



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES A LEVEL

SUMMER 2022

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Annual Statistical Report

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

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1A: A STUDY OF CHRISTIANITY

General Comments

The most popular question in Section A was Q1 (attempt% 68%). The most popular question in Section B was Q3 (attempt% 51.6%). Q2 had the highest mean score in Section A (mean=17.4). Q4 had the highest mean score in Section B (mean=16.). Based on the question 'mean' candidates generally scored higher in Section B (AO2) than in Section A (AO1).

The paper appears to have been accessible for candidates across the range of ability. It was evident that candidates had prepared well for the examination and were able to make synoptic links across the specification. There were some excellent scripts that showed candidates had an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the scholars and Christian doctrines studied.

A significant number of candidates achieved the highest bands in both AO1 and AO2 questions. Centres should be commended on the preparation of candidates for the examinations in these areas.

Unfortunately, whereas AO1 and AO2 skills continue to improve, handwriting for many candidates has deteriorated significantly. It is worth centres ensuring that for those candidates whose handwriting appears illegible, in internal testing, that using a laptop becomes a 'normal way of working' so that candidates have access to a laptop for external assessments.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 (a) Examine the consistency of the birth narratives (Matthew 1:18 – 2:23; Luke 1:26-2:40)

[AO1 20]

Q1 was answered really well on the whole, with candidates approaching this question from a variety of valid angles.

Features of stronger responses:

- Focused on the differences and similarities between the birth narratives, and successfully identified ways in which they are both consistent and inconsistent.
- Demonstrated the similarities and differences with confidence and accuracy.
- Were able to comment on the intention of the Gospel writers in redacting their sources to suit gentile and Jewish audiences.
- Made the link between consistency, and harmonisation.
- Were able to explain any inconsistencies from the perspective of redaction criticism.

- Demonstrated the ability to include the wider narrative from both Gospel accounts ensured detailed answers.
- Looked beyond just what the texts said towards the impact of the message and content of each text e.g., the focus on Jesus' lowly and humble beginnings in Luke in comparison to the more affluent and 'kingly/messiah' focus in Matthew.
- Were able to underpin their references in both accounts to Old Testament narrative. For example, the link between Moses and Jesus and references were made to Hannah's song and the Magnificat.

Features of weaker responses:

- Mixed up the Gospel writers.
- Described the contents in each of the Gospel accounts without any examination or explanation of consistency.
- Appeared to have little understanding of both accounts addressing Jews and Gentiles, for example, the magi in Matthew and the fulfilment of prophecy at the Temple in Luke.

(b) 'Redaction criticism is essential for understanding the biblical birth narratives.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Analysed and evaluated the importance of redaction criticism in comparisons to form criticism
- Referred to objective and subjective views of inspiration of the Bible – in particular verbal plenary inspiration.
- Recognised the value of redaction criticism in enriching one's understanding of the theological agenda of the Gospel writers.
- Were aware of the process and evolution of redaction criticism as an approach to reading the Gospels and were able to enhance their responses showing the breadth of their understanding confidently.
- Were able to draw comparisons with the nature of kerygma and scholars like N.T. Wright. They were also able to consider the full impact of this approach in terms of faith and belief within individuals, the Church and society as a whole.
- Made good synoptic links and considered the inspiration of the biblical canon and Calvin's doctrine of accommodation.
- Referred to Wright's critical realism and how this method is also useful in understanding the biblical narratives.
- Referred to the *sitz im leben* of the authors and how their background/audience affected how they constructed their narratives.

Features of weaker responses:

- Lacked confidence and failed to see the impact of redaction criticism on faith, beyond the reading of the birth narratives.
- Failed to focus some of their analysis on the birth narratives and, therefore, missed a key part of the specific wording of the question.
- Demonstrated a lack of understanding of the fact that the gospel writers were redactors of already existing sources, and used these sources to enrich the theological understanding of their audiences.
- Attempted to bring in Bultmann's theory of demythologisation and argue that this is a better way to understand the birth narratives, but this wasn't always done convincingly.
- Some answers focused more on explaining the differences between the accounts rather than addressing the question of evaluating whether or not redaction criticism is essential for understanding the birth narratives.

Q.2 (a) Explain N.T Wright's view of the relation of the resurrection event to history. [AO1 20]

Although this was not the most popular choice in Section A, those candidates who answered the question generally did it well.

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated a clear understanding of N.T. Wright's view of the historicity of the resurrection and explained how Wright came to this conclusion.
- Referred to the Graeco-Roman world view of life after death, as well as Jewish understanding and expectations.
- Referred to and explained the 7 mutations.
- knew N.T. Wright's combative arguments against the historicity of the resurrection in detail, for example, swoon theory.
- Clearly understood how the application of Critical Realism enabled Wright to come to the conclusions that the resurrection of Jesus was a historical event.
- Referred to the success of the early Christians in continuing as a 'resurrection movement' due to their belief in Jesus as Messiah.
- Clearly explained Wright's view 'life after life after death'.

Features of weaker responses

- Mixed up N.T. Wright and R. Bultmann and therefore were unable to gain marks in part (a).
- Focused mainly on one or two of the combative arguments and in doing so limited their achievement.

- (b) **‘Bultmann’s view of the resurrection event is more convincing than Wright’s.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated a confident understanding of Bultmann’s demythologisation of the New Testament, and the appeal of his view to an audience that prefers an empirical approach to events such as the resurrection.
- Compared the views of Wright and Bultmann.
- Referred to Wright’s use of circumstantial evidence, and the letters of St. Paul, to conclude that the resurrection was a historical event and in doing so provides an empirical approach.
- Made interim judgements throughout the essay, which helped to consolidate lines of argument.
- Summarised the main points of the essay in a concluding paragraph, to consolidate the strength of their arguments.

Features of weaker responses

- Lacked the ability to link Wright’s view with empiricism.
- Attempted to compare Wright and Bultmann, but their responses lacked analysis and evaluation and were rather explanatory.

Section B

- Q.3 (a) **Explain the role of works in justification with reference to E.P. Sanders.** [AO1 20]

This was the least popular question in this Section. Candidates appeared to know the ‘faith versus works’ debate, but some lacked in-depth knowledge and understanding of the work of E. P. Sanders.

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of E. P. Sanders’ work ‘Paul and Palestinian Judaism’ (1977), and were able to refer his interpretation and application of Paul’s address to the first century Jews who had a strict view of keeping the law.
- Made links to the theological view of Luther, regarding *sola fide* and explained E.P. Sanders’ rejection of this, with regard to Luther’s misunderstanding of the Pauline letters.
- Demonstrated an understanding of covenant and ‘*heilsgeschichte*’, the continuing story of salvation, from Judaism to Christianity.

Features of weaker responses

- Focused solely on Luther and the debate regarding ‘faith or works’ to secure salvation, during the Reformation
- Focused heavily on the debate during the Reformation and less on how E.P. Sanders responded to this debate.
- Failed to understand or refer to ‘covenantal nomism’.

- (b) **‘The New Testament letters fully support justification by faith alone.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Focused on the letters and clearly and confidently demonstrated knowledge and understanding of which letters clearly supported faith or works or both.
- Referred to reasons for Luther’s rejection of the letter of James.
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of the letters of the New Testament.

Features of weaker responses:

- Gave very general answers focusing of the ‘faith verses works’ debate.
- Failed to include reference to the letters accurately.

- Q.4 (a) Examine the contribution of Mary Daly to feminist theology.** [AO1 20]

Most candidates were knowledgeable about the contribution made by Mary Daly to Feminist theology. It was clear that candidates felt passionate about the topic.

Features of stronger responses:

- Referred to Daly’s unique perspective of feminist theology including abandoning the Church and forming sisterhoods.
- Clearly explained Daly’s rejection of the Church due to its oppression of women and how the patriarchy of the Church meant that there was a need for women to leave it.
- Included accurate quotations from Daly as evidence: ‘If God is male, then male is God’.
- Many referred to Daly’s idea that the Church has created a sexual caste system and that the ‘unholy Trinity’ of rape, genocide and war had objectified women.
- Included Daly’s idea that God is a verb, not a noun and explained the implications of this for believers.
- Some specifically contrasted and compared the views of Mary Daly with other feminist theologians, in particular Rosemary Radford Reuther and Sallie McFague.
- Made reference to several of the works of Mary Daly including: ‘Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation: T.’(1973), ‘The Church and the Second Sex (1968)’, and ‘Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism.’(1978).

Features of weaker responses:

- Answered the question, purely from a general perspective about feminist theology.
- Mixing up the views of Daly with other feminist theologians such as Sallie McFague and Rosemary Radford Reuther.

- Outlined the basic ideas of Daly's theory, but did not extend their answers to include detailed explanation. Some 'cherry picked' parts of her ideology rather than explaining it thoroughly.
- Referred to the ideas of Rosemary Radford Ruether and Sallie McFague rather than focusing on the question set.

(b) 'Feminist theology has had a significant impact upon modern Christian practice.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Considered the effects of other factors, such as socio, economic or political factors, on the progress that women have made as well as the work of feminist theologians.
- Came to strong conclusions about the effects of feminist theology upon modern Christian practice.
- Successfully identified the main arguments raised by the question. Some candidates had in depth knowledge of the timeline surrounding the ordination of women in the Church.
- Engaged in the debate well, using evidence from the Catholic Church and the feminist theologians studied: Mary Daly, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Sallie McFague.

Features of weaker responses

- Engaged with a discussion of female ordination but limited their arguments to this.
- Some candidates misunderstood the demands of the question and therefore did not answer the question set sufficiently.
- Candidates who explained the views of feminist theologians adequately, but did not use this, to answer the question of how this has impacted Christian practice today.

Q.5 (a) Explain the doctrine of the Trinity. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated that they knew the doctrine well and were able to express their understanding with accuracy and flair.
- Were able to examine all three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and place them within their scholarly context, the Creed, the Catechism and the Bible.
- Explained that the doctrine of the Trinity arose out of the need to clarify doctrinal teaching due to the heresies that were being circulated at the time.
- Included an explanation of both the economic and immanent trinity.
- Confidently expressed their understanding of the need for the doctrine to maintain monotheistic beliefs in comparison to other world religions.
- Used analogies to good effect to enhance candidates' responses. For example, St Augustine's trinity of love analogy.
- Explained some more modern developments of the Trinity, in particular, the contribution of Karl Barth.

Features of weaker responses:

- Failed to use technical language with accuracy and confidence.
- Wrote brief responses to this question, explaining the roles of each of the three persons in the Trinity, but not extending their answer beyond this. Therefore, their answers lacked breadth.
- Failed to understand that the doctrine of the Trinity is grounded in biblical evidence, despite not being explicitly referred to.

**(b) 'The doctrine of the Trinity is essential for understanding the God of Christianity.'
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]**

Features of stronger responses:

- Fully addressed all of the demands of the question set.
- Took a broad view of Christianity and the impact of this key belief.
- Were able to analyse the impact of the doctrine with confidence using Biblical, scholarly and Church sources with flair.
- Made links to other scholars e.g., Sally McFague and the limits of male centred language in expressing the person of God.
- Considered the limits of language in general in expressing an ineffable being.

- Considered the impact of this belief on the notion of Atonement and the person of Jesus as Messiah.
- Referred to the person of Jesus as being an essential way for Christians to understand the Trinity, as well as the fact that many practices in the Church refer to it.
- Noted Karen Kilby's reference to the Trinity as a 'puzzle' and the illogical nature of the Trinity as well as how it has caused controversy throughout Church history.
- Referred to analogies that enable Christians to understand the Trinity from Augustine as well as the relationship of love between the persons.

Features of weaker responses

- Demonstrated the inability to make links to other parts of the specification and often ran out of ideas, leading to rather short and limited responses from some.
- Tended to focus solely on the heresies within the Church.
- Failed to demonstrate evaluation skills throughout their answer.
- Tried to employ the ideas of Augustine and Barth but in less sophisticated answers this was not done accurately.

Summary of key points

AO1

- It is imperative to answer the question that is set. It can be advantageous to draw comparisons with other aspects of the course of study, but the main focus of the question should not be lost. Do not force synoptic links – only bring in other theologians where it is appropriate to do so and where it addresses the question asked.
- Excellent answers include accurate references to the views of scholars /schools of thought in context. It is important to not make tenuous links.
- Where appropriate accurate use of sources of wisdom and authority should be included.
- Appropriate links to other parts of the specification are helpful in ensuring breadth as well as depth is evidenced.

AO2

- Focus on the question set and analyse and evaluate in the light of that.
- Decide on lines of argument and make judgements regularly, addressing the question that is set.
- It is helpful to come to meaningful conclusions which make judgements in light of the question set.
- Make links where appropriate to other aspects of the specification. Ensure that those links are related to the question.
- The use of sources of wisdom and authority should be deployed wherever possible in order to strengthen responses.
- Ensure accuracy when employing the views of scholars.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2022
COMPONENT 1B: A STUDY OF ISLAM

General Comments

The most popular question in Section A was Q1 (attempt% 63.3%). The most popular question in Section B was Q5 (attempt% 45.8%). Q1 had the highest mean score in Section A (mean=18.6). Q5 had the highest mean score in Section B (mean=17.8).

This examination was the first place since the Covid-19 pandemic, and it was clear that most candidates had made a huge effort to do their best to this examination and respond to the questions asked. Most candidates wrote lengthy responses, enthusiastic to share what they had learned. They often wrote detailed AO1 responses.

It was notable, in response to AO2 question there appeared to be fewer responses which clearly achieved Band 5, making confident and critical analysis related to a given statement. Candidates attempted to address important words in the question but could improve on this by making definitions at the beginning of their responses and returning frequently to those key words in each paragraph and especially at the end of AO2 responses. Responses were often very lengthy but could be improved by being made more concise and to the point, with more emphasis on the argument taken than the length of the response.

Candidates were well prepared for different areas of the specification, as shown by the choice of questions. An area of knowledge and understanding which might be improved a little is the role of prophets as rasul (messenger) and nadir (warner) – Q5. In general, quotations were fairly well used as supporting evidence and reference to scholars occasionally made; perhaps a greater use of scholarly references and opinions might help some candidates achieve the higher bands.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 (a) Explain the role of the masjid (mosque) as the hub of the Ummah (community of believers) for men and women. [AO1 20]

The role of the masjid was generally well answered, and candidates took different perspectives, some focusing on the role of the masjid in the UK today and others a broad-brush approach, including the Prophet's masjid in Madinah. Both were acceptable ways of approaching this question. The question itself invited several aspects to be covered, with explanation required, not just description, which challenged candidates to include appropriate detail for each aspect and balance the response overall.

Features of stronger responses:

- Covered all parts of the question: role of the masjid, hub of the Ummah, and men and women.
- Considered a range of functions as part of the role, such as place of prostration, social centre, support, education, political consultation and so on.
- Organised the response in clear, coherent and concise paragraphs.

Features of weaker responses:

- Only covered part of the role of the masjid, most commonly for prayer, without mentioning other aspects such as education.
- Wrote about the importance of the masjid in general, without focus on its place in the community.
- Ignored the aspect of the question referring to 'for men and women'.

- (b) **'Prostration is the most important purpose of the masjid.'**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Several candidates referred to a definition of the masjid as a place of prostration, and an Islamic tradition that the whole world is a masjid and made these a focus for discussion. The question lent itself to discussing different purposes then making evaluative comments about their relative importance. A range of purposes were referred to, including fulfilling the requirements of the Five Pillars, learning and communicating Islam, and supporting fellow Muslims in their needs. Note that these are purposes which are not descriptions of activities such as how prayer is carried out, although they could be linked together and were by many candidates, provided they were made relevant to discussion of this statement.

Features of stronger responses:

- Referred to definitions and technical terms such as the definition of a masjid and prostration.
- Took a comparative approach, comparing the importance of different functions of the masjid.
- Clearly integrated comments about important purpose in each paragraph and in a well-focused conclusion at the end.

Features of weaker responses:

- Often wrote great detail about the masjid and prostration that was mostly descriptive, so did not address AO2 directly.
- Struggled to show awareness of different points of view or how they might be justified.
- Referred to a very limited range of purposes of the masjid.

Q.2 (a) Explain the religious and moral benefits of Ramadan for Muslims.
[AO1 20]

This was a popular choice of question. Candidates clearly knew a lot about Ramadan and were able to articulate the benefits reasonably well. They included the religious benefits of receiving reward in the afterlife; establishing a firmer spiritual routine such as by completing prayer on time and becoming more familiar with the words of God in the Qur'an, read at this time. Moral benefits identified included supporting the less well-off and those in need both physically through iftar meals and through gaining empathy for them by going without during the day.

Features of stronger responses:

- Covered religious and moral benefits in roughly equal proportion, often pointing out the links between the two.
- Considered 'benefits' widely in terms of the individual, community and in the worldly life and afterlife.
- Clearly explained the benefits they identified.

Features of weaker responses:

- Described what happens during Ramadan, without specific focus on the wording of this question.
- Covered religious benefits, but neglected moral benefits.
- Wrote short and descriptive responses, often lacking explanation.

(b) 'Id-ul-Fitr should be treated as a religious celebration and not a social occasion.'
Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

Most candidates were able to make some evaluation which was purposeful at Band 4; few candidates achieved confident and critical responses at Band 5. Almost all candidates were able to identify some religious and social aspects. Most candidates argued that both aspects were important. Amongst religious celebrations identified, greetings after Id prayers was most commonly identified, as well as congratulating others on completing the fast, using religious words such as giving thanks to God for the celebration. Social benefits included family time and support, and some pointed out the importance of the family in Islam, making the link between religious and social.

Features of stronger responses:

- Clearly focused the essay on discussing aspects of Eid which might be defined as religious and social.
- Commented on the words 'should' and 'not', recognising their significance in the statement.
- Challenged the distinction between religious and social and claimed this was a false distinction in Islam, as everything is part of living the way God intended.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not clearly distinguish between religious and social.
- Wrote generalised accounts about the importance of Id-ul-Fitr.
- Wrote responses which were not structured in clear paragraphs or did not include a clear conclusion or personal response to the statement after weighing up the arguments.

Section B

Q.3 (a) Examine Muslim beliefs about the roles of rasul (messenger) and nadir (warner). [AO1 20]

Most candidates knew about the roles of rasul (messenger) in bringing a revelation from God, and of nadir (warner) in warning their people against idolatry and to turn away from immorality. This question was a case of detail and relevance: the more detailed and relevant, the better the candidate addressed to need to examine these beliefs. Whilst not many candidates chose this question, those who did exhibited a full range of responses.

Features of stronger responses:

- Defined specifically the roles and gave detailed examples of each.
- Referred to several prophets, such as Muhammad, Ibrahim, Musa and Isa.
- Gave quotations or referred to specific evidence to show that details were known, specifically addressing the command word examine, which requires detail.

Features of weaker responses:

- Wrote generally about the roles of prophets.
- Only referred to Muhammad and missed out examples from earlier prophets.
- Lacked detailed evidence to support general points made.

(b) 'Muhammad was the ideal prophet and messenger.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Candidates took this question and made discussions in different ways. Was Muhammad ideal compared to earlier prophets and messengers, or were they all equal and all ideal? Muhammad faced setbacks and losses as part of his campaign yet followed the will of God. Were those setbacks evidence he was less than ideal? Or was his acceptance of these, as part of God's plan, the ideal response? These were some of the interesting ideas postulated by candidates. A full range of responses, from weak to strong, was evident amongst those candidates who chose to respond to this question.

Features of stronger responses:

- Focused on the word 'ideal' and addressed the meaning of it from different angles. Often a definition of 'ideal' in an introductory paragraph made for a perfect start.
- Considered the history of Muhammad and whether the difficult stages meant this was less than ideal or not.
- Made some comparison between Muhammad and earlier messengers and prophets.

Features of weaker responses:

- Wrote in general about the importance of Muhammad, without addressing the word 'ideal' specifically.
- Did not distinguish between prophet and messenger: although these overlap, not all prophets brought messages in the form of revelations.
- Gave some views without making a clear conclusion.

Q.4 (a) Examine challenges to Islam from two scientific theories about the origins of the universe. [AO1 20]

This was a popular question and answered from the perspective of strong knowledge. Candidates were evidently interested in this subject and knew the theories they had studied in some depth. Popular choices included the big bang theory and the steady-state universe. Islamic responses mentioned included those of Muslims who accepted aspects of the scientific account and those who rejected it due to the lack of a religious element, such as a creator God.

Features of stronger responses

- Clearly brought out why theories chosen might challenge Islam, such as if they were not dependent on a creator God as a first cause.
- Chose two theories and based the structure of the answer around them, such as a paragraph for each.
- Accurately referred to theories and relevant scientists/ scholars.

Features of weaker responses

- Wrote about theories in general or wrote about three or more, but none in detail.
- Describe theories without mentioning why they challenged Islam.
- Wrote about Islam and science in general.

- (b) 'Islamic responses to scientific views about the origins of the universe are ineffective.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

The focus of this statement was on Islamic responses, and it called for an evaluation of their effectiveness – something which challenged candidates. Many made attempts at evaluation which looked at the theories but grappling with the effectiveness was not always addressed well. Some argued that the responses were ineffective as they were based on faith, which ultimately could not be scientifically proved, so did not provide empirical evidence. Others argued that Muslims had harmonised scientific theories with relevant religious traditions, some providing relevant quotations from the Qur'an.

Features of stronger responses:

- Clearly addressed the word 'ineffective' in arguments made.
- Considered a range of different Islamic responses to various aspects of scientific views about the origins of the universe.
- Supported arguments made by reference to scholarly opinions.

Features of weaker responses:

- Repeated much of the response given in the (a) part.
- Wrote a one-sided argument without considering variations of opinion.
- Did not respond directly to the word 'ineffective'.

- Q.5 (a) Explain the importance of greater jihad as a personal spiritual struggle for every Muslim.** [AO1 20]

The question about jihad was the most popular choice from Section B. Candidates had a reasonable grasp of the differences between greater and lesser jihad, and many quotes Islamic traditions about jihad of the heart, mind, and sword, then went on to explain different contexts for lesser jihad in the lives of Muslims today. Some candidates were less clear on importance, but others explained it in terms of bringing commitment to faith especially when faced with temptation, and thereby developing closer awareness of God and building up reward in the afterlife.

Features of stronger responses:

- Explained a range of different aspects or situations in which Muslims today might struggle spiritually.
- Supported responses with relevant quotations or evidence.
- Clearly brought out the importance within the lives of Muslims and their faith.

Features of weaker responses:

- Described various aspects of lesser jihad without explaining why these were important in the lives of Muslims today.
- Mixed up greater and lesser jihad.

- (b) 'Teachings about lesser jihad are no longer relevant for Muslims today.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Again, a popular and quite well answered question. Interesting arguments made by candidates included that lesser jihad is misunderstood and practiced incorrectly today, such as by extremists, so therefore the teachings are relevant today to combat this. As opposed to this, the argument that jihad was specific to Muhammad's battles and the early establishment of Islam was made, suggesting that its teachings were not relevant in the context of the modern world. Most candidates managed to think of different points of view to discuss, some in more depth and with more critical analysis than others.

Features of stronger responses:

- Recognised the significance of 'no longer relevant' in the statement and directly addressed this.
- Used accurate quotations or referred to Islamic traditions about the teachings of jihad with accuracy.
- Developed a balanced argument with a clear conclusion or personal response at the end.

Features of weaker responses:

- Wrote simple arguments, such as jihad is no longer relevant because jihad happened in Muhammad's time, without much development.
- Missed the time aspect of the statement and wrote about whether or not the teachings of lesser jihad were important in general.
- Mixed, or did not differentiate, 'teachings about' with various activities of jihad.

Summary of key points

- Remember the focus of each Assessment Objective and address them specifically in the relevant parts. Part (a)s are assessed for AO1 and part (b) for AO2. Adding extra AO1 material in part (b) does not address AO2.
- Focus on AO2 by sharpening arguments, making them more concise and to the point, and specifically addressing the statement provided.
- Ensure definitions of key words, such as words used in the statement, are accurately given and used to effect in discussions.
- Cover all aspects of the question, especially where more than one area is required.
- Be specific and avoid writing generally about the topic under consideration.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1C: A STUDY OF JUDAISM

General Comments

The most popular question in Section A was Q1 (attempt% 67.8%). The most popular question in Section B was Q4 (attempt% 34.7%). Q1 had the highest mean score in Section A (mean=16.5). Q4 had the highest mean score in Section B (mean=17.6).

It is evident from candidates' responses that all questions on the paper were accessible, and answers covered the full range of responses. Moreover, there were a number of excellent scripts which demonstrated thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief in AO1, as well as confident critical and perceptive analysis of the issues at AO2.

It was noticeable in a number of responses that the candidates had engaged fully with the topics which had been taught. This resulted in responses which were well-articulated, and which drew upon an extensive range of scholarly views and schools of thought. This was especially apparent in the higher band AO2 responses where candidates argued their points fluently, supported by extensive, detailed reason. And even within responses from lower bands, many candidates were able to demonstrate the diversity of Jewish belief and practice for example.

With regard to part a) questions, some candidates did not address the specific requirements and failed to respond to phrases such as 'significance for'; 'influence of'; 'importance of'; 'contribution of'; and consequently, gave a narrative which was lacking in sufficient depth. Where answers were weaker in response to part (b) questions, candidates had either misunderstood the statement or had offered no more than a basic justification for the views given, relying instead on using phrases such as 'this is a weak point' or 'this is a strong point', but without any accompanying analysis or evaluation of the issue.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 (a) Explain the significance for Jews of the practices that take place at a seder meal. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Gave a full and accurate discussion of the significance of each step of the seder meal was given.
- Referred to the wider themes of the festival, such as redemption and contemporary political implications of freedom, which were linked to the practices that take place at a seder meal.
- Made reference to Exodus 6:6-7 etc.

- Used scholarly quotations skilfully in order to highlight the overarching themes of the festival.

Features of weaker responses:

- Gave a narrative account of the order of a seder meal was given without addressing the significance of the practices.
- Provided an unnecessary description of the preparation for the seder meal was given at the expense of discussing the significance of the practices that take place at the actual seder meal.
- Confused the practices that take place at a seder meal with those that take place during other Jewish festivals.

- (b) **‘The notion of redemption has no relevance for Judaism today.’
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]**

Features of stronger responses:

- Made wide-ranging use of examples from Jewish history and practice skilfully in order to support the proposed arguments.
- Considered the differing perspectives about future redemption from different groups within Judaism were analysed and evaluated successfully.

Features of weaker responses:

- Completely dismissed the relevance of redemption for Judaism today in the opening paragraph and instead embarked upon a discussion of what they considered to be more important aspects of the faith, thus losing the focus of the question set.
- Did not understand the concept of redemption.

- Q.2 (a) Examine the influence of the rebbe within Hasidic Judaism. [AO1 20]**

Features of stronger responses:

- Provided detailed discussions on the role of the rebbe and his influence within Hasidic Judaism, with references to piety; absolute authority and power; the Kvitel and the Tish.
- Referred to named current and historical rebbes effectively.
- Included anecdotes about the lengths that some practitioners have gone to in order to study and imitate a particular rebbe were evident.
- Used scholarly quotations skilfully in order to highlight schools of thought about the influence of the rebbe within Hasidic Judaism.

Features of weaker responses:

- Presented a biography of the Baal Shem Tov which did not address the focus of the question.
- Offered little more than a list of what amounted to a job description for a rebbe, but without examining the influence that he has within Hasidic Judaism.
- Entered into a comparison of the role of a rebbe with that of a rabbi.

(b) 'The role of the rebbe is the most distinctive feature of Hasidic Judaism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Used the rebbe's standing in contemporary Hasidism effectively.
- Provided a wide variety of distinctive practices within Hasidism in order to present an opposing argument.
- Considered the views of contemporary Jewish leaders from other branches of Judaism regarding the leadership role of the rebbe.

Features of weaker responses:

- Became no more than a comparison between the rebbe and the Baal Shem Tov.
- Offered merely an evaluation of the role of rebbe versus rabbi.
- Offered a list of the distinctive features of Hasidic Judaism but with little analysis and/or evaluation.

Section B

Q.3 (a) Examine beliefs about the Messiah in Judaism.

[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Presented accurate and relevant information regarding the concept of the Messiah as a distinctive idea of classical Judaism even though it is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah.
- Used scriptural references to very good effect. e.g., Isaiah and Jeremiah.
- Referred to the differing views of Orthodox and Reform Jews in detail.
- Acknowledge and discussed views from scholars such as Maimonides.

Features of weaker responses:

- Gave a general outline of basic beliefs about the Messiah was given but without a discussion of the complexity of the concept.
- Strayed into Christian beliefs about the Messiah.

- Q.3 (b) 'Beliefs about judgement and the afterlife are not relevant for Jews today.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Used examples from the rabbis of the Talmud in order to argue that there is some relevance despite there being very little to be found in the Torah relating to this issue.
- A common theme which was used successfully was the importance of focusing on what happens during life rather than being concerned about what might happen in the afterlife.
- Specific examples from scripture were used in order to support a standpoint.
- Scholarly contributions to the debate, such as that of Maimonides, were cited.

Features of weaker responses:

- Discussed the relationship between judgement and the afterlife, but with very little acknowledgement of the relevance for Jews today.
- Completely dismissed the relevance of beliefs about judgement and the afterlife for Jews today in the opening paragraph and instead embarked upon a discussion of what they considered to be more important aspects of the faith, thus losing the focus of the question set.

- Q.4 (a) Examine the importance of tzedakah (charity) within Judaism.** [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Focussed on the *importance* of tzedakah throughout the response with accompanying accurate scriptural references from Deuteronomy and Leviticus.
- Used thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary accurately and in context.
- Referred to Maimonides' hierarchy of tzedakah accurately in connection with relevant scriptural references.
- Highlighted the broader category of Tikkun Olam.

Features of weaker responses:

- Gave a basic list of the ways in which some Jews give to charity was offered, but without the required addition as to why tzedakah is important within Judaism.
- Embarked upon a detailed explanation of the Pittsburgh Platform in its entirety rather than homing in on the relevant final clause regarding social action.

- (b) **‘Tzedakah is more important than prayer.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Offered quite complex arguments regarding the relationship between tzedakah and prayer.
- Used examples of specific prayers in order to argue that even though there is no explicit commandment to pray, it is nevertheless a very important aspect of the Jewish faith.
- Referred to the viewpoints of scholars such as Maimonides effectively.

Features of weaker responses:

- Offered a one-sided response by arguing the virtue of either tzedakah or prayer but without examining the issue in sufficient depth.
- Merely listed examples of tzedakah and judged their merits and demerits with no reference to prayer.

- Q.5 (a) **Examine the contribution of Judith Plaskow to Jewish feminism.**

[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Focussed on the *contribution* of Judith Plaskow to Jewish feminism was maintained throughout the response.
- Referred to ‘Standing Again at Sinai’ in order to illustrate Plaskow’s considerable contribution to Jewish women’s theological discussions.
- Referred to issues such as the development of the ‘partnership minyanim’; a growth in women’s Torah exegesis; the development of a feminist liturgy for Passover.

Features of weaker responses:

- Offered a biography of Plaskow’s life without discussing her *contribution* to Jewish feminism.
- Wrote in detail about Margaret Wenig as well as Judith Plaskow as if the question were about the two.
- Wrote very little in response to this question, and yet did very well in part (b).

- (b) Evaluate the view that equality exists between women and men in Judaism. [AO2 30]**

Features of stronger responses:

- Drew upon the experiences/expectations of women and men from all groups within Judaism in order to present their arguments.
- Skilfully used issues relating to divorce, modesty in dress, and the requirements of the mikveh to make a case.
- Argued that this is a complex issue that depends upon whether or not the customs of some Jewish groups are indeed out of line with the expectations of the roles of women and men in secular society, and whether or not we should be comparing them.

Features of weaker responses:

- Lacked satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue, and merely listed the different roles expected of women and men in Judaism.
- Gave inaccurate information regarding the expectations of women and men in different Jewish groups.

Summary of key points

- Candidates need to pay close attention to the specific wording of each question so that opportunities are not lost to achieve higher marks;
- In AO1 responses, ensure that points are developed rather than just listed.
- Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary is a characteristic feature of stronger responses.
- The inclusion of accurate reference to scholarly views, sacred texts and/or sources of wisdom where relevant is a significant feature of stronger responses.
- An ability to reflect the diversity which is to be found within Judaism is to be encouraged, and this can be especially useful in AO2 responses.
- It is evident that candidates who have kept up to date with contemporary Jewish thought and views have been able to achieve marks within the higher bands.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1D: A STUDY OF BUDDHISM

General Comments

The most popular question in Section A was Q1 (attempt% 70.8%). The most popular question in Section B was Q5 (attempt% 46.0%). Q1 had the highest mean score in Section A (mean=18.4). Q4 had the highest mean score in Section B (mean=17.1).

It was pleasing to see how in many cases candidates had prepared themselves well for the examination particularly through revision of specialist Buddhist language and vocabulary. There was evidence of a variety of resources being used to prepare students, and thus, in many cases, a rich range of exemplification could be found in the responses to questions.

Timing did not appear to present a significant problem with most candidates being able to write full and detailed responses to the question from Section A and from Section B.

It was encouraging to read responses which showed that candidates were able to make synoptic links between various parts of the course which they had covered. This often made for responses notable for depth and breadth.

Overall, stronger responses were those which were able to demonstrate analysis and evaluation in part (b) by avoiding repetition of the same material in part (a). This meant that candidates had more time to develop a fruitful discussion in part (b).

Well-structured responses were often in evidence. Some degree of planning – however brief - before writing enable a number of candidates to develop purposeful and confident critical analysis and evaluation.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 (a) Examine the meaning of the three refuges for Buddhists. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Were able to put the three refuges in the wider overall context of Buddhist belief and practice.
- Identified the three refuges as a concept which could be simply chanted or which could provide a source for meditation.
- Gave a clear definition of each of the refuges - Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha – and their meaning.
- Provided points of convergence and divergence between different schools of Buddhism in terms of how the three refuges are approached and understood.

Features of weaker responses:

- Identified some, but not all of the refuges.
- Gave a simplistic account of the three refuges lacking in either depth and/or breadth.
- Were wholly descriptive – particularly of the life of the Buddha - without trying to examine the **meaning** of the three refuges.
- Were confused and saw the term ‘sangha’ as referring only to the *monastic* sangha rather than the *fourfold* sangha.

(b) ‘Going for refuge continues to be relevant for Buddhists in the modern world.’

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Considered the wording of the question carefully by keeping their focus on Buddhists in the **modern world**.
- Developed useful consideration of the concept of ‘refuge’ and of how in the modern world, for example, consumerism, individualism and social media presence are alternative refuges
- Presented ideas from other Buddhism(s) that questioned the relevance of going for refuge amongst convert Buddhists as opposed to heritage Buddhists.
- Proposed that the relevance of going for refuge was outweighed by other Buddhist considerations such as Socially Engaged Buddhism or the tenets of Secular Buddhism.

Features of weaker responses:

- Presented a simplistic description of each of the refuges and whether or not they were helpful for Buddhists without reference to the **modern world**.
- Lacked an understanding of the depth and/or breadth of each of the refuges in terms of being a set of attitudes informing the whole of Buddhist practice.
- Repeated much of the material in part (a) without sufficient analysis and evaluation.
- Tended to dismiss the relevance of the sangha on the grounds that there were very few Buddhist monastic communities.

Q.2 (a) Examine traditions of Socially Engaged Buddhism.

[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Presented the context of Socially Engaged Buddhism in terms of what – as an umbrella concept – it might cover and convey.
- Gave in depth and/or breadth examples of Socially Engaged Buddhism as part of their examination of the concept
- Presented examples such as Thich Nhat Hanh, the Dalai Lama, Joanna Macy, etc. with an explanation of how and why their belief and practice illuminated the meaning of Socially Engaged Buddhism.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not give any context for Socially Engaged Buddhism or general explanation of how it might be understood.
- Tended to give a list of figures involved in Socially Engaged Buddhism and summary details about their work without reference to its link to Socially Engaged Buddhism.
- Understood Socially Engaged Buddhism as being something entirely born out of and active **only** within the context of the Vietnam War.

(b) 'Social justice is an essential part of Buddhist practice.'
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of Buddhism so that other Buddhist practices within the variety of Buddhism(s) could be used to compare and contrast with social justice as a Buddhist practice.
- Made reference to scholars and scholarly opinion – such as Keown – as to Buddhism needing to recognise social justice in order to survive.
- Referred to scholars and scholarly opinion – such as Brazier – as to Buddhism needing to avoid being victim to wholly Western secular concerns.
- Considered the problem of attachment to social justice being counter to Buddhist belief.
- Gave a nuanced understanding of how the arhat path and bodhisattva path might regard social justice as being essential or not in Buddhist practice.

Features of weaker responses:

- Tended to be unclear as to what the term social justice might cover in terms of a person's attitudes and practice.
- Repeated – sometimes at length – much of the material already written in part (a) - particularly if this related to Thich Nhat Hanh – without linking it to social justice being essential.
- Interpreted the question as asking whether social justice was important for Buddhists and answered accordingly - thus ignoring the key point as to whether or not it is **essential**.
- Gave a homogenous view of all Buddhists being the same rather than considering that differences could be found between the variety of practitioners within the variety of Buddhism(s).

Q.3 (a) Explain the wider authority and significance of the Sutta Pitaka.

[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Gave the context of the Sutta Pitaka within the Pali Canon and showed knowledge and understanding of the Pali Canon.
- Provided an overall explanation of the material found in the Sutta Pitaka in terms of its suttas and teachings.

- Explained its authority and significance through reference to, for example, specific passages such as the Parable of the Raft, the Kalama Sutta and biographical passages concerning the Buddha.
- Successfully identified and noted the significance of, for example, the Jataka Tales and the Dhammapada.

Features of weaker responses:

- Demonstrated confusion as to which Pitaka was being referred to with some candidates writing entirely about the Vinaya Pitaka.
- Gave a general response which gave brief descriptive details of each of the three pitakas.
- Showed some knowledge of the Sutta Pitaka, but were mainly descriptive – particularly of the life of the Buddha – without any consideration of the wider authority and significance of the Sutta Pitaka.

(b) 'The Pali Canon is of little importance in Buddhism.'
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Showed a full understanding of the three pitakas and considered the importance of each part in Buddhism.
- Successfully recognised and reflected on the difference in the importance of the Pali Canon to the monastic and lay Sangha.
- Demonstrated an awareness of the different types of Buddhism and whether, for example, the Pali Canon in general might or might not be as important as the Lotus Sutra or the Heart Sutra within Mahayana Buddhism.
- Considered whether questions regarding the oral transmission of the material which formed the Pali Canon undermined its importance.
- Noted the age of and the patriarchal background of the Pali Canon and assessed how these factors affected its importance.

Features of weaker responses:

- Tended to repeat in a descriptive fashion much of part (a) and consider whether or not it was still important today e.g., accounts of the life of the Buddha.
- Explained briefly the three pitakas and whether each one was important or not in simplistic terms e.g., the Abhidhamma Pitaka being important for bhikkhus, but not for ordinary Buddhists.
- Approached the question with an understanding of Buddhism as being a single united belief system and thus missed, for example, the distinction between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism and how the Pali Canon's importance is different for each.
- Attempted in a limited fashion to suggest that other aspects of Buddhism were more important than the Pali Canon such as meditation.

Q.4 (a) Examine the concept of anatta with reference to the Chariot Passage in the 'Questions of King Milinda'. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Provided context by demonstrating sound understanding of the concept of anatta as one of the three lakshanas.
- Explained in detail and with examples what is meant by the concept of anatta including, for example, the concept of impermanence and of sunyata.
- Showed a sound understanding of the Chariot Passage identified in the question.
- Gave a summary of the dialogue between Nagasena and King Milinda and were able to name the five skandhas.
- Clearly linked the discussion of the nature of the parts of the chariot with the concept of the parts of the no-self.

Features of weaker responses:

- Gave a limited explanation of the concept of anatta lacking in depth and/or breadth.
- Identified anatta as one of the three lakshanas, but then described all three.
- Had very limited knowledge of the Chariot Passage and were thus unable to link it to anatta.

(b) 'The three lakshanas (three marks of existence) accurately represent reality.' [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Successfully identified each of the lakshanas – dukkha, anicca and anatta – and considered ways in which they did or did not represent reality.
- Considered whether such metaphysical concepts could represent reality given their a priori nature.
- Linked anicca to modern scientific understanding of continual flux at a sub-atomic level and thus argued that it is successful in representing reality.
- Commented on the different types of dukkha and how each of these accurately represented reality particularly in the modern world.

Features of weaker responses:

- Tended to list the three lakshanas and describe with examples what each meant before a concluding paragraph which attempted to answer the question.
- Appeared to rely on the approach that if something was not understood then it did not represent reality – for example, most people do not understand/believe in no-self and therefore it does not represent reality, but most people do understand/believe in suffering and therefore it does represent reality.
- Were vague as to what is meant by **reality** and tended to focus on whether the three lakshanas were helpful/unhelpful in daily life.

- Q.5 (a) Explain different views in Buddhism about whether women (i) can be nuns and (ii) can attain awakening. [AO1 20]**

Features of stronger responses:

- Considered the question carefully and kept their focus on **different** views in Buddhism.
- Identified **differences** between Theravada and Mahayana with regard to women being nuns and attaining awakening.
- Knew the complexity of the debate within Theravada as to whether women can be ordained with reference to, for example, Mahapajati, the Garudhammas and the broken lineage of bhikkunis.
- Understood the view that awakening could be understood as possible for all and identified how the issue might be argued either way through using the story of the Dragon King's daughter found in the Lotus Sutra.
- Considered the different approaches that might be identified between heritage and convert Buddhists.

Features of weaker responses:

- Treated Buddhism as homogenous in terms of its views with regard to women and thus did not properly address the question.
- Recounted in varying amounts of detail the accounts relating to Mahapajati but did not link this to the question.
- Explained the story of the Dragon King's daughter in a simplistic fashion as either supporting or opposing the awakening of women without regard to the different ways of interpreting the ending of the story within Buddhism.

- (b) 'Buddhism does not support feminism.' [AO2 30]**

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated a good understanding of the range of views within Buddhism(s) such as those of the Triratna Movement in the UK through to those of the Theravada Forest Tradition.
- Evaluated the debate as to whether patriarchy is embedded within Buddhism or whether it has been introduced into Buddhism through societal and cultural influences.
- Acknowledged the key arguments provided by Rita Gross through her work on Buddhism and androcentrism.
- Considered the contemporary situation of women within Buddhism today particularly with regard to ordination being accepted in Sri Lanka and being banned in Thailand.

Features of weaker responses:

- Often repeated much of the material in part (a) without any specific linking to the question.
- Presented the homogenous view of Buddhism and thus did not differentiate between approaches found in Mahayana and Theravada.
- Showed little knowledge of the scholarly opinions of those such as Rita Gross on the issue of patriarchy in Buddhism and thus presented a simplistic agree/disagree approach.

Summary of key points

- Candidates would benefit from maintaining and increasing their knowledge of specialist Buddhist language and vocabulary as this would enable them to write with greater fluency and precision both in the part (a) and part (b) questions.
- Keeping a focus on timing is important particularly as, with regard to the part (b) questions, a sufficient amount has to be written in order to convey a qualitative level of analysis and evaluation which is central to sound academic discussion.
- Candidates would benefit from continuing to recognise that in many ways Buddhism is not a unified and homogenous religion/belief system, but is made up of a variety of different schools each with its own variety of different approaches to the beliefs and practices of Buddhism.
- Candidates should continue to develop their understanding of Buddhism by gathering and reflecting upon different scholarly views. Even a brief reference to such scholarly views along with a quotation/paraphrase gives greater weight to what is written in response to questions both in part (a) and part (b).

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1E: A STUDY OF HINDUISM

General Comments

The most popular question in Section A was Q1 (attempt% 87.9%). The most popular question in Section B was Q3 (attempt% 86.3%). Q2 had the highest mean score in Section A (mean=16.0). Q4 had the highest mean score in Section B (mean=18.8).

There were no major issues with the examination paper and it was evident from the overall standard of the responses that the questions were accessible to the majority of candidates.

It is imperative that candidates read the question carefully before beginning to write their answer. Many candidates gave a rough plan before writing their answers which was good to see and certainly helped them to focus on the question set. A major weakness in some candidates' responses was that they were not focused on the question set and included a lot of irrelevant material.

Many candidates are to be commended for providing good, brief introductory and contextual information in AO2 responses, outlining key arguments with supporting examples.

Issues for consideration by centres:

- Handwriting is an issue that needs addressing by centres. Some candidates' handwriting was very difficult if not impossible to read and if an examiner and the Principal Examiner cannot read what has been written then it will not be credited. It would therefore be beneficial for centres to assess candidates' handwriting to see whether they should be typing their answers in examinations.
- A number of candidates for some reason did not number the questions they were answering. In some cases, this made it difficult to recognise which question they were answering and also where one answer ended and another began. As the marking is completed online it is vital that students identify their question at the beginning of the answer and in the box provided.
- Some candidates seem to think that it is the length of the answer that matters. Responses were so long in part (b) that the candidate had long lost their train of thought and reasoning. It is quality of content that determines the band awarded
- There were some issues with the AO2 responses. The narrative in some answers was more suited to AO1 than AO2. There were several unnecessary introductions to AO2 responses and there were many examples of the 'some agree, others disagree' style. However, candidates need to focus on using evaluative verbs, 'demonstrate, prove, justify' and other analytical tools to compare and contrast scholarly viewpoints to reach a committed conclusion.

- Candidates also need to be supported and challenged to engage with an extensive range of background reading within the widest possible context (articles, books, documentaries, video clips etc.)

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 (a) Examine features of the Indus Valley civilisation. [AO1 20]

This was a very popular choice in Section A and there were some excellent responses with candidates clearly having been well prepared on this part of the specification.

Features of stronger responses:

- Thorough and accurate knowledge of the main features of the Indus Valley civilisation.
- Reference to urban culture, socio-economic and religious features and archaeological evidence which suggests that there was no monarchy, army or prescribed religion.
- Specific and detailed examples of the features referred to such as the square seals and their images, the 'Dancing Girl of Mohenjo Daro' statue and 'proto-shiva'.
- Referred to the evidence for a belief in life after death.

Features of weaker responses:

- Lacked knowledge and understanding of the features of the Indus Valley Civilisation
- Confusion with Aryan culture.
- Lacked specific examples and evidence
- Digressed into explaining the links with modern Hinduism which was not relevant to this part of the question.

(b) 'The origins of modern Hinduism can never be known.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

This was a generally well answered evaluation question with some excellent and well-balanced answers.

Features of stronger responses:

- Arguments were well-presented and supported by clear reasoning and specific evidence and examples.
- Referred to the different theories concerning the origins of Hinduism and gave a confident critical discussion of their particular strengths and weaknesses.
- Considered the meaning of the word 'Hinduism'.
- Discussed the belief that Hinduism is timeless and therefore has no origin
- Included scholarly views and opinions and pertinent quotations where relevant.

Features of weaker responses:

- Failed to focus on the question set
- Gave superficial arguments not supported by evidence and examples
- Listed 'for and against' arguments in relation to the statement given in the question, but did not develop them in any way.
- Lacked scholarly views and opinions and relevant textual quotations.

Q.2 (a) Examine the contribution of Ramakrishna to the development of Hinduism. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Focused on the question set and how Ramakrishna developed Hinduism
- Identified a number of contributions made by Ramakrishna and explained their significance in the context of the development of Hinduism.
- Discussed Ramakrishna's contribution to the development of Hinduism as a world religion; his mystical influence on Hinduism; his development of Advaita and neo-Vedanta thought and his influence on attitudes to caste.
- Referred to his influence on Vivekananda.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not focus on the question set and gave the life story of Ramakrishna with no reference to how he developed Hinduism.
- Listed some of his achievements, but did not explain their significance in the context of the question
- Had limited knowledge and understanding of Ramakrishna's life and contributions to Hinduism.
- Focused more on Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission rather than on Ramakrishna himself.

(b) 'Western ideas greatly influenced Ramakrishna.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Identified perceived 'Western ideas' found in Ramakrishna's teaching such as universalism and scientific enquiry and how these influenced his beliefs and attitudes
- Were able to argue that many of these perceived Western influences came from his religious experiences.
- Referred to the influence of the Bhagavad Gita.
- Were able to counter-argue that Ramakrishna influenced the West.

Features of weaker responses:

- Were unable to identify 'Western ideas' and therefore unable to evaluate the statement in a meaningful way
- Made superficial arguments that were lacking specific evidence and examples

Section B

Q.3 (a) Explain the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar on varna and untouchability. [AO1 20]

This was a very popular question and generally well answered. Candidates were very familiar with this part of the specification.

Features of stronger responses:

- Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of the views of **both** Gandhi and Ambedkar towards varna **and** untouchability.
- Were able to explain correctly why Gandhi supported varna and not caste.
- Not only gave the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar, but also explained them within the context of the question.
- Referred to specific examples and evidence to support the explanation of their views.
- Included relevant quotations and scholarly views and opinions.

Features of weaker responses:

- Listed some of the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar but were unable to explain why they held those views e.g., why Gandhi supported varna and not caste.
- Gave incorrect explanations of Gandhi's views on Varna and caste and Ambedkar's call for separate electoral colleges for Dalits.
- Imbalanced answers which focused a lot on Gandhi but referred to Ambedkar in a superficial way.
- Lacked knowledge and understanding of the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar on certain aspects e.g., why did Ambedkar want separate electoral colleges?
- Lack of relevant quotations.

(b) 'Varna creates a just society.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

This was generally a well answered evaluation question with many candidates being able to present arguments relevant to the statement in the question set.

Features of stronger responses:

- Focused on the question set and evaluated throughout their response.
- Arguments based on thorough knowledge and understanding of the varna system
- Evaluated in a balanced way using clear reasoning and specific evidence and examples
- Referred to varna being divinely created; its link to dharma and the concept of varnadharma; giving structure to society; yet causing discrimination and excluding people from society.
- Compared varna to other social systems
- Compared the origin of the varna system and how it developed with reference to the views of Gandhi.

Features of weaker responses:

- Gave superficial arguments with little or no evidence in support,
- Lacked focus on the question set,
- Used irrelevant AO1 material e.g., describing the four varnas.
- Listed arguments, but they were not developed.
- Appeared to be confusion about varna, caste and jati.

Q.4 (a) Explain Hindu attitudes towards other faith. [AO1 20]

This was a generally well answered question.

Features of stronger responses:

- Referred to the pluralistic nature of Hinduism and its tolerance of a breadth of beliefs and practices within the religion – this then reflected in its attitudes towards other faiths.
- Made effective use of quotations e.g., from the Bhagavad Gita that all are part of the one truth.
- Referred to the Hindu Renaissance – neo-Vedanta and the views of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Gandhi.
- Considered more exclusivist views such as the views of Hindutva towards other faiths.

Features of weaker responses:

- Narrow in focus and only referred to one or two different attitudes and did not develop them in enough detail to attain the higher bands.
- Lacked specific teaching and examples and evidence to support the attitudes referred to and also a lack of relevant quotations and scholarly views.
- Made little reference to individuals who have influenced the relationship between Hinduism and other faiths.

**(b) 'Hinduism is clearly a pluralistic tradition.'
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]**

A generally well answered evaluation question with the majority of candidates being able to present relevant arguments.

Features of stronger responses:

- Completely focused on the question and evaluative throughout.
- Arguments were clearly supported by reasoning and evidence and examples.
- Made effective use of quotations from the Hindu Scriptures.
- Considered exclusivist practices within Hinduism – e.g., jnana yoga as an exclusivist path to liberation.
- Also referred to Dayananda and Hindutva.
- Referred to fundamental concepts in Hinduism being pluralistic such as all religions being equally valid and to the views of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda

Features of weaker responses:

- Counterarguments were often not supported or not valid.
- Arguments were listed or referred to, but not developed in any way.
- Lacked relevant quotations especially from the Hindu Scriptures.

Q.5 (a) Explain the origin and background of the Bhakti movement. [AO1 20]

This was not a popular choice of question and was not particularly well answered.

Features of stronger responses:

- Focused on the demands of the question set that is the origin and background of the Bhakti movement and not on the concept of Bhakti itself.
- Referred to the historical development of the Bhakti movement.
- Were able to explain why the movement developed in the context of religious background and teaching.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not focus on the demands of the question set.
- Digressed into explaining the concept of Bhakti in Hinduism.
- Lacked knowledge and understanding of the origin and background of the Bhakti movement.

(b) 'The Bhakti movement has had very little influence within Hinduism.' Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Were able to relate the Bhakti movement with some of the developments seen in Hinduism, e.g., the eventual rejection of the caste system, infanticide and sati.
- Focused on the Bhakti movement rather than on the concept of Bhakti.
- Referred to other influences which could have had a greater impact on the development of Hinduism such as Gandhi or ISKCON.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not focus on the demands of the question set and evaluated the concept of Bhakti.
- Had very limited knowledge and understanding of the influence of the Bhakti movement.
- Gave superficial arguments, with very little support in terms of reasoning, evidence, examples and relevant quotations.

Summary of key points

- Candidates need to read the questions carefully to ensure they fully understand the demands of the questions set.
- Poor and ineligible handwriting is an issue that needs to be addressed by centres before the examination.
- Examples, scholarly views and quotations should be used where appropriate to underpin lines of argument and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the question.
- Candidates need to avoid giving descriptive responses in AO2 questions and should use evaluative vocabulary.
- The importance of paragraphing and good grammar in candidates' responses also needs to be highlighted.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 2: A STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

General Comments

The most popular question in Section A was Q1 (attempt% 87.9%). The most popular question in Section B was Q3 (attempt% 86.3%). Q2 had the highest mean score in Section A (mean=16.0). Q4 had the highest mean score in Section B (mean=18.8).

This year's paper appeared to be very accessible for candidates. There was much evidence of pleasing levels of AO1 knowledge and understanding and AO2 analysis and evaluation indicating - in many cases - that candidates had been well prepared for the examination.

It was encouraging to read the ways in which several candidates had fully engaged with the topics, showing a sound grasp of relevant scholars, scholarly opinions, quotations and key works.

Overall, candidates seem to have managed well in terms of timings for their responses, with most being able to complete the full sets of responses – part (a) and part (b) – for each question.

As is always the case, stronger responses were those which demonstrated that candidates had read the question and taken account of what was being asked of them such as reference to named scholars and philosophical concepts.

In addition, stronger responses were those which were able to demonstrate analysis and evaluation in part (b) by avoiding repetition of the same material in part (a).

Stronger responses were also often notable for clarity. Thus, candidates organised their ideas on the given topic and were able to present them in clear paragraphs which demonstrated development of thought from the introduction through to the conclusion.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 (a) Explain the views of John Randall and Paul Tillich on religious language as symbolic. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Understood the overall concept of religious language as symbolic.
- Showed a sound understanding of the views of Randall and the fourfold function of symbols.
- Linked Randall's views to a coherence theory of truth.

- Showed a sound understanding of the views of Tillich and the six characteristics of symbols.
- Understood the difference in Tillich's understanding between signs and symbols.

Features of weaker responses:

- Lacked a clear understanding of the philosophical concept of religious language.
- Wrote only about one of the named scholars i.e., Randall, but not Tillich or Tillich but not Randall.
- Conflated the views of Randall and Tillich.
- Lacked detailed knowledge and understanding of Randall and/or Tillich.

(b) 'Symbolic language fails to give religious language meaning.'
[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Focussed on the idea of symbolic language providing or not providing **meaning** to religious language.
- Presented a context for the discussion in terms of the coherence/correspondence theory of truth and/or the cognitive/non-cognitive understanding of language
- Indicated an understanding of the idea of **meaning** in terms of the realist/anti-realist debate.
- Were able to give useful examples – such as the swastika as used by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains and then as used by Nazism during the Third Reich.
- Understood the point that neither Randall or Tillich were concerned with a propositional approach to religious language, and the implications this had for whether or not religious language had **meaning**.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not focus sufficiently on the wording of the question, but presented a catch-all essay on religious language as symbolic.
- Repeated, sometimes at length, much of the material already written in part (a).
- Lacked clarity in understanding that the whole purpose of religious language as symbolic was to be non-representative and non-cognitive.
- Lacked examples to support their analysis and evaluation.

Q.2 (a) Explain the verification principle within Logical Positivism and criticisms of the verification principle.
[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Understood the background of Logical Positivism within the work of the Vienna Circle in the 1920s and 1930s.
- Were confident in linking key scholars together such as the ideas of Hume, the early thought of Wittgenstein and the views of A. J. Ayer.
- Were fluent with terms such as *a priori*, tautology, *a posteriori* and synthetic.

- Used appropriate examples to illustrate these key terms.
- Noted that the question asked for criticisms of the verification principle and were able to provide them.
- Understood the development and possible weakening of the verification principle as found in the writing of Ayer.

Features of weaker responses:

- Lacked clarity in understanding the Logical Positivist movement and how it developed.
- Confused and/or conflated the key scholars involved in the Logical Positivist movement.
- Gave examples which did not illustrate correctly what might be understood, for example, as a tautology.
- Lacked knowledge of any criticisms of the verification principle.
- Rarely brought in analysis and evaluation to their response.

(b) 'Logical Positivism successfully demonstrates that religious language is meaningless.' [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Considered the issue of the **success** of Logical Positivism in demonstrating that religious language is meaningless.
- Were confident in presenting a range of scholars in their analysis and evaluation such as Hick, Hare, Mitchell, Swinburne and Popper.
- Used the example of the Parable of the Celestial City and/or examples taken from the Falsification Symposium effectively.
- Brought into their analysis and evaluation other approaches to religious language such as analogy, symbol, myth, and language games.

Features of weaker responses:

- Were unclear as to the main debate in Logical Positivism with regard to language and religious language in particular.
- Repeated, sometimes at length, much of the material already written in part (a)
- Presented the examples of the Parable of the Celestial City etc. at length and/or inaccurately thus confusing their analysis and evaluation.
- Had little understanding of other approaches to religious language beyond regarding it as either propositional or not.

Q.3 (a) Explain developments of the ontological argument, with reference to Descartes and Malcolm. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Some presented the ontological argument in context with reference - in varying amounts of detail - to Anselm's 'Prosologion', God as the greatest possible being ('that than which nothing greater can be conceived') and God as having necessary existence
- Were able to focus from the outset on the developments of the ontological argument with reference to Descartes and Malcolm.

- Demonstrated a clear level of knowledge and understanding of the ontological argument with good use of specialist language and vocabulary.
- Read the question carefully and made reference to both Descartes **and** Malcolm using the examples provided by Descartes and Malcolm's idea of contingent, necessary and impossible existence.

Features of weaker responses:

- Showed knowledge and understanding of Anselm but made either no or little reference to either Descartes and Malcolm.
- Considered the developments made by **either** Descartes **or** Malcolm, but not both as required by the question.
- Demonstrated a lack of clarity in the developments of Descartes through a generic summary which did not reference the key examples of the triangle and the mountains/valley.
- Did not understand what was meant by the ontological argument.

(b) 'Ontological arguments for God's existence are very effective.'

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Some kept their focus throughout on the ontological argument in terms of its being *a priori*, analytic, rational, and deductive and how that impacted on its effectiveness.
- Some considered the effectiveness of alternative *a posteriori*, synthetic and inductive approaches such as the cosmological/teleological arguments.
- Showed a sound understanding of the weaknesses of the ontological argument as suggested by Gaunilo's 'Lost Island' analogy.
- Introduced the Kantian critique with regard to existence not being a real predicate adding nothing to the concept of God.
- Evaluated alternative arguments for God's existence and their relative effectiveness.

Features of weaker responses:

- Lacked precision in terms of understanding the nature of the ontological argument and in terms of using the specialist language and vocabulary associated with the argument.
- Repeated, sometimes at length, much of the material already written in part (a).
- Approached the question as a generic one on the existence or non-existence of God and gave a set answer.

Q.4 (a) Examine Jung's explanation of how religious belief is necessary for personal growth. [AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated a sound level of knowledge and understanding with regard to Jung's tri-partite understanding of the mind with the focus on the collective unconsciousness
- Explained all/some of the four archetypes correctly and with detail.
- Read the question and kept the focus on religious belief being **necessary for personal growth**.
- Recognised that individuation/self-integration/acceptance of the God within are – according to Jung – necessary for personal growth.

Features of weaker responses:

- Showed very limited knowledge and understanding of Jung.
- Responded to the question in a descriptive way through keeping the focus entirely on some/all of the archetypes in varying amounts of detail.
- Did not show any recognition of religious and personal growth – e.g., individuation - as asked for by the question.
- Wrote in general terms about religion helping people to grow and develop with little reference to Jung.

(b) 'Jung was much more positive than Freud about the idea of God.' [AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Recognised that **neither** Jung **nor** Freud understood God in terms of traditional religious belief based on propositional statements of faith.
- Were able to use, without repeating at length, points made in part (a) regarding, for example, the collective unconsciousness/archetypes/individuation in their analysis and evaluation.
- Showed a sound understanding of Freud and were able to use ideas and examples such as the Primal Horde, wish fulfilment, the Oedipus Complex etc. in their discussion.
- Managed to consider the ways in which Jung could be seen as being less positive/not as positive as Freud with regard to the idea of God.

Features of weaker responses:

- Were limited by their lack of knowledge and understanding with regard to Jung.
- Presented the general strengths and weaknesses of the psychological approach of Freud without reference to the idea of God
- Were overly simplistic in their view that Jung believed in God as opposed to believing in the idea of God
- Confused and/or conflated the views of Jung and Freud

Q.5 (a) Examine Hume's scepticism of miracles.

[AO1 20]

Features of stronger responses:

- Placed Hume in the overall context of his reliance on what can be judged, assessed, evaluated and thus proved true or false through the empirical approach.
- Showed an understanding of his approach based on the principle of induction and knew his definition of the term 'miracle'.
- Demonstrated a detailed and accurate knowledge of Hume's critique of miracles presented in chapter ten of 'Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding'.
- Understood clearly the key point as to the highly improbable vs the highly probable laws of nature.

Features of weaker responses:

- Were limited by a lack of understanding of what 'scepticism of miracles' meant and the overall empirical background of Hume's arguments.
- Knew only one or two of the problems raised by Hume with regard to belief in miracles.
- Presented the problems raised by Hume in an overly simplistic way in a bullet point fashion

(b) 'Swinburne's defence of miracles in response to Hume is not valid.'

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated a good understanding of the range of Swinburne's defence in terms of, for example, testimonies with regard to miracle being assessed, verified, falsified etc.
- Highlighted key points in Hume's sceptical approach and showed how Swinburne's defence was successful or not in defending miracles.
- Showed a sound selection of material alongside the use of examples and quotations where appropriate.
- Were able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Swinburne's overall approach given his *a priori* theistic belief.

Features of weaker responses:

- Were limited by their lack of knowledge and understanding of Swinburne's views.
- Gave a generic response on whether or not miracles were possible.
- Repeated with little development material given in part (a).
- Tended to discuss Hume's scepticism of miracles and his argument as to the unreliability of evidence from 'ignorant and barbarous' nations as being invalid without reference to Swinburne.

Summary of key points

- Candidates would help themselves by clearly identifying the responses they write in the examination, in terms of: (a) indicating which question is being attempted, (b) using handwriting which is easily legible and (c) trying to avoid too many asterisks etc. referring to additional words/sentences/paragraphs.
- Whilst with some questions aspects of the material in part (a) might be useful with regard to answering part (b), candidates should avoid simply repeating at length what they have written as the requirement for the part (b) question is analysis and evaluation rather than descriptive recall.
- Candidates should consider carefully what each question is requiring of them in terms of knowledge and understanding and choose accordingly. Thus, for example, the question on the ontological argument required knowledge of both Descartes and Malcolm. Without that knowledge, higher bands in terms of marks are inaccessible.
- Engagement with and enthusiasm for the topics covered by the questions is always to be encouraged. The part (b) questions are often designed to provoke a response and to help candidates show their confidence in presenting their own point of view on what can be controversial areas in the field of the Philosophy of Religion

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 3: A STUDY OF RELIGION AND ETHICS

General Comments

The most popular question in Section A was Q2 (attempt% 55.7%). The most popular question in Section B was Q3 (attempt% 51.8%). Q2 had the highest mean score in Section A (mean=12.9). Q4 had the highest mean score in Section B (mean=14.4). Based on the question 'mean' candidates scored higher in part (b) questions (AO2) than in part (a) questions (AO1).

The paper produced a full range of marks for all the questions. Most candidates balanced their time well in terms of giving more time to the part (b) responses. It was clear that the advanced information had helped candidates since the majority of answers were focused on the topic of the question, especially those who were less confident in their subject knowledge. It was also clear in the first section that a proportion of candidates had focused their revision on the first half of Theme 1 at the expense of the second half and as a result, knew little about meta-ethics.

In Section A, the questions were comparable in structure and easy for candidates to interpret, both being from the meta-ethics section of the specification. The part (b) questions tended to demonstrate which candidates fully understood the nature of meta-ethics when they were asked to evaluate these theories.

In Section B, candidates had a greater challenge in interpreting Q3 and Q4, they required the skills of application or examination of specific features of an ethical theory. Question 5 was straightforward but brought with it difficulties of its own as candidates were required to distinguish between Hard and Soft determinism to be successful in answering the question. Stronger candidates showed clear awareness of the meaning of words used within the part (b) questions, such as 'intrinsic' or 'convincing' and considered the importance of such words for their response.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 (a) Explain the theory of Emotivism. [AO1 20]

This was a fairly accessible question with most responses referring to Ayer. Many responses drew on the links with Logical Positivism, but candidates who realised that Emotivism was more than simply the verification principle, generally fared better, especially when they were able to show Emotivism as a challenge to alternative metaethical approaches. It was pleasing to see the few candidates who clearly understood that Emotivism describes ethical language as *factually* meaningless, rather than simply meaningless.

Features of stronger responses:

- Demonstrated the difference in approach between Ayer and Stevenson.
- Could refer to ethical language being *factually* meaningless.
- Made reference to the function of language to persuade.
- Gave significant detail about Stevenson's approach to Emotivism
- Made accurate reference to the relationship between Emotivism and Hume's Fork.

Features of weaker responses:

- Were confused about what meta ethics is, seeing Emotivism as a normative command that our ethical decisions should be based upon our emotions.
- Confused Emotivism with Ethical Egoism – believing that emotivism described how we all do act according to our emotions which means to act in our own self-interest
- Muddled up scholars.
- Spent all or a large portion of their answer explaining the approach of the Logical Positivists at the expense of talking about Emotivism.

- (b) **'Emotivism fails to encourage moral debate.'**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Appreciated that there was a difference between Ayer and Stevenson, Ayer's approach apparently shutting down normative ethical debate, whilst encouraging meta ethical debate and Stevenson's approach making ethical debate possible.
- Understood that if ethical statements are emotional emissions there is nothing to debate in philosophical terms.
- Appreciated a possible function of ethical language to persuade or convince as part of the role of debate.

Features of weaker responses:

- Struggled to tell the difference between meta ethics and normative ethics, believing that Emotivism instructs us how we should behave.
- Failed to understand that Ayer rejected normative ethics as an area for logical discourse and analysis but saw meta-ethics as a legitimate area for debate.
- Did not understand what a debate is – seeing it as simple agreement or disagreement rather than a logical analysis of or disagreement about truth or meaning
- Used no scholarly evidence.

Q.2 (a) Explain the theory of Intuitionism.

[AO1 20]

This was a very popular question in which the best candidates understood what Intuitionism is claiming, as a meta ethical approach. The strongest approaches were able to refer to a range of scholars including Ross and so went beyond the requirements of the specification.

Features of stronger responses:

- Differentiated between Moore and Pritchard, showing the difference between their approaches and using appropriate examples and vocabulary.
- Were able to use vocabulary such as 'unreflective consciousness' or 'underivative' in the context of scholars.
- Appreciated how Intuitionism differed from Naturalism and could explain this with reference to Moore and / or Hume.
- Explained the difference between general and moral reasoning.

Features of weaker responses:

- Conflated Moore, Pritchard and Ross or did not mention any of these scholars at all.
- Treated Intuitionism as a normative or descriptive approach to ethics, that argues we should or do use a kind of 'sixth sense' to decide how to behave.
- Suggested that Intuitionism was non-cognitive, the same as common sense, or verifiable.
- Believed that 'cognitive' meant 'verifiable using empirical evidence' and thus misunderstood Intuitionism entirely
- Described the meta-ethical approach of Intuitionism as deontological, teleological, absolutist or relativist in their meta ethical approach rather than understanding that these were best applied to how they were played out in normative terms.
- Concentrated their response on talking about God-given intuition, conscience or inspiration.

**(b) 'Intuitionism is the most convincing meta-ethical theory.'
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 30]

In evaluating Intuitionism, most candidates chose to compare it with other meta-ethical approaches. This was very reasonable when they understood what meta ethics is and gave them the opportunity to explore what strengths might be sought in any meta ethical approach. It was legitimate for candidates to explore what this approach might mean for normative ethics, but candidates who did not understand what meta-ethics is doing, found this question challenging. Some candidates preferred to discuss whether Intuitionism was or was not convincing in itself. This was, again, a reasonable approach to take when candidates were able to do more than simply talk about the advantages and disadvantages of acting on our feelings.

Features of stronger responses:

- Engaged with the question and used scholars to back up their arguments.
- Considered the benefits and preference for empirical evidence in contemporary society.
- Considered the role that upbringing might play in allowing a person to intuit 'good' or 'duty'
- Discussed issues such as cultural relativism as evidence that intuition is unreliable as an objective source of knowledge.

Features of weaker responses:

- Tried to compare Intuitionism with the 'meta-ethical theories of virtue or egoism' when they were certainly writing normatively.
- Spent a long-time conflating Emotivism with Stirner and Ethical Egoism.
- Argued that the Logical Positivists would support Ethical Naturalism and reject Emotivism
- Criticised Intuitionism for being confusing when they did not understand it.
- Spoke about Divine Command, Virtue and Egoism, even if they could not think of a line of relevant argument that addressed the question.

Q.3 (a) Apply Aquinas' Natural Law to the issue of abortion. [AO1 20]

This was a popular question that was fairly easy to understand. Candidates took a range of approaches; some chose to explain all they knew about Natural Law and then mention abortion at the end. Others chose to apply Natural Law throughout. A surprising number of candidates tried to use virtues to support their responses, which is perfectly reasonable when understood correctly. A few candidates were unclear that an 'Apply' question is AO1 and not a request for evaluation.

Features of stronger responses:

- Understood the virtues as character traits that, when cultivated, would assist a person in correct reasoning, as opposed to another list of rules to obey
- Were able to talk accurately about real and apparent goods with reference to abortion
- Could explain the relevance of interior and exterior acts and therefore the role of double effect in the context of abortion.
- Understood the context of Natural Law within the Roman Catholic Church and made accurate and relevant use of Catholic scholars like Kainz or to Papal encyclicals to support their application.

Features of weaker responses:

- Conflated the two primary precepts of education and reproduction.
- Believed there were 7 or 4 primary precepts
- Conflating Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia with Aquinas' understanding of human purpose, reducing human life to being for the purpose of happiness rather than the beatific vision or fellowship with God.

- Claimed that double effect meant that abortion was allowed or acceptable.
- Claimed that Natural Law allowed exceptions to abortion in the cases of rape or incest, without reference to Kainz or the fact that this view is not the traditional interpretation of Natural Law from the Roman Catholic Church.
- Spent significant time describing the four levels of law to little effect

(b) 'Human law should always be based on Natural Law.'
Evaluate this view

[AO2 30]

Features of stronger responses:

- Understood both types of law within the context of Aquinas' four levels of law and used this to support an argument.
- Were able to consider the approaches of Finnis and / or Proportionalism in terms of their relationship with human laws.
- Referred to current affairs, for example Roe v Wade or legislation surrounding same sex relationships.
- Could discuss the relative merits of deontological and teleological approaches to ethics and how they best served human law

Features of weaker responses:

- Confused Natural law with Divine Command Theory and spent time discussing the Euthyphro dilemma and similar with no reference to Natural Law or any of its key feature.
- Spent too long talking about why another form of normative theory, for example Utilitarianism, might be a better basis for human law. Whilst this was a valid point, it should not be the sole focus of the response.
- Resorted to a basic explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of Natural Law.
- Drew inaccurate conclusions about Natural Law based upon their understanding of the word 'natural' as concerning the behaviour of wild animals or other aspects of the natural world, such as gravity.

Q.4 (a) Examine J.S. Mill's development of Utilitarianism with reference to:

**(i) Higher and lower pleasures
and**

(ii) The Harm Principle.

[AO1 20]

This was another popular question that produced quite a range of different responses. There is some confusion over what the utility principle is and how it is to be defined. Candidates tend to muddle scholars quite considerably. Francis Hutcheson coined the phrase 'greatest happiness for the greatest number'. Thomas Carlyle referred to Bentham's Utilitarianism as the 'Pig Philosophy'.

Features of stronger responses:

- Knew what the Harm Principle was and understood it as relating to the liberty of the individual to pursue happiness as they wish, unimpeded by laws and restrictions unless it caused harm to another.

- Were able to show how Mill's development arose from an attempt to resolve the imperfections in Bentham's Act Utilitarianism
- Could explain the Harm Principle in the context of Rule Utilitarianism
- Made connections between the Harm Principle and Mill's passion for social reform.

Features of weaker responses:

- Tried to exempt children and the mentally ill from the Harm Principle, but did not understand that this regarded limiting their freedom, not letting them off if they harmed someone.
- Gave examples of lower pleasures as stereotypically 'bad' things rather than simply base pleasures that animals might also enjoy.
- Limited themselves to a simple outline of higher and lower pleasures and the Harm Principle without seeing them in the context of the question as a development of Utilitarianism.

(b) 'Pleasure is the only intrinsic good.'
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

When candidates understood what 'intrinsic good' meant, they did well.

Features of stronger responses:

- Discussed whether pleasure was good or not.
- Considered what other things, if any, might be considered 'good'. For instance, love, happiness, specific acts or virtues.
- Brought in meta-ethical concerns such as Moore's consideration of how to define 'good'
- Discussed the difference between instrumental and intrinsic goods
- Referred to Nozick's pleasure machine as an example of how humans value more than simply pleasure.

Features of weaker responses:

- Simply went back through how to measure pleasure.
- Did not understand the word 'intrinsic'.
- Muddled the words 'intrinsic' and 'innate' which affected their response.
- Gave lengthy and irrelevant explanations of how Utilitarianism should be applied to animal experimentation and nuclear deterrence and thus lost sight of the question.

Q.5 (a) Explain soft determinism.

[AO1 20]

There was a very strong sense that many candidates did not understand what Soft Determinism is.

Features of stronger responses:

- Correctly identified Hobbes and Ayer as the scholars to explain.
- Chose to use Ayer's example of the kleptomaniac and the thief.

- Were able to go through Ayer's examples of constrained acts.
- Gave Hobbes' boat example to demonstrate the difference between acts that have an external or internal cause.

Features of weaker responses:

- Did not understand a 'free' act as simply consistent with an agent's desire or that in a constrained action our desires are irrelevant
- Did not appreciate that for soft determinists, a free act is still a caused act.
- Muddled predestination with determinism.
- Claimed that soft determinism required someone to have decided your actions for you in advance of your performance of them.
- Used examples of students removing blazers or holding doors open incorrectly. No sense that the internal cause would be the desire to address the heat and remove the item or the desire to be polite and considerate to another person.
- Treated soft determinism as a normative ethical theory to follow.
- Treated hard and soft determinism as interchangeable – so that one might act in a hard determined way on one occasion and in a soft determined way on another.

(b) 'The strengths of soft determinism do not outweigh its weaknesses'
Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

These responses were more successful when candidates understood what soft determinism is.

Features of stronger responses:

- Made good use of scholars from other approaches to consider the strengths and weaknesses of soft determinism.
- Were able to consider the incongruence between human desire for free will and what the empirical evidence seems to tell us.
- Understood the role of causation in soft determinism and that freedom required a redefinition so that there could be compatibility.

Features of weaker responses:

- Simply explained why hard determinism was right, often in detail.
- Seemed to be answering the question 'Is soft determinism, correct? Or why do you agree with hard determinism?' which was not the question they were given.
- Were side tracked by discussions of predestination and the implications of this for God's omnipotence or omnibenevolence.

Summary of key points

- Good candidates balanced their time appropriately between part (a) and part (b) questions.
- Good candidates also read each question carefully and responded to the question set in an appropriate way demonstrating the AO1 skills for part (a) questions and AO2 skills for part (b) questions.
- There were a significant number of scripts for which handwriting was a significant barrier to understanding and this made awarding particularly challenging. Appropriate access arrangements should be made for such candidates by centres.
- There were also a significant number of candidates who began every response with a pre-learned introduction to the study of ethics in general and / or the definition of ethical terms, whether part (a) or part (b), regardless of the question that was in front of them. In some of these cases, candidates found that almost half a page was used to do this, drastically reducing the amount of time that the candidate had to write a response to the question in front of them. It would be appropriate for candidates to omit such a general introduction and attack the question from the outset to maximise their opportunity for award.



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