.</p>
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Practices to strengthen

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

- for the Analysing criterion, teachers note that this criterion requires analysis of perspectives that have influenced religion’s interaction with the nation–state in a particular context, not the perspectives that have influenced the state’s interaction with the religion
- when making judgments for the second and third descriptors in the Analysing criterion, teachers note that these build on the first descriptor, in that the perspectives that have influenced religion’s interaction with the nation–state are supported by arguments that are informed by an understanding of the religion–state relationship and interaction
- each performance-level descriptor is considered before assigning a mark; a discrete judgment should be made for each descriptor, e.g. the first descriptor in the upper-performance level of

the Evaluating criterion requires that the responses include *discerning* judgments about the extent to which the interaction between religion and the nation–state has shaped society’s response within a particular context.



External assessment

External assessment (EA) is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment for a subject is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day.

Examination — short response (25%)

Assessment design

The assessment instrument was designed using the specifications, conditions and assessment objectives described in the summative external assessment section of the syllabus. The examination consisted of one paper:

- Paper 1, Section 1 consisted of short response (59 marks).

The examination assessed subject matter from Unit 4. Questions were derived from the context of Religion and human rights.

The assessment required students to respond to a number of short response items.

The stimulus reflected the subject matter of Unit 4 Topic 2: Religion and human rights, and was presented in written and visual texts.

Assessment decisions

Assessment decisions are made by markers by matching student responses to the external assessment marking guide (EAMG). The external assessment papers and the EAMG are published in the year after they are administered.

Effective practices

Overall, students responded well to:

- short response items that required describing and explaining key concepts related to Religion and human rights such as how a religious teaching aligns with a statement from the *Universal declaration of human rights*
- most stimulus items by analysing them for relevant teachings so that they could demonstrate their own understanding of the five world religions in relation to human rights
- short response items that required paragraph response by communicating ideas that clearly related to the exam questions, using full sentences and cohesive paragraphs.

The following excerpts have been selected to illustrate effective student responses in one or more of the syllabus assessment objectives. The characteristics identified may not be the only time the characteristics have occurred throughout a response.

Samples of effective practices

Short response

Assessment objective: Demonstrate understanding

Question 2a

This question required students to explain the relationship between *anatta* and the statement that 'everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person' (Article 6, *Universal declaration of human rights*). Students were provided with an excerpt from 'No-self or Not-self?' as Stimulus 2.

Effective student responses:

- identified a relevant Buddhist teaching on *anatta*
- provided a clear explanation of the relationship between *anatta* and Article 6.

This student response excerpt has been included:

- to illustrate a high-level response that identifies the connection between the Four Noble Truths (obligation to end suffering) and *anatta*
- to provide a clear explanation of the Four Noble Truths and its link to the recognition of all people, thus linking *anatta* and Article 6.

Demonstrate understanding	<p>Excerpt 1</p> <p>The Buddhist teaching of "anatta" aligns with the statement that "everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person" because of the teachings of the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths state that life is dukkah (suffering) which is caused by desires that can be abolished if a Buddhist adherent follows the Eightfold Path (middle way). These truths are described in stimulus 2 as being "directly experienced" which implies that all human beings experience life's suffering and "anatta" entails that "there is no permanent "self" " (stimulus 2) which therefore ^{implies} recognises that everyone has a right to recognition as a person. This is because of the shared experience of life's suffering (dukkah) and the impermanance of "self" within human and animal bodies.</p>
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Assessment objectives: Differentiate and Demonstrate understanding

Question 4

This question required students to differentiate between the Islamic and Christians teachings about the role of individual responsibility in supporting human rights, using Stimulus 5 and 6 and a relevant religious teaching from each religion.

Effective student responses:

- identified and explained a valid difference between Islamic and Christian teachings about individual responsibility to support human rights. The explanations provided in the responses determined the characteristics that made the Islamic and Christian teachings about individual responsibility to support human rights distinct from each other
- identified relevant specific teachings from Islam and Christianity to provide a clear and detailed explanation of the relationship between the teaching and a responsibility to support human rights.

These student response excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate high-level responses that provide clear and detailed explanations of relevant, accurate and specific religious teachings
 - Excerpt 1 specifically identified and explained the Islamic teaching of the submission to the will of Allah by providing details of characteristics of the authority of Allah and links to Stimulus 5 and Islamic beliefs about divine judgment
 - Excerpt 2 accurately identified and explained relevant characteristics of the Christian teaching of free will — specifically, creation in the image of God, and the role of sin and heaven. These were used to explain the acceptance of individual responsibility to do good and not evil.

<p>Differentiate and Demonstrate understanding</p>	<p>Excerpt 1</p> <p>Firstly, for Muslims, Allah is the only source and guarantor of rights and cannot be suspended or altered by any human. Also, as a result of Muslim's desire to live out the will of Allah and completely submit to him, it is critical that adherents follow and support his desires. Stimulus 5 explores these notions as it states, "Remember My blessings which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill your pledge to me." Therefore, as Allah blessed adherents with these rights they are thereby required to submit to his will and live in accordance with his Allah. Hence, if an adherent was to not support human rights they would then be deviating from the path of Allah and will be judged accordingly on Judgement Day. As such, it is up to the individual to choose the path of Allah and support the rights granted to them.</p>
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	<p>Excerpt 2</p> <p>^{however,} Christian adherents believe that because they were made in the image of God, they have free will. ^{yet,} Although Christianity teaches that ^{sin} people is an inevitable and in order for Christians to reach heaven (due to their linear worldview of one life), these adherents must repent their sins and use their free will to make ethical decisions. This is ^{exemplified} displayed in Stimulus 6 where it states, "I was told that we do evil because we choose to do so of our own free will." This statement further supports the ^{teaching} conce of sin and repentance and a person's free will, which displays that Christianity teaches that the role of individual responsibility in supporting human rights is an adherent's free will to do good and avoid evil.</p>
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This student response excerpt has been included:

- as it identified and explained distinct religious characteristics that establish a valid difference between Islamic and Christian teachings about individual responsibility to support human rights.

Differentiate	<p>Excerpt 3</p> <p>unlike Muslims who are commanded to uphold human rights to demonstrate their dedication to Allah's will, Christians possess the free will to choose whether or not they support human rights. However, the according to the teaching of the sanctity of human life all humans deserve respect and to have their rights upheld.</p>
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Assessment objectives: Analyse perspectives and Evaluate and draw conclusions

Question 5

This question required students to analyse Stimulus 7 and 8 to draw conclusions about how Islamic finance aligned with the statement that 'everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family' (Article 25, *Universal declaration of human rights*). Stimulus 7 provided contextual information about Islamic finance and Stimulus 8 was a quote from the *Qu'ran*.

Effective student responses:

- explained how both Islamic finance and a relevant Islamic teaching aligned with Article 25
- provided a detailed explanation on a relevant Islamic teaching

- provided a justified argument about the relationship between an Islamic teaching and Islamic finance, effectively using Stimulus 8 to justify the conclusion
- organised paragraph/s to convey ideas succinctly, purposefully and fluently in relation to the question.

This student response excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate a section of a high-level response that clearly explained the teaching of 'Greater Jihad' by providing details of specific relevant characteristics of Greater Jihad such as the internal struggle to submit to the will of Allah
- to illustrate effectively use of quotes and the concept of justice from Stimulus 8 to explain Greater Jihad and then linking these to Islamic finance. This was then used to support the alignment between Greater Jihad, Islamic finance and Article 25.

<p>Analyse perspectives, and Evaluate and draw conclusions</p>	<p>Excerpt 1</p> <p>Stimulus 8 speaks of the internal struggle in Muslims to 'not follow desires' or 'deviate' from the will of Allah. This internal struggle is what is known as the Greater Jihad in Islam, concerning it how a Muslim determines how they can best submit to Allah. Stimulus 8 further suggests that a Muslim can overcome this Greater Jihad and thus submit to Allah by 'standing firmly for justice as witnesses to God' (Stimulus).</p> <p>This belief in the importance of justice as a way to overcome the Greater Jihad is manifested in Islamic finance.</p> <p>Stimulus 7 According to Stimulus 7, money can only be made ^{and use} in a way that is 'productive'; only through 'legitimate trade and investments' (Stimulus 7). This is because Muslims believe it unjust to expect to benefit in lending money to, or receiving money from, someone else (Stimulus 7).</p>
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Assessment objectives: Analyse perspectives, Evaluate and draw conclusions, and Create

Question 6

This question required students to analyse relevant stimulus to evaluate the extent to which two Hindu teachings had informed Kailash Satyarthi's beliefs, and how these beliefs could align with the statement that 'childhood is entitled to special care and assistance' (Preamble, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*).

Effective student responses:

- provided clear and detailed explanations of two relevant Hindu teachings that appeared to inform Kailash Satyarthi's beliefs about children's rights, using the stimulus material to support reasoning
- made insightful and reasoned judgments about how these Hindu teachings align with Kailash Satyarthi's support of the statement that 'childhood is entitled to special care and assistance', and supported judgments with a valid argument
- organised paragraph/s to convey ideas succinctly, purposefully and fluently in relation to the question.

This student response excerpt has been included:

- to illustrate a section of a high-level response that provided a detailed and precise explanation of ahimsa. This is done by explaining relevant and specific characteristics of ahimsa including an accurate definition, features of the concept that are relevant to Kailash Satyarthi's beliefs about children's rights, and supports this with effective use of quotes from the stimulus
- to demonstrate insightful and reasoned judgments about the relationship between the Hindu teaching of ahimsa, Kailash Satyarthi's beliefs, and the statement from the Preamble of *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. These were supported with valid arguments that are legitimate and well-founded on authentic and specific Hindu teachings.

<p>Analyse perspectives, and Evaluate and draw conclusions</p>	<p>Excerpt 1</p> <p style="text-align: right;">_____ For</p> <p>instance, Satyarthi's strong belief in "peace and non-violence" (Stimulus 10) is clearly informed by the Hindu promotion of peaceful and respectful interactions among all people ('ahimsa'). Moreover, Satyarthi's belief that humanity should "listen to and respect the voices of children ... [through] acts of] caring and sharing" (Stimulus 11) significantly reflects the doctrine of 'ahimsa' by indicating that all individuals, irrespective of age, should be treated with non-violently with dignified respect. The and support of 'caring and sharing' also accentuates the CRP's promotion of "special care and assistance" for children <u>through highlighting value for self-giving service.</u></p>
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Practices to strengthen

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

- providing teaching and learning experiences that focus on examining stimulus to accurately identify relevant religious teachings from the stimulus that relate to specific human rights concepts, rather than generalised religious ideas. High-level responses identified relevant,

authentic and specific religious teachings that were clearly based in the stimulus and related to the specified human rights article or concept

- strengthening students' understanding of the correct characteristics and features of religious teachings from Unit 4 Topic 2: Religion and human rights, so that explanations of the alignment to human rights concepts move beyond generalisations and provide accurate and relevant details to support the relationship. Successful responses were precise and unambiguous in their explanations of the alignment, pointing to pertinent characteristics that demonstrated a relationship between the teachings and human rights concepts
- providing teaching and learning opportunities that focus on differentiating between religious traditions, so that students can determine the distinct characteristics and differences evident within and across religious traditions when responding to human rights concepts and issues.