

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

BGCSE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2025



PAPER 1: WRITTEN

General Comments

Most candidates performed well in the recall or knowledge and understanding questions such as; question 2 (a) where they were required to list two common ethical codes of Judeo Christian religions, 3 (a) in which they had to state two beliefs of African Traditional Religion, 4 (a) where they had to state two common beliefs of religions studied as well as 5 (a), which requested them to explain the meaning of loyalty. Question 1 (a) was poorly performed mainly due to a lack of content and not necessarily because of a lack of understanding of the requirement of the item or question by the candidates.

The middle and higher-order questions were found to be challenging by a lot of candidates. It is important to teach candidates that they should always align their answers to the questions, i.e., they should always ensure that their responses directly address the requirement of the question. For example, in question 2 (c) they were required to justify two benefits of salvation in today's society; however, a lot of their answers failed to show how the keyword, salvation, relates to their responses. Evaluation and analysis questions such as 4 (b) and 3 (c) were poorly handled because candidates only gave either the positive or negative part of the question. They ended up losing marks because they had not given a balanced assessment as required by the questions.

Comments on Individual Items

- 1 (a) Candidates were required to explain one political factor that led to the formation of Baha'i Faith. Most candidates lost marks because they gave socio-economic factors instead of the political ones as required. Some gave factors that led to the start of other religions like Hinduism and Islam, which showed confusion and lack of knowledge, and therefore led to loss of marks. Candidates should be cautioned against giving wrong names of the founders of religions, especially in cases where the question does not require them to give such information, as it often leads to them losing marks. Most candidates did badly on this question.
- (b) Candidates were required to explain two ways in which some Christian organisations in Botswana assist in combating violence against women. It was easy for some candidates to understand, and they managed to score full marks. However, some candidates gave specific Non-Governmental Organisations and their roles, which led to them losing marks. It is important to help candidates to know the difference between NGO's and Christian organisations so that they do not confuse the roles of the two.
- (c) Candidates were requested to evaluate two ways in which Christianity has affected African Traditional Religion. A lot of candidates were able to identify or describe changes brought on by Christianity but failed to show how this was either a negative or a positive effect, which was the main requirement of the question. Failure to understand the demand of the question led to loss of marks. Those who understood the question got full marks, with others only stating either the positive or negative effect. It is important to emphasise to students that when assessing an effect, they need to clearly bring out the negative and positive aspects of that effect and not just to leave the answer hanging without clarity.



- 2** (a) Candidates were required to list two common ethical codes of Judeo-Christian religions. The question was well understood by most candidates, and they managed to score full marks. Some candidates wrote either Sharia Law or the Ten Commandments and lost marks as the two are specific to certain Judeo-Christian religions and showed a lack of understanding of the requirement of the question.
- (b) Candidates were requested to explain two roles that Christianity plays in enhancing political stability in Botswana. Some candidates managed to state the role played by the Christian church in the political set up of Botswana but failed to explain how this has helped to enhance political stability which was the requirement of the question, and this led to them losing marks. It is advised that candidates should be encouraged to always ensure they have fully understood the question and address its full requirement.
- (c) The question required candidates to justify two benefits of salvation in today's society. Some candidates managed to explain or justify why salvation is important in today's society and scored full marks. Other candidates, however, lost marks because they failed to explain how salvation is responsible for the responses given, i.e., how salvation is responsible for the positives mentioned. Candidates should always be encouraged to align their responses to the question to avoid unnecessary loss of marks.
- 3** (a) Candidates were requested to state any two beliefs of African Traditional Religion in Botswana. The question was easy to comprehend, and most students did well and managed to score all marks. Some, however, lost marks because they gave practices such as ancestor veneration, instead of beliefs. There is a need to always clarify the difference between the two during teaching and revision to avoid any confusion.
- (b) Candidates were required to explain two ways in which family ties are strengthened in African Traditional Religion. A lot of candidates understood the demand of the question and were able to score the full marks. However, some candidates lost marks because they gave ways in which marriage can be sustained and not how family ties are strengthened. For example, the payment of bride price was one of the common responses given by candidates, although it was incorrect. The difference between the two objectives should always be clarified to candidates.
- (c) Candidates were required to assess how any two Christian practices can negatively affect the environment. Performance on this question was poor as exhibited by most candidates, who only succeeded in identifying the practices and their negative effects on the environment, but failed to bring out the positive effect as required by the question. Those who attempted to give a positive effect focused on the effect on individuals and not on the environment, as the question required. A lot of candidates also lost marks because they gave practices of African Independent Churches and not those of Christianity. There is a need to give students wider information or details on how the Christian practises can positively affect the environment.



- 4 (a) Candidates were required to state any two religious beliefs from one of the religions studied in Module 6. The question was well understood, and most candidates scored full marks. Some of them, however, lost marks due to their failure to state religion chosen to answer the question as per the instructions given. Teachers should always emphasise to candidates, the importance of stating the religion chosen to answer the question as failure to do so leads to loss of marks. Stating religion chosen also helps examiners to determine whether the answer is correct or not.
- (b) Candidates were required to evaluate two effects of religion on marriage from one of the religions studied. Most candidates failed to interpret the question well. Instead of giving the effects of religion on marriage, they gave the effects on the family. Other candidates lost marks because they just stated the teachings and practices of the chosen religions, but failed to show how this affects marriage, as the question required them to. It is important for candidates to always align their responses to the question. A lot of candidates also lost marks because their answers were one-sided; they gave either a positive effect and failed to state the negative effect and vice versa. There is still a need to emphasise the need to always give a balanced evaluation.
- (c) Candidates were asked to describe any two challenges encountered by different religions during their establishment in Botswana. The majority of candidates understood the question well and managed to score full marks as they stated the challenges and described them well. Some lost marks as they gave challenges specific to the Christian missionaries, such as illiteracy.
- 5 (a) Candidates were required to explain what is meant by loyalty. Most candidates understood the question and managed to score full marks.
- (b) The question required candidates to explain two roles played by ecumenical movements in Botswana. Some candidates understood the question and were able to score full marks. However, some could not differentiate the roles of ecumenical movements from those of the church, for example, counselling of married couples and offering of prayers at the homes of the bereaved, and hence they lost marks. It is important to fully explain the roles of ecumenical movements and show how they differ from the general roles played by the Christian church.
- (c) Candidates were required to describe any two negative effects of global epidemics on the society. It was a well-understood question, and a lot of candidates managed to score full marks. Some, however lost marks because they gave effects of natural disasters such as displacement of people and loss of food and shelter. The difference between natural disasters and global epidemics should always be emphasised.



PAPER 2: STRUCTURED

General Comments

The overall performance of the 2025 candidates declined compared with that of the previous year. This was mainly because candidates in most Centres could not identify the expected two issues per question, because in some instances, they elaborated on the same issues instead of bringing in different issues altogether. On a different note, some candidates did not score highly, as they appeared weak in demonstrating their application skills, as per the expectations of the level of response or grid.

Other candidates, however, evidently possessed enough information to address some questions and yet failed to align such information with the demands and expectations of the items in question. A good observation regarding their competencies was the ability to identify issues, even though candidates failed to answer the questions with precision.

Comments on Individual Items

- 1** This was a popular question that was well answered by most candidates. As demanded by the question, they were able to demonstrate their application skills in relation to different religions and their dimensional examples to promote religious tolerance.
- 2** This was also a popular question for which candidates generally did well. Candidates who scored low marks tended to be those who presented general information about African Independent Churches without providing examples of such churches. This brief approach to responding to the question by candidates led to limited responses that could not earn full marks.
- 3** This was an equally popular question among the candidates. A lot of candidates generally scored high marks at level 5 mainly because they succeeded in identifying how love is put into practice, also giving examples from today's society ranging from Christianity to other churches involved.
- 4** This question was not very well answered, even though many candidates had attempted to respond to it. The majority of candidates did not align their issues with the demand of the question. Many candidates raised issues on how men and women relocate based on the past, failing to align that to its impact on contemporary Botswana.
- 5** The candidates' performance for this item was average. Although not many candidates attempted to respond to this question, those who did generally managed to identify issues especially favoured by what is currently happening in society. They generally gave wide, detailed responses that were fairly well elaborated.
- 6** This was a popular question among the candidates, although their performance was not good. Contrary to the demand of the task, candidates merely brought a narration of the particular religion in question; however, their response did not align with the demand of the question. The few candidates who managed to align their answer tended to only present 1 issue and therefore only earned half of the available marks.