



**Harris
Manchester
College**

Written Work Guidance

Religion and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Candidates are required to submit one piece written in English, which you have composed as part of a current or recent course of study, not exceeding 2,000 words in length (and shorter is fine). It should demonstrate your ability to:

- think clearly and to reason coherently
- structure work and arguments in a logical way
- write clearly (and grammatically), with clear expression of thought
- provide evidence of independence of thought.

There is no restriction as to the kind of work you may submit, providing it is your own work. You might choose to submit, for example, a mock A Level essay completed under examination conditions or a homework essay from your IB course. You should submit the work that you think best demonstrates the qualities outlined above.

Your work may be on any subject and not necessarily Theology or Religion. If you are taking e.g. A Level Religious Studies and consider one of your essays for that course to represent your best work then, of course, you should submit it. However, essays on other subjects, e.g. English, History, Politics etc are also welcome. You should submit the work that you think best demonstrates the four qualities listed above. It is fine to ask for the advice and opinion of your teacher or another advisor at your school.

It is not usually necessary to write something especially for your application and if you have composed a suitable piece of work as part of a recent or ongoing course of study, you should submit it. However, if you do not have any recent, suitable written work available, tutors are pleased to accept a piece that has been written for submission.

When selecting a topic for your written piece, you should avoid topics and questions that are purely descriptive and instead choose something that encourages analysis. Try to make some kind of argument or come to some kind of decision. The faculty does not prescribe titles but the following are offered, either as titles to use or to guide your own formulation of a title:

Religion and Theology:

1. 'Theology and Religion should not be studied in a secular University.'
Discuss.

2. How might you resolve the ethical issues surrounding blood sports/cosmetic surgery/medical testing on animals? [choose an issue that interests you]
3. 'If God does not exist, then religion is pointless.' Do you agree?

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies:

1. Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford used to be called 'Oriental Studies'. Can you explain why this change happened, and discuss?
2. What do you see as the main differences between your own culture and the culture you hope to study?
3. 'Human beings have more to unite than divide them.' Discuss the varied representations of what unites human beings in the culture of two or three countries, including your own.
4. Examine the relationship between religion and politics in one or two countries.
5. Examine the relationship between memory and politics in one or two countries.

In the case where a piece of work has been produced especially for submission as part of an application (and not in routine schoolwork), there is no expectation that this work will have been marked by a teacher.

Please read the further guidance available in the answers to [FAQs on the Theology and Religion Faculty's website](#).