

# Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2011

GCE

GCE Religious Studies

6RS02/1A

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025 or visit our website at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com).

If you have any subject specific questions about the content of this Examiners' Report that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our **Ask The Expert** email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/>

January 2011

Publications Code US026620

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2011

## AREA 1A The Study of Religion

---

### Introduction

The Investigations Paper of January 2011 demonstrated a remarkable level of scholarship evident across all areas of study and some answers demonstrated the engagement that had with their area of investigation. The enthusiasm for and knowledge of the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. Some Centres chose to focus on the same or similar topics for all their candidates, whereas other Centres permitted considerable choice for individual candidates. Some candidates were very well prepared for the examination and it was evident that Centres used their specialist resources and interests to encourage candidates to research in depth a particular area of study. It is important to stress again that the 'Investigations' unit has a definite academic purpose. The aim is to involve candidates as active participants pursuing open-ended enquiries with an emphasis on independent learning. Questions were designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and all valid answers were considered.

Candidates were mostly entered for the correct paper but there were still a few entries for particular areas of study where it might have benefited the candidate more to consider entry for a different area of study. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper.

Some topics share generic ideas across a number of different areas and it is vital that candidates know the **distinctive** features of their investigation so that in the exam candidates know which question to answer ie question 1, 2 or 3. It is worth noting that the difference between discussing an ethical issue, for example, in Area C and Area D would be in the kind of emphasis required by Area of Study; Area 1C requires a range of ethical and/or religious teachings applied to a medical issue whilst Area D requires a more detailed knowledge of the ethical precepts of the World Religion(s). Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was in a box that did not match the answer.

Variation in achievement was related to answering the question and to the two assessment objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Importantly, in the exam itself there must be explicit attention to these objectives in the examination answer. Each question consistently referred to the assessment objectives with the trigger word 'Examine' for AO1 and 'Comment on' for AO2. These dictated the structure of the question and helped to plan their answers. It would be advisable for candidates to pay regular attention to the level descriptors for these assessment objectives as a way of monitoring their development and progress during their investigations. The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' will always appear in the question to ensure that the generic question can be answered with material from any appropriate investigation. Preparation for the exam must also pay attention to enabling candidates to develop their management of material studied throughout their investigations and to how best structure their content to answer the specific question. Success can be undermined by writing up a rote-learned answer which was not adapted in any way to the question set.

The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions. It was not possible to include exemplars for some questions that attracted a small entry in this examination series.

## Q1

### RELIGION AND SCIENCE

There was a wide range of responses to this question, some very ably marshalling a range of scientific and religious accounts of origins of the universe and others at the other end of the spectrum that became a little too narrative with little focus on the wording of the question. The best answers drew their material back to the wording of the question, or set up their approach clearly with reference to it and then proceeded to address key themes through a variety of models of relationship between religion and science which answered the task well. Good mention was made in some answers to methodology of the two disciplines, and the usage of language within the two systems but other more 'straightforward' approaches also did extremely well in many cases. Good material was used and scholarship referred to in a majority of cases, the weaker answers lacked supporting or illustrative material of a suitably academic nature.

Some candidates demonstrated an impressive grasp of the demands of the question by introducing their material through a precise introduction of their understanding of the epistemological pursuits of religion and science. Many candidates had sound knowledge of different models for establishing the relationship between religion and science. Most answers were up to date in scholarship and went beyond discussing only one particular model. Their argument was upheld and supported by thorough knowledge of relevant scholarship and many answers demonstrated careful exposition of the material studied and thus the conclusions followed on with ease.

Once again, candidates analysed the Design Argument or the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God with no obvious link to the question or the topic they had investigated. The demands of the Investigations paper are different to the Foundations Paper and this Area of Study is not exclusively about the existence of God.

## Q2

### ANTHROPOLOGY/SOCIOLOGY/PSYCHOLOGY of RELIGION

This question was largely very well done. One of the most popular choices was an investigation into Freud and his importance for an understanding of religion. There was evidence of skilful interaction with the question that resulted in stimulating discussion. In AO1 most presented the core, basic details about Freud's ideas with a proficient use of terms. Responses at the lower levels were content with a straightforward exposition of Freud's key ideas. Those responses at the higher levels selected and adapted their work to the demands of the question. With regard to this question, good responses focused on those Freudian ideas pertinent to an understanding of religion. It is not essential, but some knew the distinctive ideas in some of Freud's primary texts and were able to draw on specific textual data. If candidates know this type of material it is to their credit to draw on this expertise. AO2 tended to be well answered with a consideration of a range of debate and controversy ending in a conclusion that decisively argued for or against the question. There was also some examples of Freud and Jung in the same answer and these essays worked well when presented as a comparison of their views on the source and value of religion in society as this allowed for a purposeful addressing of the question.

Other approaches included a comparison and analysis of sociologists of religion and an assessment of the validity of those views in the light of the quotation and some focused on Dawkins' critique of religion and evaluated that viewpoint well. The same points made about Freud apply in terms of the crucial importance of managing the content so as to focus on the question.

## Q3

### CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

There were too few responses to this question in January 2011 to compile a full report, although some work was presented within the field of literature with some good work using C.S. Lewis as an exemplar for creative expression in religious life. Please refer to Principal Examiners' Reports from earlier series for further advice.

#### Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Further copies of this publication are available from  
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467

Fax 01623 450481

Email [publications@linneydirect.com](mailto:publications@linneydirect.com)

Order Code US026620 January 2011

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit [www.edexcel.com/quals](http://www.edexcel.com/quals)

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750

Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH