



**General Certificate of Education**

**Religious Studies 1061**

**RSS04 Religion, Philosophy and Science**

**Report on the Examination**

*2009 examination - January series*

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2009 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

#### COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX  
*Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.*

## **RSS04 Religion Philosophy and Science**

### **General comments**

There was an encouraging number of scripts from candidates who had clearly prepared well for the first examination in this new Specification. Many centres have clearly understood the changes to the content of the legacy Specification and have taken these changes in their stride. There were individual scripts which scored at the very top end of the mark range and, at the other end, very few scripts which truly failed to meet the demands of the paper. A pleasing majority of candidates expressed themselves coherently and standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar were generally high.

There were also one or two general issues which emerged. First, a number of candidates included discussion or evaluation material in part (a). The assessment objective for this part of the question does not allow for credit to be given to such material. Second, it was noticeable that some candidates from across a range of centres did not answer the question(s) set. No credit can be given for material, no matter how well expressed, which is not relevant to the question. Finally, many candidates contented themselves with re-presenting argument and counter-argument in AO2 questions without then going on to assess the validity of either. To score at the higher levels, candidates must have the courage to come to a judgement about not just a thesis but its antithesis.

### **Question 1 (Topic 1 Miracles)**

This was a popular question. Centres which had taught the legacy Unit RS06 capitalized on the inclusion of this topic in the new Specification. Discussion of the merits of David Hume's argument was not asked for in the question. Most candidates understood Hume's critique although there were various spellings of the word 'volition' to include, rather confusingly, 'violation'. A number of candidates had learned that miracles could be defined as events of religious significance and inserted this learning into part (b) in the hope that it might receive credit. This part of the question focuses solely on evaluation so large amounts of AO1 material cannot be credited here. Pleasingly, many candidates were able to discuss Maurice Wiles' critique of an interventionist deity and also counter this with thoughtful arguments.

### **Question 2 (Topic 2 Creation)**

This was a popular question but one which gave rise to a degree of confusion. Many candidates seemed to equate the word 'nature' with the theory of evolution, missing the fact that it was the nature of the universe which was being asked about. Another noticeable feature was the confusion between 'world' and 'universe'. Centres are asked to ensure that this misunderstanding does not continue since it can result in candidates failing to gain marks. Answers ranged from highly detailed responses about the Big Bang to answers which covered scientific theories more generally. Both types of answer were capable of scoring full marks. Although the Steady State theory is no longer on the Specification, it made a regular appearance in answers. The weaker answers did not talk about the nature of the universe. Many candidates missed the fact that part (a) did not require them to talk about religious views.

**Question 3 (Topic 3 *The design argument*)**

This was the most popular question on the paper. Candidates demonstrated a pleasing knowledge of a wide range of design arguments, although there was a worrying trend for candidates to write that Aquinas knew that the Earth went round the Sun.

Part (b) specifically required candidates to talk about the scientific challenge to the argument. No credit could be given for Humean style criticisms. Reference to the Big Bang in this part of the question could only be credited if candidates argued that it was a random event which did not require the mind of a Designer.

**Question 4 (Topic 4 *Quantum mechanics and a religious world view*)**

This was the least popular question on the paper. Candidates were, however, able to describe the developments in quantum mechanics easily enough. The range of material used to answer part (b) might have been broader and centres are reminded that any religious belief can be referred to.