



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES A LEVEL

SUMMER 2018

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2018

1A: A Study of Christianity

General comments

On the whole this paper was answered well and was accessible to the majority of students who were entered for the examination. The full range of marks was employed indicating effective differentiation.

It was good to see that more commonly students demonstrated evaluation skills proficiently, with many gaining higher marks in part (b) than part (a). Overall, there were some outstanding answers from some extremely capable and knowledgeable candidates. The main issue for weaker candidates was not reading the question fully, homing in on the topic area within the question and then rushing to write down everything they knew about the topic rather than providing a concise, selective and focused answer to the question asked.

Although all questions were attempted, indicating accessibility, the most popular questions by far were questions 1 and 4.

Section A

1. (a) Compare the birth narratives in Matthew 1:28-2:23 and Luke 1:26-2:40.
[AO1 20]

An extremely popular question, with the overwhelming majority of responses detailed and done very well, some of which showed a high degree of knowledge. Most answers tended to focus on the differences rather than the common threads running through both narratives, although for a comparison, as long as there was some reference to both aspects full marks could be accessed. There was sometimes a confusion of the 'immaculate conception' with the 'virgin birth'.

Features of stronger responses:

- accurate contrast of differences;
- general over view of similarities;
- references to scholars and redaction criticism.

Features of weaker responses:

- mixing up the nativity stories;
- not always understanding what redaction criticism is;
- only looked at differences.

(b) 'The birth narratives indicate clearly the identity of Jesus.' [AO2 30]

Some very impressive theological discussion of the relevance of demythologisation, redaction criticism, comparison with other models of Jesus and links to the concept of atonement or to Jesus as teacher/rabbi. Many candidates clearly understood and were able to express clearly the various theological identities as presented in the birth narratives. Many answers were able to attempt a critical evaluation of the statement. There were some insightful answers which referred to T. Crossan, N.T. Wright and R. Bultmann in their answers, however, very few candidates were able to pinpoint the detail in the narratives given by the gospel writers who intentionally identify Jesus as the Jewish messiah and universal saviour. Fewer candidates were able to refer to ways in which the accounts can be harmonised to give a clear picture of Jesus' identity. Aspects that were often missing included the symbolism of the gifts by the magi (Matthew), the superiority of Jesus over John the Baptist (Luke).

Features of stronger responses:

- accurate theological debate about Jesus' identity;
- references to scholars and redaction criticism.

Features of weaker responses:

- digressed into narrative about Jesus;
- just focused on whether Jesus was real or not.

2. (a) Explain how the Christian biblical canon was established. [AO1 20]

Those who answered this question were able to give some details of the formation of the canon. For many however, the answers lacked depth in this area. Answers tended to be rather clinical rather than reflecting the 'messy' nature of the formation of the canon. Overall there were a mixed set of responses here. Unfortunately some answers obviously displayed a good knowledge but had not read the question properly and just listed what books are in the canon and when they were included; explaining **when** not **how** the biblical canon was established. Those who did understand the question gave some very good answers, showing that they understood what complicated and controversial processes were involved in the establishment of the canon as well as the considerable level of debate that went into it.

(b) 'The Bible cannot be regarded as the inspired word of God.'

Evaluate this view with reference to Christianity. [AO1 20]

This was generally very well answered, with candidates who had not scored as well as they could on the (a) answer, demonstrating their true capabilities here. There were excellent understandings of the difference between objective and subjective inspiration as well as a good understanding of the theologies of scholars like Bultmann and Barth. In particular, answers referred to R Bultmann and demythologisation of the New Testament. There was also a very good understanding of Calvin's principle of accommodation. Those that answered this question particularly well either fully analysed the debate or raised a number of issues with this question as per the mark scheme.

Section B

3. (a) **Examine the distinctive features of the celebration of Easter in the Eastern Orthodox church.** [AO1 20]

Overall, those who answered this did not do it well and in part mostly failed to identify the aspect of the question that demands the features of 'Eastern Orthodox' Church. Very few candidates could describe the main features of the Eastern Easter traditions for either Lent, Holy Week or Easter Day. An element of panic seemed to set in for many who included as many religious and non-religious Easter traditions they could remember into their work! Those that did grasp that Eastern Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter differently to the Western Church lacked the detail required to reach the top bands for this question. It seemed that candidates found this difficult to answer as they did not have detailed knowledge and understanding of the distinctive features, rendering them ill equipped to comment on the significance of the differences. There was so much that could be written about that this was actually a very good question for prepared candidates, so it was a shame it was not more popular or generally answered well. There was little detail offered, despite the accurate and extensive information available in the textbook.

Features of stronger responses:

- accurate depictions of key events;
- focused only on the distinctive elements of Easter in an Eastern Orthodox church.

Features of weaker responses:

- very general comments about Easter;
- weak knowledge of what is different about Easter in an Eastern Orthodox church.

- (b) **'The differences in the celebration of Easter between Eastern Orthodox and Western churches are of no significance.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Again, this was not answered well and this was mainly due to the fact that answers failed to understand that there were distinct differences between how these Churches celebrate Easter and be able to identify examples of this. This meant that the analysis was missing but there were marks awarded to most candidates as they were able to discuss whether there was a significance in the way Churches celebrate as they are all united in their belief in Christ.

Features of stronger responses;

- accurate contrast of key differences;
- Using similarities to argue for an underlying commonality;

Features of weaker responses;

- a general commentary on similarities;
- evidence used tended to be a conflation of the two churches.

4. (a) **Examine the views of Richard Dawkins on the relationship between religion and science.** [AO1 20]

The most popular answer in Section B. Most candidates were able to write in detail about the attitude of Richard Dawkins towards the relationship of religion and science. There was a clear interest in the topic with many candidates being able to cite examples given by Dawkins (moth and flame) and use the 'language of Dawkins' in his anti-theist polemic (aberration, anti-intellectual, memes). Some candidates who did not achieve highly in this question only discussed Dawkins views and did not make an explicit link to his view on the relationship between religion and science, as per the demands of the question.

Features of stronger responses:

- accurate and detailed explanation of how Dawkins views the relationship between religion and science;
- good reference to the different lines of argument Dawkins presents.

Features of weaker responses:

- just explained Dawkins as an atheist who wrote the 'God Delusion';
- tended to ignore the word 'relationship' in the question.

(b) **'Scientists must be atheists.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

There were some outstanding answers to this question, some agreeing and some disagreeing and many candidates scored highly with their answers. The more sophisticated candidates recognised that Dawkins is something of a maverick even within the atheistic community and mentioned scholars like Owen Jones who have distanced themselves from his polemical stance. Many answers were strong on this question as it was phrased openly and gave them plenty of scope to approach it from different (and many) angles. The most common approach was to show the debate between Dawkins and the McGraths with many students also discussing the views of Gould. The best candidates were able to identify the views of these scholars in terms of their 'extremism' noting that Dawkins may not represent the views of all atheists and the nuance that it is possible to be atheist and not be as critical of the relationship between religion and science as him. Some answers went even further and made links with AS Philosophy and A2 Philosophy referring to the New Atheism and to the teleological and cosmological arguments. Philosophers and scientists referred to included R Swinburne, J Polkinghorne and F R Tennant. The best answers were able to identify the views of these scholars in terms of their 'extremism' noting that Dawkins may not represent the views of all atheists and the nuance that it is possible to be atheist and not be as critical of the relationship between religion and science as him.

Features of stronger responses;

- a wide ranging discussion in the area of science and religion and their relationship;
- a variety of perspectives considered.

Features of weaker responses:

- a general commentary on atheism and religion;
- lack of reference to specific views about the relationship between religion and science leading to simplistic conclusions.

5. (a) Explain the main beliefs and practices of the Charismatic Movement.

[AO1 20]

This was answered fairly well with most candidates being able to identify accurately what the Charismatic movement was. The candidates that performed well on this question made accurate links to the Bible and showed the influence of the passages on the beliefs and practices, there were candidates with some frequency who attempted to discuss the beliefs and practices of the movement without mention of the Holy Spirit. Weaker candidates limited their answers to the superficial characteristics of the Charismatic movement such as lively music and freedom of movement. Most candidates were able to refer to 'tongues' and supernatural healing being characteristic of the Charismatic movement. There was not a great deal of reference in answers to the gifts of the Holy Spirit in any great detail nor reference to the interdenominational aspect of the charismatic movement.

Features of stronger responses:

- accurate understanding of the Charismatic Movement;
- good, detailed discussion about key features.

Features of weaker responses:

- a general, descriptive summary of style of worship;
- seeing Charismatic as simply Pentecostal.

**(b) 'The Charismatic Movement has more weaknesses than strengths.'
Evaluate this view.**

[AO1 30]

This was generally answered well, but some candidates strayed into simply providing a narrative of strengths and weaknesses rather than a specific evaluation of the statement. Those that answered part (a) well were able to show the links between the Holy Spirit and the Charismatic Movement and its influence on the main beliefs and practises. Without this link candidates were not able to fully demonstrate a 'thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge'. However, weaker candidates seemed to perform better than part (b) and most candidates approached the question from the modern movement that was accessible to all denominations of Christianity versus whether the experiences were verifiable. Better answers were able to include some excellent synoptic links with religious experiences and religious language.

Features of stronger responses:

- good debate about the role of the Holy Spirit;
- accurate understanding of the impact of strengths and weaknesses within Christianity as a whole.

Features of weaker answer responses:

- a general summary of a strength or weakness;
- tended to just judge the authenticity of the charismatic experience.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2018
Component 1B: A Study of Islam

General comments

Candidates rose to the challenge of the new specification, demonstrating notable improvements and maturity over and above that demonstrated in the independent AS level qualification.

Many candidates were able to make accurate quotations and references, and respond to questions with appropriate depth and breadth. They were generally aware of diversity within Islam and frequently referred to differences of theological opinion about various matters. Some candidates demonstrated exceptional performance through coherent, well-argued criticism of aspects of religion.

The best responses engaged clearly with the terminology of the question set, rather than writing about a topic in general. Clear definitions helped candidates to focus their writing. The most coherent responses linked the subject of each paragraph back to the argument being made to address the question.

AO2 skills showed significant development in some responses where candidates criticised the strengths and weaknesses of each side of an argument, something rarely seen in responses to the legacy specification. Some answers argued from different perspectives agreeing with a quotation, for very different reasons, and this is just as acceptable as taking a 'for' and 'against' approach, where argued carefully.

Almost all candidates carefully followed the rubric and attempted the correct number and parts of questions from the right sections. There were few very weak answers. Weaker answers in general could be improved through more attention to detail and addressing the specific question set, rather than the topic in general.

Section A

1. (a) Examine the Muslim concept of tawhid (oneness). [AO1 20]

This question encouraged candidates to look in depth into the concept of tawhid (oneness) which many responded well to. Almost all candidates were able to explain the concept as one of the key Islamic beliefs and narrate the clearance of the Ka'ba of idols under the Prophet Muhammad. Many explained that belief in oneness was important in the life of a Muslim, giving examples from a range of religious practices.

Features of stronger responses:

- strong answers picked up on aspects of the teaching such as imminence and transcendence;
- the role of God as creator and unity in the universe; the concept of goodness and evil and God's plan for creation, stemming from oneness, were more advanced points which some students related with expertise to the question set.

Features of stronger responses:

- weaker answers described tawhid in the context of the Shahada and in comparison to the five pillars;
- some only touched on tawhid by contrasting the concept with idolatry without taking it much further.

**(b) 'The Islamic concept of tawhid is not coherent.'
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]**

Most candidates were able to open their responses with some kind of explanation of coherence related to the concept of tawhid, which set out the scope of their response.

Features of stronger responses:

- there were some excellent responses which challenged Islamic understandings of coherence and argued that the concept was not coherent; following on from themes identified in part (a), it was discussed how could God be immanent and transcendent? Creator and judge? Controller of fate yet also giver of free will?
- some contrasted the different understandings of Sufi and Shi'a Muslims and questioned whether practices which some Muslims condemned as shirk could possibly follow on from a coherent understanding of tawhid.

Features of weaker responses:

- were confused about the word 'coherent' and offered no definition of it, or did not focus a response on it;
- some made simplistic conclusions such as of course it is coherent, without considering different opinions – be they in favour or against the statement.

2. (a) Examine Islamic teachings about nabi (prophets) and rasul (messengers)

[AO1 20]

This was the most popular question in section A. Many candidates were able to define the two roles and identify many examples of each, narrating traditions about their lives and the importance of teachings they brought both in the time that they came and for Muslims in general, at all times.

Features of stronger responses:

- considered the overlap between the roles as well as the distinctive features, and were able to trace themes such as the importance of both in relaying the message of monotheism to communities who had gone astray;
- good answers were able to quote or refer to two or three occasions of teachings from nabi (prophets) and rasul (messengers) to illustrate their answers.

Features of weaker responses:

- weaker answers focused only on one prophet, Prophet Muhammad, and summarised his life, rather than his teachings;
- some inaccurately referred to all prophets as bringers of books or to Adam or Noah as bringers of holy books, incorrectly.

**(b) 'Prophet Muhammad was the perfect prophet.'
Evaluate this view with reference to Islam.**

[AO2 30]

There were several different ways in which candidates discussed this statement. Some focused on the concept of perfection and questioned what this meant in terms of humanity, which needed an example they could relate to. Some contrasted angels without free will and therefore perfect servants of God to Prophets who could think, question and be tested.

Features of stronger responses:

- focused on the concept of Muhammad as the 'seal of the Prophets' at the end of a long line of messengers, and agreed that this meant he was the most perfect and complete of them all;
- some answers analysed Muhammad's character and actions. Some described his shadowless, humble and inspiring personality as perfect;
- others argued that if he was perfect then he would not have engaged in conflict and would have rid the society of his time of hypocrites, rather than just driving them out of Madinah;
- some argued that all Prophets were testifiers to the same message so therefore none was more perfect than any other.

Features of weaker responses:

- listed several strengths in Muhammad's character, jumping to the conclusion that agreed with the statement without reasoning why that to be the case;
- some gave reasons why they thought Muhammad was good, but did not address the idea of perfection.

Section B

3. (a) Examine Muslim teachings about jihad. [AO1 20]

This was a really popular question. Many candidates gave excellent definitions of jihad and made reference to scholarly approaches given to Al-Ghazali and Averroes. Candidates were successful in balancing their answers with both greater and lesser jihad mentioned as well as other variations.

Features of stronger responses:

- stronger answers elaborated on the difficulty Muslims face to struggle to perform all aspects of their faith and how many see this struggle as the inner or 'greater' jihad;
- many made reference to 'lesser' jihad or physical conflict at the time of the Prophet and his successors and the restrictions which classical scholars placed upon it.

Features of weaker responses:

- weaker answers described following the five pillars as a jihad, but went little further.
- they often did not distinguish any different types of jihad and could not provide many details or references about the teaching.

(b) 'Jihad is misunderstood in today's world.' Evaluate this view with reference to Islam. [AO2 30]

There were a variety of responses to this question. Some built on their answer to part (a) and discussed whether the concept was misunderstood because a focus was placed on one aspect of jihad, often violent jihad.

Features of stronger responses:

- stronger answers considered different ways in which jihad might be misunderstood;
- these included within the media and amongst Muslims themselves, some of whom might take differing opinions about the original interpretation of the word;
- a few answers quoted scholars such as Tahir al-Qadiri and his criticism of the way some Muslims have interpreted jihad as violent.

Features of weaker responses:

- weaker answers generally suggested jihad was misinterpreted as lesser or violent jihad and greater or inner struggles to follow Islam were ignored;
- few weaker answers referred back to or discussed different interpretations from the time of the Prophet.

4. (a) **Examine how the festival of Ashura shapes Muslim religious identity.**
[AO1 20]

Fewer candidates chose to respond to this question. For those who did a full range of answers was produced. Most correctly identified Ashura and knew something about the specific rituals which occur at this time.

Features of stronger responses:

- stronger answers developed understanding of Shi'a interpretations of Ashura;
- they explain that behind commemoration of sorrow and suffering was the important focus of justice for rightful claims;
- stronger answers also considered the Sunni focus of fasting at the time of Ashura, recalling the deliverance of believers led by Prophet Musa away from the slavery of the Egyptians.

Features of weaker responses:

- weaker answers simply wrote about Shi'a commemoration of the events at Kerbala described as self-harm;
- they missed other aspects such as passion plays and the deeper meaning of identification with the just, regardless of circumstance.

(b) **'The focus on suffering during Ashura misrepresents Shi'a identity.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Many candidates struggled to define different aspects of Shi'a identity which might include many different acts, main beliefs and celebrations. Those who did, and then were able to relate and discuss the place of Ashura within this framework, were able to make the best responses.

Features stronger responses:

- stronger answers considered the word misrepresents and argued about perceptions of the way Ashura is celebrated as against interpretations of Shi'a identity;
- some argued it was a misrepresentation because Shi'a identity includes many different aspects and other festivals such as the Arba'een pilgrimage;
- others argued that the focus on suffering is a good way of demonstrating Shi'a identity in upholding rightful claims to the leadership of the early Muslim community, even if that involved suffering.

Features of weaker responses:

- weaker responses tended to argue simply that rituals regarding sorrow and suffering did misrepresent Shi'a identity;
- however, they struggled to define the meaning behind them and to come to grips with the concept of identity.

5. (a) **Examine the challenges of being a Muslim in Britain today.**

[AO1 20]

This was a popular choice for candidates; many considered a range of different challenges, the most common being finding space and time to pray, fast and celebrate festivals whilst others around carried on with work or education.

Features of stronger responses:

- demonstrated breadth by considering challenges ranging from practising certain rituals, to deciding which interpretation of Islam to follow where several competing versions are present in Britain today;
- some candidates chose to include reference to difficulties facing prejudice from others, to issues of difference within families between generations over matters such as marriage to relatives from other parts of the world.

Features of weaker responses:

- listed problems a Muslim might encounter if attempting to follow a conservative version of their faith in modern Britain, without explaining why;
- Some focused narrowly on one aspect of practising Islam, without considering much in the way of breadth of issues, such as challenges within Muslim communities.

(b) **‘The Muslim family is at the heart of the Islamic religion.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 30]

Candidates seemed to respond well to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- the better answers were able to make links between the family and the communication of Islamic rituals and culture to the young, beginning with the recitation of the Adhan into the ear of the new born to welcome them into the faith;
- stronger answers considered ways in which the family supported each other and communicated aspects of the Islamic faith to the younger generation;
- some discussed the family as first teachers and contrasted this to other sources of knowledge such as Imams or even guidance from the internet.

Features of weaker responses:

- the weaker responses often concluded the family was not at the heart of faith because rituals such as the five pillars were more important;
- however, they did not draw links between those rituals and the communication of those rituals.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2018
Component 1C: A Study of Judaism

General comments

Where responses were good, candidates displayed an excellent use of evidence and examples, and a thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. It was also noticeable that students had been exposed to a range of views of scholars/schools of thought which were well-used by the stronger candidates especially in part (a) answers.

However, the quality of the answers given varied greatly, and, at the middle and lower end of the range, it was evident that many candidates lacked depth and breadth in their knowledge and understanding, with some struggling to give a satisfactory response to any of the questions which were attempted.

Whilst some responses to part (b) questions show that many candidates have been well prepared for the requirements of critical analysis and evaluation, it is however evident that there remains room for improvement regarding AO2. For example, it is evident that there are some candidates who are failing to recognise the difference between knowledge and understanding (AO1) and analysis and evaluation (AO2), thus limiting their ability to achieve marks from the higher bands especially in response to part (b) questions. Weaker candidates were also unable to sustain a line of argument, and candidates need to ensure that views given are supported by reasoning and/or evidence rather than merely raising the issue and leaving it up to the reader to decide.

There are some general areas in which improvements can be made, such as a greater use of references from sacred texts and sources of wisdom. Also, too many part (b) answers failed to make any reference whatsoever to the views of scholars/schools of thought. Candidates should also continue to be reminded to pay close attention to the specific wording of each question as weaker answers invariably failed to address the question set. In some scripts it was also evident that the candidates had not covered the full range of the specification in their revision and, as a result, were unable to provide an adequate response to the questions which appeared on the paper.

On an administrative note, the majority of candidates did not fill in the box on the front of the answer booklet to indicate the questions which were attempted and should be reminded to do so.

Section A

1. (a) Examine the significance of Abraham within Judaism.

[AO1 20]

This question was, by far, the most popular question in Section A, and it was generally answered well.

Features of stronger responses:

- good candidates were able to bring detail and depth to their answers, using accurate examples from the life of Abraham in order to illustrate his significance within Judaism;
- strong candidates also quoted accurately from the text of Genesis, as well as including the views of scholars where appropriate.

Features of weaker responses:

- weaker responses merely told the story of Abraham's life and did not fully draw out the significance of issues such as his turning to monotheism; the terms of the covenant relationship with God; Abraham's test of faith; the establishment of the ritual of circumcision.

(b) 'The covenant God made with Abraham was for all of humanity and not just for the Jewish nation.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- the concepts of particularism and universalism were discussed with confidence;
- were also able to incorporate scholarly views into their arguments, and provided both analysis and evaluation rather than an answer which merely dealt with 'on the one hand' or 'on the other hand' style arguments.

Features of weaker responses:

- tended to lose their lines of argument and generally failed to reach adequate conclusions; some merely retold the story of the Abrahamic covenant;
- others digressed and approached the question as if it were an Abrahamic covenant versus Mosaic covenant comparison.

2. (a) Examine the differences between the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds.

[AO1 20]

This question was only attempted by one candidate and therefore we are unable to provide any meaningful analysis.

See published mark scheme for suggested material.

(b) 'The Gemara rather than the Mishnah, is the most important element of the Talmud.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

This question was only attempted by one candidate and therefore we are unable to provide any meaningful analysis.

See published mark scheme for suggested material.

Section B

3. (a) **Examine the content of the Shema and its use as an aid to faith and remembering.** [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- candidates undertook a thorough examination of the three sections of the Shema;
- they were able to quote relevant passages with accuracy whilst using them as the means by which to illustrate how the prayer acts as an aid to faith and remembering.

Features of weaker responses:

- too many candidates failed to make any reference at all to Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41;
- opportunities were missed to show how the words of the prayer are taken literally by wearing tefillin; fixing mezuzot to the doorposts; by wearing a garment, a tallit, with tzitzit on it.

- (b) **‘The most important beliefs in Judaism are to be found in the Shema.’
Evaluate this view.** [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- noted that it could be argued that what constitutes the most important beliefs within Judaism is, in itself, difficult to define and that any discussion on this matter needs to take account of the diversity which is to be found within the Jewish faith;
- scholarly views and references to the Torah and Talmud were also characteristics of good answers;
- counter arguments discussed the viewpoint that the important beliefs of Judaism are only to be found in the Torah, with the 613 mitzvot providing the template for living life in accordance with God’s wishes;
- the Amidah was also cited as providing an opportunity for worshippers to reflect upon fundamental Jewish beliefs.

Features of weaker responses:

- were unable to sustain a line of argument, and candidates need to ensure that views given are supported by reasoning and/or evidence rather than merely raising the issue and leaving it up to the reader to decide.

4. (a) **Explain the importance of the Ten Sayings (Aseret ha D’ibrot) within Judaism.** [AO1 20]

This question was not generally well-answered as there was a tendency to adopt a Christian approach to the Ten Sayings rather than to explain their importance within Judaism.

Features of stronger responses:

- candidates recognised the importance of the Ten Sayings as providing the basis for Jewish religious and ethical life, whilst also acknowledging that they are viewed as categories into which each of the remaining 603 mitzvot can be placed. Examples from the different categories were included and discussed.

Features of weaker responses:

- very few answers discussed the importance of the Ten Sayings as providing the basis for Jewish religious and ethical life; the lack of reference to either rewards or punishments means that they are more aptly characterised as ethical or moral exhortations than as laws; that their aim is to bring the world to ethical monotheism; that according to rabbinic tradition they are not individual commandments, but categories into which each of the remaining 603 mitzvot can be placed;
- failed to include actual examples from the different categories with accompanying discussion.

(b) 'The Ten Sayings provide an adequate summary of Jewish religious belief.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- discussed the purpose of the Ten Sayings.

Features of weaker responses:

- few made a link with the focus of the question which was whether or not the Ten Sayings provide an adequate summary of Jewish religious belief;
- opportunities here also lost in not considering other sources within Judaism such as the Shema, for example, which could be seen as providing a more adequate summary of religious beliefs.

5. (a) Explain how the practices that take place during the festival of Rosh Hashanah reflect Jewish beliefs.

[AO1 20]

This was the most popular question in Section B.

Features of stronger responses:

- candidates addressed and explained practices such as the selichot service; the wearing of white and its use in the synagogue; the use of the machzor; the blessing 'May you be written down for a good year'; the use of the shofar; the foods eaten at the festival; the tashlikh ceremony.

Features of weaker responses:

- failed to address the focus of the question and merely gave an account of the festival of Rosh Hashanah (with varying degrees of success) without explaining how the practices reflect Jewish beliefs;
- Some candidates wrote incorrectly about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as if they were one and the same festival; whilst some weaker candidates attributed the practices of other festivals such as Yom Kippur, Pesach and Hanukkah incorrectly to Rosh Hashanah.

- (b) Jewish festivals are the most effective way of reinforcing Jewish identity.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]**

Features of stronger responses:

- candidates discussed the power of certain festivals to bring even non-observant Jews back to the synagogue for the celebration for example;
- they also identified certain festival practices which underpin Jewish identity and used these as the basis for their analysis and evaluation;
- stronger candidates were also able to use the views of scholars/schools of thought in an appropriate way.

Features of weaker responses:

- merely listed the practices of festivals with very little analysis or evaluation;
- in a minority of cases, candidates lost the focus of the question completely and embarked on a discussion of which festival was the most important within Judaism.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2018
Component 1D: A Study of Buddhism

General comments

Overall there was a pleasing level of competency in the responses written by candidates. This appeared to demonstrate that centres had prepared candidates well. A number of candidates showed great ease and fluency in using technical Buddhist terminology. Many responses showed a good understanding of basic Buddhist teachings, including its diversity – knowledge of Japanese schools and Tibetan practices was regularly in evidence.

One general observation is that candidates might need more practice and familiarity with how to allocate time for each question. Whilst part (a) questions are worth 20 marks and part (b) are worth 30 marks, in some cases candidates did not serve themselves well by spending more time on part (a) than on part (b).

Centres might further support candidates in honing their skills in writing more holistic responses to the part (b) questions. Often candidates displayed a wide range of knowledge and understanding, but were perhaps not as adept as might be in putting this together in their responses in an evaluative way.

Candidates might be further helped by developing the skill of ‘questioning the question’ before writing their response. Often the wording of the question – particularly in part (b) - has been specifically chosen to draw out views which are both supportive and challenging of the concepts behind the question.

It was encouraging to read a number of responses where candidates had clearly been engaged by the subject. Again, centres might further support candidates in putting their interest and enthusiasm into responses which show dynamism and insight. In this area, personal opinions supported by evidence - not just assertions - are to be much encouraged.

Section A

- 1. (a) Examine the growth of Buddhism in Britain. [AO1 20]**

Features of stronger responses:

- better responses were able to focus on particular aspects of Buddhism in Britain;
- here key individuals were often highlighted such as Allan Bennett and Christmas Humphreys;
- in addition, key organisations were noted including the New Kadampa Tradition in Ulverston or Soka Gakkai International in Taplow;

Features of weaker responses:

- some candidates limited themselves to overly generalised accounts of the rise of interest in Buddhism in the West;
- a number of responses mentioned the modern mindfulness movement in passing, but this needed to be linked to its usage in Britain and to the interest thereby generated in Buddhism.

(b) 'Only 'heritage' Buddhists are real Buddhists, 'convert' Buddhists are not.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

This question provoked a wide variety of useful responses showing engagement with the topic.

Features of stronger responses:

- better responses questioned the terms 'heritage' and 'convert' and presented useful analysis of each;
- in addition, better responses challenged the concept of what might constitute a 'real Buddhist';
- here depth and breadth of knowledge was often displayed in contrasting, for example, the beliefs and practice of Theravada and Pure Land Buddhism and ways in which such contrasting beliefs and practices might both be seen as 'real' Buddhism.

Features of weaker responses:

- some candidates limited themselves to a perhaps simplistic approach which focused on the difference between 'heritage' Buddhists being brought up in a Buddhist culture and 'convert' Buddhists not having the same experience;
- the general conclusion was then drawn which stated that whilst the former were 'real' Buddhists, the latter could not be.

2. (a) Examine Buddhist attitudes to women.

[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- better responses were able to focus on giving an overall examination of Buddhist attitudes to women ranging from the intercession of Mahapajapati and the ordination of nuns through to, for example, the writings of Rita Gross;
- most candidates who answered this question commented knowledgeably on the variation in the number of rules in the Vinaya for monks and nuns as a possible indication of negative attitudes towards women;
- in addition, many candidates noted the story of the Dragon King's Daughter in the Lotus Sutra and its possible interpretation as being a text of patriarchy.

Features of weaker responses:

- some candidates limited themselves to generic points about the position and role of women in society over time with little reference to Buddhist attitudes;
- in a number of cases, candidates seemed unclear as to the tradition regarding the conversation between Ananda and the Buddha and how this led to the ordination of nuns.

(b) 'Buddhist history and texts align with feminism.'
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- a number of candidates responded to this question in a creative and creditable fashion by providing a discursive commentary on the AO1 content already given for question 2 (a);
- there was some pleasing and high-level discussion of the story of the Dragon King's Daughter and whether it might be seen as transcending patriarchy or as reflecting and re-enforcing the agenda of patriarchy found at that time.

Features of weaker responses:

- perhaps there might have been, overall, a little more in terms of modernity in Buddhism and possible alignment with feminism.
- some candidates made little or no reference to what might be seen as the general understanding within some Buddhist traditions that the normative model for a person seeking enlightenment is always that of a monk who is necessarily male.

Section B

3. (a) Examine Tibetan Buddhist practices.

[AO1 20]

Most of the candidates who answered this question were able to provide useful points with regard to mantras, mandalas and mudras.

Features of stronger responses:

- candidates were able to explain mandalas as patterns of the universe/s or as palaces inhabited by Buddhas;
- exemplification helped support stronger answers; thus, in a number of responses examination of the mantra was supported by citing particular mantras.

Features of weaker responses:

- some candidates limited themselves to very simplistic descriptions of mandalas as being complex designs made up of coloured sand; this ignored the crucial symbolic dimension involved;
- in some cases, whilst there was some knowledge of mandalas and mantras, knowledge and understanding of mudras seemed entirely lacking.

(b) 'Buddhism is about practices, not beliefs.'
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

This proved to be a very enjoyable question to mark since many candidates were able to approach it with verve and imagination.

Features of stronger responses:

- a wide range of contrasting practices and beliefs was often presented; thus, for example, the potential priority given to zazen in Zen Buddhism was contrasted with its perceived lack of focus on particular beliefs;

- other candidates underscored the priority of belief in the three marks of existence as providing the basis upon which all Buddhist practices rested;
- some candidates were able to complement their discussion by explaining what they perceived Buddhism to really be about in terms of either practices and beliefs and provided answers such as the importance of dana and gaining punya or the importance of belief in the possibility of attaining nirvana.

Features of weaker responses:

- some candidates restricted themselves by a basic approach to structuring their essays e.g. paragraphs on Buddhist practices followed by paragraphs on Buddhists beliefs followed by a conclusion as to which was more important;
- in some cases, there appeared to be very little knowledge of any Buddhist practices apart from meditation and the practice of mindfulness.

4. (a) Explain the three lakshanas (marks of existence). [AO1 20]

This was a very popular and well-answered question.

Features of stronger responses:

- it was impressive to note how many candidates were able to give full and detailed explanations including reference to the Four Sights, the teaching of Nagasena and the Questions of King Milinda;
- most candidates were able to explain in no little detail the three types of dukkha and the ways in which the three lakshanas are interlinked and interdependent.

Features of weaker responses:

- some candidates seemed unclear as to the depth of meaning given to dukkha and to its significance in terms of suffering and unsatisfactoriness being a key mark of existence;
- in some responses, exemplification was attempted which tended to be simplistic and did not support the depth of explanation required e.g. anicca is like the feeling of a school holiday which is not permanent.

(b) 'The three lakshanas are the most important teachings in Buddhism.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

This was another question where better candidates appeared to enjoy answering the question in that they could display a wide range of knowledge and understanding.

Features of stronger responses:

- some candidates focused entirely on the three lakshanas and in their response assessed whether dukkha, anatta or anicca might be more important or whether they stood together as being fundamental; such discussions usefully linked the lakshanas to moments in the life of the Buddha or to the Dharma;
- other candidates brought in a variety of other Buddhist teachings such as the Lotus Sutra and upaya or the Heart Sutra and sunyata and successfully presented a discussion on whether such concepts were more or less important.

Features of weaker responses:

- given the range of Buddhist teachings, some candidates limited themselves by focusing on single issues such as meditation or mindfulness which might be seen more as practices than teachings;
- some candidates did not focus sufficiently on the key words in the question 'most important' and therefore tended to list a variety of Buddhist teachings without reaching a purposeful conclusion.

5. (a) Examine the background and work of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

[AO1 20]

Responses to this question tended to be very straightforward.

Features of stronger responses:

- most candidates were able to provide significant biographical details regarding Tenzin Gyatso ranging from his finding through to his exile in Dharamsala;
- a number of candidates were able to provide a balanced response in terms of examining both the background of the Dalai Lama and then the present work of the Dalai Lama.

Features of weaker responses:

- overall candidates seemed a little less secure on the present-day work of the Dalai Lama particularly with regard to neuroscience and socially engaged Buddhism;
- some candidates made vague and generic responses to the Dalai Lama writing books and appearing in interviews. Further exemplification was often lacking.

(b) The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh ensure that Buddhism remains relevant in the modern world.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- good candidates were able to engage fully with the question and to focus on its underlying rationale; thus, issues discussed included whether what the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh were keeping relevant was in fact Buddhism, or a form of simplified and demythologised neo-Buddhism;
- the importance of other Buddhist movements in the West such as Zen or Triratna was also argued by some as being key to keeping Buddhism relevant in the modern world;
- some candidates also referred to aspects of the dharma being all that was required to keep Buddhism relevant such as the three marks of existence or simply the reality of dukkha and the possibility of it being transcended.

Features of weaker responses:

- some candidates contented themselves with perhaps simplistic responses which focused on the media presence of the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh or on the number of books which each has written;
- some candidates tended to limit themselves to an overall description of the work of both the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh. This ignored the purport of the question which was as to whether their work ensured that Buddhism remained relevant.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2018

Component 1E: A Study of Hinduism

General comments

It was pleasing to see that centres have risen to the challenges of the new specification. There were some excellent responses which clearly showed that the candidates had been well prepared with accurate, extensive understanding and confident use of religious concepts and terms. However, it is imperative that centres focus on the detail of the specification content.

The paper seemed accessible to the vast majority of candidates and the answers spanned the range of bands. It also seems that some of the weaknesses found in the previous specification have been transferred to the new. Candidates need to focus on the question set and answer the demands of that question. Some failed to do this and answered on a related concept or teaching e.g. on the question on bhakti some candidates spent too much time on examining puja in general. Others did not read the question carefully enough especially in part (b) and therefore did not address the issues raised by that question. However generally the evaluative questions were well structured and moved away from the traditional for and against method of answering. This allowed a more complete evaluation of the issues raised.

On an administrative note some candidates do not fill in the box noting the questions that they have answered on the front of the answer booklet leaving the examiner to do this. Some candidates were also for some reason not putting the number of the question at the beginning of the answer and not using (a) and (b) within the answer. It was difficult in some cases to see where part (a) finished and part (b) began.

Section A

1. (a) Compare the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar towards the Dalits.

[A01 20]

This was a popular question.

Features of stronger responses:

- stronger responses addressed the question directly with sound knowledge and understanding;
- there was some impressive use of scriptural and scholarly quotes e.g. by Gandhi and Ambedkar themselves to exemplify points made;
- they explained in detail why Gandhi opposed the treatment of the Dalits and yet supported the Varna system;
- the comparing and contrasting of views was balanced and well supported.

Features of weaker responses:

- there were also some very general and superficial answers to this question;
- it was surprising to see a number of candidates who confused the views of Ambedkar with Gandhi;
- others for some reason stated that Gandhi opposed the Dalits and supported the way they were treated.

**(b) 'The varna system can be justified.'
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 30]

This was generally a well answered question with most candidates able to present reasoned arguments.

Features of stronger responses:

- stronger responses were well developed focusing entirely on the issue raised by the question, were well supported, challenged and evaluated;
- there were some good references to sources of wisdom and beliefs and concepts within Hinduism to support arguments e.g. the centrality of belief in varnashramadharma;
- the answers were balanced in their evaluation of the positive and negative aspects of the varna system considering the value to Hindu society as a whole with the oppression of the Dalits.

Features of weaker responses:

- they lacked challenge and evaluation of the issue and contained a number of repetitions of the same point e.g. the oppression of the Dalits;
- arguments and views presented were not supported by evidence and examples;
- the answers were imbalanced and were weak on the positive side of the varna system.

2. (a) Explain the different views of Shankara and Madvha on the relationship between Brahman and atman.

[A01 20]

The focus of the question was knowledge and understanding of Shankara and Madvha's views on the relationship between Brahman and atman.

Features of stronger responses:

- stronger responses made clear the differences between the two; answers referred to Shankara's Advaita Vedanta and Brahman as being identical with the atman and Madhva's Dvaita Vedanta which states that they are distinct from one another;
- the answers were detailed and clear in their understanding of the concepts and were able to use religious terms and language confidently;
- there were also some excellent use of quotes and examples to support the answers given.

Features of weaker responses:

- some completely confused the views of Shankara and Madhva;
- there was a lack of clear understanding which resulted in a lack of evidence, examples and quotations;
- the answers were imbalanced and tended to focus much more on Shankara than Madhva. Although an answer cannot be completely balanced if it asks for the views of Shankara and Madhva then the higher bands cannot be attained Madhva is only afforded a short paragraph at the end of the answer.

(b) 'It is impossible to worship an impersonal God.'
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Most candidates were able to present some valid arguments to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- they gave a definition of what is meant by an impersonal God and were able to relate their arguments to Advaita and Dvaita Vedanta;
- they were able to discuss, compare and contrast and exemplify the concepts of Brahman nirguna and Brahman saguna;
- they also referred to the importance of the 'personal' in Hinduism and exemplified these arguments with reference to bhakti and darshan;
- the responses contained thoughtful argument and a clear conclusion.

Features of weaker responses:

- there was confusion within the answers as to what is meant by an 'impersonal God';
- there was a considerable lack of evidence to support the views given;
- many answers were completely one-sided and focused entirely on arguments that only a personal God can be worshipped; a complete evaluative answer needs to consider more than one view on the issue being considered.

Section B

3. (a) Explain the controversy surrounding the origins of Hinduism. [AO1 20]

There was a wide range in the standard of answers given to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- contained thorough knowledge and understanding of the contrasting theories surrounding the origins of Hinduism;
- were able to explain the difficulties with the two main competing discourses – the Indus Valley Civilisation and the Aryan Invasion and give examples of the conflicting evidence on both sides of the argument e.g. the difficulty in interpreting the Indus material;
- were also able to discuss the term 'Hinduism' and explain why many believe it has no beginning.

Features of weaker responses:

- showed very limited knowledge of the topic and did not address the question in any detail;
- others did not answer the question set which was a consideration of the theories surrounding the origins of Hinduism and simply described the features of both Indus Valley and Aryan traditions.

(b) 'There is little similarity between modern Hinduism and Indus Valley and Aryan traditions.'
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Most candidates were able to present some valid arguments to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- they gave a range of valid arguments to support a balanced answer considering the relationship between modern Hinduism and Indus Valley and Aryan traditions;
- were able to refer to relevant beliefs and practices within modern Hinduism and compare and contrast with some of the beliefs and practices within Indus Valley and Aryan traditions e.g. worship of the mother goddess, proto-shiva and ritual cleansing;
- also referred to aspects of modern Hinduism that cannot be traced to either Indus valley or Aryan traditions e.g. Bakhti.

Features of weaker responses:

- they tended to reiterate much of what was wrongly used in part (a) and described or explained the main features of Indus Valley and Aryan traditions without linking them in any way to modern Hinduism;
- other answers were imbalanced and did not refer to the differences between modern Hinduism and Indus Valley and Aryan traditions;
- some answers confused the Indus Valley and Aryan traditions and wrongly attributed aspects of belief and practice to them.

4. (a) Explain different types of bhakti in Hinduism. [AO1 20]

The responses to this question were generally disappointing.

Features of stronger responses:

- addressed the question directly with sound knowledge and understanding of the different types of bhakti;
- were able to examine and exemplify each type successfully – e.g. by referring in the context of Vaishnava bhakti to the activities of ISKCON;
- also able to identify yatra as a form of bhakti;
- gave a good overview of bhakti as being one of the four margas.

Features of weaker responses:

- there were some very general and superficial answers to this question;
- a number of answers were limited in their knowledge and understanding of bhakti and could only refer to it in general terms without referring to specific types such as vaishnava or Shaiva bhakti;
- there was also a general lack of specific examples.

**(b) 'The practice of bhakti is more practical than spiritual.'
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 30]

The responses to this question were generally disappointing.

Features of strong responses:

- they were well developed focusing entirely on the issue raised by the question, were well supported, challenged and evaluated;
- referred to the practical aspects of bhakti such as showing love and devotion through service and the practical aspects of bhakti worship;
- were also able to show the spiritual significance of these practical activities such as prashad and darshan and to link the practical and spiritual together to come to a balanced conclusion.

Features of weaker responses:

- they lacked challenge and evaluation of the issue and contained a number of repetitions of the same point mainly listing the practical aspects of bhakti;
- they also tended to be no more than a list of points for and against without any real development of the arguments.

5. (a) Examine the traditional views on the roles of women and men in Hinduism.

[AO1 20]

The responses to this question varied greatly in quality.

Features of stronger responses:

- showed a good balanced understanding of the traditional views on the roles of women and men in Hinduism;
- also exemplified the roles with reference to beliefs, teachings and practices such as the Laws of Manu, varnadharma of both women and men and roles within the family.

Features of weaker responses:

- they did not answer the question set and ignored completely the views on the roles of men in Hinduism;
- there was a lack of examples and evidence to support the views presented;
- were very descriptive in nature e.g. simply describing the role of the woman in the home.

- (b) **‘The way women are regarded in Hinduism can never change.’**
Evaluate this view with reference to Hinduism. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- they answered the question directly and compared and contrasted the traditional views on women in Hinduism with how women are regarded in Hinduism today;
- were able to support the arguments presented with reference to Hindu teaching and practice e.g. a woman's dharma is still defined by her marital status, but on the other hand gender driven pregnancy termination is now illegal;
- referred to women who have succeeded to overcome traditional views and influence the way women are regarded in Hinduism e.g. Indira Gandhi.

Features of weaker responses:

- the answers were superficial and lacked evidence and examples to support the views given;
- were descriptive in nature and the knowledge presented although mainly accurate was not used to present a coherent argument;
- were also imbalanced and lacked knowledge and understanding of the changes that have been seen in the way women are regarded in Hinduism.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2018

Component 1F: A Study of Sikhism

General comments

It was pleasing to see that centres have risen to the challenge of the new specification. There were some excellent responses which clearly showed that the candidates had been well prepared with accurate, extensive understanding and confident use of religious concepts and terms. However, it is imperative that centres focus on the detail of the specification content.

The paper seemed accessible to the vast majority of candidates and the answers spanned the range of bands. It also seems that some of the weaknesses found in the previous specification have been transferred to the new. Candidates need to focus on the question set and answer the demands of that question. Some failed to do this and answered on a related concept or teaching e.g. on the question on Vaisakhi some candidates discussed its importance in the context of Sikh identity. Others did not read the question carefully enough especially in part (b) ignoring key words and therefore did not address the issues raised by that question. However, generally the evaluative questions were well structured and moved away from the traditional for and against method of answering. This allowed a more complete evaluation of the issues raised.

On an administrative note some candidates do not fill in the box noting the questions that they have answered on the front of the answer booklet leaving the examiner to do this. Some candidates were also for some reason not putting the number of the question at the beginning of the answer and not using (a) and (b) within the answer. It was difficult in some cases to see where part (a) finished and part (b) began.

1. (a) Examine Guru Arjan's contribution to the development of Sikhism.

[A01 20]

This was a popular question.

Features of stronger responses:

- stronger responses addressed the question directly with sound knowledge and understanding of the life and contribution of Guru Arjan;
- the events in his life were strongly linked to how they developed aspects of Sikhism e.g. his death leading to the formation of the Sikh army;
- they gave specific and detailed examples to support the views presented.

Features of weaker responses:

- tended to be descriptive in nature – listing the events in his life without any real examination of how they contributed to the development of Sikhism;
- they were limited in scope and focused only on his contribution to the Adi Granth and the Golden Temple;
- there was a lack of evidence and examples to support the information presented.

- (b) **‘Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s empire was not a religious empire.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO1 30]

The quality of the responses to this question varied greatly.

Features of stronger responses:

- stronger responses were well developed focusing entirely on the issue raised by the question, were well supported, challenged and evaluated;
- they showed very good knowledge and understanding of Maharajah Ranjit Singh’s empire and this was used to create coherent and well supported arguments;
- were balanced in their evaluations and avoided the for and against way of answering which is not suitable for this question and could refer to how Ranjit Singh’s empire combined religion and politics and presented Sikhism as an universal religion.

Features of weaker responses:

- they lacked challenge and evaluation of the issue;
- arguments and views presented were not supported by evidence and examples;
- answers were imbalanced because of the for-against format used.

2. (a) **Examine the role and importance of the Mul Mantra in Sikhism.** [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- showed knowledge and understanding of the content of the Mul Mantra and therefore discussed its importance in a specific and detailed way;
- referred to the teaching on the nature of God and the Oneness of God, that mukti is by God’s grace and that God is eternal;
- also referred to the Mul Mantra as a statement of faith;
- were able to explain the role of the Mul Mantra in daily prayers.

Features of weaker responses:

- imbalanced responses and too general when dealing with the importance;
- little or no reference to the words contained in the Mul Mantra;
- very limited understanding of the role of the Mul Mantra.

- (b) **‘The Mul Mantra is the most important statement of faith in Sikhism.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Most candidates were able to present some valid arguments to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- referred confidently and accurately to the content of the Mul Mantra;
- were able to make a successful link between the content of the Mul Mantra and the most important tenets of Sikh faith e.g. belief in God and monotheistic theology;
- referred to other important statements of Sikh faith e.g. the Rahit Maryada;
- the responses contained thoughtful argument and a clear conclusion.

Features of weaker responses:

- there was confusion within the answers as to what is meant by a ‘statement of faith’;
- there was a considerable lack of evidence to support the views given including a lack of knowledge of the content of the Mul Mantra;
- answers listed everything and anything within Sikhism as being more important expressions of Sikh faith – the majority being completely irrelevant to the issue raised in the question.

Section B

3. (a) **Examine the origin and growth of the Sikh community in Britain.** [AO1 20]

There was a wide range in the standard of answers given to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- contained thorough knowledge and understanding of the chronological origin and growth of the Sikh community in Britain;
- were able to explain the context in which Sikhs came to Britain and the reasons why they settled in certain parts of the country e.g. as economic migrants from the Punjab they went to the traditional industrial areas such as Lancashire and the East and West Midlands;
- were also able to give a coherent and balanced overview including the present situation.

Features of weaker responses:

- showed very limited knowledge of the topic and did not address the question in any detail;
- listed certain events in the history of the Sikh community in Britain without any real development or examination;
- described Sikh practices in Britain today.

(b) 'Practicing Sikhism in Britain is not difficult.'
Evaluate this view.

[AO1 30]

Most candidates were able to present some valid arguments to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- strong responses gave a range of valid arguments to support a balanced answer;
- were able to refer to problems such as the use of Punjabi and strong sense of identity which Sikhs have making assimilation into British society more difficult;
- referred to the freedoms in law which Sikhs have e.g. wearing a turban in the workplace which mean that they are not discriminated against;
- there was considerable use of specific evidence and examples to support the views given.

Features of weaker responses:

- they tended to give general views which were not supported by evidence or examples;
- arguments tended to be listed without being developed;
- some answers were completely imbalanced focusing entirely on the difficulties encountered.

4. (a) Explain how the festival of Vaisakhi helps Sikhs to focus on the virtues of Sikh life.

[AO1 20]

The responses to this question were generally disappointing.

Features of stronger responses:

- addressed the question directly with sound knowledge and understanding of the festival of Vaisakhi;
- were able to explain what the virtues of Sikh life are such as protecting the truth, the importance of community and a duty to oppose oppression and then link the practices of the festival to these virtues;
- there was effective and coherent use of specific examples and evidence from the festival.

Features of weaker responses:

- there were some very descriptive answers giving the background to the festival and describing some of the practices associated with it;
- a number of answers made no link whatsoever between the practices of Vaisakhi and the virtues of Sikh life;
- there were answers which focused entirely on how Vaisakhi expresses Sikh identity which was only relevant to some extent.

- (b) **‘The gurdwara is a social rather than a religious institution.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

The responses to this question were generally disappointing.

Features of stronger responses:

- were well developed focusing entirely on the issue raised by the question, were well supported, challenged and evaluated;
- referred to the social aspects of the gurdwara and its importance to the Sikh community especially in places such as Britain;
- were able to show the religious significance and importance of the gurdwara in terms of worship, sewa and langar;
- evaluated how the social and religious of the gurdwara are often inter-related, and that social aspects can be an expression of religious aspects.

Features of weaker responses:

- lacked challenge and evaluation of the issue and contained a number of repetitions of the same point mainly listing how the gurdwara is used by the Sikh community;
- tended to be no more than a list of points for and against without any real development of the arguments;
- no consideration of the relationship between the religious and social aspects.

5. (a) **Examine the concepts of Kirat Karo and Vand Chakko in Sikhism.**
[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- showed good balanced understanding of both concepts;
- exemplified how the concepts affect Sikh lifestyle – earning a livelihood without deceit or cheating and sharing wealth with others in the community;
- gave a brief explanation of their relationship with one another and with Naam Japo as the three pillars of Sikhism.

Features of weaker responses:

- were imbalanced and focused much more on one than the other; a completely balanced answer is not always possible or required, but when two components are asked for a brief paragraph on one of them will not attain the higher bands.
- lacked examples and evidence to support the views presented;
- were very descriptive in nature simply describing the concepts without discussing their significance.

- (b) **‘Faith in God is more important than actions.’**
Evaluate this view with reference to Sikhism.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- answered the question directly and compared and contrasted in a balanced way the importance of faith and actions;
- were able to support the arguments presented with reference to Sikh teaching e.g. work in Sikhism is regarded as a form of worship;
- discussed the relationship between faith and action in the context of Kirat Karo and Vand Chakko;
- were also able to evaluate action as being an expression of faith and relate this to specific concepts and teachings within Sikhism such as sewa.

Features of weaker responses:

- were superficial and lacked evidence and examples to support the views given;
- demonstrated no real understanding or evaluation of the relationship between faith and action.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2018
Component 2: Philosophy of Religion

General comments

Candidates are making considerable use of the resources available to support the specification and this is enhancing candidates' responses. There is clear evidence of some excellent teaching, which is enabling candidates to respond in the way they have. We really are seeing candidates evaluating in a lengthy fashion, reflecting the weighting of AO2 in the new style A2 paper. Candidates have been prepared well to meet the demands of the paper and thankfully rubric was not an issue.

We would however ask examination officers to remind candidates of the need to insert the question numbers completed on the front of their paper. This will considerably reduce the amount of administration that examiners have to carry out.

Section A

1. (a) **Examine different versions of the teleological argument for the existence of God as presented by Paley and Tennant.** [AO1 20]

This question was generally done fairly well

Features of stronger responses:

- most were able to refer to Paley's watchmaker analogy and a number made reference to the rock which is an important part of the analogy to contrast the simple with the complex;
- some gave wider evidence than this by referring to the human eye or the lacteal system;
- high calibre answers should refer to Tennant's specific pieces of evidence that point to a designer.

Features of weaker responses:

- candidates would do well to refer to key words in their answer such as 'order' and 'purpose' as weaker candidates failed to use these terms;
- both Tennant's anthropic and aesthetic principles were written about. Few acknowledged any reference to evolution in either the anthropic or the aesthetic principle though.

- (b) **‘The teleological arguments for God’s existence are not effective.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- some referred to the efficacy or not of the analogy between the watch and the Universe. Hume’s criticisms abounded which were pertinent to the rejection of the analogy;
- there was of course scope to look at unconvincing aspects of teleological arguments as a whole such as discussing the relative adequacies of inductive arguments;
- questioning involving evolutionary theories, including scholars was fitting.

Features of weaker responses:

- most referred to the Big Bang as a challenge to the teleological argument but often failed to give supporting reasoning/evidence;
- many answers were not markedly different than they would have been if the question concerned cosmological arguments; that is, simplistic general arguments against God’s existence more usually associated with cosmological were present.

2. (a) **Examine different versions of the ontological argument for the existence of God as presented by Anselm and Malcolm.** [AO1 20]

Generally the differences between Proslogion 2 and 3 were acknowledged by the majority of candidates.

Features of stronger responses:

- thorough examinations of both of Anselm’s forms was often read with candidates understanding that the definition of God plays a crucial role in his argument;
- there were some excellent examinations of the views of Malcolm;
- there were some references to God’s existence being either impossible or necessary, but this needed development in some cases. A few candidates noted Malcolm’s understanding of God as an ‘unlimited being’.

Features of weaker responses:

- referred to the fact that the ontological argument was ‘a priori’ and deductive but it wasn’t always clear whether they knew what this meant;
- Gaunilo was only appropriate in this part if he was used as a ‘straddle’ between Aquinas’ first and second form;
- the idea of existence as a perfection was at times confused, with the idea being given that ‘God must be perfect’ without understanding that this is because existence is a perfection which a perfect being must have; this needs to be used when explaining that God must have the property of ‘existence’ or else another being who would be greater than God could exist, explaining why this is absurd.

- (b) **‘The ontological arguments for God’s existence fail.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- there were some fabulous explanations of the challenges to the argument; Kant in particular was most prominent; the majority understood his main challenge that existence is not a predicate and it was useful to read his thalers example; a few noted his general issue with arguments that involved reference to the noumenal world;
- Gaunilo was fairly well explained as was Anselm’s retort to his ‘perfect island’ example.
- on the effective side of the argument in the main candidates used the deductive nature of the argument; often this was compared and contrasted with the relative success or failure of inductive arguments; it would be good practice to widen this perhaps by suggesting that existence can be considered a predicate, as 100 real thalers does have the property of purchasing-power (S. Davis).

Features of weaker responses:

- weak responses rarely got past a reference to Gaunilo and often this was misunderstood;
- also, simply stating that it is an a priori argument is not evaluation of the issue.

Section B

3. (a) **Examine the Augustinian type theodicy.**

[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- many were able to succinctly examine the theodicy by separating it into neatly divided sections; this no doubt aided memory too;
- evil as a privation was understood with some references to his example of blindness being a privation of sight; an improvement would be to relate information to an explanation of moral and natural evil;
- the Fall was mentioned as was humanity being seminally present in Adam; however, it was completely missed that Augustine said this was propagated in the physical act of sex, involving concupiscence.

Features of weaker responses:

- it should be noted that there is no need for long explanations of the problem of evil at the start. The problem is ‘a given’ and candidates should get straight on to examining Augustine’s theodicy; an explanation of what a theodicy is, however, would be useful.

- (b) **‘Augustinian type theodicies are irrelevant in the 21st Century.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- pertinent use was made of scientific findings regarding the universe going from chaos to order and of the idea that we cannot all descend from Adam; these points can justifiably be related to the question by saying that the theodicy is irrelevant today as it has been shown to be false;
- some referred to the 21st Century's use of logic and empiricism to refute the claim.

Features of weaker responses:

- many candidates had revised strengths and weakness of this theodicy and were trying to squeeze them in, often when they did not fit the question;
- merely tagging on ‘is therefore irrelevant in the 21st century’ is not acceptable, at the end of an argument that had nothing to do with the question set.

4. (a) **Examine Jung’s explanation of religious belief.** [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- many did write about the fact that Jung discovered ideas and images in patient’s dreams whose origins could not be traced to the individual’s past experiences; then links were made from these images to mythical and religious themes; this allowed them to explain primordial images or archetypes;
- there were examples of some of the key archetypes and Jung’s interpretation of them. The persona (the mask we wear), the shadow (the suppressed unconscious part of our personality), anima and animus (our inner attitudes that take on the characteristics of the opposite sex), the self (midway between consciousness and the unconscious);
- some realised that Jung saw God as an expression of the collective unconscious. An encounter with the Self, is a religious experience with God. The Self is the God within us. Hence the Self archetype produced the same symbolism that has always expressed the deity.

Features of weaker responses:

- candidates need to bear in mind that they are being asked about Jung’s explanation of religious belief, rather than a general explanation of Jung; in some scripts there was little or no reference to God and/or religion;
- some misunderstood individuation which is the process by which a person moves toward the achievement of the Self.

- (b) 'Jung was more positive than Freud about the idea of God.'
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- most were able to show how Freud was negative towards religious belief; for example, religion is a neurosis that is bad for one's psychological health; they pointed out the similarity between neurotic behaviour, such as repeated hand-washing and religious rituals;
- also prevalent was the idea that religion is the product of the unconscious mind trying to come to terms with repressed memories and pressures; these ought to be faced, but religion is an attempt to control unconscious feelings and is merely wish-fulfilment; these were exemplified by referring to, for example, repeated Eucharistic rituals;
- an example of how Jung's views of religion could be negative is that it could also be argued that for Jung God was 'in the mind'; God as merely an inner psychological experience rejects the traditional view of God as an external being; the God image can be explained by archetypes but God is still only the God within; religion would claim to have evidence for an external God with whom one can have a relationship;
- less well attested but most relevant is Freud's view that religion does provide that comfort that one is searching for, so it does perform a positive function with regard to mental health; it has also been noted that he said that religion could stimulate creativity and imagination.

Features of weaker responses:

- there were some unhelpful stereotypes regarding religious ritual which were not used by Freud;
- some used this as an opportunity to write what they knew about Freud rather than writing an evaluation of the positives and negatives of the views of both men regarding the idea of God.

5. (a) Explain how Logical Positivism challenges the meaningfulness of religious language. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- candidates who explained that Logical Positivism concerned with whether a statement made sense, not whether it was true or false; most were able to explain the Verification Principle;
- better answers exemplified this with religious statements in order to meet the demands of the question; e.g. religious statements such as 'God is timeless' fails the verification test and so is deemed meaningless; indeed, all talk of God must be nonsensical since God's essential attributes are non-empirical and therefore meaningless;
- links could be made with A.J. Ayer's Emotivism; falsification, as a development of Logical Positivism and were acceptable, some stated that an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive God is no different from an imaginary God or no God at all.

Features of weaker responses:

- candidates who mentioned strong and weak verification and merely gave historical or scientific examples; this is not meeting the demands of the question; implications for religious language must be drawn out.
- some just mentioned the parable of the gardener without illustrating the problem it raised regarding religious language; it was stated that the believer does not allow anything to count against their beliefs but this was not unpacked;
- the idea of 'qualifying' beliefs was rarely offered by weaker candidates.

(b) 'Logical Positivism successfully shows that religious language is meaningless.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- one line of argument used to support the statement was that religious language is cognitive and so by the two principles it shows that it is meaningless;
- another was to oppose the statement by challenging the Logical Positivists approach to language;
- many candidates noted there is an issue with the Verification Principle and said that it was neither analytic nor synthetic; there is no sense experience that can count in its favour and so is meaningless;
- a valid approach was that religious language is non-cognitive and therefore the verification and falsification principles are irrelevant since they apply to cognitive language;
- many candidates used analogies and language games as a means of asserting the meaningfulness of religious language.

Features of weaker responses:

- a considerable number of answers referred to 'bliks', but often were unable to put this into the context of the question;
- it would be useful to read more extensive references to scholars such as Hick and Swinburne;
- many said that Logical Positivism fails its own test but did not explain why.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2018

Component 3: Religion and Ethics

General comments

This compulsory paper produced the full range and marks but did appear to be challenging for candidates in some areas. Rubric was observed on the whole and most candidates managed to produce balanced answers across the four sub-questions in relation to the timing.

It was pleasing to see that candidates recognised the significance of the (b) sections in terms of weighting and timing and in general produced some very good evaluative answers. The first compulsory section generated most responses from question 1 on hard determinism; however, quite a few candidates either confused or conflated hard determinism with predestination which had a detrimental impact on both (a) and (b) sections, although the (b) section was more open to a variety of interpretations of determinism if used to contrast with the success of a philosophical concept of hard determinism. The second question, similarly, saw some confusion of libertarianism with religious arguments that tried to explain free will in relation to predestination.

The questions in the option section of this paper were all chosen by candidates, with question 3 being the least popular on Emotivism. Whilst there is overlap with Ayer's argument on religious language in terms of initial principles, there was some confusion surrounding his conclusions about ethical language which are very different to those on religious language. The main issues with questions 4 and 5 were the deontological and teleological aspects required as a focus by the questions and these were often ignored in favour of a general presentation of either Aquinas' Natural Law and Rule Utilitarianism.

1. (a) Explain hard determinism with reference to philosophical, scientific and psychological concepts. [AO1 20]

This was by far the most popular choice of question among candidates.

Features of stronger responses:

- included reference to technical vocabulary such as universal causation, materialism and incompatibilism as well as speaking of the kind of scholars mentioned on the specification;
- candidates were expected to consider Locke, genes and Pavlov, but good candidates often referred to other scholars / concepts too that were not required by the specification but were relevant, such as Skinner, Watson, Darwin, Genetic Fixity and others;
- the strongest answers were able to show how each of the scholars mentioned demonstrated features of the hard determinist position – that our behaviour is caused and we are not free to choose how we act.

Features of weaker responses:

- conflating philosophical hard determinism with predestination or predeterminism from Augustine or Calvin; the specification states that Theme 4a refers to religious concepts of predestination with reference to the teachings of Augustine and Calvin, whereas Theme 4b refers to Concepts of determinism - Hard determinism: philosophical (John Locke); **NB** there is a difference between the philosophical concepts of hard determinism, that is largely materialist and incompatibilist, and the religious concept of predestination that considers how God may have planned humanity's ultimate destiny in advance of behavioural or faith choices made;
- candidates usually recounted the story of the sleeping man from John Locke. There were a wide range of different stories re-told, sometimes he was alone, sometimes not, sometimes he wandered into the room himself and sometimes he chose to try the door. Each variation would potentially affect how well the analogy works.

(b) 'The philosophical concept of hard determinism clearly illustrates humanity has no free will.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Those who were confused over Q1. (a), often continued this confusion into Q1.(b). Candidates who made use of religious ideas to answer the question set specifically were credited. For instance, a candidate who was able to explain that philosophical concepts were in conflict or concurrence with religious arguments and to support such a claim, were awarded highly. If candidates simply argued about whether predestination or free will was more coherent with reference only to the religious scholars, did not achieve so highly. This showed a limited identification of issues raised by the question, being only partially addressed.

Features of stronger responses:

- an ability to argue whether scholars like Locke were able to present a coherent argument and these candidates may have argued that philosophically he proved nothing, only claimed logical coherency or showing that determinism was possible or probable, but not certain;
- others compared or contrasted the alternative approaches, such as Sartre or the soft determinists to see whether other scholars were more successful
- the strongest answers weighed up whether there was a stronger alternative explanation for human behaviour than that of philosophical hard determinism, such as that of science or psychology.

Features of weaker responses:

- tended to answer a different question than the one set, preferring to write a response to the question 'Humanity has no free will.'; such candidates missed the in depth evaluation and analysis of philosophical arguments and their success was very limited;
- seemed confused about what hard determinism is, appearing to claim that it means we are determined a bit, but not completely or that we can override our determinism;
- other candidates cited religious or societal laws, such as those of Natural law, as evidence of determinism rather than causal factors. e.g. society or religion has laws to instruct our behaviour, so we are determined;

- many simply listed scholarly arguments for and against free will rather than weighing up the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments in the light of the statement given in the question.

7. (a) Explain libertarianism with reference to philosophical scientific and psychological concepts. [AO1 20]

This was a significantly less popular choice for section A.

Features of stronger responses:

- included an explanation of Sartre, Sirigu and Rogers;
- many did a good job of explaining the idea of bad faith and the waiter analogy and there were some good examples of technical vocabulary stemming from the original French such as *mauvaise fois*, *en-soi* and *pour-soi* with correct definitions and explanations;
- very strong answers explained that Libertarianism was incompatibilist and materialist.

Features of weaker responses:

- a tendency to conflate the religious ideas of free will with libertarianism, although this was less of a problem than in question one;
- most candidates understood that they should talk about Sartre, Sirigu and Rogers although many weaker candidates did not include all three;
- a number of candidates misunderstood Sirigu and did not know that Sirigu herself has made no comment on the existence of free will, but has merely identified the parts of the brain where choices appear to be made.

(b) 'The libertarian concept of psychology inevitably leads to the belief that we are total free.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

There were some very successful attempts at this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- included an understanding that they were required to assess the success of approaches like that of Rogers;
- some chose to consider whether psychology demonstrated free will or determinism by using Rogers to contrast with Pavlov;
- others considered whether there were any better attempts at arguing for free will than Rogers, by thinking about whether Sirigu or Sartre did a better job.
- others used a combination of these approaches; all were valid.

Features of weaker responses:

- included those who attempted to interpret the question as 'Humans are totally free. Evaluate this view.' this was not the question set and so awarding credit only limited credit could be awarded where relevant;
- other weak approaches simply described the work of libertarian scholars again rather than getting down to analysis and evaluation linked to the question set.

Section B

3. (a) **Explain the meta-ethical approach of emotivism, including reference to A.J. Ayer.** [AO1 20]

This was not the most popular question but those who chose it, generally produced a good account of emotivism.

Features of stronger responses:

- candidates were able to use the technical vocabulary associated with meta-ethics and Emotivism such as non-cognitivism and could define it;
- those that understood that meta-ethics did not require a normative application were also more likely to do well;
- the strongest candidates understood that Ayer's work on religious language and his work on ethical language, whilst connected, were making different points;
- the most highly awarded material was that which talked of the use of ethical language being to express emotion, not make propositions;
- stronger candidates understood the secondary use of such language was thought by Ayer to be about persuading others to feel the same (and could develop this with Stevenson as some stronger answers did), but the statements contained no cognitive information and so were factually meaningless.

Features of weaker responses:

- included the ability to explain basic details, some confusion that the boo/hurrah theory was an account of how we express our emotions rather than a parody of our attempts to make ethical pronouncements;
- other weaker answers tried to treat Emotivism as a normative ethic and attempted to apply throughout;
- many weaker candidates gave lengthy accounts of Logical Positivism or Hume's is/ought problem;
- candidates could have referred to the work of the Logical Positivists as an influence, but such material was only a minor point;
- other weak answers attempted a grand tour of all the meta ethical theories rather than focussing on only Emotivism.

- (b) **'Moral terms, like right and wrong, are no more than expressions of our emotions.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- candidates were able to give an analysis of whether there was anything more to moral language than simply emoting or expressing a feeling; they drew on the work of Naturalists and Intuitionists to challenge Emotivism or to offer alternative approaches and were able to weigh up which seemed more convincing and why;
- these candidates were also able to consider whether moral terms could be expressions of emotions, but also contain other features too;
- some pointed out that even Ayer and Stevenson recognised the persuasive element in their function and so moral terms contained more within them than just feelings.

Features of weaker responses:

- tended to do a tour of meta-ethical theorists without any real analysis of them; this is not really demonstrating the skills required in a part (b) response;
- many missed opportunities to make use of Hume's fork or the naturalistic fallacy to support the Emotivist position;
- many mis-used Moore's example of the colour yellow to support emotivism, thus not demonstrating a full understanding of the Intuitionist / Emotivist distinctions;
- others tended to confuse meta-ethics and normative ethics in their analysis which meant they did not get to the essence of the strengths and weaknesses of the theory.

4. (a). **Examine both the deontological and teleological features of Aquinas' Natural Law.** [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- some candidates produced some very good accounts of the ethical theory itself, including a broad range of features from within it;
- the best candidates referred to deontological as being duty based and therefore more absolute or reflecting on specific actions, in contrast with teleological which is based on ends or purpose of acts;
- the strongest answers were able to go through Natural Law pointing out the features that were deontological or teleological and explaining why, e.g. they could point to the beatific vision as our telos and the primary precepts as our duty to obey; there was no expectation that there should be an equal balance of both features since candidates were more likely to find deontological features of Natural Law.

Features of weaker responses:

- included a struggle with accurate definitions of deontological and teleological as some conflated them with other terminology that was not quite accurate, e.g. the focus on teleological being the same as consequentialism led some candidates to become confused by thinking Natural Law weighs up consequences of individual actions in its decision making, which it does not;
- in addition, there were candidates who, in their enthusiasm for explaining Natural Law, forgot to include any reference at all to the deontological or teleological aspects of the theory;
- there were also many candidates who muddled teleological and deontological throughout.

(b) 'Natural Law is meaningless without belief in a creator God'
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

There were some very strong answers to this question and candidates were able to refer to a wide range of arguments both for and against.

Features of stronger responses:

- very good candidates had the confidence to refer to John Finnis in this answer to demonstrate how it is unnecessary to believe in a creator to follow Natural Law;
- others demonstrated the ability to weigh up the extent to which such a belief was necessary, for instance showing that the primary precepts are absolute and require the worship of God but they are not the only precepts and so maybe moral agents could pick and choose;
- some also recognised that the question concerned a creator God and that worship God could be interpreted outside of the Christian tradition.

Features of weaker responses:

- there was a lack of recognition of the necessity of God at all and more of a weighing up of the general strengths and weaknesses of a legalistic approach to ethics;
- some candidates were just content to weigh up the issue of 'worship God' and were reluctant to look further into the revealed virtues or levels of law for evidence of God's necessity;
- whilst it was not necessary to refer to Finnis in this response, weaker candidates tended to miss the opportunity to use him.

5. (a) Examine both the deontological and teleological features of Rule Utilitarianism.

[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- they included a systematic journey through Rule Utilitarianism pointing out the deontological and teleological features along the way;
- many used the harm principle successfully as an example of a deontological rule from Mill;
- candidates understood that Rule Utilitarianism has a teleological aim of producing maximum happiness for the majority, but has the deontological approach of making it our duty to obey rules that are formulated with happiness as their goal;
- some more sophisticated answers were able to show how the duty aspect was weaker in weak rule in comparison with strong Rule Utilitarianism.

Features of weaker responses:

- weaker candidates often struggled with the definitions of deontological and teleological in this answer and this had a significant effect on their marks.

- many made the error of going through the whole of Mill's Utilitarianism rather than Rule Utilitarianism, which was unnecessary; whilst Mill is identified on the specification as someone who can be categorised in this way, it would have been the rule-like features that candidates would need to home in on. Mill's higher and lower pleasures, on their own, were unrelated the rule aspect of Utilitarianism; where candidates were able to use higher and lower pleasures as a way of establishing deontological rules, they were awarded; most candidates who raised the idea of higher and lower pleasures, did so thinking that they were a feature of Rule Utilitarianism, which they are not.
- there was also a tendency in these type of responses to simply say that Utilitarianism looks at consequences, but not develop the answer further than this.
- many explained strong and weak rule as features of Mill's utilitarianism rather than understanding that these were competing approaches taken by different advocates of Rule Utilitarianism.

(b) 'Act Utilitarianism provide a better basis for making moral decisions than Rule Utilitarianism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Many candidates responded very well to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- demonstrated evaluation and analysis rather than simply describing Act and Rule Utilitarianism;
- many candidates were able to weigh up the value of the hedonic calculus as a decision-making tool for Act Utilitarians. They considered the practicality of this approach and the ease of following rules. They also balanced this against the compassion of considering individual situations;
- some were prepared to consider that neither approach was better than the other, and that a third option was required, such as Egoism or a religious approach. Where these responses resisted the urge to go off into an evaluation of their preferred ethic, they were awarded.

Features of weaker responses:

- some candidates were under the impression that Rule Utilitarianism measures pleasure as 'higher' and 'lower'; this is incorrect and candidates need to be careful over this definition; the clue is in the title: Rule Utilitarianism establishes set rules that are then enforced throughout society;
- candidates could have used the harm principle as an example of one rule; few candidates were able to identify an advantage of Rule Utilitarianism (e.g. its ease of use) in its application to society and its goal of happiness / well-being for society in general.



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