

Teachers must judge the internally assessed work against the criteria using the level descriptors.

- The aim is to find, for each criterion, the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student, using the best-fit model. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a criterion at different levels. The mark awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the criterion. It is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be awarded.
- When assessing a student's work, teachers should read the level descriptors for each criterion until they reach a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work being assessed. If a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors should be read again and the one that more appropriately describes the student's work should be chosen.
- Where there are two or more marks available within a level, teachers should award the upper marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a great extent. Teachers should award the lower marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent.
- Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial marks, such as fractions and decimals, are not acceptable.
- Teachers should not think in terms of a pass or fail boundary, but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.
- The highest level descriptors do not imply faultless performance but should be achievable by a student. Teachers should not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.
- A student who attains a high level of achievement in relation to one criterion will not necessarily attain high levels of achievement in relation to the other criteria. Similarly, a student who attains a low level of achievement for one criterion will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for the other criteria. Teachers should not assume that the overall assessment of the students will produce any particular distribution of marks.
- It is recommended that the assessment criteria be made available to students.

## Internal assessment details

**Duration:** 20 hours

**Weighting:** 25%

### Requirements and recommendations

The internal assessment is an investigative study of an aspect of the religious experience, practice or belief of a group and/or individual adherents. The focus for the study can be a visit to a sacred place, building or a museum, a study of artifacts, attendance at an act of worship, an interview or interviews with religious adherents, or a study using a range of sources. However, it is important to emphasize that this is an academic exercise, which requires preliminary research.

### Relationship to the syllabus

Any religion can be the focus of the study—it does not have to be taken from the list of the nine world religions in the core syllabus. Students will be expected to write a focused and precise analysis on the investigative study.

### Word count

Students must produce a written analysis of 1,500–1,800 words but **no** more than 1,800 words. If the word limit is exceeded, the teacher's assessment of the work must be based on the first 1,800 words. Work that exceeds the stated word count will also be penalized under criterion E. Work that significantly falls beneath the stated range of the word count of the task is likely to receive low marks.

Titles, citations, references and appendices are not included in the word count.

### References

Students are expected to include a comprehensive list of references that reflects wide preliminary reading. All sources must be referenced consistently, including interviews, and any referencing system can be used. Appendices can be used, for example, to present questions asked at interviews.

### Ethical guidelines

Students should consider whether there are ethical implications involved in visiting a place of religious worship or in interviewing a religious adherent. It is important to show respect for the views and beliefs of others, and the integrity of the information gathered.

It is important that the representation of religions is evidence based, balanced and neutral, as opposed to stereotypical and biased. Generalizations that fail to reflect the internal diversity of belief and practice within major religious traditions should be avoided. A critical awareness of sources is required, especially media and internet sources, with regard to reliability, accuracy and perspective. In the internal assessment task, the authority and appropriateness to the research project of individual interview subjects must be considered. Care should be taken not to misrepresent interviewees when using material gained from fieldwork, for example, by quoting them out of context. At the same time material should not be used uncritically.

### Permissions and confidentiality

Teachers must advise students on the suitability of a research topic and approve all topics. Teachers should advise on protocols that apply to visiting specific religious communities, to participating in, or observing, religious practices, and when speaking with religious representatives.

When conducting fieldwork and using interview material, **permission** must be gained from interviewees to reproduce that material. Otherwise, sources have to remain anonymous. All interview participants must be informed of the nature and academic goals of the study in which they are participating and students must guarantee that the interview is **confidential**.

### Controversial issues

These should not be avoided but require a balanced and informed approach that acknowledges the likely complexity behind them. Generalizations that represent a whole religious tradition must be avoided, for example, using the term "Muslims" when a particular Muslim group is involved. Value judgments, such as "these are not true Muslims", should also be avoided. There is a clear need to investigate sources and interpretations, and to be critically aware of the complexity of representation.

Further details are given in *Ethical practice in the Diploma Programme* (poster), which is available on the OCC.

## The investigation

The following stages are necessary in order to carry out the investigation and set the research question.

- **Preparation**—students are expected to have done preliminary research into their chosen topic in order to establish that it will be an appropriate area of investigation.
- **Expectations/rationale for study**—students must have a clear conception of what they expect to find (out) and how they are going to investigate their chosen area.

**The following are given as examples of an investigation.**

1. Interview with an adherent reflecting on the significance of personal religious experience on their identity and world view.
2. Observation of a religious festival or rite of passage to investigate its purpose and significance.
3. Investigation of different acts of worship performed by two or more different groups within a religion to analyse different perceptions of the purpose of worship.
4. Visit to an art gallery to view depictions of religious narratives.
5. An investigation of a contemporary religious issue or dilemma (such as inter-religious marriage or conversion from one religion to another) through research on the internet, secondary sources and the media.
6. Investigation of radical, liberal, conservative and fundamentalist interpretations of religious traditions through interviews and/or observations of worship, or research on the internet, secondary sources and the media.

**The following are given as examples for research questions.**

1. What is the significance of performing Ramadan for a Muslim? (Interview a Muslim family.)
2. What is the importance of a believer's baptism to a Baptist? (Visit a Baptist church, observe the rite and interview a Christian Baptist.)
3. What is the significance of any differences in practice between an Orthodox and Reform Jewish Shabbat service? How do these differences relate to belief? (Visit two synagogues, observe the services and interview members of the congregations.)
4. How does an indigenous religion respond to its environment? Examples might be Aboriginals, traditional African religions and Shamanic religions (secondary and primary sources, visits to cultural centres and museums).
5. Analyse how religious beliefs are transmitted through art or architecture by looking at such examples as the Buddha's enlightenment, the design of a gurdwara, portraits of Jesus's Crucifixion or Resurrection, or the stained-glass windows in synagogues as compared with churches.

## The written analysis

Each student must produce a written analysis with the following format (together with a coversheet stating the title of the investigative study and the word count) under the **five** headings given below.

- Rationale and preliminary research
- Plan for study
- Summary of significant findings
- Critical reflection and evaluation
- References and compliance with format

**Requirements for the written analysis**

Students are advised to use the following guidelines to format their written analysis, which will ensure that the work meets the requirements of the criteria.

**Criterion A Rationale and preliminary research**

Students must:

- provide a rationale for the choice of topic for the investigative study
- define the focus of the investigative study, which should be formulated as a question
- outline and justify the range of sources consulted
- select and analyse supporting evidence, showing how this evidence informs the investigative study.

**Criterion B Plan for study**

Students must:

- clearly state and narrowly focus the research question
- outline the scope and plan for the investigative study
- identify the relationship between the research question and the scope and plan.

**Criterion C Summary of significant findings**

Students must:

- identify and outline significant findings from the investigation through observation, interview and/or participation
- explain the relationship between research findings and the research question
- discuss the rationale and plan of study in relation to the significant findings.

**Criterion D Critical reflection and evaluation**

Students must:

- critically reflect on the significant findings in relation to the research question
- demonstrate how the investigative study deepens an understanding of religious experiences and/or beliefs
- identify misconceptions and inconsistencies as a result of the research plan and materials used
- understand the degree to which the research was successful in producing significant findings for analysis, and justifying future research.

**Criterion E References and compliance with format**

Students must ensure that:

- the work is no more than the 1,800 word limit
- the list of references consistently follows a standard format
- the format of the written analysis has been followed as described in the section “The written analysis”.

## Internal assessment criteria

### Investigative study

There are five internal assessment criteria for the written analysis.

Criterion A	Rationale and preliminary research	8 marks
Criterion B	Plan for study	3 marks
Criterion C	Summary of significant findings	6 marks
Criterion D	Critical reflection and evaluation	10 marks
Criterion E	References and compliance with format	3 marks
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30 marks</b>

The purpose of the internal assessment is to assess students' ability to demonstrate the following in relation to the written analysis.

- Knowledge and understanding (assessment objective 1)—criteria A and D
- Application and analysis (assessment objective 2)—criteria A, C and D
- Synthesis and evaluation (assessment objective 3)—criteria A, C and D
- Selection, use and application of a variety of appropriate skills and techniques (assessment objective 4)—criteria B and E

#### Criterion A Rationale and preliminary research

This criterion assesses the rationale and focus for the investigative study, and whether an appropriate range of sources and supporting evidence have been used to inform the investigative study.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The rationale is stated with little evidence of research, or there is limited research but no rationale.
3–4	The study has been researched, and some supporting evidence has been produced, though this may not be relevant. The rationale is stated.
5–6	The study has been well researched using a range of sources, and supporting evidence has been produced. The rationale is clearly stated, with evidence of some development.
7–8	The investigative study has been thoroughly researched using a wide range of sources, and excellent supporting evidence has been produced. The rationale is clearly stated and well developed.

**Criterion B Plan for study**

This criterion assesses the scope and a plan for the investigative study, the focus of the research question and the relationship between the research question and the scope and plan.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The scope and/or plan for the study are stated but not clearly focused. There is no research question.
2	The scope and plan for the study are generally appropriate and focused. The research question is stated and is related to the scope and plan.
3	The scope and plan for the study are appropriate and focused. The research question is clearly focused and closely related to the scope and plan.

**Criterion C Summary of significant findings**

This criterion assesses the significant findings from the investigation, the relationship between the research findings and the research question, and whether the rationale and plan of study relate to the significant findings.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	There is little indication of significant findings, and these are not related to the research question, rationale and plan for the study.
3–4	Significant findings are stated and are related to one or more aspects of the research question, rationale and plan for the study.
5–6	Significant findings are clearly stated and well developed, and the relationship between the research question, rationale and plan for the study is fully demonstrated.

**Criterion D Critical reflection and evaluation**

This criterion assesses the quality and analysis of the significant findings in relation to the research question and how the investigative study has deepened understanding of religious experience and/or beliefs.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	Critical reflection is very limited, with no linkage between the research question and significant findings. There may be some recognition of one or more misconceptions and inconsistencies between the research and the findings, or limited but underdeveloped reference to research methods used.

Marks	Level descriptor
3–4	There is an attempt at some critical reflection, with little or no linkage between the research question and significant findings. There is a basic recognition of some misconceptions and inconsistencies between the research and the findings. There is some limited reference to research methods used.
5–6	There is evidence of sound critical reflection, demonstrating some understanding of religious experience and/or belief. There is an understanding of how far the research question informed most, if not all, of the significant findings. There is some recognition of any misconceptions and/or inconsistencies between the research and the findings. There is some discussion of research methods chosen.
7–8	Critical reflection is sound and well developed, demonstrating an understanding of religious experience and/or belief. There is a good understanding of how far the research question has informed the significant findings. Where appropriate, any misconceptions and/or inconsistencies between the research and the findings are identified. There is an evaluation of the research methods used. Conclusions and future possibilities may be outlined.
9–10	Critical reflection is detailed and very well developed, demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of religious experience and/or belief. There is an excellent understanding of how far the research question has informed the significant findings. Where appropriate, any misconceptions and/or inconsistencies between the research and the findings are developed and evaluated. There is a thorough evaluation of the research methods used and recognition of any underlying assumptions and/or bias. Conclusions and future research possibilities are considered.

### Criterion E References and compliance with format

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student meets the three formal requirements of writing, organizing and presenting the written analysis.

- The work is no more than the 1,800 word limit.
- The list of references consistently follows a standard format.
- The format of the written analysis has been followed as described in the section “The written analysis”.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The work is no more than the 1,800 word limit.
2	The work is no more than the 1,800 word limit and meets one of the other formal requirements.
3	The work is no more than the 1,800 word limit and meets the two other formal requirements.

# Glossary of command terms

## Command terms with definitions

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in examination questions, which are to be understood as described below. Although these terms will be used frequently in examination questions, other terms may be used to direct students to present an argument in a specific way.

The assessment objectives (AOs) listed below are those referred to in the world religions syllabus.

<b>Analyse</b>	AO2	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
<b>Comment</b>	AO1	Give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation.
<b>Compare</b>	AO3	Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Compare and contrast</b>	AO3	Give an account of the similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Contrast</b>	AO3	Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Define</b>	AO1	Give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity.
<b>Describe</b>	AO1	Give a detailed account.
<b>Discuss</b>	AO3	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
<b>Distinguish</b>	AO2	Make clear the differences between two or more concepts or items.
<b>Evaluate</b>	AO3	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
<b>Examine</b>	AO3	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
<b>Explain</b>	AO2	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.
<b>Identify</b>	AO1	Provide an answer from a number of possibilities.
<b>Justify</b>	AO3	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
<b>Outline</b>	AO1	Give a brief account or summary.
<b>To what extent</b>	AO3	Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.