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Examiners' Report January 2010

GCE General Studies 6GS01

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January 2010

Publications Code US022802

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6GS01/01 Unit 1 AS General Studies: Challenges for Society

General comments

Many candidates were able to attempt answers to all the questions on this paper within the time available. However, as in previous series, it was clear that some candidates had not managed their time well in relation to the marks available for different sections of the paper. Specifically, each of the essay questions in Section C carries as many marks as the whole of Section A.

Also, for a significant minority of candidates, poor Quality of Written Communication (QWC) was significant. Candidates should be aware that approximately 15% of the marks available for the paper are awarded for QWC.

Questions 1-20

Questions 1-20 are multiple choice and the answer key can be found in the mark scheme. Statistical data relating to the questions is available on ResultsPlus.

Question 21

Many candidates were able to gain two marks, most commonly for stating that dementia mainly affected older people and that dementia described a group of syndromes.

21 Give two characteristics of dementia outlined in paragraphs 1 and 2.

1. ~~Dementia describes a group of syndromes.~~ Dementia would be suffered by the young but mainly the elderly.
2. Dementia currently affects one person in twenty over the age of 65 and one person in five at the age of 80.



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Examiner Comments

1 Mark

The first answer gains a mark because it makes a comparison, stating that although the young do suffer from dementia it is "...mainly the elderly". The second answer does not gain a mark because it makes no comparison with reference to age, and even if it did this would be a repeat of the first answer. Candidates should consider whether they are giving two different answers or just attempting to restate the same point twice.

1. It is a degenerative disease(s).

2. It is a group of syndromes.



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Examiner Comments

2 Marks

This answer gains marks for two distinct and correct points.

Question 22

Large number of candidates misunderstood this question, providing answers relating to the significance of increasing life expectancy. Many answers focused on the significance of an average, for example saying "It does not apply to everyone because it is an average" which did not merit a mark unless the answer went on to comment about the significance of the spread of life expectancy.

22 Give one strength and one weakness of statistical data such as 'average life expectancy' (paragraph 1).

Strength Statistical data is an unbiased representation of the facts, and as a result, ~~it is undeniable~~ provides strong support.

Weakness It is sometimes difficult to tell whether such data is reliable, ~~at~~ with such things as how many people were involved in the survey remaining unclear.



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Examiner Comments

2 Marks

Strength - The first answer gains a mark for describing statistical data as "facts".

Weakness - The second answer would not gain a mark just for describing the data as "unreliable", but does gain a mark for explaining that this unreliability might arise from sample size.

Strength most people are living longer and the life expectancy has risen consistently since 1840

Weakness they say if people live longer dealing with the ~~etc~~ disease dementia it will become expensive



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Examiner Comments

0 Marks

This candidate seems to have misinterpreted the question, which refers specifically to the strength and weakness of "...statistical data.." rather than the benefits or otherwise of increasing life expectancy.

Question 23

The great majority of candidates were able to calculate the correct answer as 32 year.

23 Use the information in paragraph 1 to calculate how much average life expectancy in the UK increased between 1840 and 2000.

$$2000 - 1840 = 160$$

$$160 / 2 = 80 \times 100 = \textcircled{8000}$$



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Examiner Comments

1 Mark

This candidate has gained a mark for including their working out which shows a correct calculation of $2000 - 1840 = 160$. The bare answer, given as 8000 in this case, would merit no marks on its own. In numerical questions candidates should consider whether the final answer calculated is reasonable – 8000 is clearly not a reasonable figure for increased life expectancy

$$2000 - 1840 = 160 \text{ years} = 16 \text{ decades}$$

$$2 \text{ years per decade}$$

$$2 \times 16 = 32$$

Life expectancy has increased by 32 years



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Examiner Comments

2 Marks

This candidate gains both marks

Question 24

Many candidates were able to identify charities and the government as providers of research funding. NICE was often incorrectly identified.

24 From Source 1, identify **two** sources of funding for research into dementia.

- 1 the one way it's funded is by charitable events
- 2 The other way it's funded is by advertisement.



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Examiner Comments

1 Mark

This answer gains a mark for referring to charitable events. The question asks candidates to identify sources of funding "From Source 1.." which contains no reference to advertising.

Question 25

Candidates who read the question carefully were able to provide a range of answers, often gaining two or three marks. A significant minority of candidates attempted to answer the question by addressing ethical issues relating to the treatment of animals used in testing drugs. Such answers gained very few or no marks.

25 Explain how 'ethical issues related to resource allocation arise nowadays from the success of modern medicine' (lines 15–16)

NICE, national institute for health and clinical excellence already have drug treatments that have they rationed drug treatments. These drugs treatments are the 'success of modern medicine', however they have caused ethical concern. This may be because tests have not proved the cure of dementia or we don't know of the long term effects it could cause.



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Examiner Comments

1 Mark

This candidate has gained a mark for identifying the rationing of drugs by NICE referred to in the source as an example of "...issues related to resource allocation.." mentioned in the question. However, there is no attempt to explain why this is an ethical issue, for example by referring to the fact that decisions may have to be made when there are conflicting priorities. Nor is there any attempt to expand on the "...success of modern medicine...", for example by explaining that there are more or better drugs or treatments available which increase demand and hence stretch resources.

Modern medicine has the ability to cure, or to prolong the lives of those suffering from previously untreatable diseases such as Leukemia. The fact that they are being rationed means that only few people are given this drug (due to expense) whereas thousands of people may need it across the country. Everyone has the same right to the drug just as the next person, so people are questioning why some people get it and others do not. This of course leads to ethical issues.

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Examiner Comments

4 Marks

This candidate has exemplified the “..success of modern medicine..” in the specific context of Leukaemia for 2 marks, and has gained a further two marks for referring to rationing and need.

Question 26

Most candidates were able to gain one or two marks by identifying relevant pieces of evidence but only a minority gained marks for identifying individual pieces of evidence as fact or opinion.

26 Referring to Source 1, assess the strength of the evidence presented to support the conclusion that 'dealing with dementia is going to become increasingly problematic.'

There is a lot of statistical evidence provided in source to back up that dementia will ~~become~~ become more problematic. Statistical data on the amount of people who suffer with dementia in age range is given, this is factual evidence given in statistical data form. ~~Mean~~ Statistical analysis linked to the life expectancy of those living in the UK backs up their point that people are living longer in the UK.
With that in mind, and linking the analysis with



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Examiner Comments

6 Marks (including 2 for QWC)

When asked to "...assess the strength of evidence..." candidates should focus on the nature of the evidence provided in the source. For example, many pieces of evidence can be clearly identified as facts or opinions. This candidate has identified 2 or more pieces of evidence correctly as fact or opinion.

This conclusion is backed by evidence in the source such as 'life expectancy has risen consistently since 1840' meaning that the problem would become 'increasingly problematic'.

Problems that are already being caused include funding of drug treatments and ethical issues, for the treatment.

I think that the evidence is quite strong in the sense that the problem will become worse as

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Examiner Comments

5 Marks (including 3 for QWC)

This candidate has gained two marks for identifying two relevant pieces of evidence, firstly that life expectancy has risen and secondly that there will be more people suffering from dementia. However the comment that "...the evidence is quite strong..." does not gain a further mark because it does not explain that the evidence is based on facts or statistics.

Question 27(a)

A significant number of candidates were unable to attempt this question even at a simple level. However, those candidates who did attempt to answer the question often gained two or three marks.

27 (a) What does 'utilitarianism' mean?

(3)

From the principle of utility, utilitarianism is an ethical theory based on the statement "the most pleasure for the most people". It was created by Jeremy Bentham, and later revised by John Stuart Mill. It aims to bring about the most amount of happiness or pleasure for the most amount of people with as little pain as possible.



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3 Marks

This candidate gains full marks for identifying utilitarianism as an ethical theory which aims to increase happiness and decrease pain.

Meaning that resources should be given out efficiently to those who need them most at the time. Such as giving the majority of food to someone ~~the~~ in a group that has eaten the least.



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Examiner Comments

0 Marks

This candidate has understood the context of the question and has come very close to gaining a mark for saying that "...resources should be given out efficiently..". Trying to demonstrate the meaning of a concept by giving concrete examples is a good way of answering the question, but the example of giving food to someone who has eaten the least does not illustrate a utilitarian approach unless it is explained that this is done to maximise happiness.

Question 27(b)

Candidates who had some understanding of utilitarianism were able to provide answers which often scored highly by describing how a utilitarian approach can be applied in allocating resources in medicine. A significant number of candidates made no attempt to answer this question.

(b) Show how utilitarianism might be applied in the context of allocating resources in medicine. Illustrate your answer with an example.

(5)

Utilitarianism may be applied to allocating resources in medicine by ~~only~~ giving the treatment that is available to those that need it most. For instance if two people ~~both needed~~ were both on dialysis machines and so had to regularly attend hospital but one lives next door and the other lives miles away and does not drive then the one that had more difficulty getting to the hospital would be judged to need a new kidney more and so is more likely to get a kidney transplant.

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Examiner Comments

5 Marks (including 2 for QWC)

This candidate has gained two marks for illustrating the answer with the example of dialysis and comparing the differing needs of two patients. A further mark would have been gained for linking this to the limited resources available, or for discussing how resources might be allocated to dialysis or kidney transplants. A third mark has been given for saying that a judgment has been made about who has the greater need.

Utilitarianism can be applied to allocating resources within medicine because it supports the idea of listening to different views and opinions, therefore enabling the chance to try out test for new medicines and methods.

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Examiner Comments

2 Marks (including 2 for QWC)

This candidate has not made any relevant points and scores no marks for the content of the answer. However the answer is in the context of the question and therefore still gains two marks for Quality of Written Communication (QWC).

Question 28

Answers to this question produced a range of marks up to a maximum of 18 out of 20.

Consider arguments for and against the view that imprisonment is an effective punishment.

Imprisonment is one of the main forms of punishment in the UK and it is used for all different types of crime. However prisons are becoming increasingly over-crowded, therefore is it really an effective deterrent? On the other hand it was found that 'over the last 10 years, levels of recorded crime have decreased', showing that the level of crime has decreased.

Over the past 10 years different types of crime has been taken place and crimes that were around 10 years ago may very rarely occur these days. Common crimes these days include Internet fraud.

Nevertheless for the crime that results in imprisonment, imprisonment could be far from a deterrent for some criminals. Some criminals may be homeless, have no job and no family therefore being in prison can help them in some ways. By being in prison they have somewhere to sleep, somewhere to wash, they have their meals everyday and they are surrounded by people. In addition prisons often run free courses for prisoners so they can learn new skills and find a job after they leave prison. However by providing the prisoners with qualifications and counselling they can leave prison after they have served their time and start again which will help to reduce the amount of crimes in the UK.

On the other hand prison can act as a deterrent to some people as they are often scared as they are now on their own therefore it is effective.

Nevertheless some criminals do not find the prospect of imprisonment scary as they know that through good behaviour they can have their prison sentences reduced significantly, therefore they will or not in most cases serve the amount of time they were originally given. One reason for this is due to over-crowding in prisons as previously stated. Prisons are all funded by the government and as it is one of the main forms of punishment prisons can become overcrowded.

Many people who have been to prison often return to prison in some cases but not all cases. Often crime is committed spontaneously and therefore the criminal does not think of their punishment as a result. Therefore it is not that imprisonment is going to deter the criminal from committing the crime as they will do it anyway. In conclusion I do not believe that imprisonment is an effective punishment for criminals but it is a suitable punishment for criminals. Prisons can ~~often~~ provide somewhere for people have nowhere to live or sleep, it can provide food etc. therefore it does not entirely act as a punishment in some ways. Also many prisoners know that their sentence can be reduced with good behaviour. On the other hand I don't believe there are any other forms of punishment which will be as effective for criminals.

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Examiner Comments

11 Marks (including 3 for QWC)

In this essay question candidates can be awarded marks for the knowledge they demonstrate (Assessment Objective 1) and also for presenting arguments in support of their answer (Assessment Objective 2). In marking candidates work examiners are looking for examples of how these assessment objectives are met, rather than any right or wrong answer. The actual question "Consider arguments for and against..." is preceded by a short passage which is intended to help candidates by stimulating their thoughts on the subject matter of the question. In this case a good answer will mention some of the different purposes and forms of punishment and may also present information about the prison population and factors which affect the crime rate. Many of the arguments for or against the effectiveness of imprisonment are then easily linked to the knowledge presented. In this case marks were awarded for points A1, A4, A6 and A14 for AO1, and for points B5, B12, B13, and B14 for AO2.

Question 29

Answers to this question produced a range of marks up to the maximum of 20 out of 20.

To what extent does science cast doubt on older ways of thought?

Evolution is widely accepted as the principle of our (human) existence. 200 years ago however, you would have been branded as insane to believe in such a view, as society believed that God created us all. Darwin was the one behind the theory of evolution and it is from his book, "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection" that these two opposing views exist and clash with each other.

Science focusses on coming up with a hypothesis, and then proving it by means of an investigation. It is because of the proving part that people chose to believe in scientific theories than older thoughts, but in its essence it is still just a theory. The main difference between science and religion is that a religious person doesn't question their faith, they believe it to be true, whereas a scientist will come up with lots of theories so that it all makes sense. The older way of thought (creation) was not questioned by Christians because they had every faith in knowing that it was already true, whereas biologists thought that evolution made sense, and tried to prove it. By finding out that we humans share a large amount of our genetic make up (DNA) with apes makes evolution a more likely theory.

Until rock solid evidence is found, the debate will continue. However it is not fair to say that either is true, when they are still based on theories and faiths.

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Examiner Comments

11 Marks (including 3 for QWC)

In this essay question candidates can be awarded marks for the knowledge they demonstrate (Assessment Objective 1) and also for presenting arguments in support of their answer (Assessment Objective 2). In marking candidates work examiners are looking for examples of how these assessment objectives are met, rather than any right or wrong answer. The actual question "To what extent..." is preceded by a short passage which is intended to help candidates by stimulating their thoughts on the subject matter of the question. In this case a good answer will very often use the context of a major scientific development such as Darwin and evolution, or Copernicus and the heliocentric solar system, and contrast this with earlier scientific knowledge or religious beliefs. The nature of scientific knowledge and religious belief is therefore relevant and can be used to support arguments about the extent to which science casts doubt on older ways of thought. Other arguments will relate to the purposes of science and religion. In this case marks were awarded for points A7, A9, A11, A12, A13 and A15 for AO1, and for points B1 and B4 for AO2.

Appendix A: Statistics

6GS01/01: Challenges for Society

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	90	55	49	43	38	33
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

6GS02/01: The Individual in Society

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	90	63	56	49	42	35
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

6GS03/01 Change and Progress

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	90	58	53	49	45	41
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary Mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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