

# PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA  
EXAMINATIONS  
COUNCIL

## BGCSE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2024

### PAPER 1: WRITTEN PAPER

#### General Comments

Candidates generally performed well in most of the questions in the cognitive domain of knowledge and understanding, questions which simply required them to recall and state specific facts. For example, for question 1a, candidates were required to state founders of Christianity and Islam, while for question 3a they were required to list sacred objects of African Traditional Religion in Botswana. For 5a, candidates were to identify values that sustain relationships. However, candidates' responses showed that most of them were properly trained in answering such questions.

In spite of the above, nevertheless, candidates struggled to differentiate between a theological and a sociological definition of religion, with most of them being able to give the theological definition and not the sociological one. More attention needs to be given to helping candidates during their learning to understand the various definitions of religion. The assessment questions showed a bit of improvement but generally candidates struggle to give a balanced assessment. These are the type of questions in which most candidates struggled or failed to get full marks, mainly because they only gave either the positive or the negative part of the question while the expectation was that they should give both the negative and positive portions in order to present a well-balanced assessment.

#### Comments On Individual Questions

- 1 (a) The question required candidates to state the founders of Christianity and Islam. The question appeared to be easy for most candidates as they managed to score full marks. There is however a need to encourage them to always give the founders' full names in order to avoid losing marks.
  - (b) Candidates were required to explain the difference between a theological and a sociological definition of religion. Most candidates struggled with the question especially giving the sociological part of the definition. There is need for teachers to give more attention to explaining the other definitions of religion and not only focus on the theological definition.
  - (c) Candidates were requested to evaluate two ways how ethical codes enhance social harmony. A lot of candidates lost marks because they did not give a balanced evaluation. Their evaluation was one sided and focussed on mostly the positive part of the answer and left out the negative. There is need for teachers to emphasise the importance of always giving both the positive and negative part of the question for both answers as in order to meet the requirement of the question. They should also avoid repetition of same responses or explanations as this also leads to loss of marks.
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- 2 (a) Candidates were asked to give any two common beliefs of African Traditional Religion and Hinduism. This was a simple recall question that was done well by a lot of candidates. However, there seemed to be some confusion as some just gave other common elements between the two religions and not necessarily the beliefs, and as a result they lost marks. Some candidates also gave practices instead of beliefs. Teachers ought to highlight the importance of candidates needing to take time to read and understand the demand of any question before merely rushing to address the objectives as they remember them from class.

- (b) Candidates were requested to explain two factors that led to the formation of Islam. This was an open question that required either political or socio-economic reasons. Some candidates managed to get full marks for the question while others seemed to confuse the factors of formation of religion to those that led to its establishment in Botswana. There is need for teachers to clarify the confusion between the reasons that led to the formation of the religion and those that led to it now being established in Botswana.
- (c) The question requested candidates to explain any two positive roles played by ancestors in African Traditional Religion in Botswana. The question seems to have been well understood as most candidates performed well on it. However, some candidates gave roles without explaining them and as such lost marks. Teachers are encouraged help candidates to be able to always ensure that they understand the demand of the question and align their answer to that which is required of them.
- 3 (a) Candidates were requested to list two sacred objects in African Traditional Religion. The question was well understood and done well by a lot of candidates. Some candidates however, lost marks because they gave places instead of objects.
- (b) The question requested candidates to explain any two positive effects of modern development on sacred places. A lot of candidates understood the demand of the question and answered it well. A few gave negative effects due to lack of understanding while some also lost marks because they gave effects that did not relate to the sacred places. There is need for teachers to always emphasise how the sacred places themselves actually benefit from the modern development.
- (c) Candidates were required to evaluate two effects of any teaching of African Traditional Religion on men and women relationships in modern society. The question seemed to be a challenge for most candidates. Some failed to give the teaching that they would be using to answer the question and thereby lost marks. Others gave roles instead of teachings and also lost marks. There is need for candidates to be made aware of these kind of questions that require them to provide teachings that they will be using to respond to the question.
- 4 (a) Candidates were requested to explain one way of resolving religious fundamentalism. The question was well understood by most candidates, and they managed to get full marks for the question. A few candidates however lost marks because they explained what fundamentalism is instead of explaining how it can be resolved and some also lost marks because they failed to give further clarity or explanation of the way identified.
- (b) Candidates were required to explain two ways in which religions help people who have been affected by natural disasters. Though an easy question, a lot of candidates lost marks because they gave different material needs as separate responses to the question and therefore failed to score full marks for the question. There is also need for teachers to help clarify the difference between natural disasters and global epidemics as candidates seem not able to differentiate between the two.

(c) Candidates were required to describe two challenges that were encountered by different religions during their establishment in Botswana. The question was well understood and most candidates managed to get the full marks. Those who lost marks did not align their answers to Botswana society and others failed to give full clarity of the challenge identified.

5 (a) Candidates were required to identify two values needed to sustain good human relationships. Majority of the candidates did well and managed to get all marks for this question.

(b) The question required candidates to describe any two advantages that can result from Botswana being a multi faith society. It was a very open question which was understood by most candidates. However, a lot of candidates lost marks because they could not satisfactorily demonstrate or describe how the good interactions of pluralism benefit the Botswana society.

(c) Candidates were required to examine two ways in which religious tolerance can negatively affect social harmony. Most candidates were able to give the negative effect of religious tolerance but failed to give further clarity on the answer or to provide reasons as to how the social harmony is affected.

### PAPER 2: WRITTEN PAPER

#### General Comments

Generally, the performance declined more than expected, compared to the previous year. This is possibly due to the fact that this is the third year in the adoption of an Assessment that hinged on unstructured questions. The level of discussion for the identified issues to address questions was not very good. The majority of candidates failed in the aspect of elaboration in order to reflect knowledge and understanding, as well as skills and competency as per the level of response or grid.

Candidates failed to draw a line between the identified issues in a question hence the repetition of discussion as commonly observed. The linking or alignment of issues to the demand of the question by many candidates still posed a challenge hence loss of marks. It was therefore evident that most candidates did not do well because of either their failure to bring two issues which led to level 3 or at times presenting limited discussions of issues.

#### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 This was observed to be a popular question although it was poorly done as candidates were only able to identify the issues but failed to elaborate on them. Nevertheless, some candidates scored high marks as they happened to know about the religion in question while the majority failed because of limited discussion and knowledge about the aspect of issues in the particular religion.
- 2 The item was poorly done as candidates knew the response but failed to discuss or elaborate it accordingly. For those who scored high marks, they were able to elaborate, bring forth the application of balanced assessment, conclude, recommend and make a judgment.
- 3 This was not a popular question although it was fairly done nonetheless, as candidates who understood the term “impact” were able to score high marks by taking advantage of the fact that impact can be either positive or negative.
- 4 This was not a popular question and was not well done as observed through the minimal number of candidates who managed to score high marks. This was a result of confusion with regard to information on world religions. The issues were identified but candidates were not able to align the specific issues to the different religions of their choice. For example, abstinence is a common denominator for all religions but the level of discussion and elaboration to specific religion differs.
- 5 The question was a popular item which was, on average, well done by most candidates with the exception of those who were unable to show application or examples to support their issues. Most candidates were able to identify issues and align them to the question relevance of the practice to Botswana. The challenge to those who did not do well was the alignment or linking of information to the demand of the question.
- 6 This was noted to be yet another popular question since Christianity is known by most candidates and were therefore able to identify issues. A good number of candidates elaborated their issues accordingly and reflected wide detailed knowledge and understanding, application and ability to come up with their own opinion, conclusion and recommendation, based on the issues discussed. It was one of those items that were well done by candidates.