



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES AS

SUMMER 2019

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Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 1A: An Introduction to the Study of Christianity

General Comments

Overall, the paper was answered well, with some responses showing excellent breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding in AO1 questions and evaluative skills in AO2 questions. The full range of marks were applied showing the paper effectively differentiated between candidates' responses. There was not much difference between marks achieved for part (a) and part (b) for each question although some candidates did produce very high quality part (b) answers, particularly for Question 1b and Question 3b.

All questions were attempted, showing the accessibility of the paper, Question 1 was attempted by around twice as many candidates than Question 2. Question 1 was the question answered most successfully on the paper, with a good proportion writing solid Band 5 answers.

Question 3 was by far the most popular selection from Section B. Question 1 was the question answered most successfully on the paper, with a good proportion writing solid Band 5 answers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

1. (a) **Explain different ways in which the birth narratives of Jesus help Christians to understand the doctrine of the incarnation.**

[AO1 25]

This was the most popular question in Section A, answered by around twice as many candidates (67.2%) as Question 2. There was a good range of answers covering all five bands.

Features of stronger responses:

- Specific reference to scripture – including reference to elements of the birth narratives and gave a good selection of examples.
- Explained both sides of the understanding of incarnation - Jesus was both fully God but also fully human

Features of weaker responses:

- Only considered Jesus as fully God or fully human
- Did not understand the term 'incarnation'.
- Did not address the question set and instead simply retold the birth narratives.

1. (b) **‘The birth narratives are a credible source for Christian belief today.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

This question was generally answered more successfully than part (a) with more candidates achieving Band 5 than any other part (b) question. Many candidates had a clear opinion on this topic and argued it effectively.

Features of stronger responses:

- Referred to Points other than just Redaction Criticism.
- Redaction Criticism argued from both points of view - most of these with the view that this meant that the birth narratives are not a credible source for Christian belief today. The best answers also included arguments as to why redaction criticism could make them more credible, showing excellent analysis and evaluation of the issue.
- Included features of historicity of the birth narratives

Features of weaker responses:

- Didn't fully evaluate the view(s) given and only focused on how they are not credible.
- A solely from an atheist perspective, failing to consider Christian belief today.

2. (a) **Explain the different views presented by Rudolf Bultmann and N.T. Wright on the resurrection of Jesus.**

[AO2 25]

Fewer candidates chose to answer this question (31.1%) than Question 1, but there was a similar range in responses, ranging from Band 1 to 5, although there was a higher proportion of Band 5 responses than for question 1 (a).

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated a deep understanding of Bultmann's understanding of the significance of the resurrection, which included explaining not only his demythologisation, but his views on what the resurrection means for Christians.
- Included references to a variety of points made by N.T. Wright, including detailing the context around the resurrection and some specifically referencing his published work.

Features of weaker responses:

- Only wrote about the views of Bultmann.
- Attempted to refer to the views of N.T. Wright, but the information given was incorrect.

2. (b) **‘Bultmann’s views on Jesus’ resurrection are more convincing than those of N.T.Wright.’ Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

On the whole, students did not answer this as well as the part (a), however the responses showed candidates generally answered it well. Some students who had misunderstood or left out N.T. Wright in part (a) included a brief and correct analysis of his view in part (b).

Features of stronger responses:

- Stronger responses really analysed each scholar’s view in depth before comparing their views and evaluating the strength of their arguments. Showing a depth of understanding of both views.
- A wider range of different views were considered than in Q 1(b)

Features of weaker responses:

- Only analysed Bultmann’s views - focusing on his ‘demythologisation’ and whether or not this view was convincing.
- Failed to develop a clear line of reasoning.

3. (a) **Explain issues raised by the use of male language about God.**

[AO1 25]

The vast majority of the candidates answered this question from Section B (69.8%) and almost all focused on Sallie McFague.

Features of stronger responses:

- Many candidates had a sound knowledge of McFague’s ideas and included other issues with using male language about God.
- Some answers included reference to the Bible and how Jesus used male language about God, with many including how Jesus called God ‘Abba’.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses came where candidates misunderstood the question and discussed the reasons why male language about God was not an issue.
- Mistakenly focused on Sallie McFague herself and her general background.

3. (b) **‘Understanding God as mother weakens the traditional idea of the Christian God.’ Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

The part (a) and part (b) to this question were answered equally well, with candidates’ responses ranging from Band 1-5. Again, the vast majority focused their responses on the ideas of Sallie McFague. Candidates recognised that God as mother is a part of McFague’s model of God.

Features of stronger responses:

- Candidates recognised that God as mother is a part of McFague's model of God. Most candidates were able to present a clear line of reasoning and where they argued that the statement is correct they used examples from the Bible to support their argument.
- Stronger responses included reference to the Bible for both sides of the argument, with some including biblical analogies of God as a 'mother hen' or a 'woman looking for a lost coin' as well as passages to support the view that it does weaken the traditional view of the Christian God, such as Jesus teaching the Lord's Prayer, beginning 'Our Father'.
- Focused on an evaluation of 'God as 'mother'

Features of weaker responses:

- Went off-topic and instead focused on McFague's 'Mother, Lover and Friend' analogy
- Did not evaluate and presented only on the view that it does weaken the traditional idea of the Christian God.

4. (a) **Explain reasons for Luther's rejection of James 2:24 which states that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.**

[AO1 25]

This question was only attempted by a very small number of candidates (8.4%), mostly from the same centre. Most that attempted this question answered it well, with answers being far more detailed than answers for other Section B responses.

Features of stronger responses:

- Showed excellent depth of understanding on Luther and most included a variety of Bible references to explain Luther's rejection of James 2:24.
- Gave thorough explanation of Luther's reasoning.

Features of weaker responses:

- Misunderstood the term 'sola fide'
- Misunderstood James 2:24

4. (b) **'The New Testament letters only support justification by faith alone.' Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

This question was answered very well (with a highest part (b) mean of 17.6%), with only one candidate not reaching at least Band 4.

Features of stronger responses:

- Included a variety of Paul's writings as examples to show how the New Testament letters support justification by faith or justification by works.

- Focused on the issue of whether the New Testament letters only focus on justification by faith - responding to the word 'alone' in the question.
- One candidate interpreted the question differently and explored whether or not it is only in the New Testament letters that the idea of justification by faith alone is evident, as opposed to in other areas of the Bible. This was an acceptable way of responding to the question and as such was an excellent answer due to the depth and breadth of the teachings included.

Features of weaker responses:

- Didn't fully grasp the concept of justification by faith alone
- Fewer references to biblical text

5. (a) Explain ways in which God's love is a potential model for Christian behaviour.

[AO1 25]

This question was not selected by many candidates (20.2%) but many of the responses were good. There were no Band 1 responses.

Features of stronger responses:

- Focused on Exodus 34:6-7 and 1 John 4:19-21
- Applied examples used to show how God's love is a model for Christian behaviour. God's omnibenevolent character and Jesus' teachings of 'love your neighbour' were mentioned by many candidates.

Features of weaker responses:

- Gave general responses on God's omnibenevolence
- Only referred to 'love your neighbour'.

5. (b) 'God's behaviour towards human beings is not an ideal basis for Christian morality.' Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

This was answered adequately, but not as well as part (a) or the other Section B part (b) questions.

Features of stronger responses:

- Thorough analysis of God's omnibenevolence through a discussion on how his actions may not always seem to exemplify this attribute. They also used examples of God's *behaviour* towards humans. They focused on biblical passages and really analysed and evaluated whether God's behaviour can be seen as loving in passages where he punishes and curses generations of his people.
- Issues surrounding the problem of evil were incorporated by some candidates.
- Such responses used these passages to argue that Christians shouldn't necessarily use God's behaviour as a basis for morality, and they evaluated these arguments effectively.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not respond to the specific demands of the question, and instead discussed biblical/Jesus' teachings rather than examples of God's behaviour (what God did/does) towards human beings.
- Answered this question as if this was an AO1 question, including the same content as part (a) with little analysis or evaluation.

Summary of key points

- Candidates performed best when they carefully read and fully understood the question. The best AO1 responses showed candidates had excellent understanding of the specific demands of the question and showed insight into religion and belief.
- Weaker responses were often generalisations of topics rather than answers that engaged with the specific question. For example, whilst more candidates chose Question 1 over Question 2, some did not engage thoroughly with the question; rather describing the birth narratives more than explaining how they help Christians to understand the incarnation.
- The weaker AO1 and AO2 responses demonstrated that these candidates had failed to fully grasp the question or got confused between scholars or Biblical verses.
- The stronger AO2 answers showed thorough consideration of the issues highlighted in the question and a clear line of reasoning.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 1B: An Introduction to the Study of Islam

General Comments

The standard of responses was good and there were many comprehensive answers, handling the material well, selecting a breadth of examples and explaining some in detail. The most popular questions were Question 1 and Question 3.

There were perhaps more responses in Band 4 and slightly fewer reaching Band 5 due to these responses demonstrating less precision and not showing thorough depth of knowledge and understanding within the context of the specific demands of the question set. There were also fewer responses in Bands 1 and 2, showing that centres have succeeded in ensuring students are able to access the material and make a satisfactory attempt to address the specific questions set.

The best responses to AO2 questions built up good discussions and arguments. Instead of referring to agreeing and disagreeing, they pinpointed aspects of the topic where some might agree or disagree, and gave an indication as to how significant that was within the discussion overall, leading to their conclusion in response to the statement given.

Weaker answers sometimes repeated points or wrote short paragraphs in which they did not add anything to their answers, perhaps due to lack of depth of knowledge or understanding. A few candidates appeared to write a short answer to their final part of the final question, which suggested time management issues.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A

1. (a) **Outline different religious and social roles of masjids (mosques) for Muslims.**

[AO1 25]

This was a popular question and most candidates knew some of the roles of masjids (mosques). Many achieved their highest mark on this question of all they attempted. The better answers balanced both breadth and depth and were able to refer to a range of different roles, choosing to expand on some in detail.

Features of stronger responses:

- Outlined a range of religious roles for masjids including conducting the daily prayer services, giving details about facilities for this; Friday prayers and sermons; schools and Madrassahs; Id prayers and guidance from the Imam on matters of Shariah, with varying degrees of style and emphasis according to different traditions.

- Social roles of masjids included facilities for developing the Ummah, for helping those in need informally and formally with Zakat, and developing strength of faith for individuals, community and society.

Features of weaker responses:

- Limited their response to either religious or social functions but not both.
- Limited detail about one area, such as prayer, rather than explaining in detail the prayer facilities ranging from practical areas to preparing (washing) to teaching children how to perform their daily duties.

1. (b) **‘The masjid (mosque) today has little in common with the first masjid in Madinah.’ Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

Most candidates disagreed and argued that the message of Islam, including the prayers and pillars, was unchanging and so the functions of the mosque to achieve this were also common across the ages.

Features of stronger responses:

- They considered aspects of the first masjid connected with the political and military leadership at the time when the Muslim community was becoming established, and argued this was a major difference.
- Some mentioned the different styles of architecture the modern styles being very different from the simple, first places of prostration.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses repeated their disagreement but struggled to find different angles to discuss the statement.
- Some considered prayer functions were similar but did not expand on this to give details about how the Prophet instituted the practices as Muslims follow them today by his Sunnah in the context of life around the first masjid.

2. (a) **Explain the different traditions that occur on the day of Id-ul-Fitr.**

[AO1 25]

Fewer candidates chose to respond to question 2 than question 1. Candidates referred to a wide range of traditions, including rising early, wearing new clothes, taking a longer route to a larger mosque or outside space for the tradition of Id prayer; listening to a special sermon and making salutations (takbirs) in thanks to God; visiting graveyards and making personal prayers (dua); family celebrations; social functions and support and inclusion of the poor through Id collections and sharing food.

Features of stronger responses:

- The best responses not only described most of these traditions but brought out the meaning: such as the thankfulness of individuals in eating after fasting and thanking God for His blessings; or making a fresh commitment after the effort of fasting in Ramadan.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses often missed out details of the religious side of Id, other than mentioning there is a prayer.
- Some responses confused the two main Id festivals.

2. (b) **‘The main function of Id-ul-Fitr is as a social occasion.’ Evaluate the view.**

[AO2 25]

Candidates overwhelmingly understood the focus of the statement and responded to it. Most framed their discussions in considering whether Id was mostly social or mostly religious; others argued about whether it was mostly a family or community festival and the degree to which it was a social occasion in a wider sense.

Features of stronger responses:

- Strong answers clearly identified different aspects to discuss and followed these up by considering how some might agree and others disagree with the statement, before coming to a balanced conclusion of their own.
- An interesting perspective on the inclusion of the less well-off came through in debate. Some argued that the payment of Id dues and zakat was part of the religious aspect of Id. Others argued that the inclusion of all sectors of society such as in the equality shown in prayer and the sharing of food was in fact a social function.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses argued for one side or the other, without acknowledging the existence of different views, or briefly acknowledged them, but did not expand to show consideration of why some might take that view, even if they did not agree with it.

Section B

3. (a) **Explain the importance of the Qur’an as a source of authority for Muslims.**

[AO1 25]

Question 3 was the most popular question in part B. Many candidates focused on the personal use of the Qur’an individual Muslims might make for their daily practice and to decide moral issues. Although this was relevant, few mentioned the word Shari’a and still fewer considered how the Qur’an might complement the Sunnah of the Prophet in informing Muslim faith and practice.

Features of stronger responses:

- Explained how Muslims considered the Qur'an the word of God due to its miraculous origins, and some quoted from traditions about the Night of Power.
- The best went on to explain how the Qur'an is the primary source of authority for Muslims but may need interpreting through the traditions of the Prophet, or with the help of scholars or personal interpretation for different situations arising nowadays.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses wrote about how Muslims used the Qur'an in their prayers, but not about why it was important as a source of authority.

3. (b) 'The Qur'an was a message for its own time.' Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

Most candidates understood the significance of the question and argued against it, making the point that Muslims considered the Qur'an a message for all time, not just the time in which it was revealed.

Features of stronger responses:

- Drew out the importance of the beliefs explained in the Qur'an and how they were important in addressing the idol worshippers at the time. They explained how individual verses in the text were sometimes sent to guide the Prophet in situations he faced.
- Made the argument about the Qur'an being the final revelation and so just as relevant today and not meant to be tied to a historical time period.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses made simplistic arguments about the Qur'an being the holy book of Islam in all time, without understanding why some might raise issues about the problems in understanding the Qur'an to apply for modern day issues.

4. (a) Explain the role of the shahadah when converting to Islam.

[AO1 25]

Few candidates were able to describe the process of reciting the shahadah in front of witnesses, believing and learning about it, in the process of someone choosing Islam as their faith.

Features of stronger responses:

- Linked the practice of saying the shahadah to the beliefs of Islam and the realisation of faith and development of imaan.
- Explained how a person might feel closer to God like a new born child and gain a sense of connection with the one supreme being and creator, as part of His creation.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses wrote about the importance of the shahadah in prayer and in the five pillars but did not address their responses specifically to the role of the shahadah in the process of conversion/ reversion to Islam.

4. (b) **‘Having personal faith in the beliefs stated in the shahadah is all that matters.’ Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

Most candidates understood the significance of the question and discussed whether faith in the shahadah was all that mattered or whether it was meaningless unless proved by good actions, which might be considered on the Day of Judgement.

Features of stronger responses:

- Argued that intention was based on shahadah and regardless of a person's ability to do the rest of the five pillars, which might be restricted by wealth or ill health, their personal faith was essential.
- Countering this some argued that without being reminded of Judgement and the afterlife – not specified in the shahadah, a Muslim might not act on it.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses wrote about the five pillars of Islam and if the shahadah was the most important or all were equally important, without addressing the main focus of the statement of faith in the shahadah, rather than simply the practice of saying it.

5. (a) **Explain the significance of Muhammad's political and military leadership in Madinah for the development of Islam.**

[AO1 25]

Fewer candidates chose this question than the others in Section B; for those who did, the question differentiated responses widely between the more and less able candidates. Some provided reasonable responses in which Muhammad's skills and courage in leading the Muslims in events such as the Battle of Badr were explained. This was balanced by his peaceful leadership and tolerance of others as evidenced by the Constitution of Madinah.

Features of stronger responses:

- Strong answers covered by political and military leadership and brought out the characteristics of Muhammad in facing hardships.
- Good explanations gave if statements: if it were not for Muhammad's leadership, the community might not have survived the hardship of the move, or succeeded in battle.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses covered only one aspect of the question, or wrote purely descriptive accounts of events, rather than drawing out the significance from them.

**5. (b) 'The ideal model for Islam was established in Madinah.'
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

Some candidates did not understand what might be meant by model, whereas stronger responses defined aspects which might be considered a model, such as the practice of the five pillars, mosque and many aspects of the Sunnah of Muhammad which could be put into practice openly in Madinah whereas they were kept secret during the Makkan persecutions.

Features of stronger responses:

- Argued that the ideal model came from the sources of authority, the Qur'an and Sunnah, and was put into practice in Madinah as best people could given the close guidance of Muhammad whom they knew well and who led them.
- Some noted that the establishment of a whole city included those who were believers and others who were hypocrites so although the Prophet's leadership could be considered a model, the establishment of the city itself came with more complexity.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses wrote about limited ways in which a model might be considered to have been given in Madinah, such as the construction of the mosque.

Summary of key points

- Candidates need to focus on the question set and answer the demands of that question. This means responding directly to, and engaging with, the terms of the question.
- Formulaic responses sometimes helped candidates to do this; at other times it may have hindered them. 'Strong' and 'weak' points need to fit the argument if used. Candidates may identify that there are different perspectives and show their understanding of them without saying 'I agree' and 'I disagree'.
- For part (a) questions there may be a temptation to write down information around the topic without selecting the important points for that particular question. It is not necessarily length of a response that counts, but the quality of it.
- Arguments presented in the (b) parts of the questions need to be adequately supported by evidence and reasoning. Better answers consisted of short paragraphs clearly linked to the statement, backed up with one or more pieces of evidence and a short explanation of how they supported the argument.

- Candidates have developed their understanding of a diversity of opinion, but centres could continue to develop this further, particularly different strands of opinion within Islam.
- Some candidates need to plan their time more carefully as they obviously ran out of time when trying to complete their final response.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 1D: An Introduction to the Study of Buddhism

General Comments

Candidates were able to demonstrate both breadth and depth across the paper. There was a good demonstration of knowledge and understanding for each AO1 question. The most popular questions were Question 1 and Question 4.

The use of scholarly quotations was a feature of responses that reached the top band, rather than a reason why a response reached the top band. Many candidates however, did not include any reference to scholars or scripture. If quotes are to be used, then they must be used purposefully, in context and explained, not simply added in arbitrarily.

Some candidates attempted to re-word the question set and answer one that they felt they would have preferred. This often led to a low to middle band answer, as although part of their response contained creditable material, other parts of it were irrelevant.

The best AO2 responses were those that could make links between 'for' and 'against' paragraphs, critically engaging with them. Answers that contained greater analysis and evaluation made it into the higher bands, especially those who made clear links to the demands of the statement given. Conclusions given at the start of a response can be just as relevant as those that feature at the end.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

1. (a) Explain how different Buddhists view the three refuges.

[AO1 25]

This question was answered very well by the top end of candidates. There were a number of candidates who fell into the middle bands, because they did not read the question carefully, particularly the word "different", which meant parts of their responses were irrelevant.

Features of stronger responses:

- Read the question carefully and understood what was being asked of them.
- Explored how different groups of Buddhists understand the three refuges. For example, the views of the Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists (along with other groups of Buddhists); exploring the differences between their views and the importance placed on each jewel. This was either set out in paragraphs about each refuge or by each type of Buddhist.
- Discussed convert and heritage Buddhists as opposed to Mahayana and Theravada, or indeed alongside, and these responses also made it into the higher bands, provided the explanation was coherent and evidence based.

Features of weaker responses:

- Responses that fell into the lower bands often did not provide an answer that addressed the question.
- They explained the three refuges, and often in detail, but did not engage with the perception that different groups of Buddhists have of these elements.

**1. (b) ‘Going for refuge is not relevant for Buddhists today’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

The best answers to this question were the ones that differentiated between the three refuges and the concept of going for refuge. Band 5 was awarded to responses that critically analysed and evaluated the relevance of the act of ‘going for refuge’. The candidate would have explored the necessity to do this in the modern world compared to the world of ancient Buddhists. The best answers explored a shift in the understanding of this act today

Features of stronger responses:

- Understood that going for refuge has many uses and explored the relevance of each in the modern world.
- Explored the relevance today for different groups of Buddhists, feeding in from part (a) of the question.
- A debate on the impact of removing this ritual was discussed by some; questioning whether it would significantly alter the religion.

Features of weaker responses:

- Candidates that fell into the lower bands tended to be those who did not understand that the question was asking for a discussion of the act of going for refuge rather than the importance of each refuge as an sanctuary in itself.
- Candidates were still awarded for assigning merits and cons of each refuge in terms of its usefulness. Many did not reach the top bands when taking this approach.
- There were some candidates who did not understand the analytic nature of the question by not including more than one point of view.

2. (a) Explain the Buddhist practices of samatha meditation and vipassana meditation.

[AO1 25]

This answer was equally not as popular as question1. This question was answered well on the whole, with many candidates able to clearly demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the two types of meditation practices. The best answers

Features of stronger responses:

- Candidates that reached the top band gave answers that explained the two types of meditation in detail. This included explaining the practise, purpose and perceived outcome. They focussed on each of the two types of meditation equally
- These candidates highlighted the differences in the two types of meditation inexplicitly in the way that they described each.
- They included metta bhavana and anapanasati by name in the description of samatha meditation and some candidate made reference, or fully explained, how the two types of meditation link. This was especially prevalent when a candidate was mentioning meditation as a path to enlightenment.
- Usually included specialist terminology and included references to scholars such as Damien Keown.

Features of weaker responses:

- They tended to confuse the two types of meditation or fail to understand the differences between the two. Some of the weakest answers repeated themselves for each section of their answer.
- Did not understand the purpose or benefits of each meditation practice and very few of the weaker answers brought in the ideas/views of scholars.

**2. (b) 'Meditation is essential for all Buddhists.'
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

Stronger candidates explored the question from many angles whereas the weaker answers tended to focus on the merits or cons of meditation in general, often they stated that there is something more essential in Buddhism, such as the lakshanas.

Features of stronger responses:

- The best answers to this question were the ones that discussed the relevance of meditation both for types of Buddhist such as Pure Land and Theravada, but also for convert versus heritage, for Buddhists living in different countries and for monastics versus lay Buddhists.
- Candidates did not discuss all of the above but an acknowledgement for the vastness of Buddhism led to good discursive answers.
- The best candidates offered alternatives when they dismissed the essential nature of Buddhism and could critically analyse using evidence in the form of teachings from specific groups of Buddhists. For example, the way that Pure Land Buddhists may view meditation as a potential gateway to egotistical thought.

Features of weaker responses:

- Some candidates did not engage with the phrasing 'all Buddhists' as a cue to discuss the views of different Buddhists. Instead they discussed meditation as a strong or weak practice compared to other aspects of Buddhism.

- Weaker candidates had very limited lines of argument and went for a short for/against approach that gave little analysis or evaluation.

Section B

3. (a) Examine the use of the Patimokkha.

[AO1 25]

This question was not a popular question. Many candidates did not demonstrate understanding the requirements of the question. For many the focus was not on the *use* of the Patimokkha.

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated a knowledge and understanding of who uses the Patimokkha and also when exactly they were used. For example, some candidates explained that the Patimokkha is recited on Uposatha days by Theravada Buddhists.
- They offered an insight into the history and modern use of the rules for monks and nuns. Some candidates explained the different rules for men and women as an example of their use.
- The best answers explained why they were used and were able to express the need for the rules as a way of keeping peace, highlighting the positive nature of the rules as they were intended.
- Some responses made reference to the use in history and the present day.

Features of weaker responses:

- Demonstrated that the candidate did not understand the question or perhaps did not read the term 'use'.
- They did not refer to the way in which monks and nuns use the rules, focussing mistakenly on what the Patimokkha actually are or how they came to be.

3. (b) 'The parajikas are not necessary today.' Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

The answers to this question fell into two categories. Those who focused on the parajikas, and their necessity, and those who included other aspects of Buddhism, and their comparative necessity.

Features of stronger responses:

- Could demonstrate that they had a full understanding of the parajikas but could also critically engage with their relevance in the modern world, such responses engaged with the term 'today'. They could provide clear lines of reasoning for both sides of the argument competently, and included evidence to strengthen their points.
- Compared the rules to those of many modern societies.

- Made reference to events in history, where monks and nuns had broken these rules and it had stood as an acceptable act at the time, e.g. 1963 event where Thich Quang Duc burned himself in protest of the persecution of Buddhists.
- Contained many lines of argument, including arguments directly relating to monks such as the need to break a rule for self-defence or relating to the wider community, demonstrating the need for rules as the setting of the moral standard to which lay Buddhists should attempt to achieve.

Features of weaker responses:

- Contained few lines of argument and did not explain their brief points coherently, there were no examples or evidence to back up their point.
- Failed to understand the difference between the parajikas and the Patimokkha.

4. (a) Explain the three lakshanas (three marks of existence).

[AO1 25]

This was a popular answer.

Features of stronger responses:

- Explained briefly the history of the lakshanas before explaining in detail each element.
- Included scripture in their explanation, for example the questions of King Milinda, or the Buddha explaining that everything is in flux.
- When explaining dukkha they included various types of dukkha and gave examples to explain anicca and anatta in detail.
- Used the chariot analogy to explain anatta.
- Utilised specialist terminology to very good effect.
- Could explain that these three elements of Buddhism needed to be acknowledged as part of enlightenment, with reference to the Buddha's own enlightenment.

Features of weaker responses:

- On occasion a candidate confused the terms anicca and anatta. There were often frequent spelling mistakes of these two words.
- A common feature of a weaker answer was an answer that consisted of an explanation of Dukkha in the majority, with a shorter explanation of the other two lakshanas.
- The weaker answers often had little description and a lack of examples.

4. (b) 'Dukkha is the most important concept in Buddhism. ' Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

This question was generally answered very well. Candidates could easily evaluate the importance of dukkha using a number of lines of enquiry.

Features of stronger responses:

- Evaluated the importance of dukkha in comparison to other aspects of Buddhism and could compare and contrast one or more other aspects well.
- Referred to scholars to reinforce their arguments.
- Spent time analysing and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of dukkha and applying this to evaluate importance. These candidates often also brought in alternative concepts as being more important.
- Backed up their lines of reasoning with evidence.
- Brought in the critical analysis of scholars such as John Snelling and Walpola Rahula.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker answers were those that answered in discreet paragraphs that discussed various elements being the most important concept in Buddhism, without critically engaging with each point, much less offering a direct comparison of importance.
- The weakest of answers contained a reason why dukkha is important and one reason it is not.

5. (a) Examine the Four Noble Truths.

[AO1 25]

This was not a popular question.

Features of stronger responses:

- Contained the physician analogy and intertwined the explanation and the analogy.
- Made use of specialist terminology such as samudaya, nirodha, magga, tanha, lobha, dosa and moha, in context.
- Explain the origin of the Four Noble Truths and make reference to the Dhammacakkapavattana.

Features of weaker responses:

- Failed to explain the Four Noble Truths succinctly and mixed up elements. This was the same for the analogy of the physician, some of the weaker answers did not manage to explain the link between a doctor and the Buddha.
- Or could only explain the Four Noble Truths on a basic level and could not explain it alongside the physician analogy or make links to other relevant aspects of Buddhism. For example, when discussing nirodha a candidate could make links to nibbana as a result of nirodha.
- Failed to use terminology such as magga or samudaya.

5. (b) **‘The Four Noble Truths reflect reality.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

Some candidates struggled with the wording of the question specifically the phrase ‘reflect reality’. The question wanted candidates to analyse whether or not the Four Noble Truths can be seen in real life. Candidates who understood this managed to offer examples from real life that demonstrated that either the Four Noble Truths can be seen or that they cannot.

Features of stronger responses:

- Understood the parameters of the question and could articulate various lines of argument to great success.
- Critically engaged with the statement and provided evidence for both sides of the debate e.g. the idea that reality is different to different people and so in this case it could be different for different Buddhists.
- Compared the Four Noble Truths to other elements of Buddhism and said that these were better reflections of reality and why.

Features of weaker responses:

- Clearly did not understand the nature of the question and instead answered by analysing the importance of the Four Noble Truths for Buddhists.
- Presented very few lines of argument and failed to come to a justified conclusion.

Summary of key points

- Centres need to ensure that candidates understand how to answer the specifics of the question.
- In questions where two specific concepts or practices are asked, candidates need to try to give an answer which focuses on both concepts.
- The best AO2 responses were those that could critically engage with the arguments presented.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 1E: An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism

General Comments

Please note there were only a small number of candidates entered for this Option and this is reflected in the length of the report given.

The most popular questions were Question 1 and Question 3. The paper seemed accessible to the vast majority of candidates. There were a few excellent responses which showed that the candidates had been well prepared with accurate and extensive understanding, they showed confident use of religious concepts and terminology. However, there were only a small number of responses of this type. Many responses seemed to be grouped around the mid to lower bands.

Some weaknesses persist, candidates need to remember to focus on the question set and answer the demands of that question. There are a number of candidates who try to fit a pre-prepared answer to a slightly different question than the one on the examination paper. This rarely succeeds, and by doing so candidates disadvantage themselves. When responding to the AO2 part (b) questions, some did not read the question carefully enough and therefore did not address the issues raised by that question.

A serious administrative note is that some candidates did not use (a) or (b) to differentiate between the different parts of the question they were answering, leaving the examiner to guess where one finished and the other began, which in some cases was very difficult to establish.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

1. (a) Outline different theories on the Indus and Aryan origins of Hinduism. [AO1 25]

This was by far the most popular question in Section A. Some centres had obviously prepared their students well for such a question.

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of both the theories. Students wrote confidently about the Indus Valley Community, citing archaeological evidence such as the Great Bath at Mohenjo-Daro and the small square seals used for trading to support their points.
- Identified a number of features and linked them to specific concepts within Hinduism.

Features of weaker responses:

- Imbalanced answers with candidates focusing much more on one origin than the other.

- Confusion between the two elements of the question or only referring in their answers to either the Indus Valley Civilisation or the Aryans. Others
- Failed to refer to any aspects of the Indus or Aryan culture.
- Described the cultures without making any attempt to link them to the origins of Hinduism.

1. (b) **‘Knowledge of the Indus Valley Civilisation is essential for understanding Hinduism today.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

Features of stronger responses:

- Answered this question with confidence and offered a number of key arguments to support the claim that to understand Hinduism a knowledge of the Indus Valley is essential, and balanced such arguments with other views such as the differences with modern Hinduism.
- Arguments were well-supported with archaeological and or other evidence and evaluated effectively.

Features of weaker responses:

- Confused the Indus Valley Civilisation with the Aryan culture and therefore the arguments presented were flawed.

2. (a) **Explain Jnana yoga and bhakti yoga as different paths to liberation.**

[AO1 25]

There were some excellent responses to this question. It was a straightforward question asking for knowledge and understanding of two paths to liberation within Hinduism.

Features of stronger responses:

- Thorough understanding of how the two paths lead to liberation and the differences between them.
- Specific and relevant answers given to explain how Hindus follow the different paths.

Features of weaker responses:

- Superficial and lacked detail.
- Referred to karma yoga which was completely irrelevant to the question

2. (b) **‘Jnana yoga is not relevant to Hindus in the 21st century.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

The responses to this question on the whole were relatively low scoring.

Features of stronger responses:

- Relevant arguments presented and supported with reasoning and evidence e.g. Jnana is not relevant because it is not accessible to many Hindus.
- Arguments focused on the question i.e. the relevance of Jnana yoga and not a discussion on the three paths to liberation.

Features of weaker responses:

- Missed the focus of the question that is the relevance of Jnana yoga and not “which path is the best path to liberation”.
- Showed little understanding of the exclusivity of Jnana yoga and candidates found it difficult to offer a wide variety of alternative viewpoints in their answers.
- Referred to karma yoga which was completely irrelevant to the question and was given no credit.

Section B

3. (a) **Examine the concept of karma in Hinduism.**

[AO1 25]

This was by far the most popular question in Section B.

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated clear understanding of the concept of karma and its significance within Hinduism and included references to the different kinds of karma and how it affects the lives of Hindus.
- Explained the link between karma and reincarnation.

Features of weaker responses:

- Weaker responses were very superficial in nature and did little more than explaining karma in terms of ‘what goes around comes around’.

3. (b) **‘Belief in karma is by far the greatest influence on the lives of Hindus.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

There were some good balanced answers to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- Presented a number of valid arguments which included a discussion on the effect of karma on lifestyle and the attainment of Moksha; the link between karma and varnashramadharma. Considered other different influences on the lives of Hindus such as varna.

Features of weaker responses:

- Were imbalanced and lacked support for any of the arguments presented.

4. (a) Examine Gandhi's understanding of the Hindu concept of ahimsa. [AO1 25]

This question was only attempted by two candidates.

Features of the best response seen:

- Showed an understanding of the origin of the Hindu concept of ahimsa, in Jainism origins and the political use made of it by Gandhi.
- Demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of Gandhi's development of the concept into what he called satyagraha.

Features of weakest responses seen:

- Demonstrated a limited understanding of ahimsa, but their response lacked depth and exemplification.

4. (b) 'Truth has an inherent force.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 25]

This question was only attempted by 2 candidates.

Features of the stronger response:

- Attempted to discuss Gandhi's use of ahimsa in his satyagraha and the importance he placed on truth.
- Referred to truth giving the moral high ground in any situation. Quotes from Gandhi supported arguments made.

Features of the other response:

- Misinterpreted the question to mean that "it is important to always tell the truth."

5. (a) **Explain the spiritual significance of events that take place during Holi.**
[AO1 25]

Only 1 candidate attempted this question.

The mark scheme outlines what would make a good response for this question e.g. a good understanding of Holi's spiritual significance, highlighting a number of aspects such as the theme of good over evil, rewards for loyalty to God, the benevolence of the gods, spiritual blessings by Agni, etc.

The candidate's response

- Some of the response provided rather generic descriptions of the events within the Holi celebrations, such as things being thrown and bonfires, rather than focusing on the set question - the spiritual significance of these events.
- Although the spiritual significance of Holi is implicit in some parts of the answer it is not explicit enough to achieve the higher bands.

5. (b) **'Festivals are not necessary to express Hindu identity.'**
Evaluate this view.

[AO1 25]

The candidate was able to present some valid arguments to this question.

Good features of the response given:

- Presented strong arguments to support the view that taking part in its festivals does not necessarily show any commitment to Hinduism and does not therefore express Hindu identity.
- Were also able to give examples of how identity can be better expressed in other ways.
- Contained thoughtful argument and a clear conclusion.

Summary of key points

- It is imperative that centres focus on the detail of the specification content.
- Candidates need to focus on the question set and answer the demands of that question.
- In questions where two specific concepts or practices are asked for candidates need to try to give a response that focuses on both concepts.
- Arguments presented in the AO2 (b) questions need to be adequately supported by evidence and reasoning.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 2: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

General Comments

Candidates are making considerable use of the resources available to support the specification and this is enhancing their understanding and their responses.

Centres are also making use of the fact that much of the content existed in the legacy specification. There is clear evidence of some excellent teaching which is enthusing candidates to respond as they have done. There was a wide divergence in terms of quality of scripts.

The most popular questions were Question 1 and Question 3.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

1. (a) Outline Augustinian type and Irenaean type theodicies.

[AO1 25]

Candidates had an awareness of the existence of the two theodicies and were able to say at least a few things about each. This was by far the more popular question in Section A with 73.3% of candidates attempting this question. It was also clearly accessible, as its facility factor was the highest within the paper, at 58.3%.

Features of stronger responses:

- Abided by the trigger word 'outline' rather than trying to write everything they knew about the theodicies which is impossible in the time available.
- Wrote in a logical sequence in terms of allowing the theodicies to flow generally, which meant they had far less issues in terms of confusing the details of each theodicy.
- Included Biblical quotes but as well as just stating them, good candidates actually used them to highlight key features.
- Showed how each theodicy could address the problems of different types of suffering.

Features of weaker responses:

- Ignored the trigger word 'outline' and invariably suffered across the whole paper in terms of time available per part-question as a result. Examiners did not expect more than the key features as asked for in the question.

- There was confusion at times between the two theodicies, although this was marked with understanding by the examining team. Whilst some knew that Augustine suggested that some are saved and that Irenaeus suggested salvation for all, there was little in terms of considering implications of those beliefs.
- Some erroneously said that Irenaeus completely blames God for the existence of evil as God made the world imperfectly.

**1. (b) ‘Augustinian type theodicies fail to solve the problem of evil.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

This was a popular question with 72.3% of candidates attempting this part-question. The facility factor was 57.1%. There was an awareness of the fact that there is a huge amount of material from which to draw in order to present an evaluation and we read a wide amount of skilful analysis.

Features of stronger responses:

- Did not simply present information, but they referred to the information in order to make an evaluative point.
- Were able to cite successes of these types of theodicies as well as their possible failures. Examples of failures included the idea that the existence of Hell being foreseen as being a necessity does pose a problem for the characteristics of the God of Classical theism.
- Successes suggested included the theodicy’s basis in Scripture, as well as it being acceptable within Christianity due to its reliance on creation, The Fall and the Atonement.

Features of weaker responses:

- Unnecessary explanations of features of Augustinian type theodicies in terms of AO1 information. This wasted time and the candidates suffered from a lack of time across the rest of the paper as a result.
- Many confined answers solely to failures of the theodicy and were unable to truly evaluate.

2. (a) Outline the problem of evil with reference to Epicurus and Mackie.

[AO1 25]

Candidates were able to outline some types of evil that leads to the problem of evil. 24.3% of candidates attempted this question and the facility factor was 38.1%.

Features of stronger responses:

- Outlined the types of evil with appropriate exemplification, but never lost the focus of the question. That is, they used these various types of evil in order to show how their existence posed a logical problem when put alongside the existence of the God of Classical theism.
- Made reference to Epicurus and even quote or paraphrase key aspects of his views and what this meant for God’s characteristics.

- Correctly identified Mackie's inconsistent triad *and* drew out the implications of this. Some referred to the paradox of omnipotence and this could be further developed in Centres.

Features of weaker responses:

- Reference to the types of evil was stand-alone and did not really engage with the question.
- Some responses omitted 'evil exists' when it came to the inconsistent triad, including omniscience instead and the answer then became confused.

2. (b) **'Epicurus' form of the problem of evil is not a problem.'**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

There was a variety in the way that this part-question was answered and many found this question difficult. 22% of candidates attempted this part-question and the facility factor was considerably lower than that of question 1, at 33.9%. One line of argument that could be adopted could include the idea that there is no problem as humans cannot know the ways of God.

Features of stronger responses:

- Made reference to the fact that for atheists there is no problem as such.
- Similarly for those belonging to the Eastern religious traditions the 'problem' is not such due to the belief in karma.
- Some did make reference to Process theology, which was creditworthy although not part of the Specification.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not grasp the focus of the question.
- Made references to theodicies possibly eliminating the problem which is valid. However, a straight evaluation of the theodicies is not what the question demanded.

Section B

3. (a) **Examine Anselm's ontological argument.**

[AO1 25]

This was the most popular part-question in this section, with 75.5% of candidates attempting this, with a facility factor of 47.2%. Candidates could give a basic introduction which mentioned *a priori* and/or deductive. There was generally little understanding of the notion of existence as a perfection.

Features of stronger responses:

- Dispensed of the stating of phrases such as deductive and *a priori* and actually related these concepts to the ontological argument, drawing out why they had included reference to them.
- Tended to know the difference between the first and the second form and the reason for the existence of them both.

- Came to a conclusion having shown why Anselm claims God's existence to be self-evident and a logical necessity.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not really know what either deductive or *a priori* means. The answers also tended to fuse Anselm's two ways together, showing little understanding of the nuances of Anselm's arguments.
- Some were unable to give the correct definition of God, according to Anselm. Merely stating that it is better to exist in reality than in mind alone, is not addressing the key feature of existence being something that God must possess.

3. (b) **'A *priori* arguments for God's existence are persuasive.'**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

75% of candidates attempted this part-question, with a facility factor of 40.9%. Candidates knew that the ontological argument is an *a priori* argument.

Features of stronger responses:

- Wrote about the nature of *a priori* arguments. They commented on such things as: *a priori* arguments may be less subjective as they do not rely on experience.
- Also, a line of reasoning was that for the conclusion of *a priori* arguments to even have a chance of being correct then so too must the premises be. It was useful to read about differences between *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments.

Features of weaker responses:

- Some discussed only the ontological argument; whilst it is acceptable to refer to this argument in an answer, the question is about far more than that, this fact was reflected in the band awarded.
- Similarly, just comparing such arguments with *a posteriori* was not addressing the focus of the question.

4. (a) **Examine William James' four characteristics of mystical experience.**

[AO1 25]

This was the least attempted question of the entire paper, with 9.9% of candidates attempting it. The facility factor was the third highest of the part a) questions, at 44.4%. Most responses included an identification of at least three of James' four characteristics.

Features of stronger responses:

- Gave an explanation of mystical experience making reference to the fact that there are many categorisations.
- Were able to identify all four characteristics and also provide appropriate exemplification of them. This could be developed further in Centres as this makes responses considerably more dynamic.

- Some made use of work studied on St Teresa of Avila for example, but other pertinent examples from sacred literature and/or history would be most useful.

Features of weaker responses:

- The explanations were very brief, they lacked cross-referencing to other work or examples and lasted for only a sentence or two.
- Some, especially transiency was often incorrectly explained as being something that did not have a very long effect.

4. (b) **‘James’ four characteristics adequately define mystical experience.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

9.2% of candidates attempted this question and the facility factor was 42.5%. Most candidates attempted to give more than one point of view.

Features of stronger responses:

- An ability to give different viewpoints. There were few, but candidates who had studied more widely benefitted. Some were able to suggest that the four characteristics are inadequate as not all mystical experiences are ineffable. This was accompanied by an example.
- Another line of reasoning was that some experiences do take rather longer than that which transiency suggests. Indeed, some mystical experiences may be considered as being ‘active’ in the sense that the experient had yearned for the experience making them more than passive observers.
- Very few indeed were able to suggest that his four characteristics do not adequately deal with the unity or Oneness that may be felt as a result of mystical experience.

Features of weaker responses:

- Struggled with the concept of ‘adequate’ which led to some very weak answers which really got no further than making some very bland points about James’ characteristics. Many seemed to have not considered this particular line of questioning at all.

5. (a) **Explain St. Teresa of Avila’s types and stages of prayer.**

[AO1 25]

There was a tendency to give an account of only the life of St. Teresa which is not the focus of this question. 11.1% of candidates attempted this part-question, with a facility factor of 41.1%

Features of stronger responses:

- Those who put St. Teresa’s writings on types and stages of prayer into the wider category of both her work and mysticism as a whole. They were not distracted by either of the former things. They were able to write specifically about her types and stages of prayer, explaining each methodically.

- Used her gardening metaphors and importantly, related these to prayer, showing that they were for illustration purposes.
- Made good use of the essential aspect of God's grace in prayer. The 'interior castle' was utilised and again, related to prayer.

Features of weaker responses:

- Were often both brief and bland.
- There was some reference to the garden metaphors, but these remained stand-alone, not being related to prayer in any way at all. 'Mansions' were treated in the same fashion.

5. (b) 'Religious experience has a major impact on religious belief and practice.' Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

11.5% of candidates attempted this part-question, with a facility factor of 47.7%. The majority understood what religious experience is.

Features of stronger responses:

- Gave an explanation of religious belief and practice, including examples of each. This made it clearer how religious experience may have an impact on these things. When candidates made reference to specific types of religious experience, such as visions or conversion, the answers were enhanced. This is because using an example makes it much easier to suggest whether an impact resulted.
- Were able to evaluate how things other than religious experience could impact on religious belief and practice. For example, many noted that a proportion of believers have never had a religious experience, but still believe and practice.

Features of weaker responses:

- Generally, had only one line of reasoning, that is, a major impact on religious belief and practice does occur as a result of religious experience.
- There was a worrying lack of development of things other than religious experience that have had a major impact on religious belief and practice. For example, it may be suggested that St. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus was not the catalyst for his conversion. The conversion could be the culmination of Paul's wrangling with certain issues over a longer period of time.

Summary of key points

- Candidates need to be familiar with the prescribed "Command" words.
- The material studied needs to be adapted to the questions set.
- Balanced learning of the entire Specification will allow candidates to access a more widespread choice of questions.
- Using a variety of textbooks and other resources helps candidates to produce higher band responses.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 3: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND ETHICS

General Comments

The paper was of a style consistent with last year; the full range of areas on the AS specification being assessed. Candidates usually showed a general understanding of the rubric of the paper with only a very few having not attempted both parts of one question from each section. There was a tendency for part (b) responses to be longer than the part (a) despite all questions having equal marks on the AS examination.

Question 2 and Question 4 were the most popular questions. Each of the remaining questions in Section B had an almost equal attempt rate.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

1. (a) **Explain Fletcher's Four working principles as a means of assessing morality.**

[AO1 25]

This was the least popular of the Section A questions according to its attempt percentage - 27.5%, and yet appeared to be the most accessible in this section in terms of its facility factor score of 47.6%.

Features of stronger responses:

- Went through the four working principles methodically, accurately defining each
- Gave examples to illustrate definitions
- Explained that these were designed to help people to understand and apply agape
- Defined 'agape' as unconditional care of concern / altruistic love / charity.

Features of weaker responses:

- Defined 'positivism' wrongly as positive actions or happiness.
- Did not understand 'pragmatism' as the practical application of love
- Limited their answers to a simple definition rather than developing this further.
- Conflated love with happiness
- Mistook relativism for relevant and thus defined this principle incorrectly.

1. (b) **‘Situation Ethics does not work.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

This question scored a relatively high facility factor (52%) for the (b) type AO2 questions, which suggests it was accessible to candidates.

Features of stronger responses:

- Discussed at the start what would make such a theory ‘work’.
- Contrasted it with other theories and considered why one worked better than another.
- Considered that a principle was pragmatism which required every action to ‘work’ towards love.

Features of weaker responses:

- Just listed strengths and weaknesses of Situation Ethics without reference to the question.
- Produced very descriptive explanations of alternative theories that might be considered to work better.
- Focused on the ability of Situation Ethics to allow ‘immoral’ acts without consideration of what may make such actions immoral.
- Gave limited responses about the subjectivity of love with no elaboration.

2. (a) **Examine the role of ‘agape’ (selfless love) in Fletcher’s Situation Ethics.**
[AO1 25]

The first compulsory section produced a significant preference from candidates for this question (66%), however some candidates struggled to select appropriate information to address the question.

Features of stronger responses:

- Used the four and six principles to demonstrate the role of agape.
- Expanded on the question’s definition of agape by explaining what this means.
- Contrasted briefly agape with the other kinds of love.
- Explained that it was a middle way between lawlessness and rigid suffocating rules.

Features of weaker responses:

- Many candidates did not give any detail of Situation Ethics.
- Saw agape as separate as opposed to intrinsic to Fletcher’s principles.
- Described Situation Ethics as secular or claimed that Fletcher rejected God within his theory.
- Made little or no reference to agape as referenced in scripture.

2. (b) **‘Agape should replace religious rules.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

This question had the highest facility factor (52.9%) of all the part (b) questions, suggesting it was the most accessible AO2 question for candidates.

Features of stronger responses:

- Focused on religious rules rather than just societal rules.
- Considered the value of using both rather than choosing between agape and religious rules.
- Considered agape as a principle that underpins religious laws.
- Could consider other options beyond whether rules should or shouldn't be replaced e.g. that using both may be possible.

Features of weaker responses:

- Simply described Situation Ethics
- Focused on applied examples of abortion or homosexuality rather than considering the question.
- Considered the strengths and weaknesses of Situation Ethics without reference to the question.
- Made claims that agape could lead to selfish actions demonstrating a misunderstanding of the nature of agape.

Section B

3. (a) Explain Ethical Egoism.

[AO1 25]

Nearly a third of candidates (32.3%) attempted this question in Section B. Responses to this question were often pleasing, with some candidates making effective use of the subject specific terminology such as, *einzig* or *eigenheit* or Plato's ring of Gyges as an analogy. However, there were a significant proportion who struggled to explain the difference between ethical and psychological egoism.

Features of stronger responses:

- Gave significant levels of detail regarding Stirner and his egoistic theory.
- Included subject specific vocabulary accurately.
- Distinguished between selfish and self-interested actions.
- Clearly and accurately identified the difference between Psychological and Ethical Egoism.

Features of weaker responses:

- Candidates tended to become side-tracked with lengthy descriptions of ethical scenarios rather than using them to exemplify the theory.
- Confused Utilitarianism with Ethical Egoism
- Were unable to explain how Stirner took a different approach to Psychological Egoism.

3. (b) **‘All so called moral actions are ultimately selfish.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

This question had the lowest facility factor (43.7%) of all the part (b) questions, suggesting it was less accessible to candidates than the other AO2 questions.

Features of stronger responses:

- Recognised that the main issue for analysis and evaluation involved Psychological Egoism and the question of whether consciously or unconsciously we act in our own self-interest.
- Considered the difference between selfish-actions and self-interest.
- Discussed whether moral actions that are in self-interest are necessarily ‘bad’.
- Allowed for discussion that actions needed to be in self interest in order to be moral.

Features of weaker responses:

- Tended to have a discussion regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Ethical Egoism without reference to the question.
- Did not appreciate the difference between Ethical and Psychological Egoism.
- Contrasted with other approaches, such as Virtue Theory or Utilitarianism, but without reference to the question.
- Relied on multiple examples to demonstrate the same point regarding certain actions being selfish or altruistic.

4. (a) **Apply Aquinas’ Natural Law to the issue of abortion.**

[AO1 25]

This question was more challenging for some candidates (as noted by its facility factor of 41.9%) who whilst having a clear understanding of the primary precepts and double effect when it came to abortion, often did not develop their answers with reference to other features of Natural Law.

Features of stronger responses:

- There were some knowledgeable discussions of double effect where the candidate had explained interior and exterior acts first.
- Were able to explain the application or usefulness of virtues in such an ethical dilemma.
- Could apply issues like the interior and exterior acts and consider the difference between a real and apparent good within the situation.
- Gave worked examples of situations when abortions would be condemned or potentially tolerated.

Features of weaker responses:

- Some candidates struggled to apply features of Natural Law, beyond the primary precepts

- Tended to incorrectly assume that abortion would be accepted in the case of a rape without exploration of the difficulties associated with such actions.
- Spent too long explaining the issues and laws regarding abortion with no application of Natural Law.
- Described Natural Law teleological and therefore consequentialist which is inaccurate.

**4. (b) 'Natural law offers a perfect way to make moral decisions.'
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

Despite Q4 being the most popular Section B question, this question appeared to less accessible for some candidates, as noted by its facility factor of 45.2%.

Features of stronger responses:

- Could suggest why other ethical theories might be more effective.
- Were able to expand upon their arguments by giving a concrete example or reasoning to support it.
- Some considered using the naturalistic fallacy to challenge the validity of Natural Law.
- Others considered the secular nature of society and how it does not value Natural Law.

Features of weaker responses:

- Struggled to identify arguments for and against the question.
- Simply identified moral dilemmas, such as abortion and euthanasia, and described how Natural Law would respond to them.
- Got side-tracked by applied examples and lost sight of the question.
- Misunderstanding/misuse of the naturalistic fallacy as flaws in nature rather than as a logical error in the process of deduction (an extension of the is/ought challenge).

5. (a) Explain the main features of Act Utilitarianism.

[AO1 25]

This question had one of the lowest facility factors (41.9%) of all the part (a) questions, suggesting some candidates found this question challenging (see features of weaker responses). Some candidates struggled to select appropriate information to address the question, they simply wrote everything they knew about Utilitarianism.

Features of stronger responses:

- Defined and explained the term 'Act' within Act Utilitarianism
- Used Bentham to exemplify the features of Act rather than giving a general outline of Bentham's theory
- Gave ethical examples rather than non-ethical generic ones to illustrate features
- The strongest answers were able to describe the utility principle as not only producing pleasure, but minimising pain as well.

Features of weaker responses:

- Just gave an overview of Bentham with no reference to what made his theory Act Utilitarianism.
- Included extensive information about Mill or Rule Utilitarianism without utilising it to demonstrate the features of Act in contrast
- Were unable to explain or demonstrate how the aspects of the hedonic calculus might yield different results in different situations.
- Defined the hedonic calculus without use of synonyms such as intensity describes how intense the pleasure is.

**5. (b) 'Act Utilitarianism offers an effective way to make moral decisions.'
Evaluate this view.**

[AO1 25]

This question demonstrated candidates' extensive knowledge of Jeremy Bentham and its facility factor of 51.2% suggests it was an accessible question. However, some candidates failed to examine what made his ethical theory of Act Utilitarianism (applying the hedonic calculus to each individual ethical conundrum, relativist, applying no rules other than the principle of utility) effective.

Features of stronger responses:

- Were able to give reasons and examples for why Act Utilitarianism is effective or not
- Could contrast Act with Rule Utilitarianism and weigh up which approach was more effective
- Considered what it meant to call an ethical theory 'effective'
- Focused on the idea of 'Act' as a weighing up of happiness in each unique situation.
- Could distinguish between Act and Bentham or Utilitarianism in general

Features of weaker responses:

- Got wrapped up in discussions about quality and quantity of happiness and were thus distracted from issues regarding rules or assessing individual acts.
- Tended towards a list of strengths and weaknesses of Utilitarianism in general rather than addressing the question.
- Were unable to distinguish between Act and Rule Utilitarianism as a method of making moral decisions.
- Tended to include high levels of irrelevant AO1 material.

Summary of key points

- Candidates must remain focussed on the question set and avoid being distracted by too many lengthy examples or irrelevant issues.
- It is imperative that candidates ensure accurate understanding of technical vocabulary.
- 'Application' questions always require candidates to explain how to put the ethical theory into practice in real moral situations rather than simply explain the issues or the theory.

- The highest scoring AO2 responses do not simply provide a list of general strengths and weaknesses of the view given in the statement, but critically engage with statement - analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of any lines of argument using reasoning and/or evidence.



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