

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2011

GCE

GCE Religious Studies

6RS02/1E

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AREA 1E The Study of The Old Testament/Jewish Bible

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 candidates 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 candidates 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-learnt 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.

AREA 1E The Study of The Old Testament/Jewish Bible

The level of knowledge and scholarship shown in this question by some candidates was impressive. Although the Old Testament had the fewest candidates the level of responses has improved.

Q1

RELIGION AND SCIENCE

The entry for this question was too small to produce a report.

Q2

THE NATURE OF GOD

Some candidates answered this question with a high level of insight and were well-equipped to examine the notion of whether it is possible to know the nature of God. Some candidates made a very good job of backing up their views with a wide range of very useful and contrasting biblical quotations, both from the Law and the Prophets. Some candidates were very knowledgeable and addressed the question effectively through the use of scholarly opinion backed up by the Prophets and the Psalms. Evaluation was interesting and varied in approach, from the evangelistic notions of God's embracing agape love, through pre-destination, heaven and hell to philosophical notions of free will and epistemic distance.

Q3

JOB AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

Some candidates were able to examine skilfully the problem of suffering in Job and compare it with textual narratives elsewhere, most notably the Genesis myths. Many then went on to look at philosophical notions, particularly the Augustinian Theodicy and natural and moral evil. Scholarship was evident and references were made to the redeeming and atoning love of God. However, some candidates re-told the Job narratives then wrote about philosophical notions, but were unable to relate the two in a very meaningful way.

Grade Boundaries

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

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