

Study of Religion subject report

2025 cohort

January 2026



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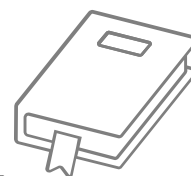
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Introduction



The annual subject reports seek to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement of internal and external assessment processes for all Queensland schools. The 2025 subject report is the culmination of the partnership between schools and the QCAA. It addresses school-based assessment design and judgments, and student responses to external assessment for General and General (Extension) subjects. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop student learning and assessment experiences for 2026.

The report also includes information about:

- how schools have applied syllabus objectives in the design and marking of internal assessments
- how syllabus objectives have been applied in the marking of external assessments
- patterns of student achievement
- important considerations to note related to the revised 2025 syllabus (where relevant).

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 that demonstrate best practice.

Schools are encouraged to reflect on the effective practices identified for each assessment, consider the recommendations to strengthen assessment design and explore the authentic student work samples provided.

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 internal and external assessment.

The report is publicly available to promote transparency and accountability. Students, parents, community members and other education stakeholders can use it to learn about the assessment practices and outcomes for senior subjects.

Subject highlights

94

schools offered
Study of Religion



34%

improvement in
endorsed IA3
at Application 1

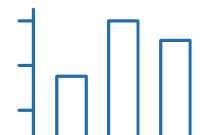


99.77%

of students
received a
C or higher



Subject data summary



Unit completion

The following data shows students who completed the General subject.

Note: All data is correct as at January 2026. Where percentages are provided, these are rounded to two decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Number of schools that offered Study of Religion: 94.

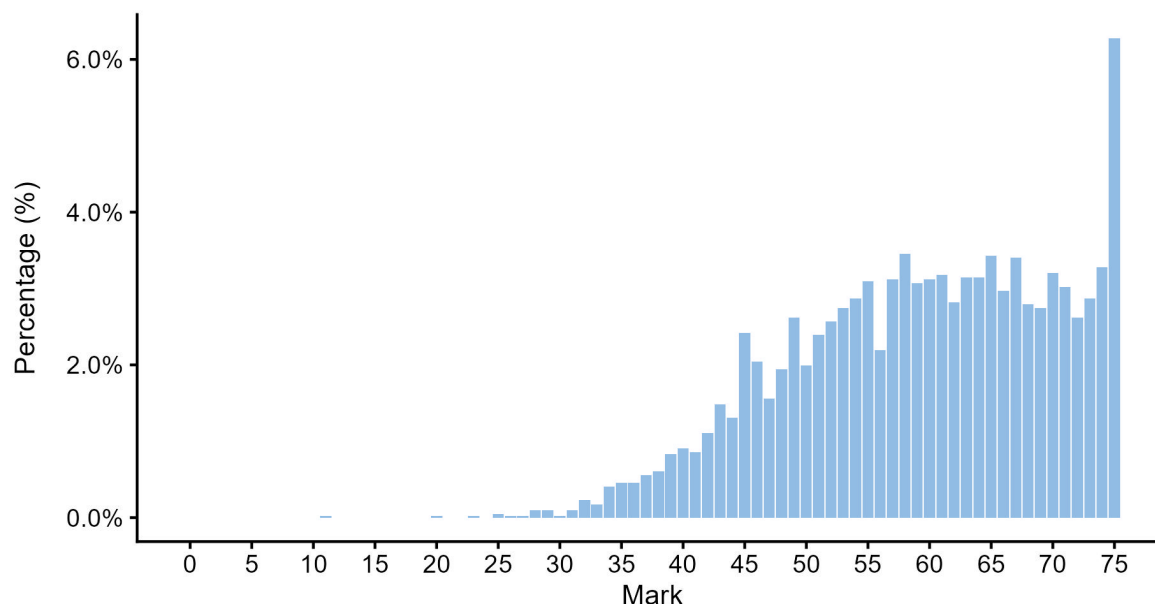
Completion of units	Unit 1	Unit 2	Units 3 and 4
Number of students completed	4,428	4,176	3,956

Units 1 and 2 results

Number of students	Unit 1	Unit 2
Satisfactory	4,270	4,099
Unsatisfactory	158	77

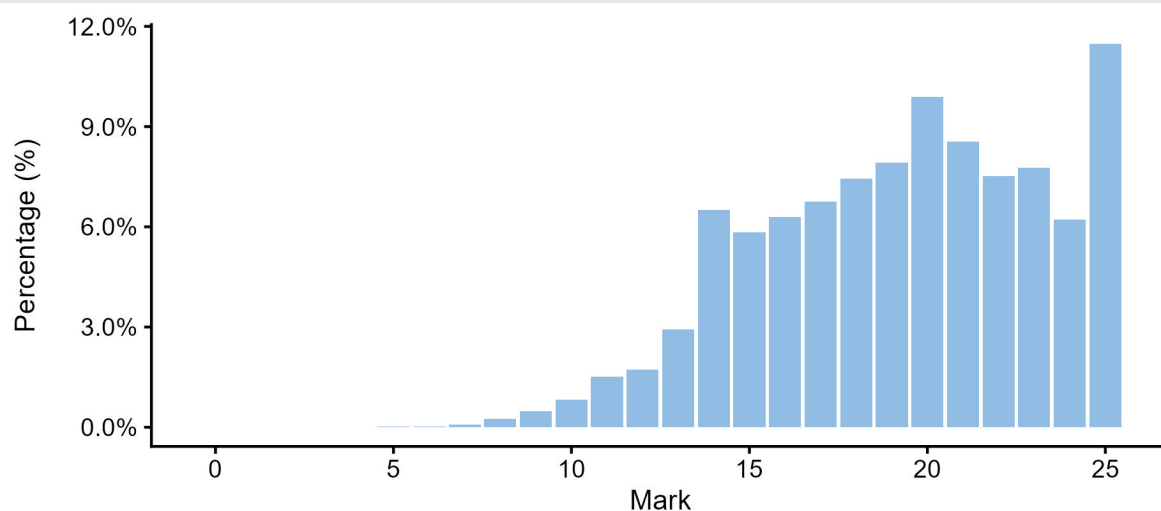
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results

Total marks for IA

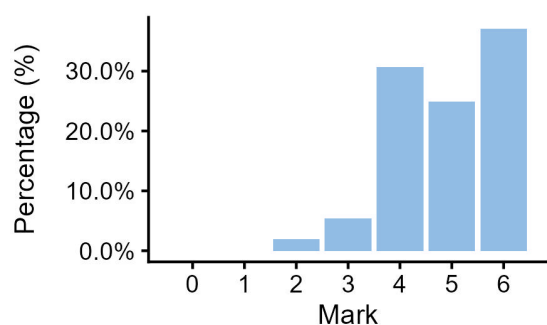


IA1 marks

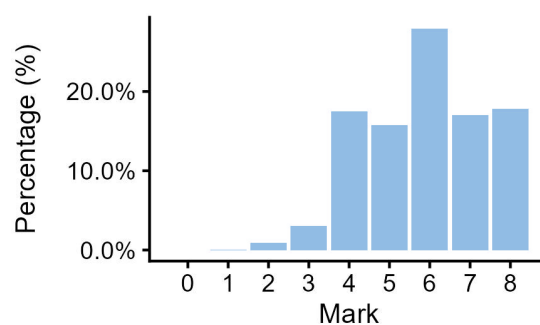
IA1 total



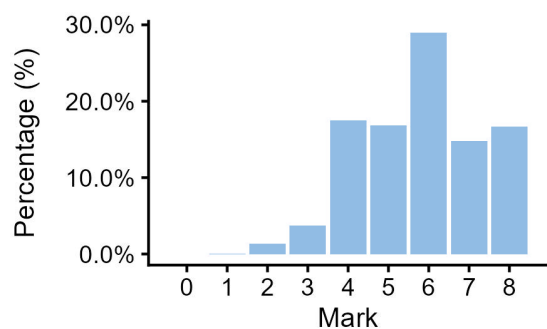
IA1 Criterion: Describing and demonstrating understanding



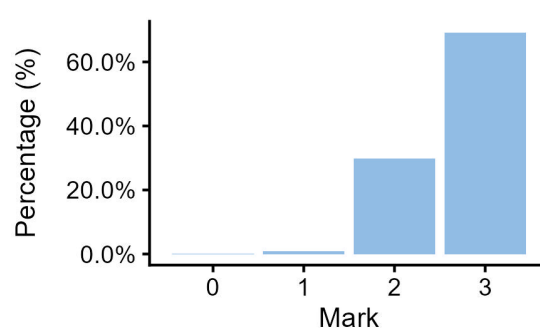
IA1 Criterion: Differentiating and analysing



IA1 Criterion: Evaluating and drawing conclusions

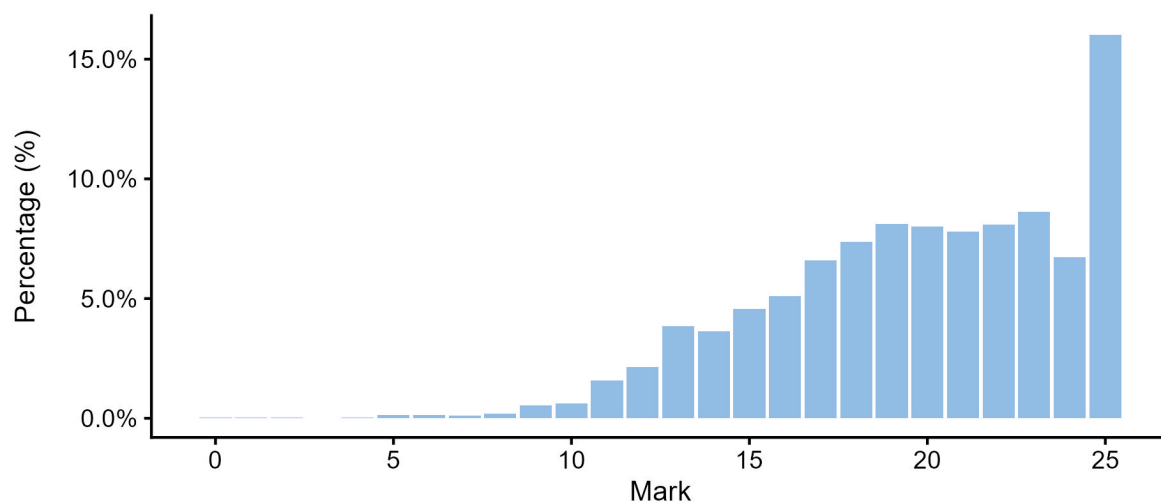


IA1 Criterion: Creating

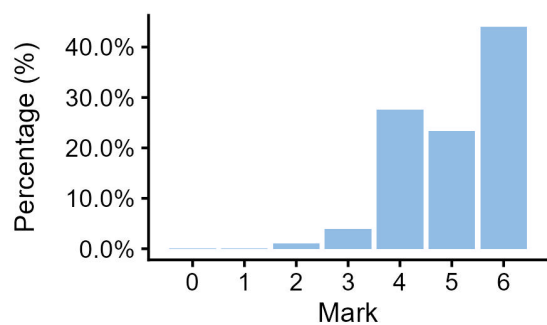


IA2 marks

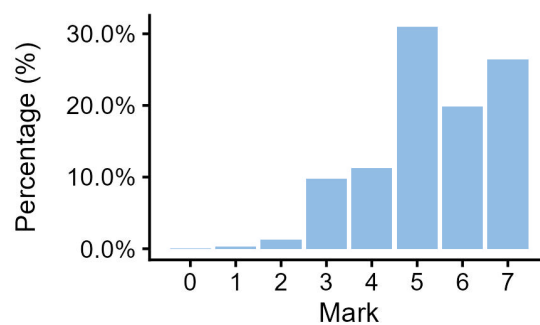
IA2 total



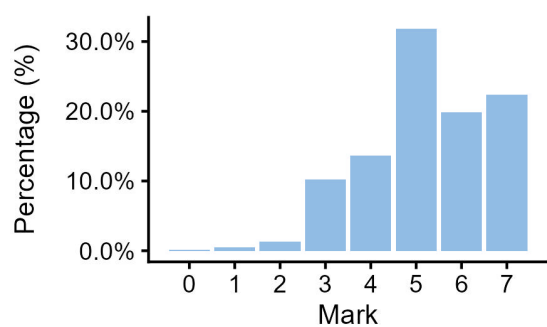
IA2 Criterion: Demonstrating understanding



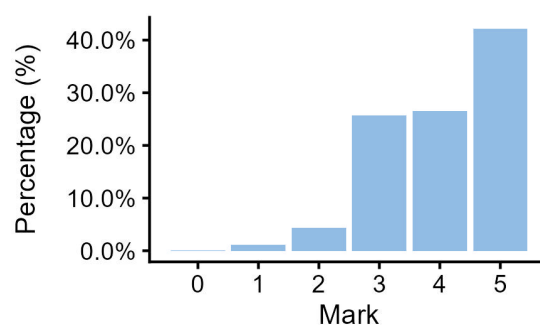
IA2 Criterion: Analysing



IA2 Criterion: Evaluating and drawing conclusions

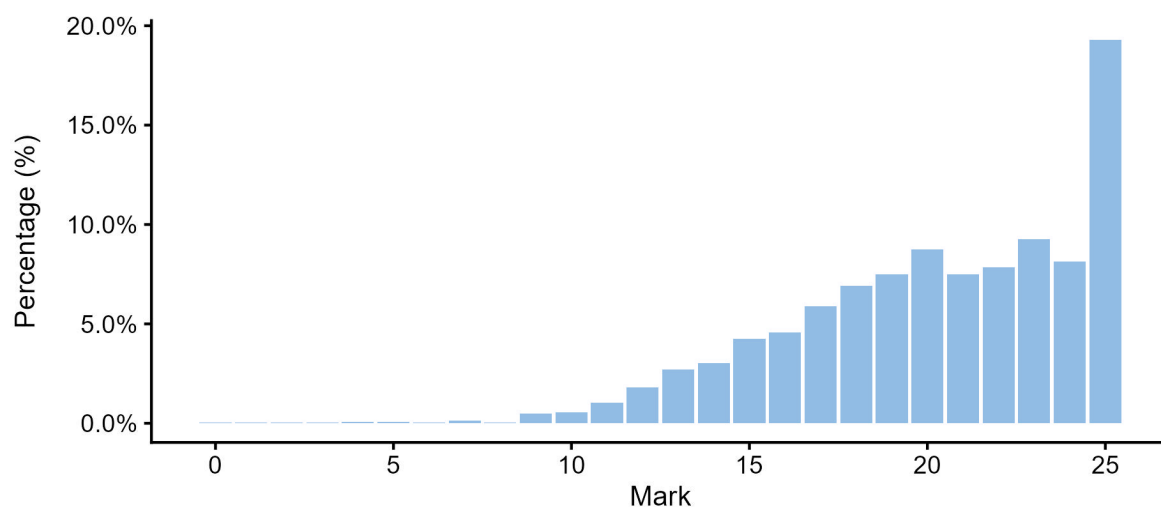


IA2 Criterion: Considering, organising and creating

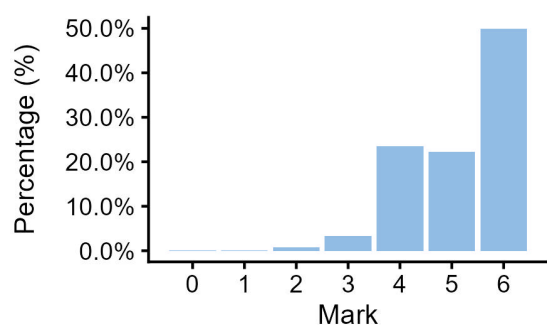


IA3 marks

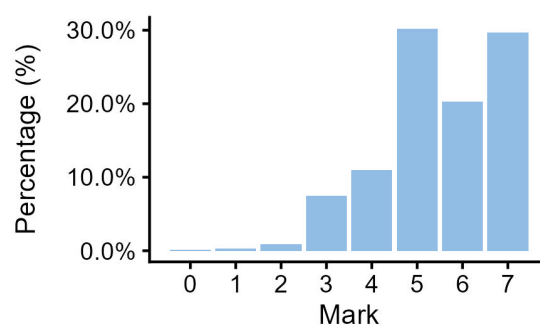
IA3 total



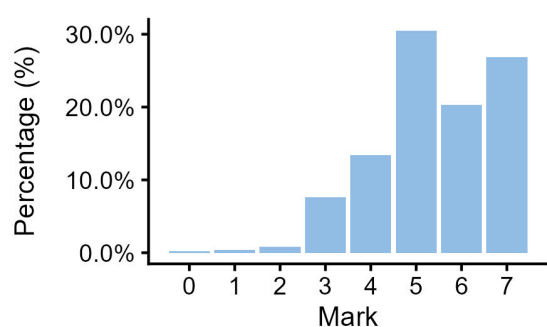
IA3 Criterion: Demonstrating understanding



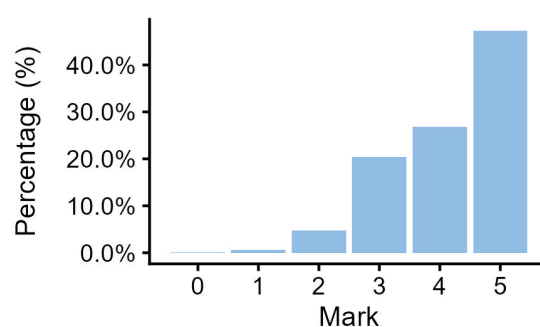
IA3 Criterion: Analysing



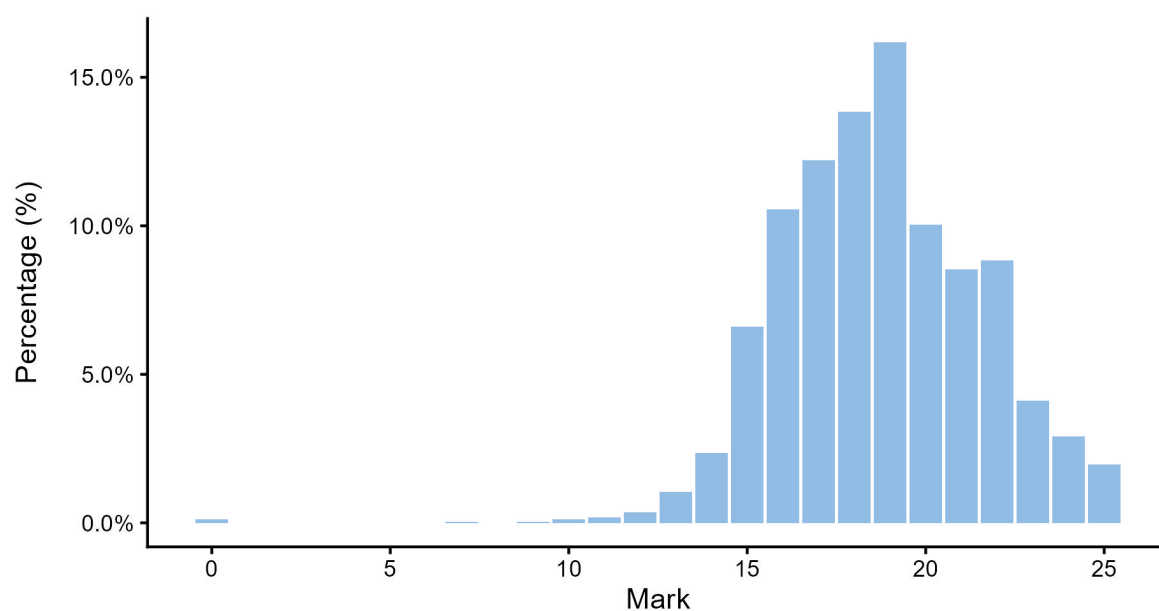
IA3 Criterion: Evaluating and drawing conclusions



IA3 Criterion: Considering, organising and creating

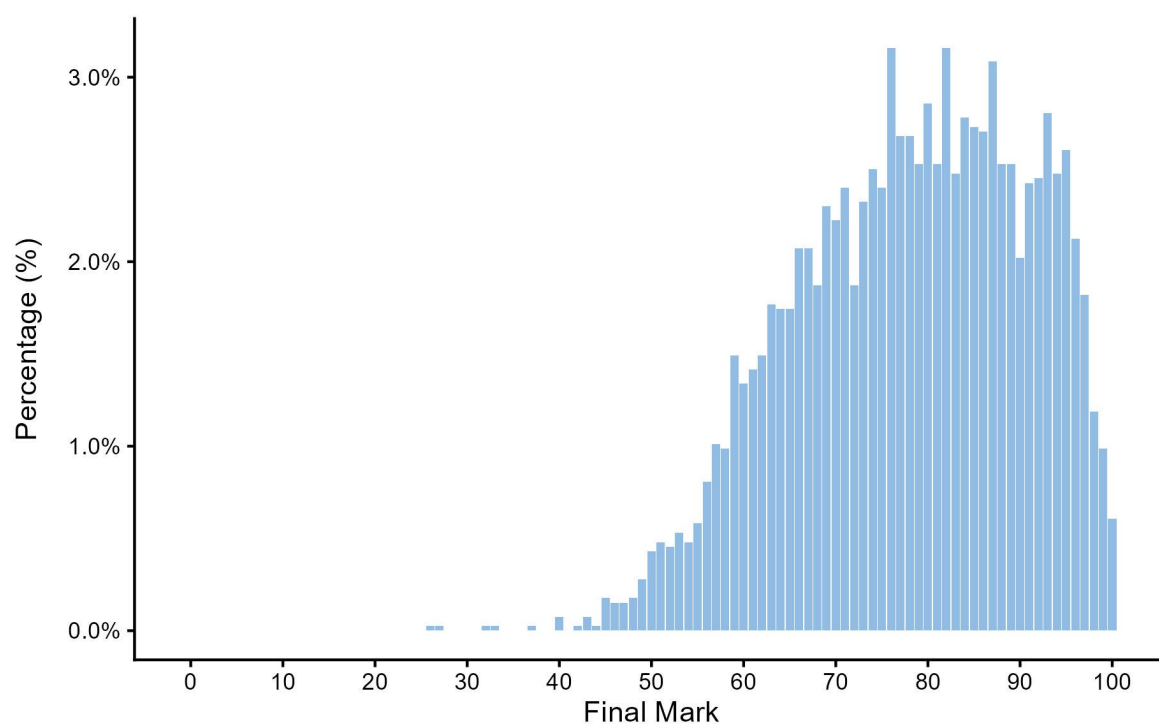


External assessment (EA) marks



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	100–84	83–64	63–43	42–18	17–0

Distribution of standards

Number of students who achieved each standard across the state.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Number of students	1,498	1,883	566	9	0
Percentage of students	37.87	47.60	14.31	0.23	0.00

Internal assessment



This information and advice relate 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 assessment. 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 *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 9.5.

Percentage of instruments endorsed in Application 1

Internal assessment	IA1	IA2	IA3
Number of instruments	94	94	94
Percentage endorsed in Application 1	26	71	66

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 instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) and are used to make decisions about the cohort's results.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 9.6.

The following table includes the percentage agreement between the provisional marks and confirmed marks by assessment instrument. The Assessment decisions section 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	94	826	3	93.62
2	94	821	1	94.68
3	94	830	4	97.87

Internal assessment 1 (IA1)



Examination — extended response (25%)

The examination assesses the application of a range of cognitions to a provided question, scenario and/or problem.

Student responses must be completed individually, under supervised conditions, and in a set timeframe.

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	103
Authentication	0
Authenticity	1
Item construction	4
Scope and scale	20

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- aligned with assessment and syllabus specifications requiring the writing of an analytical essay and using unseen stimulus
- stipulated the analysis of perspectives of two major world religions in response to a social ethical issue in Syllabus section 4.3, Topic 1
- provided opportunity for students to satisfy the assessment objectives, particularly Assessment objectives 4 and 6 (Syllabus section 4.5.1)
- provided clear and accurate instructions that informed students about the processes they needed to engage in to meet assessment objectives and ensured students were not led to a predetermined response.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- provide students with a process to achieve the assessment objectives, especially Objectives 2 and 3 in the 2025 syllabus (Unit 3 Topic 1, p. 27). Tasks must direct students to
 - analyse perspectives about religious expression that form and inform responses to a social–ethical issue

- direct students to evaluate the significance and influence of religion on religious–ethical stances made by adherents to a social–ethical issue
- provide directives that reflect the syllabus objectives and the ISMG performance-level descriptors in the 2025 syllabus (Unit 3 Topic 1, p. 29)
- provide a balanced package of stimulus items (e.g. excerpts from sacred texts and religious writings, reference books, journals, media articles, illustrations images) that
 - are succinct, enabling students to engage with them in the 15-minute planning time. For the 2025 syllabus, a visual stimulus is no longer a requirement
 - provoke thinking, without providing specific teachings or conclusions about religious positions on the issue. This will better position the students to demonstrate their own unique conclusions (Unit 3 Topic 1 — 2025 syllabus, p. 27)
 - relate to the context of the social–ethical issue and the perspectives of the two religious traditions, which should reflect the broader views within a religion and not be limited to one denomination or subgroup.

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	3
Language	4
Layout	1
Transparency	3

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided a balanced context and stimulus that avoided bias
- included images and diagrams that were clear, relevant and accessible to all students
- provided clear and precise instructions that enabled students to understand the task requirements
- used appropriate language and avoided unnecessary jargon and colloquial language
- were free from spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- provide legible stimulus content, and avoid confusing stimulus layouts or scaffolding
- use consistent terminology that aligns with the syllabus rather than introducing new terminology, e.g. identify the social–ethical issue as ‘the environment’ even if narrowing the task to a specific focus such as ‘pollution’.

Additional advice

When developing an assessment instrument for this IA, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The 2025 syllabus (Unit 3 Topic 1, p. 20) states that students should analyse perspectives about religious expressions that form and inform responses to issues or situations with specific use of sacred texts and other authoritative sources. Therefore, their use in stimulus is recommended. However, references to specific teachings such as the Ten Commandments or the Noble Eightfold Path are examples of content that, if provided as stimulus, would be familiar to students. This prevents deeper analysis and could lead to a predetermined or expected response in relation to a religion's ethical approach to the social–ethical issue. Unfamiliar stimulus enables students to connect the concept to ethical outcomes, which can inform a deeper analysis of beliefs and practices within and across traditions.
- The Evaluating criterion has been refined in the 2025 syllabus, through the assessment objective wording 'evaluate the significance and influence of religion on ... social–ethical issues.' This must be done through the synthesising of religious ideas and positions regarding social–ethical issues, making judgments and drawing conclusions about the significance of religion and its influence on individuals, groups and society when responding to social–ethical issues. Decisions must be justified with reasoning and evidence from sacred writings and other authoritative sources. Tasks should align with the subject matter for Unit 3 Topic 1 (2025 syllabus, p. 20) and Syllabus assessment objectives (2025 syllabus 2025, p. 27).
- The 2025 syllabus requires that stimulus is succinct enough to allow students sufficient time to engage with it, e.g. one A3 page or equivalent. This enables students to engage with the stimulus in the planning time of 15 minutes.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability 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	97.87	2.13	0.00	0.00
2	Differentiating and analysing	97.87	2.13	0.00	0.00
3	Evaluating and drawing conclusions	97.87	2.13	0.00	0.00
4	Creating	97.87	0.00	2.13	0.00

Effective practices

Reliable judgments were made using the ISMG for this IA when:

- there was evidence that attention was given to the ability to clearly differentiate between the two religious traditions while showing a comprehensive understanding of the beliefs and practices of each religion
- marks were awarded where the essay showed a logical progression in the development of ideas through each of the four criteria. This was often supported by a clear and concise introduction that contained a hypothesis used throughout the essay.

Practices to strengthen

When making judgments for this IA for the 2025 syllabus, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the ISMGs in the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- How stimulus is to be used in the response is more clearly articulated in the second criterion, Analysing, in the 2025 syllabus. The selection and use of relevant information from stimulus must demonstrate the influence on decision-making for the social–ethical issue.
- The 2025 syllabus refers to the synthesis of ideas in Criterion 3, Evaluating. The link between synthesis and evaluation is more explicit in the 2025 syllabus ISMG.

To further ensure reliable judgments are made using the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- when making a judgment in Criterion 2, particularly at the 5–6 mark performance level, consider the performance-level descriptors above and below what is being awarded. Ensure the performance-level descriptors clearly match the evidence in the student response
- for Criterion 4, it is possible for there to be some minor errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation and for the response to still be awarded the top performance level. While the 2025 syllabus requires consistently appropriate application of language conventions, this does not require an error-free response. Responses that contain some errors that do not impede the development of ideas to any extent can be awarded the top performance level.

Additional advice

It is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The 2025 syllabus has a reduced number of assessment objectives, listing only four objectives. Each criterion has only one assessment objective, which is then clearly outlined in the ISMG.
- The word ‘differentiation’ does not appear in the ISMG for the 2025 syllabus. The response now needs to show an explanation of the distinct beliefs and practices of the religious traditions and must include similarities and differences.

Samples

The following excerpts have been included to provide examples of the ways religious traditions inform ethical decision-making when responding to a specific social–ethical issue.

Excerpt 1 provides a clear and concise introduction that articulates the essay’s hypothesis regarding the ethical stance of Christians and Muslims towards the social–ethical issue of refugees.

Excerpt 2 illustrates effective use of ethical teachings and stimulus to support arguments from a Christian perspective on the issue of capital punishment.

Excerpt 3 clearly articulates key differences between the religious traditions in relation to the social-ethical issue of capital punishment. It demonstrates an understanding of Buddhist beliefs that support drawing appropriate conclusions.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

A refugee refers to a ~~the~~ person forced to leave their home country due to imminent threats to their survival. While Christian and Muslim adherents', ^{respective} religious teachings inform obligations toward the issue of refugee treatment, any action is ultimately tempered by the social, political and ~~religious~~ economic realities of their societies. Motivated by a shared telos – eternal life – both Christians and Muslims are called to uphold the inherent human dignity of all people. However, responses differ on the basis that Christianity favours virtue ethics, focusing on cultivating virtues such as compassion and ~~an~~ agape love in communion with God and Islam prioritises the deontological duties grounded in divine command, emphasising social cohesion. Despite these differences, both traditions ~~mandate~~ ^{influenced by} care for the vulnerable ~~and~~ fulfilment of owed duties.

Excerpt 2

Conversely, ^{the} ~~Catholic~~ interpretations of scripture by Christians – such as Catholics – ^{informs} ~~guides~~ their responses against capital punishment. The Catholic Church draws upon their four authorities – scripture, Natural Law, Tradition, and experience – to a significant extent when responding to capital punishment. Scripture such as "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13) – "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matthew 7:12) – and the Golden Rule is critical to support their perspectives. Furthermore, the experiences of humanity means the desire ^{using} for capital punishment has reduced significantly – the ^{states} ~~United~~ conducting executions and ^{imposing} ~~the~~ death ^{sentences in the United States} ~~penalty~~ has reduced significantly from 2003–2023 (St. 3) as ^{Christianity} ~~the~~ ~~Chri~~ has major influence over governmental policies. Natural Law, the inherent sense of right and wrong using our conscience and divine judgement of God's plan, is drawn upon extensively to support the Christian perspective that only God determines who lives and dies – humanity should not interfere. The development of Catholic Church Tradition is highly influential in informing religious-ethical responses. Previously, the ^{of the Catholic Church} ~~Catechism~~ permitted execution as it safeguarded the common good, but the Catholic Church would not perform execution themselves and would instead hand convicted₃ to the government.

Excerpt 3

Unlike Christianity's linear worldview and teachings, Buddhism's cyclical worldview and teachings of anatta - no self - is ^{vital} highly in guiding a Buddhist's response to capital punishment as it means nothing is permanent, therefore ^{"everyone"} ~~people~~ has the potential to improve and correct themselves" (st. 6) but execution deprives people of this possibility. ^{capital punishment} It goes against ^{one of} ~~the one~~ the Five Precepts, do no harm, which is fundamental in ^{informing} ~~guiding~~ adherents perspectives. ^{Their teleological} ~~on capital~~ perspectives, as everything is related to the consequences of actions, is the driving force ^{forming their responses} against capital punishment. ^{by highlighted the harmful consequences generated as a result.} The Buddhist belief in enlightenment, a major difference from Christianity, significantly guides the advocacy of the Mahayana school against capital punishment. They preach collective enlightenment, with the help of bodhisattvas who promote loving-kindness and are therefore more vocal advocates against ^{capital} ~~the~~ punishment as it decreases the likelihood of Nirvana. These ^{religious-ethical responses from} beliefs and perspectives, informing a Buddhist's decision-making processes, are crucial.

Internal assessment 2 (IA2)



Investigation — inquiry response (25%)

This assessment requires students to research a specific problem, question, issue, design challenge or hypothesis through collection, analysis and synthesis of primary and/or secondary data. An investigation uses research or investigative practices to assess a range of cognitions in a particular context. Research or investigative practices include locating and using information beyond students' own knowledge and the data they have been given.

Students must adhere to research conventions, e.g. citations, reference lists or bibliographies. This assessment occurs over an extended and defined period of time. Students may use class time and their own time to develop a response.

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	21
Authentication	5
Authenticity	0
Item construction	1
Scope and scale	0

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided students with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter for Unit 3 Topic 2: Ethical Relationships (Syllabus section 4.4)
- provided students with the opportunity to meet the required assessable objectives (particularly Assessment objectives 4 and 6) and performance-level descriptors of the ISMG
- adhered to the assessment specifications (Syllabus section 4.5.2), including the requirement to investigate one contemporary issue from the list in Unit 3 Topic 2, analyse perspectives within the religion selected and respond to a hypothesis which is used as the focus of the student's inquiry
- provided specific directions to 'analyse perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent's response' to the contemporary ethical issue selected, and to 'evaluate and draw conclusions about the influence of religious ethics on an adherent's response' to the ethical issue.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- provide a selection from the six topics and related examples prescribed in the 2025 syllabus subject matter for Unit 3 Topic 2: Personal Ethics (2025 syllabus, p. 21)
- require students to present an analytical essay that analyses perspectives from within one of the five major world religions (2025 syllabus, p. 31).

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	1
Transparency	5

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- clearly articulated a single specified world religion and the topics from which students could select, which reflected the subject matter for Unit 3 Topic 2: Ethical relationships (Syllabus section 4.4)
- provided clear direction in relation to Assessment objectives 4 and 6, so students knew how to approach the task.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- provide clear instructions to ensure all students in the cohort are investigating the same major world religion, while giving students a choice of topic within the parameters of the Subject matter (2025 syllabus, p. 21)
- avoid directives that are outside the assessment specifications, e.g. a requirement to provide research questions, notes or a journal is outside the authentication guidelines.

Additional advice

When developing an assessment instrument for this IA, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The Analysing criterion has been revised, and the ISMG now requires students to analyse and respond to information in religious texts and other authoritative sources. This requirement differs from the Considering, organising and creating criterion in the 2019 syllabus. Students are now assessed on the quality and diversity of sources, with more explicit assessment of the credibility of the sources and how they inform analysis.

- Assessment objective 2 (Analysing) has been revised and should be reflected in task directives. This objective now requires students to
 - analyse perspectives about religious expression within a world religion that influence responses to the contemporary personal ethical issue selected
 - explain the selected religion's influence on responding to a contemporary personal ethical issue.
- Assessment objective 3 (Evaluating) has been revised. Newly devised tasks should reflect syllabus language, particularly the inclusion of the 'significance' and 'influence' of religious ethics (2025 syllabus, p. 31).

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability 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	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	Analysing	97.87	2.13	0.00	0.00
3	Evaluating and drawing conclusions	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	Considering, organising and creating	96.81	0.00	3.19	0.00

Effective practices

Reliable judgments were made using the ISMG for this IA when:

- responses aligned with the performance-level descriptors in Criterion 1. They consistently matched with an understanding of the identified religious tradition's beliefs, explaining how these informed an adherent's response to a contemporary ethical issue
- determining the match of evidence in student responses regarding the discernment of conclusions in relation to the influence of religious ethics on an adherent.

Practices to strengthen

When making judgments for this IA for the 2025 syllabus, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the ISMGs in the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- Primary and secondary sources are no longer a consideration. The quality of research is now demonstrated by the critical selection and use of information from religious texts and authoritative sources. This informs the analysis of perspectives and religious expression as demonstrated in Criterion 2.

- Similarities and differences of beliefs and practices within the chosen religion should be explained to show an appropriate level of analysis in Criterion 2, demonstrating an understanding of how responses are influenced in relation to the selected personal ethical issue.

To further ensure reliable judgments are made using the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- there is a focus on the first descriptor in the Analysing criterion. Responses at the upper performance levels need to show that analysis of perspectives is informed by critical selection and appropriate use of relevant information. This should be appropriately cited according to the school's chosen referencing conventions
- responses should focus on the significance of religious beliefs and teachings on personal ethics and the way these influence adherents within a religious tradition. Approaches to ethical theories must not be the argument's focus.

Additional advice

It is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- Evaluation is required to demonstrate synthesis of ideas about the influence of religious ethics on responses to a contemporary personal ethical issue. Judgments about the significance of religion and its influence on responses now includes the justification of judgments, enhancing the importance of supporting arguments through a confluence of ideas within the response.
- The specific context of the religion and personal ethical issue should be considered when making judgments about the selection and use of sources.

Samples

The following excerpts have been included to provide examples of the ways a religious tradition informs ethical decision-making when responding to a contemporary ethical issue.

Excerpt 1 is an introductory paragraph that provides the context for discussion regarding Buddhism's interaction with Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART). The excerpt has a clear and detailed hypothesis that guides the analysis throughout the essay.

Excerpt 2 incorporates various credible sources within a body paragraph to present perspectives regarding a Buddhist response to euthanasia. It concludes the paragraph with a clear judgment about the extent to which a Buddhist's response is influenced by religious ethics.

Excerpt 3 demonstrates an understanding of how Islam influences adherents when considering IVF technology. It combines the overall analysis covered in the body of the essay and addresses the initial hypothesis to create a concise concluding paragraph.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Ethical issues regarding Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) are subject to contentious views in many faiths, embodying significant doctrinal perspectives. Nonetheless, contemporary scientific developments present multifaceted ethical issues, prevalent within various religious precepts, particularly Buddhism, thereby necessitating reconsideration of Orthodox Doctrines. **While both *Mahayana* and *Theravada* Buddhists emphasise the sanctity of life and significance of ethical action, their theological differences give rise to the intricacy of progressive ethical issues, specifically In Vitro Fertilisation.** This divergence foregrounds the way Buddhist adherents engage in bioethical difficulties, signifying the inconsistency of moral interpretations within the broader context of Buddhist moral philosophy. Despite the prominence of In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) among Buddhist adherents, ethical implications persist concerning the creation of life. Buddhist teachings raise moral concerns relative to the practice, particularly regarding the decimation of nascent life, the perceived artificiality of the process, and the presence of consciousness. Moreover, emerging ART, specifically In Vitro Gametogenesis (IVG), further augments these implications, prompting introspection among Buddhists. Adherents further contend the complexities surrounding the precise moment of conception, engendering a more nuanced analysis of the Buddhist faith.

Excerpt 2

When considering the intentional act of ending one's life to relieve suffering, the karmic cycle is an important religious principle, likely to be used by adherents when justify their stance. *Karma* is "a principle of moral retribution, which holds that one inevitably suffers the good and bad consequences of one's moral deeds" and is linked to a belief in rebirth or the cycle of *samsara*, such that "good and bad moral deeds in one life lead to rebirth in a better or worse condition in the subsequent life," (Keown, 2008). Liberation from *samsara* is otherwise known as achieving nirvana, reached when one has purified their karma by adhering to the Eightfold Path, accumulating enough good karma (*punya*) so that karma ceases to bind one to the boundless cycle of rebirth. Therefore, some Buddhist adherents reject the practice, believing that illness, disease, and suffering are consequences of one's karmic debt that must be endured. Lawton and Morgan propose the idea that "death through euthanasia ... can never be an escape from suffering," as it is merely delayed to a subsequent life, (Morgan, et.al, 2007, p90). Further corroborating with this notion, healthcare, and ethics academics Grove, Lovell, and Best, outline that "the ending of a life is not the solution to suffering because life is seen through the prism of this cyclical existence of death and rebirth," (Grove, et.al, 2022). Robert Florida, associate fellow at the University of Victoria, suggests that euthanasia, with the intention of evading karmic consequences that initially led to great illness and suffering is "a futile attempt," (Florida, 1993, p.40). This idea is complemented by Tibetan Buddhist yogi and saint, Milarepa, who authored a poem on the subject of illness and retribution in his biography "Your body was torn with agonising pain/ And your mind was full of grievances! / ... All this was due to your past sinful deed-/ A bitter retribution to the Ripening Karma" (Lesco, 1986, p.53). In conjunction, these sources posit a common Buddhist argument against euthanasia, that the premature loss of human life disturbs the natural cycle of karma and attempts to evade a karmic debt that must be rightfully paid.

Reference:

Keown, D. (2008). *Buddhism and Medical Ethics: Principles and Practice*. University of London

Excerpt 3

The pursuit of offspring through the use of IVF in response to fertility issues is generally perceived as permissible within Islamic belief as it upholds the principle of 'assured parenthood' – a natural extension of the marital union, (Emile, 2024). However, selective reduction as a nuance of IVF raises great ethical concern due to the termination of unborn foetus questioning the principle of sanctity of life (ACOG, 2017). A thorough analysis of secular and non-secular personal perspectives relating to IVF reveal how the interplay between secular culture and Islamic tradition resulted in complete reliance on technology or Allah's divine will in decision-making (Anas, 2025; Hamdan, 2013). Hence, it was concluded that Islamic ethical thinking holds profound significance to an adherents' response to IVF through personal decision-making, the influence of Quranic verses and the application of Islamic ethical teachings.

Internal assessment 3 (IA3)



Investigation — inquiry response (25%)

This assessment requires students to research a specific problem, question, issue, design challenge or hypothesis through collection, analysis and synthesis of primary and/or secondary data. An investigation uses research or investigative practices to assess a range of cognitions in a particular context. Research or investigative practices include locating and using information beyond students' own knowledge and the data they have been given.

Students must adhere to research conventions, e.g. citations, reference lists or bibliographies. This assessment occurs over an extended and defined period of time. Students may use class time and their own time to develop a response.

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	23
Authentication	3
Authenticity	4
Item construction	4
Scope and scale	18

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided students with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter for Unit 4 Topic 1: Religion and the nation–state (Syllabus section 5.3.3)
- directed students to address Assessment objectives 4 and 6 (Syllabus section 5.5.1), requiring students to analyse perspectives that influenced the selected religion's interactions with the nation–state, and then to evaluate and draw conclusions about this interaction, specifically seeking conclusions about the influence on shaping society's response
- ensured the scale of information and the knowledge and skills students were required to address were manageable within the allocated 15 hours. This was best demonstrated where the scope of the investigation was narrowed to a specific event or timeframe within the context of the religion and nation–state interaction.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- narrow the scope and scale of the content students are required to investigate, e.g. by specifying an event in the task such as ‘investigate the ways Tibetan Buddhists interacted with the nation–state of Tibet during the 1959 Buddhist Uprising’ or ‘investigate the ways Australian Aboriginal spiritualities have interacted with the Australian Government in response to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s Apology Speech in 2008’ (2025 syllabus, pp. 23–24). For some topics, a broader timeframe may be appropriate, e.g. investigating Hinduism in India 1945–1948
- explicitly include the language of Assessment objectives 2 and 3 to ensure alignment with the performance-level descriptors in the ISMG and allow students to demonstrate the assessment objectives
- refrain from requesting research notes and journals, which are beyond the specifications for the task.

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	1
Language	0
Layout	0
Transparency	0

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- avoided language, stimulus and directions that contained bias or inappropriate content
- used appropriate language and avoided unnecessary jargon and colloquial language, which might have confused students and detracted from the key objectives of the assessment.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- provide context and task directions that do not lead students to a prescribed conclusion or judgment, as this would limit students’ ability to address Assessment objective 3 (Unit 4 Topic 1, 2025 syllabus)
- provide clear instructions using cues that align with the syllabus specifications, objectives and ISMG.

Additional advice

When developing an assessment instrument for this IA, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The language used in Unit 4 Topic 1 (2025 syllabus, p. 36) has been refined. Tasks must direct students to
 - analyse perspectives about religious expression within a world religion that influences responses to the nation–state in a particular context
 - evaluate the significance and influence of religion on responses to the nation–state in a particular context.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability 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	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	Analysing	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	Evaluating and drawing conclusions	97.87	2.13	0.00	0.00
4	Considering, organising and creating	98.94	1.06	0.00	0.00

Effective practices

Reliable judgments were made using the ISMG for this IA when:

- schools consistently applied the performance-level descriptors in Criterion 1 to student responses when determining the extent of the interaction between religion and the nation–state
- matching student evidence regarding the analysis of perspectives in Criterion 2 and how they influenced the interaction between the religion and the nation–state.

Practices to strengthen

When making judgments for this IA for the 2025 syllabus, it is essential to consider the following key differences between the ISMGs in the 2019 and 2025 syllabuses:

- The critical selection and use of information from religious texts and authoritative sources must inform analysis of perspectives and religious expression, as outlined in Criterion 2. Distinct beliefs and practices within the identified religion should be investigated and explained to

enable students to show an understanding of how these influence religion's interaction with the nation–state.

- The focus is on students producing an analytical essay that synthesises the ideas they have researched during the inquiry process on the influence of religion, its interaction within the specified context and the extent to which it has shaped society's response.

To further ensure reliable judgments are made using the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- although historical and political sources can be important in establishing the context, the essay needs to focus on the religious expression in the identified context
- for the Evaluating criterion, ideas should be incorporated into each argument, allowing for the logical, cohesive and succinct development of ideas where each detailed judgment is supported with reasoning and evidence
- for the Communicating criterion, a high-level response clearly uses the analytical essay genre to communicate the argument outlined in the hypothesis and does not contain elements from other genres. Students are directed to focus on the accuracy of the religious language identified and used in the response to demonstrate the top performance level.

Samples

The following excerpts have been included to provide examples of the ways in which religion has interacted with the nation–state in a specific context.

Excerpt 1 highlights the incorporation of various religious perspectives when discussing the interaction of Hinduism in India during partition.

Excerpts 2 and 3 both show how key teachings and religious perspectives underpin and influence interactions with the nation–state. Excerpt 2 explores this through a Catholic Christian perspective in the El Salvadorian context, while Excerpt 3 considers Buddhist perspectives in Burma.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

This “mix [of] religious identity with questions of territory and statehood [...] made political settlement very difficult to achieve” (Religious Education Council, 2017). Some political leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi, who opposed this violent migration, suggested that adherents should uphold *ahimsa* (non-violence) and promote interfaith unity (*sarva dhamra sama bhava*) as directed (UNESCO, 2020). Additionally, his philosophy of *sarvodaya* (progress of all) and *satyagraha* (truth force) promoted an inclusive society founded on moral principles that were harmonious for all religious traditions and castes, opposing the religious division and political pressure of the partition that sparked the mass refugee movement (Yadav & Khan, 2023). Numerous adherents, both Hindu and Muslim, aligned with his beliefs and were influenced by this radical yet peaceful religious leader, wanting religious ethics to be brought to politics “rather than political militancy [brought] into religious communities”, opposing the partition in its entirety (Heredia, 2009). However, although he maintained his philosophy, the ideals he sought were never actioned due to India’s majoritarian political parties that were biased towards Hinduism, despite the constitution declaring the nation-state as secular (Ali, 2022). This was apparent in the Hindu Mahasabha and Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh¹, two right-wing Hindu nationalist groups that politicised the partition (Mishra, 2018). They interpreted the traditional beliefs and ethical teachings of Hinduism through the ideology of Hindutva² that converted their spiritual beliefs into a political identity commonly labelled as Hindu extremism (Mishra, 2018). Hindutva, a predominantly anti-secular ideology (The University of Melbourne, 2024), forced the migration of other religious adherents and justified the violence towards them through the belief of *Hindu Rashtra* (Hindu nation) which deemed India as a Hindu theocratic state (Kaur, 2022). This ideology also deemed religious minorities, such as Christianity and Islam, as ‘outsiders’ due to their “perceived allegiance to [their] people, places and political powers outside India [which] meant that they cannot be ‘true’ Indians” (Religious Education Council, 2017).

Attributions for sources quoted in Excerpt 1:

Religious Education Council. (2017). *Religion and conflict: Partition and its aftermath | Why is this relevant to resilience?* <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/rec/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Gateway_4-3c.pdf>

Excerpt 2

Assassinated by a right-wing death squad while celebrating mass on March 24th, 1980, Romero's death occurred nearly twelve years before the civil war's end (University of Notre Dame, 2025). In his final sermon, delivered just one day prior, he addressed the military directly: "The peasants you kill are your brothers and sisters... No soldier is obliged to obey a law contrary to the law of God. In the name of God... I command you to stop the repression" (Romero, cited in Caritas Australia, 2024). This plea reflected core Catholic values such as justice, solidarity and the sanctity of life, urging soldiers to recognise the humanity of their victims and prioritise divine law over political obedience. Aware of the danger he faced, Romero stated, "If they kill me, I will rise again... may my death...be for the liberation of my people" (Romero, cited in University of Notre Dame, 2025). By framing his potential death in the language of sacrifice and resurrection, Romero intentionally mirrored Christ's martyrdom, offering himself as a catalyst for unity, moral awakening and societal transformation. Through these declarations, Romero exemplified key Catholic Social Teachings: dignity of the human person and preferential option for the poor (Caritas, 2024). Embodying these values, he transformed the Church into a moral authority that not only denounced injustice but modelled how faith could inspire resistance and shape national conscience (Erhart, 2023). By offering his life for the oppressed, Romero became a unifying symbol of peaceful resistance, galvanising marginalised communities, especially catechists, Christian Base Communities (CEBs) and rural clergy who continued to uphold his vision despite opposition from conservative Church leaders (CAFOD, 2015; St Gregory's Catholic College, 2025). Although Romero's successor, Archbishop Rivera y Damas, pursued a more cautious, Vatican-aligned strategy of negotiation, Romero's legacy persisted through grassroots activism, even as the Vatican expressed concern over liberation theology's alignment with class struggle (BBC, 2011; Freed, 1990). As historian Smitha noted, Romero's assassination "swung many away from the regime into an alliance with those who were in armed rebellion against the government", indicating how Catholicism, through Romero's death, catalysed a more radical and collective social response (Smitha, 2018). This interaction between Church and people fostered a new theological consciousness that redefined the Church's role, from institutional conservatism to moral compass for justice and liberation.

Excerpt 3

Furthermore, they suggest that the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) political party is being overtaken by Muslims and "can't be trusted" (Biver, 2014). Thus, Islamophobia has caused several Burmese monks and laypeople to feel "that Buddhism was under siege, that the sasana was in decline, and that urgent measures were necessary to preserve it," a sentiment that continues to inform nationalist rhetoric in contemporary Myanmar (Aung-Thwin, 1985). Despite the Sangha holding no political authority, in accordance with the Vinaya (the monastic code of conduct), monks have the moral obligation to be involved in political affairs when the sasana is threatened (Biver, 2014). In addition to contemporary motivations, the Mahavamsa, a Pali Chronicle, provides scriptural justification for violence in defence of Buddhism. The text, a reflection of King Dutthagamani's war against Tamil King Elara, states that defeating "non-believers" to protect the Sangha accrues positive karma as it is the fulfillment of one's duty (dharma), and claims, "from this deed arises no hindrance in thy way to heaven" (Mahavamsa, 25:109-111). Buddhist nationalists interpret this text to position Muslims as modern invaders threatening Myanmar's religious purity and therefore - the cleansing of Islam from Myanmar is a moral duty (Malji, 2021). However, some Burmese monks opposed the nationalist movement asserting it was a direct violation of the Dhammapada, which directly condemns Himsa (violence), stating, "Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule" (Dhammapada verse 5). This contradiction underpins religious dualism, where monks prioritise the preservation of the sasana over individual ethics, placing violence as a necessary means to ensure the 'survival of Buddhism'; thus allowing for the attainment of enlightenment and the reaching of Nirvana, the ultimate goal for all Buddhist adherents (Walton & Hayward, 2014). Monks like Wirathu reconcile this dualism by positioning legislative change as extensions of their moral duty (Myat, 2021). While the Dhammapada emphasises ahimsa (non-violence), karuna (compassion) and metta (kindness), nationalists argue that tolerating Islam risks Buddhism's erasure (Hewapathirane, 2019).

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. The external assessment papers and the EAMG are published in the year after they are administered.

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 with five short response questions that required students to respond to unseen stimulus (58 marks).

Assessment decisions

Assessment decisions are made by markers by matching student responses to the external assessment marking guide (EAMG).

Effective practices

Overall, students responded well when they:

- planned their overall responses, enabling them to maximise their use of time and answer each question appropriately
- organised individual responses clearly and purposefully to meet the question requirements. For lower-mark questions, this meant avoiding unnecessary detail, while for longer responses, they used clear topic sentences to ensure all aspects of the question were addressed
- constructed responses to higher-mark questions that required depth by thoughtfully considering the stimulus in relation to the question. This included detailed discussion of relevant religious teachings and explicitly linking to the stimulus, showing clear and purposeful connection
- concluded with a strong summary in longer responses to ensure that all parts of the question were addressed.

Practices to strengthen

When preparing students for external assessment, it is recommended that:

- teachers provide students with opportunities to meaningfully incorporate stimulus into practice responses to assist in addressing the question requirements, e.g. if students are asked to explain, they can include aspects of the stimulus to assist with and support the explanation, rather than defaulting to providing a summary of the stimulus
- students avoid listing everything they know about a specific tradition or teaching and ensure they are referring to these in relation to the question asked. This requires students to carefully read the question and apply their understanding to a particular statement or scenario outlined in the question and/or stimulus

- students practise annotating stimulus items in planning time (i.e. 15 minutes), and consider information contained in context statements as it often provides an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the stimulus.

Samples

Short response

Question 1

This question required students to describe how the principle of saving a life informed a Jewish understanding of human life. Students were required to use the provided stimulus in their description.

Effective student responses:

- identified a relevant Jewish belief
- used stimulus to provide an accurate description of how the belief informed a Jewish understanding of human life.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate accurate descriptions of how a Jewish belief informed adherents' understanding of human life
- to show effective use of stimulus as part of the description.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Save a life, or Pikuach Nefesh, urges ~~to~~ adherents to commit to saving human life above all else, as "one must take care not to die as a result of fulfilling a mitzvot," as ^{proclaimed} ~~proclaimed~~ in Stimulus 1. This positions human life ~~to~~ as sacred and above all else, granted by the belief in B'zot B'tzlem Elohim, meaning all humans are made in the image and likeness of G-d, so life must be treated with exceptional care, even if this means not keeping G-d's "statutes... and ordinances" (Stimulus 1).

Excerpt 2

The importance of preserving ~~human~~ life is vital in the Jewish understanding of human life, as it is believed that nothing – not even following the mitzvot – can take precedence over saving lives. This is described in the teaching of pikuach nefesh, which is the idea that any of the 613 ~~mitzvot~~ ^{as life is a singular, precious gift from G-d.} given to Moses on Mt Sinai can be broken if ~~they~~ necessary to save one's life. In other words, "Can one not not 'die' as a result of fulfilling the mitzvot" (Stimulus 1). Therefore, ~~the clear importance~~ saving a life is ~~clearly the utmost~~ clearly the most important value in Judaism as G-d allows mitzvot to be broken if necessary; human life is the most important.

Question 2b

Question 2b required students to explain how an Islamic linear world view supports safeguarding 'fundamental rights and freedoms' (Preamble, *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*). Students were required to use another Islamic teaching and the stimulus to answer the question.

Effective student responses:

- identified a linear world view, explaining how it aligned with safeguarding fundamental rights and freedoms
- used another Islamic teaching and the stimulus.

These excerpts have been included:

- because they effectively used stimulus to explain how an Islamic teaching aligns with a linear world view that supports the safeguarding of fundamental rights and freedoms
- to show there are several teachings that can be used to answer the question accurately.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

An Islamic adherent's journey in their linear worldview of life, death, and afterlife is determined by their fulfillment of the pillars of Islam in submission to Allah, thereby supporting that "fundamental rights and freedoms" are "part of the Islamic religion". Allah promises "believing... obedient... charitable" and "fasting" Muslims "an immense reward" and "pardon", establishing that following the pillars of Shahadah (faith), Zakat (charity), and Sawm (fasting) will result in favourable judgment upon death and the soul reaching Jannah, the teleological end (S3). Zakat financially supports "fundamental rights" to basic necessities, while Shahadah and Sawm - as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad - encourages Muslims to practice "[truthfulness]" and "[patience]" in respecting other's "freedoms" (S3). Hence, as the five pillars of Islam are divine duties central to submission, determining an adherent's afterlife, upholding "fundamental rights and freedoms" is an "integral part" of the Islamic linear worldview.

Excerpt 2

The Islamic belief in the greater ~~the~~ jihad clearly ^{influences} ~~supports~~ the ^{linear} ~~linear~~ worldview ~~and~~ of Muslims and therefore inspires the safeguarding of "fundamental rights and freedoms" (Preamble). Muslims believe the greater Jihad describes the idea that ~~inside~~ every adherent must ^{make} ~~fight~~ a personal, internal effort to avoid evil (lying, cheating, violence, stealing, intoxication) and to do good by following the ~~the~~ Five Pillars. [★] To ~~wage~~ ~~make~~ ~~fight~~ experience this personal struggle is what allows Muslims to reach paradise on the Day of Judgement, as they view that life is a unique, singular gift from life to death. This is expressed in Stimulus 3, which describes the idea that "believing men and women" (those who ~~for~~ experience this personal struggle) will receive "immense reward" upon death (Stimulus 3). ^{This} ~~workview~~ ^{workview} and teaching clearly align with the Cairo Declaration, as they encourage adherents to make the effort to ~~support~~ ^{live} out Allah's will and support everybody's rights and freedoms if they wish to reach paradise.

★ Question 2B:

Therefore, ~~if~~ they must make an effort to do good by ~~protecting~~ ^{living} out Allah's will and protecting the universal rights and freedoms of all.

Question 3b

This question asked students to explain the role of Revelation in Christianity. They were required to analyse the stimulus (a quote from John 1:14) and show how the Christian tradition aligns with the Preamble in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that identifies the 'inherent dignity and ... equal and inalienable rights' of people.

Effective student responses:

- identified a relevant Christian teaching and described the Christian concept of Revelation
- explained the role of Revelation in showing how the Christian tradition aligns with dignity and rights for all people
- used stimulus appropriately.

This excerpt has been included:

- as it clearly shows the relationship between Christianity's belief in Revelation and the importance of human dignity
- because it incorporates the stimulus into the explanation, using another Christian teaching.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Revelation, the Christian belief that God reveals himself through this creation ~~at~~ (Divine Revelation) and incarnate Jesus (Special Revelation), urges adherents to "recognise... the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable human rights" of all. This is exemplified in Stimulus 5, ~~at~~ the Book of John from the New Testament⁵, where God "became flesh and lived among us" through the belief in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God's "only son". This special revelation, where God reveals himself through incarnation, promotes Divine Revelation, recognising ~~the~~ Imago Dei, where all humans are made in God's image and likeness, and thus should be treated as such⁴, as exemplified through incarnate Jesus. Hence, urging for the recognition of "inherent dignity" and "equal and inalienable rights" of all.

Question 3c

The question focused on the obligation outlined in the Preamble in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, requiring students to use stimulus to differentiate between Jewish and Christian approaches in fulfilling this obligation.

Effective student responses:

- identified a relevant teaching for each religious tradition
- provided an explanation of the relationship between the teachings and the Preamble
- explained the difference between Jewish and Christian obligations
- used stimulus in the response.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate that relevant teachings identified were clearly aligned with the concept of an obligation to all people, having different perspectives and reasons for doing so
- as they use stimulus to provide clear and detailed explanations of the relationship between the teaching and the Preamble.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Jewish and Christian adherents have differing approaches, however both ultimately aim for "the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms." For Judaism, the belief in *chesed*, or loving kindness, is a driver for adherents to promote values of respect and uphold the fundamental freedoms. ^{This is seen} as El Shaddai called Abraham to "walk in [his] ways" to be protected in his "everlasting holding." (54) Similarly the belief of Agape for Christians, meaning love and often stems from 'love thy neighbour' calls Christians to act in the same ~~kindness~~ "grace and truth" as Jesus did, therefore treating all ⁱⁿ God's family with "respect" and in accordance to "human rights." However, Although the two beliefs align significantly, Jewish adherents act this way in order to maintain the everlasting covenant, however Christians act this way to emulate Jesus' ways on Earth, to be more Christ-like. ^{There} ~~this~~ ~~contrasts~~ motives contrast the ~~a~~ two religions, however the ultimate obligation to align with the teachings of the Preamble, remain the same.

Excerpt 2

Whilst both Jewish and Christian adherents believe in the sanctity of human life, urging them to fulfill their obligation towards achieving "universal respect for and observance of human rights and... fundamental freedoms", they differentiate on the reasons why. For example, in the Jewish tradition, adherents believe in only the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, promoting the belief in the 613 Mitzot. This "everlasting covenant", as exemplified in Stimulus 4, urges adherents to "walk in my ways and be blameless", introducing the belief in Repentance. God granted people free will, making them fundamentally equal, but also grants them a responsibility to uphold the "promotion of universal respect" and "observance of human rights". This means that adherents maintain this covenant by adhering to the 613 mitzvot, but if these are broken, they have a responsibility to repent against their sin, allowing for Tikkun Olam - repair the world back into how it was in Genesis. Whilst Christian adherents believe in Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants as well, they also adhere to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. This belief in the Messianic Covenant urges adherents to act ^{as} Jesus would do, uplifting individuals through Agape Love, ~~and~~ displaying the "glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (Stimulus 5). This urges adherents to act with forgiveness and unconditional love towards ~~their~~ humanity, ~~just~~ just as God shows through his sacrificial lamb Jesus, promoting "universal respect", "human rights", and "fundamental freedoms" so that they may live in everlasting life with God in Heaven. Hence, whilst both Jewish and Christian adherents believe in the sanctity of life, aligning with the preamble of the UDHR, they differ in the reasons why.

Question 4

This question asked students to analyse the extent to which a Hindu response to homelessness was informed by karma and link this discussion with Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In support of their response, students needed to use another Hindu teaching and the stimulus.

Effective student responses:

- analysed how a Hindu response to homelessness was informed by karma
- provided a judgment about the alignment of karma to Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- used stimulus and another Hindu teaching to support their response.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate detailed analysis of how a Hindu response was informed by karma, effectively linking this discussion to relevant elements of Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- as they effectively use stimulus and other teachings to support analysis
- as responses convey ideas succinctly and purposefully in relation to the question.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

The Hindu response to homelessness - offering financial aid - is significantly informed by karma and the belief that all beings have an atman, aligning with the notion that everyone has a "right to life, liberty, and security". The atman, "self" or soul, is a part of Brahman - the ultimate reality - which exists in all beings, establishing the inherent dignity of all people as a result of their shared divinity, and supporting that all people have the "right to life, liberty and security" (S7). Hence, the "inadequate" access to "space, security, [and tenancy]" posed by homelessness, affecting "vulnerable" people, violates the Hindu belief in personal worth (S8). Thus, positive karma, the notion that "doing good" will shape "good" future outcomes, is accumulated by "[financially supporting]" homeless people so that their "day-to-day needs" are met: "dignity" and "security" is "[supported]" (S7; S6; S8). As the accumulation of good karma is critical to escape samsara (cyclical worldview) and reach Moksha (liberation) where the atman is reunited with Brahman, it significantly informs the Hindu response to homelessness, which aligns with the recognition that everyone has the right to "life, liberty, and security". Overall, as the atman present in all beings underpins their right to "life, liberty, and security", aiding the homeless generates positive karma, central to liberation from samsara. Therefore, karma both significantly underpins the Hindu Benevolent Fund's mission and aligns with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Excerpt 2

The ~~the~~ belief in karma significantly informs the Hindu response to homelessness, as it ~~positions~~ delineates that adherents must do good by others if they themselves wish to experience good consequences, clearly aligning with the idea that everyone "has the right to life, liberty and security" (UDHR). Hindus believe that ~~all~~ ^{all} humans are ~~trapped~~ ^{trapped} in a cycle of samsara (reincarnation), wherein upon death, the atman (soul) transmigrates to a new body according to their previous accumulation of karma. Karma describes the universal cause-and-effect of actions; if one does the self does good, "it becomes good" (Stimulus 7). If enough good karma is achieved this ties into the teaching of dharma (the duties every individual ^{must} ~~must~~ fulfill). If enough good karma is achieved through fulfilling one's dharma, one can achieve moksha (release from samsara; reunification of Atman with Brahman, the ultimate reality). This belief clearly informs a Hindu response to the issue of homelessness, as it is viewed as a Santana dharma (universal duty for all) to protect the poor and vulnerable. As the homeless experience ~~the~~ numerous human rights violations, such as not having a secure housing arrangement or ~~access~~ ^(Stimulus 8) access to food or financial security, Hindus view it as their sacred duty to "do good

good" (Stimulus 7) by doing charitable, "good acts" (Stimulus 7) and supporting the homeless. For example, the Hindu Benevolent Fund was set up to prompt the community to support "families in dire need of financial help" (Stimulus 6). For those Hindus, they would view it as their duty ^(dharma) to help these people. Thus, they would work to fulfill this dharma because that would in turn result in positive consequences for them through good karma. Essentially, if they wish to achieve moksha and "become virtuous" (Stimulus 7) by gaining good karma, they would want to support the homeless by setting up charities. Thus, it is clear that the teachings of karma and dharma ~~clearly~~ align with the recognition that everyone "has the right to life, liberty and security of person" (UDHR), as they prompt Hindus to protect the homeless in order to ~~become good~~ achieve good karma.