

GCE AS Examiners' Report

Religious Studies

AS

Summer 2025

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Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
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*please note we are unable to provide reports for the following options due to their small entry numbers.

1a. An introduction to Christianity
1e. An Introduction to Hinduism

Executive Summary

Context of this series:

The historical decrease in entries for this qualification continued this year with a 11.6% smaller cohort than in 2024.

Positive aspects of candidates' performance:

- across all components many candidates showed **good understanding of key concepts, used appropriate terminology, structured arguments well, and engaged with sources of authority and scholars** effectively.
- high scoring AO1 responses often **included relevant scriptural references, scholarly views, ethical scenarios, and philosophical arguments to illustrate and support points**, demonstrating **depth and breadth** of knowledge and understanding.
- for AO2 responses, the best responses **maintained focus on the specific wording of the question, maintained clear lines of reasoning, providing various perspectives, and engaged in genuine analysis and evaluation** rather than mere description.

Issues for centres to consider:

- some responses **drifted from** the specific **question** wording and **lacked clear paragraphing**.
- common **AO1 errors** included **conflating different philosophical arguments** (e.g., ontological, cosmological, and teleological), **misclassifying thinkers** or **ethical theories**, relying on **narrow or superficial points**, and **failing to provide sufficient examples**.
- weaker responses **did not adequately refer to relevant sources of authority**, failed to **define key terms** at the outset, and often **wasted time with unnecessary summaries or introductions** rather than substantive content.
- sometimes **candidates repeated AO1 type material instead of engaging in genuine AO2 analysis and evaluation**.
- some AO2 responses **did not explore both sides of arguments**, leading to one-sided or underdeveloped answers.
- **some candidates failed to understand key terms from the specification being used in the AO2 questions**, such as ritual, self-interest, ritual or intrinsic good and as a result struggled to address the question.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE Advanced Subsidiary
Summer 2025

1b: An Introduction to Islam

Overview of the Component

Which Assessment Objectives are being assessed?

Part (a) of each question tests candidates AO1 skills - knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

Part (b) of each question tests candidates' AO2 skills - analysis and evaluation, with regards to aspects of and approaches to religion and belief.

Which aspects of the qualification were assessed in this examination?

- Q.1** Theme 2A: The concept of Allah – tawhid (oneness) and shahadah (bearing witness).
- Q.2** Theme 2B: Muslim beliefs about nabi (prophets), rasul (messenger), nadir (warner) and risalah (the message)
- Q.3** Theme 1C: The Qur'an as a source of wisdom and authority – its use and treatment in Islam
- Q.4** Theme 3A: Salah (prayer) and other forms of prayer
- Q.5** Theme 4C: Ramadan and Id-ul-Fitr

Positive features of responses:

- many candidates gave clear, accurate definitions and used specialist terminology effectively.
- strong answers balanced breadth and depth, often supporting points with relevant Qur'anic references, hadith, or examples from Islamic practice.
- some responses demonstrated original thinking and confident analysis especially when addressing complex evaluative points.
- well-structured answers often used logical paragraphing to develop arguments coherently and cover multiple perspectives.

Issues for centres to consider:

- weaker responses lacked precision, with vague references or insufficient explanation of key terms and concepts.
- some candidates gave mainly descriptive answers to AO2 questions without adequate analysis, evaluation, or breadth of points.
- some candidates use a weak paragraph structure in places, which led to poorly developed or incoherent arguments.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 This was by far the most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- made good use of terminology was given and gave clear definitions.
- made explicit reference to verses from the Qur'an – e.g. Sura 112.
- explored the concept of 'oneness' with regard to several aspects of uncompromising monotheism, ranging from worship without idols; in beliefs, such as God with no son or father; and in creation shown by unity in signs of nature.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- refer to Sura 112 clearly and with precision, as some were vague.
- do more to explain 'oneness' compared to polytheists in Makkah in the context of revelation of the sura.
- use better structure, with short paragraphs each taking one aspect of 'oneness'.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- covered aspects of personal importance (believing in the heart), importance in a group or public setting (outward declaration of the shahadah to affirm faith in Islam) made in front of two witnesses to gain acceptance in a Muslim community.
- realised and responded to the word 'entirely' in the statement.
- saw a link between personal belief and outward demonstration of this.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- describe personal and public occasions when the shahadah is said and do more to analyse and evaluate the importance of these.
- develop a broader range of points to support the arguments made.
- draw the argument together in conclusion directly referring to personal matter, to give coherence to the argument overall.

Q.2 This was by far the least popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- were clear about both rasul and nabi prophets.
- structured responses well, such as making a point about the role then backing up with examples in one paragraph before moving on to the next area.
- gave examples particularly of nabi prophets with an overview of their mission.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- refer to messengers and other roles or types of prophets.
- be much clearer about distinctions or roles in general.
- provide examples of prophets which fit into these roles and give one or two examples to illustrate otherwise generalisations made.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- considered what 'ideal' might mean, such as a perfect role model for Muslims in any situation.
- gave breadth of coverage to what might mean ideal, ranging from laws to individual habits.
- considered if the difficulties faced were linked to problems in Muhammad's prophethood and if that made it less than ideal.
- evidenced the emergence of sects suggesting prophethood not ideal.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- differentiate between Muhammad's response and the difficulty of the time he lived in, which might not have been ideal.
- provide two or three ways in which it might have been ideal, to give more breadth.
- consider the significance of the belief that Muhammad completed the line of messengers.

Q.3 This was narrowly the second most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- mentioned a broad range of ways Muslims might treat the Qur'an.
- included aspects of physical treatment as well as a source of authority.
- sometimes referred to compilation and care that was taken in this, due to perceived status as the word of God.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- do more to explain how treatment related to status.
- provide greater breadth of ways of treatment besides washing.
- explain the significance of taking care in compilation and elaborate how care was necessary to ensure authenticity as the word of God.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- considered accuracy of language in terms of getting a sense of meaning for the reader.
- articulated the difference between translation and interpretation.
- fine-tuned arguments and brought out expertise by questioning the nature of Arabic and changes of meaning in oral recitation.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- address importance of Arabic is used in prayer, which may affect accuracy of meaning.
- use a clearer paragraph structure to develop an argument, including both sides of the debate.
- address the word 'only' in the statement such as by considering different translations.

Q.4 This was the most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- balanced responses well between nature and purpose.
- brought out the ritualistic nature of prayer, giving examples using appropriate terminology.
- provided evidence such as quotations from sources of authority. Referred to the requirement in sunna of Muhammad, as well as the purpose for individuals, developing their spirituality and showing obedience to God for reward in the afterlife.

The main areas of improvement for less successful responses:

- need to consider both aspects: nature or purpose and balance the response better.
- describe the prayers and draw out nature and purpose overtly.
- write clearer paragraphs each focused on a main point.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- provided a clear stance at the start of the argument, often agreeing with the statement.
- either gave a definition of ritual or explained within the body of the response, such as routine, format.
- sometimes followed original arguments with confidence and coherence.
- a few picked up on the word 'much' or challenged the statement, suggesting ritual itself was the main point and to be valued.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- make arguments consistent and check paragraphs for consistency.
- be clear what a ritual is, such as by writing a definition in opening.
- add a conclusion or overall judgment somewhere as some answers tailed off without one.

Q.5 This was the least popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- description of practices during Ramadan was given detail.
- some responses brought out the relationship with God linked to every point made.
- demonstrated an understanding of spirituality in terms of relationship, well explained.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- provide less description and more explanation.
- improve responses by bringing out aspects of a Muslims relationship with God from descriptions.
- give more depth about some practices to enable explanation about how they affect a Muslim's relationship with God.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- provided clear logical paragraphs which moved arguments on.
- equally covered the individual and group benefits of Ramadan, such as observing Ramadan might bring individual reward in the afterlife following God's judgment, which could occur on an individual basis; or a broad range of community benefits, such as strengthening the mosque, helping charity and developing fellowship through shared practices.
- explained the importance of benefit in religious terms e.g. in the afterlife.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- refer to how the community benefits from the celebration of the festival not just individual benefits – which some candidates did.
- improve paragraphing within essays in order to show logical development of a line of argument.
- include a conclusion consistent with the arguments being made.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE Advanced Subsidiary

Summer 2025

1d. An Introduction to Buddhism

Overview of the Component

Which Assessment Objectives are being assessed?

Part (a) of each question tests candidates AO1 skills - knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

Part (b) of each question tests candidates' AO2 skills - analysis and evaluation, with regards to aspects of and approaches to religion and belief.

Which aspects of the qualification were assessed in this examination?

- Q.1** Theme 2A: The three lakshanas (three marks of existence): dukkha, anicca and anatta
- Q.2** Theme 2B: The nature of ultimate reality: Pratityasamutpada, karma and rebirth
- Q.3** Theme 1B: The Awakening/Enlightenment of the Buddha
- Q.4** Theme 4A: Going for refuge.
- Q.5** Theme 3C: The dasa sila (ten precepts) – key moral principles

Due to the low number of entries for this option it is only possible to provide the following summary:

Positive features of responses:

- there was a clear understanding, from most candidates, of what is expected in each type of question.
- there were some excellent responses to Q3 that managed to express the meanings behind specific elements of the interactions, very much embracing the word 'meanings' in the question.
- some candidates who offered evidence of engagement with the work of scholars (although not required to do so at AS) as well as other sources of authority.
- were able to make relevant and clear links to other areas of the specification.
- candidates who carried the thread of their AO2 arguments through each counter argument tended to offer the most analytically and evaluatively rich answers.

Issues for centres to consider:

- candidates need to read each question carefully and focus on both the command word and other key phrases in the question.
- some responses would benefit from an increased and relevant use of sources of wisdom and authority.
- some candidates drifted from the question set. For example. Q1 some candidates offered content of each of the three lakshanas equally and separately, despite the question asking for anicca and anatta.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE Advanced Subsidiary
Summer 2025

2. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

Overview of the Component

Which Assessment Objectives are being assessed?

Part (a) of each question tests candidates AO1 skills - knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

Part (b) of each question tests candidates' AO2 skills - analysis and evaluation, with regards to aspects of and approaches to religion and belief.

Which aspects of the qualification were assessed in this examination?

- Q.1** Theme 2A: Deductive arguments - origins of the ontological argument
- Q.2** Theme 2C: Challenges to the ontological argument
- Q.3** Theme 1C: Challenges to inductive arguments - cosmological
- Q.4** Theme 4B: Mystical experience- Rudolph Otto
- Q.5** Theme 3A: The problem of evil- Mackie and Paul

Positive features of responses:

- very few rubric errors, and on the whole good use of time management, with the vast majority of candidates completing all questions fully.
- candidates that did well focused on the precise wording of the question, and did not waste time on content that was not related to the question.
- candidates that did well did not describe AO1 style content in part (b) responses.
- candidates that did well made good use of examples to illustrate their points or arguments in part (b) questions.

Issues for centres to consider:

- the responses this summer on the whole, seemed to be weaker than previous series. This may perhaps be due to the themes chosen for Section A and the nature of the Q2a and Q3a question focus on challenges. Whilst these are legitimate areas of the specification some candidates found these challenging.
- there seemed greater confusion between ontological/ cosmological/teleological arguments this year than seen previously.
- where responses were not so successful, candidates tended to write about what they wanted to discuss rather than the specific demands of the question. This was particularly evident in certain questions such as Q2a, Q3a and Q5b in particular.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 This was by far the least popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- successfully outlined the concept of *a priori* knowledge with reference to relevant and accurate examples.
- showed accurate understanding of the role of logic in deductive proofs.
- referenced different aspects of ontological arguments to illustrate and support their points, linking back to the concepts of *a priori* and deductive proofs.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- focus on the specific demands of the question, which concerned the concepts of *a priori* and deductive proofs.
- use aspects of ontological arguments to illustrate the concepts, rather than just explaining the arguments in isolation.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- kept the focus on the wording of the question.
- used the strengths and weaknesses of ontological arguments to illustrate or support their analysis and evaluation.
- demonstrated either depth or breadth of knowledge in presenting reasoning to support or counter the statement in the question.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- focus on the wording of the question and avoid writing about ontological arguments in a generic fashion.
- avoid writing about the merits of inductive arguments in a way which doesn't link back to deductive arguments or relate to the question in any way.

Q.2 This was by far the most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- demonstrated a sound grasp of the main challenges to ontological arguments reflecting those on the specification.
- could coherently outline how the selected challenges challenge specific aspects of particular ontological arguments.
- used accurate examples from philosophers to good effect, to illustrate the challenges.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- avoid explaining ontological arguments, which was not the question focus.
- demonstrate knowledge of how the challenge applies to specific aspects of ontological arguments, rather than just stating the challenge in isolation.
- avoid confusing challenges to ontological arguments with challenges to cosmological arguments.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- focused on the precise question asked, exploring different perspectives regarding what may or may not be 'effective' and why. For example, what might be effective for those with a pre-existing religious belief in contrast to Empiricists.
- weighed up and evaluated arguments for and against the statement, rather than just describing them.
- referred to a range of relevant scholars or arguments accurately and clearly.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- avoid confusing ontological arguments for other arguments such as cosmological or teleological.
- try to evaluate arguments rather than just describing them.
- only refer to inductive or a posteriori argument if you are using them to make an evaluative point about ontological arguments, meaning content remains focused on the specific question.

Section B

Q.3. This was by far the most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- showed accurate knowledge and understanding of a variety of challenges to cosmological arguments, demonstrating breadth or depth.
- provided a context for the selected challenges and were able to explain how they challenged specific cosmological arguments or aspects of the relevant argument.
- used examples/ analogies accurately to support or illustrate their point.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- avoid conflating cosmological and teleological arguments and their challenges, remaining focused on the specific question.
- avoid just stating challenges, explain how they challenge with development, reference to what they are challenging.
- make use of appropriate examples/ accurate analogies from the relevant philosophers.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- focused on the 21st century context of the question, selecting relevant arguments and examples for this focus e.g. the Big Bang theory, quantum physics, the law of inertia, rising secularism and Empiricism, etc.
- demonstrated a range of points, going beyond just repeating the challenges explained in the part (a).
- considered the inductive nature of cosmological arguments in relation to the 'persuasive' aspect of the question wording.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- select content that best relates to the specific question, rather than giving generic strengths/ weaknesses of cosmological arguments.
- avoid referring to challenges to and weaknesses of teleological arguments.

Q.4. This was question was by far the least popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- demonstrated detailed knowledge of Otto's ideas surrounding mystical experiences.
- used specialist terms such as 'mysterium tremendum et fascinans' and 'numinous', etc.
- supported and developed points with relevant examples, e.g. Moses and the burning bush or Isaiah.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- focus on Otto's views as the question specified, rather than those of James.
- use examples and accounts of mystical experiences to support and illustrate the points made.
- include wider breadth of Otto's views rather than repeating the same point.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- were able to draw on a variety of types of religious experience and their impact on religious belief and practice to support their arguments.
- used specific examples to illustrate and support their points, e.g. the mystical experiences or conversions which founded many world religions and lead to specific influential teachings or practices.
- referenced the views of scholars such as James, St Teresa of Avila and Otto to aid evaluation.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- include reference to other types of religious experience to contrast with mysticism.
- reference examples of belief or practice that has been influenced by specific types of religious experience.

Q.5 This was the second most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- addressed the full demands of the question, referencing the ideas of both Mackie and Paul in detail.
- referenced the different logical and evidential basis of the arguments.
- used accurate and relevant examples or explanations to illustrate and appropriately develop points made e.g. fully outlining all aspects of Mackie's inconsistent triad and his rejection of potential solutions. Also referencing Paul's statistics to highlight the 'holocaust of the children' and the implications of the lack of free will in particular for the God of Classical Theism.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- avoid confusing Paul's arguments with Rowe's. They differ considerably.
- avoid limiting the scope of answers by only referring to one aspect of the question.
- include examples or evidence to illustrate points further, so they are fully outlined rather than just briefly stated without context.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- focused on the natural evil aspect of the question, and were able to ensure reference to theodicies and other arguments were fully linked to the natural evil context.
- specifically referenced the qualities of the God of Classical Theism and evaluated whether natural evil successfully challenged these or not.
- had clear lines of argument throughout, with emphasis on evaluation rather than just description. Particularly with regards to the theodicies.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- address the 'natural evil' focus of the question. Many weaker responses either just discussed the question from a generic problem of evil perspective or got swept up in Augustinian type theodicies and original sin, without being able to successfully link this to natural evil.
- consider the nature of the God of Classical Theism and use this as a means of structuring or approaching the question. Many responses didn't explore the specific challenges to the nature of God, rather just generic challenges to God's existence as a whole.
- consider the arguments from the Irenaean type and Augustinian type theodicies as a potential defence to the qualities of the God of Classical Theism, which could be evaluated in terms of arguments for or against the statement.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE Advanced Subsidiary
Summer 2025

3. AN INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION AND ETHICS

Overview of the Component

Which Assessment Objectives are being assessed?

Part (a) of each question tests candidates AO1 skills - knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

Part (b) of each question tests candidates' AO2 skills - analysis and evaluation, with regards to aspects of and approaches to religion and belief.

Which aspects of the qualification were assessed in this examination?

- Q.1** Theme 4A: Classical Utilitarianism – Jeremy Bentham's Act Utilitarianism: happiness as the basis of morality
- Q.2** Theme 4C: Bentham's Act Utilitarianism and Mill's Rule Utilitarianism – Application of the theory: the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent
- Q.3** Theme 1C: Ethical Egoism
- Q.4** Theme 2C: Aquinas' Natural Law – Application of the theory: Abortion
- Q.5** Theme 3A: Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics – His rejection of other forms of ethics and his acceptance of agape as the basis of morality

Positive features of responses:

- in the main candidates were able to interpret questions correctly and understand what was required to address them.
- for Q1 the best responses were able to show the context for the hedonic calculus and give ethical examples to support the use of it.
- for Q4, the best responses were able to show how to work out the application issue in the context of Natural Law as a whole.

Issues for centres to consider:

- some candidates had difficulty with Q3 if they were unclear about the differences between Egoism and Utilitarianism.
- when responding to AO2 part (b) questions candidates do not need to give introductions that lay out what they will go on to argue, as they are using up valuable time and end up repeating themselves.
- when responding to AO2 part (b) questions some candidates were merely presenting one side of a debate, without entertaining other points of view.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 This was the most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- there were some great examples of context setting, explaining key relevant vocabulary and showing an understanding of what the calculus is trying to do.
- could correctly identify the seven factors of the calculus.
- candidates who knew the seven factors could define and explain them correctly without simple repetition of the term.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- illustrate the calculus with examples of ethical problems.
- the use of synonyms to define the factors of the calculus rather than reusing these words in the explanation.
- ensure that a conclusion is provided and supported with reasoning.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- showed an understanding of the word 'justice', either in terms of 'fairness' or 'equality' or as a part of a system of law. Either interpretation was fine, and helped to make responses more purposeful.
- successful answers understood Bentham's background in law making and systems of justice.
- the tyranny of the majority was often used and exemplified well.
- could identify what was fair or unfair about weighing up every ethical problem separately, with examples, usually gained more marks.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- demonstrate an understanding that Mill's 'lower pleasures' are not necessarily simply immoral, evil or unjust.
- try to be more focused on justice rather than general strengths and weaknesses in their response.
- ensure that they know the difference between Bentham and Mill and are confident with how to correctly classify either as 'Act' or 'Rule' Utilitarians.

Q.2 This was the least popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- understood why a nuclear weapon was a different kind of threat from arms in general and understood 'deterrent' as discouraging other nations from engaging in warfare with the nuclear country.
- were able to conduct a cost / benefit analysis using the hedonic calculus to show how the theory would work.
- could use the hedonic calculus to weigh up the morality of possessing nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- avoid using non-ethical examples, or examples unrelated to nuclear arms as a deterrent, to save time and ensure the answer stays relevant.
- consider the difference between deterrent and defence since some focused purely on using the weapons rather than possessing them with the intent to discourage war.
- ensure that they use the hedonic calculus to demonstrate the cost/benefit analysis of possessing such weapons, to show their understanding of Act Utilitarianism.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- understood 'intrinsic good' as meaning good in and of itself as opposed to just leading to good things or not even being good at all.
- considered other possible intrinsic goods like love or the primary precepts.
- were able to distinguish between happiness and pleasure clearly exploring the difference and offering reasoning why one or both might be intrinsically good.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- ensure they are clear about the differences between Egoism and Utilitarianism so that they do not assume that all happiness is about self-interest.
- avoid generalised accusations of Utilitarianism being 'vague' or causing 'chaos' without reasoning or examples to support the challenge.
- where alternatives to pleasure were considered as possible intrinsic goods, it would be good practice to ensure that discussion of alternate goods do not then become the sole focus of the essay.

Section B

Q.3 This was the second most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- chose to give a brief introduction setting the context of the challenges within an understanding of Egoism, without unnecessary detail or development.
- understood the importance of community ethos and could give examples to support why Egoism might not encourage this.
- demonstrated a good understanding of social injustice and how Egoism could cause such problems.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- need to differentiate between self-interest and pleasure or happiness.
- need to understand what bigotry means and explain the lack of evidence for one person's needs being superior to another.
- should know the challenges mentioned on the specification, which would help candidates to avoid generic, non-specific objections that could be applied to any theory.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- considered that 'evil' might be defined as 'self-interest' by people like Fletcher but 'evil' to Aquinas and to Stirner might mean different things again, making it difficult to conclude objectively.
- they also considered what the term 'inevitably' means and whether this was an accurate description in this context.
- considered the possibility that the 'union of egoists' or consideration of long-term self-interest might prevent rash, unreasonable acts.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- try to differentiate between self-interest and selfishness or self-interest and pleasure. They may not mean the same thing.
- repeating AO1 information from part (a) without any differences means that candidates have not understood the AO2 skills (analysis and evaluation) required when addressing part (b) questions correctly.

Q.4 This was the most popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- had a clear understanding of the working of Natural Law and were able to put the precepts into the context of the teleological goal of the beatific vision. As a result, the application of the theory was often successful.
- were able to outline each primary precept and apply the issue of abortion to the secondary precepts.
- were able to explore real and apparent goods or interior and exterior acts within their application which added depth and breadth to the responses.
- some even referred to Howard Kainz to show how Natural Law might be interpreted differently than the traditional understanding of Aquinas.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- need to go beyond simple obedience to scripture (Do not kill) by considering the role of reason in Natural Law
- have an accurate understanding of double effect if it is used, since it is not traditionally understood as an acceptance of a direct or intended abortion and it is not used to justify abortion in cases of rape.
- avoid unnecessary descriptions of the four levels of law or the virtues unless they can be used to help to address the issue of application to abortion.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- considered Natural Law as an exercise in casuistry and could consider the more teleological elements of the theory.
- were able to consider what it is about the modern world that makes this theory challenging and brought up modern ideas about bodily autonomy and women's rights.
- some were able to utilise other ethical theories such as Situation Ethics or Virtue Theory to consider abortion from another, maybe more modern, perspective.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- think about what has changed in society since Aquinas was writing and to be aware that in Aquinas' time, abortion would have been life threatening to a woman. Women would have been in the care of their fathers or husbands and not often autonomous.
- don't leave out any aspect of the question, so this part (b) would still require a candidate to consider whether Aquinas can help people make decisions about abortion rather than any other ethical problem.

Q.5 This was the least popular question in this section.

(a) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- referred to Luke 10 and 1 Corinthians 13 as detailed on the specification. They knew the content and how it related to agape.
- were able to relate these verses to the most relevant principles such as 'Agape is the only intrinsic good' or 'love wills the neighbours good whether we like him or not.'

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- be familiar with the context of the Bible command to love your neighbour. Understanding that it is rooted in the Old Testament, emphasised in the New Testament and that it is not simply one of the ten commandments helps.
- answers should then go beyond this one simple command and consider other scripture, such as that required by the specification.
- being able to demonstrate the specifics of Jesus' parables and actions can add breadth and depth to an answer.

(b) What worked well – characteristics of successful responses:

- referred to Lord Devlin and were able to consider the extent to which we need rules to control or structure society and help young people know how to behave.
- applied Situation Ethics to same sex relationships or to abortion here so that they could demonstrate the importance of demonstrating agape – selfless love, rather than judging.

The main areas of improvement needed for less successful responses:

- consider the work of William Barclay here who directly challenged Situation Ethics and could provide some useful lines of argument.
- being willing to consider both sides of the argument rather than simply arguing one point of view.
- be careful not to confuse the Old Testament commands of Judaism with the requirements that the Bible makes of Christians, e.g. the 613 Mitzvot.

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