# SACE Board LogoGovernment of South Australia Logo2023 Spiritualities, Religion and Meaning Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2023 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

Across the assessment types for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is the equivalent of 1000 words. Students should not speed up the recording of their videos excessively in an attempt to condense more content into the maximum time limit.

From 2023, if a video is flagged by markers/moderators as impacted by speed, schools will be requested to provide a transcript and markers/moderators will be advised to mark/moderate based on the evidence in the transcript, only considering evidence up to the maximum word limit (e.g., up to 2000 words for AT3).

If the speed of the recording makes the speech incomprehensible, it affects the accuracy of transcriptions, and it also impacts the ability of markers/moderators to find evidence of student achievement against the performance standards.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Reflective Analysis: 30%

For a 10‑credit subject, students complete two reflective analysis tasks.

For a 20‑credit subject, students complete three reflective analysis tasks.

Students engage in reflective analysis to respond to a source or stimulus related to a big idea. The 2023 student cohort embraced a range of AT1 tasks. These reflected many interesting and varied activities, including in-person and virtual visits to sacred places, places of worship and contemplation, guest speakers, film stimuli etc.

The more successful responses commonly:

* utilised well-developed and relevant stimuli/sources, including religious art, cartoons, school liturgies/masses, contemporary films, television, radio podcasts, documentaries, excerpts from articles, journals, books and virtual tours. This facilitated a high standard of reflection on the potential impact of personal and shared actions
* demonstrated an engagement with stimulus materials beyond those which were provided by the teacher, thus demonstrating greater exploration and reflection of the understanding of religious, spiritual and meaning of concepts and ideas
* focused on certain specific features in each task rather than attempting to cover the complete range available, allowing for an in-depth exploration of concepts
* incorporated a variety of primary and secondary sources as needed, to support thorough exploration and analysis
* demonstrated a clear understanding and application of the influences of religion and spirituality in both local and global contexts, with specific references to sources
* discerned relevant information for inclusion and offered succinct analyses and reflections
* displayed an awareness of the complexity of religious and spiritual ideas, avoiding superficial generalisations.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied on dictionary definitions for religious and spiritual terms instead of presenting evidence from more in-depth research, such as scholarly sources
* tended to be descriptive or summary-oriented, lacking the depth of analysis required to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts studies from various sources
* included generalised comments about reflection without providing explanations regarding the personal/shared meaning and influence of religious/spiritual perspectives.

Assessment Type 2: Connections: 30%

For a 10‑credit subject, students complete one connections task (for 10-credit course note a maximum of 1000 words if written, 6 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form).

For a 20‑credit subject, students complete one connections task (for 20-credit course note a maximum of 2000 words if written, 12 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form).

Students explore a concept or issue related to a big idea from a spiritual or religious perspective. They may develop a new or enriched understanding by connecting with others, e.g., peers, community members, elders, or online communities. They may also engage in other forms of research. Applying these insights, students undertake a task or activity in collaboration with others. They engage in reflective practice to evaluate the impact of their shared action and their learning about spiritual and/or religious concepts, ideas, and beliefs. Evidence for each student’s connections task must be assessed individually, and it must demonstrate the student’s individual role in and contribution to the task.

It was evident that learning communities positively embraced this AT2 assessment type with work demonstrating creativity and innovation.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* ensuring students are clear about the purpose and/or goal of the task
* encouraging students to clearly define research to enhance the practical elements of the task.

The more successful responses commonly:

* clearly articulated the purpose and/or goal of the task
* defined research strategies to enhance the practical aspects, enabling a deeper understanding, reflection and evaluation of the transformative action resulting from collaborative efforts
* engaged in tasks that were stimulating, providing students with opportunities for sustained, productive, and authentic collaboration
* followed a clear process that outlined the overall project undertaken
* provided explicit and clear evidence of collaboration, offering specific examples of individual contributions to the task or activity
* offered authentic evidence of individual learning through photos, graphs, forms, surveys, and data
* utilised an appropriate modality to present information, catering to individual strengths
* employed a variety of sources for feedback from peers, teachers, mentors, other school staff, and/or community members, as appropriate
* analysed feedback from others in conjunction with assessing their development of skills and learning
* established connections between their understanding and evaluation of how personal and shared meaning is influenced by religious or spiritual concepts, experiences, and beliefs
* analysed and acknowledged various relevant and appropriate sources of spiritual or religious perspectives
* utilised a range of highly appropriate inquiry and communication skills
* presented information in a clear and succinct manner, ensuring that all key information addressing specific assessment features was contained within the word count, using appendices only for additional supporting evidence if deemed appropriate.

The less successful responses commonly:

* offered description based responses instead of engaging in analysis and reflection of the actions taken
* only created opportunities for incidental collaboration or for students to work independently towards a common goal, rather than collaborating with a group of people with equal responsibility over a period of time to design and deliver an outcome
* presented the same evidence for each student within a group, without clearly identifying the individual contributions or incorporating personal reflections
* were overly scaffolded, limiting students' opportunities for in-depth and insightful analysis and reflection
* provided simplistic and/or inaccurate explanations of religious/spiritual concepts or beliefs
* displayed limited evidence of the intended achievements of the task.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Transformative Action: 30%

10‑credit subject

For a 10-credit subject, students identify and research a local, national, or global issue related to a big idea of their choice, utilizing primary and secondary sources.

Students:

* explore one or more spiritual and/or religious perspectives on their chosen issue
* investigate one or more existing initiatives, and reflect on spiritual and/or religious beliefs and values as a motivation for social action and transformation
* evaluate the efficacy of the initiative/s and suggest possible further actions.

Students must provide evidence of Exploration and Analysis (EA1 and EA2) and *Action and* Reflective Practice (ARP3). It is important to remember that students completing the 10credit version of SRM do not have to actively devise an initiative.

There were many innovative questions and research areas submitted for the Transformative Action task in 2023. Popular focus topics included (but were not limited to) areas linked to homelessness, eco-spiritual issues, meditation and mindfulness practices, planetary flourishing versus planetary suffering, food insecurity, domestic violence, religious/ spiritual responses to climate change, human trafficking /modern slavery, mental health initiatives, refugee crises and support, aid to war-torn countries and the fast fashion industry.

The more successful responses commonly:

* chose initiatives that had obvious religious or spiritual motivations
* referred to a Big Idea and integrated this throughout the piece
* often explicitly named and linked the organisation or focus on a big idea within an overall research question, for example “How does Care International fight poverty to improve communities and justice by promoting human rights?” or “How does the Asylum Seeker Centre provide peace, purpose and meaning by supporting asylum seekers and refugees?”
* used and acknowledged (a range of reliable, authentic, and valid sources of information (including quality primary sources such as interviews, podcasts, Zoom calls, presentations and feedback from groups where appropriate). These were used to support understanding and develop knowledge, concepts and skills.
* analysed the spiritual/ religious perspectives of the issue/ topic they were exploring
* explored the spiritual/ religious motivations/ values/ beliefs underpinning the solution/the organisation working to address the issue
* when discussing charitable works, the pieces explored the personal/ social/ emotional/ spiritual benefits to the person working for the charity, not just those being served
* communicated clearly, referencing a spirituality or faith and how shared views shape culture among communities. How community influences the religious and spiritual perspective was also explored.
* when discussing impact, the papers described how a group/ individual's life had improved (beyond regurgitating corporate strategies and KPIs from the charitable organisation's website) thus  
  evaluating the effect of the existing initiatives/ organisations.
* discussed specific strategies which impacted individuals and communities and why (including links to spiritual/ religious aspects) not just what was done or achieved
* incorporated pertinent religious scripture, sacred texts, or spiritual quotations to substantiate the points made and further strengthen the research with evidence
* reflected on the initiatives/ activities and communicated what worked well and what did not and what recommendations could be made in a future world/ moving forward.

The less successful responses commonly:

* contained generalisations, stereotypical, or biased statements without substantiation
* described issues rather than analysing them
* did not use reliable religious or spiritual sources, referring to sources without authority or qualifications as experts
* referred to interviews with primary sources with no explanation of their relevance, expertise, or qualifications
* drew on a limited number of relevant primary and/or secondary sources
* were written only as critiques of the work of organisations or charities that implemented initiatives.

20 credit subject

For a 20-credit subject, students are tasked with identifying and researching a local, national, or global issue related to a big idea of their choice, utilizing a diverse range of primary and secondary sources.

Students are expected to:

* explore one or more spiritual and/or religious perspectives on their chosen issue
* develop and apply an initiative designed to generate transformative social change or call others to action (advocacy) based on spiritual and/or religious values
* evaluate the impact and/or possible future implications of their initiative on stakeholders and reflect on spiritual and/or religious beliefs as motivation for social action and transformation.

Students must provide evidence of Exploration and Analysis (EA1 and EA2) and Action and Reflective Practice (ARP1 and ARP3).

The more successful responses commonly:

* referred to a Big Idea and integrated this throughout the piece
* explored one or more spiritual and/or religious perspectives on their chosen issue
* developed a focus question that allowed scope for exploration based on an issue of religious or spiritual nature
* structured the task with an introduction that placed the issue or question into context and used sub-headings to address relevant aspects of the issue in a succinct manner. This appeared to help students make efficient use of words and present findings that clearly addressed the specific features for assessment
* used and acknowledged (a range of reliable, authentic, and valid sources of information (including quality primary sources such as interviews, podcasts, Zoom calls, presentations and feedback from groups where appropriate). These were used to support understanding and develop knowledge, concepts and skills
* clearly developed and applied an initiative designed to generate transformative social change or advocate for action based on spiritual and/or religious values
* evaluated the impact and/or possible future implications of their initiative on stakeholders and reflect on spiritual and/or religious beliefs as motivation for social action and transformation
* sourced pertinent and inspiring community members whose status and roles in society as experts in their fields were key to answering their inquiry question
* were focussed on topics in which students seemed to have a special interest
* had a designed purpose or issue which provided clarity and direction for the inquiry
* communicated clearly, referencing a spirituality or faith and how shared views shape culture among communities. How community influences the religious and spiritual perspective was also explored
* used and acknowledged a variety of relevant sources to support understanding and development of knowledge, concepts, and skills
* incorporated pertinent religious scripture, sacred texts, or spiritual quotations to substantiate the points made and further strengthen the research with evidence
* considered a range of perspectives when analysing concepts, ideas, and skill development
* showed a thorough, contextual understanding of the chosen idea and explicitly discussed examples of how the student has developed their motivation for social action and transformation
* used a mode of presentation appropriate to the task and the students' strengths
* developed a clear conclusion that drew together the key points, lines of investigation, and discussion to arrive at a well-informed and perceptive evaluation of the impact and implications of their initiative and reflect on the underpinning spiritual and/or religious belief as the motivation for social action and transformation.

The less successful responses commonly:

* contained generalisations and stereotypical or biased statements without substantiation
* described issues rather than analysing them
* presented information without citing sources or including a reference list
* did not use reliable religious or spiritual sources, referring to sources without authority or qualifications as experts
* referred to interviews with primary sources with no explanation of their relevance, expertise, or qualifications
* drew on a limited number of primary and/or secondary sources
* were written only as critiques of the work of organisations/charities that implemented initiatives
* investigated an ethical issue rather than an initiative
* described an issue without relating it to a faith community, religion or spirituality
* were limited in the extent of transformative action shown
* focussed on exploring a religion's position on an issue, limiting the opportunity to evaluate impact
* presented simple solutions or advocacy and did not evaluate impact so it was unclear how effective these were in drawing due awareness and making a difference in/ solving the issue.

General

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by ensuring students understand the intent of the assessment, for example transformative actions which focussed purely on an ethical issue had limited opportunities to meet all performance standards.

All words used in the body of the text are counted for assessment purposes. This includes all words the assessor reads, from the beginning of the introduction to the end of the conclusion. Argument or analysis that is required for an assessment task should be presented in the body of the text, and not in supporting materials such as tables, flow charts, graphs and diagrams. Supporting materials such as these should be used only to illustrate or support the body of the text.