

Religions in Australia

2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Society and Environment Learning Area



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

RELIGIONS IN AUSTRALIA

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Some 300 students from South Australia and the Northern Territory undertook Religions in Australia in 2010. Moderators found that the samples provided by teachers this year were of a higher standard than in previous years. There was less need to adjust teacher marks overall, and there were no major adjustments. For the most part, the samples were delivered for moderation in the correct format. Almost all schools understood clearly what was required for the moderation sample and there is no need to repeat the SACE Board's instructions.

Not all tasks seen by the moderators were constructed to allow students to achieve at the highest level. Tasks that called for descriptive responses from students did not allow them the opportunity to demonstrate evidence against all the required criteria.

Moderators noted that there was some repetition across and within tasks, which runs the risk of inviting plagiarism. Teachers need to keep aware of plagiarism, which has become much more prevalent with the greater availability of online resources. The SACE Board has clear guidelines on breaches of rules, which can be found on the SACE website. On occasion, moderators suspected that there had been plagiarism in student work, but it is difficult to detect in the moderation process. Detection of plagiarism should occur by the teacher well before the sample is received for moderation.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 1: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

The written assignments were of a consistently good standard. Teachers are however encouraged to expose students to the many and varied religions practised in Australia. Restricting the entire curriculum to Christianity and its variants together with a review of Judaism (seen as linked to Christianity) can be done within the subject requirements, but students even in religiously oriented schools would benefit from discovering the experience of other world religions. The subject Religions in Australia certainly intends this to be the case.

There appears to be an increase in the number of students producing what they see as a necessary assumption of exclusivity concerning their own Christian denomination. Even if this exclusivity is part of the school ethos, a more academic and objective style of writing is required in the subject at this level.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Some of the investigative reports were of a very high standard and reflected a research culture that would be welcomed even at tertiary level. Some students competently generated data and then analysed that data using acceptable research methodologies. The only comments from moderators concerned those reports that were almost totally descriptive and should not have been approved in the first instance by the class teacher.

For the most part, referencing was satisfactory this year, but attention should continue to be paid to consistent in-text referencing and the bibliography. All conventional styles are acceptable, but they must be consistent and must contain the requisite information.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 3: PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Practical activities were in general well done, and there was a great improvement in their quality compared to several years ago. The samples provided many interesting activities, such as carrying out surveys and questionnaires, having guest speakers, conducting in-depth interviews, and visiting religious sites. Teachers are to be congratulated on their efforts in understanding this assessment component so well.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 4: ORAL COMMUNICATION TASK

In the past, these tasks have caused some concern at moderation, as little evidence had been submitted for moderation to verify the procedure at the school. This year, most schools required students to describe the process of the task and the moderators were able to make an informed judgement. There appears to be a move towards more student collaboration, and while this is an important component of learning, teachers should be certain that they are assessing each individual student and not the group.

Chief Assessor
Religions in Australia