

Examiners' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2013

Edexcel GCE – Religious Studies
Unit 2: Investigations – The Study of
the New Testament

6RS02/1F

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk for our BTEC qualifications.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you can speak directly to the subject team at Pearson.

Their contact details can be found on this link: www.edexcel.com/teachingservices.

You can also use our online Ask the Expert service at www.edexcel.com/ask. You will need an Edexcel username and password to access this service.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

January 2013

Publications Code DP034370

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2013

Unit 2: Religious Studies - The Study of the New Testament

Introduction

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Investigations Paper of January 2013 demonstrated a very high level of independent student enquiry. The engagement that candidates had with their area of investigation was evidenced in the way they independently used and evaluated a wide range of source material. 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. 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 students 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.

Whilst most centres had entered their candidates for the correct option there were still a few entries for particular areas of study where consideration regarding entry for a different area of study may have been beneficial to the candidate. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper. There was evidence of candidates choosing a different question on the paper to the question they had clearly prepared for before the examination. In some of these cases the candidate was using material suitable for Question 1 to answer Question 3 and not really grappling fully with the demands of the question. Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was put in a box that did not match the answer. Examiners were encouraged to mark positively. Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the option that matches their area of study and that candidates are clear about which question they have been prepared for on the paper.

Variation in achievement was related 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. The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions but the answer itself is not necessarily generic as candidates are expected to use their material to answer the question. The purpose of the

question is to challenge candidates to adapt their material so that at the highest levels they may demonstrate a coherent understanding of the task, based on the selection of their material. Widely deployed evidence/arguments/sources were evident in well-structured responses to the task whereby a clearly expressed viewpoint was supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument. There was skilful deployment of religious language in many answers and the fluency of the essay showed command over the material.

Candidates at the lower end of achievement struggled with the demands of the question. In preparation for this examination some candidates may find it useful to write up their investigation under exam-timed conditions to a variety of different possible questions. They might build up a number of different essay plans to different possible questions. The important point in these activities is to enable candidates to develop their management of material such as how to best structure their content to answer the specific question. However, success can be undermined by writing up a rote-learned answer which was not adapted to the question set, or by answering a question that has been written for a topic they have not studied.

Specific Comments – Paper 1F – The Study of the New Testament

The overall standard of the responses to these questions were scholarly and consistent with the performance of previous sittings. Candidates once again drew on a range of interesting material. There was a more concerted effort to address the question.

At the top end, many answers were excellent and received very high marks. There was a clear and detailed understanding of the issues and of the religious and theological meanings behind them. Candidates referred to a range of scholars, both ancient and modern, as well as detailed theological debate and argument. There was proficient use – and understanding – of complex theological ideas such as ‘salvation’ and the use of New Testament symbolism was impressive.

In the middle range, candidates were less comfortable with New Testament theology and tended to concentrate on re-writing the textual narrative and then developing ideas from it. Quite a number missed the real meaning of the questions and concentrated on tangential issues. In the ‘moral teachings’ question a number of answers used GCSE-type material and in the ‘Life after Death’ question, many candidates wrote a philosophical account with little reference to the New Testament.

At the lower end, candidates concentrated largely on re-telling Bible stories or offering generalised philosophical/ ethical accounts with little scholarly analysis. There was also evidence of centres preparing candidates with the same essay structure and the same illustrative quotes from scripture and/or scholars; weaker candidates who had been prepared in this way had difficulty manipulating their material to answer the question.

6RS02_1F_Q01 – Religion and Science

There were very few answers to this question. The majority of responses were skilful with the demands of the question. A successful approach to this question often entailed a study of miracles in the New Testament where the best candidates not only retold the stories but used them well to justify their argument. Christian belief and scholarship was used extensively in some of the better answers – whereas the weaker candidates used a rather descriptive view of the stories without the careful analysis of the question. A few weaker candidates were not very conversant with the religion and science debate and had little to say in relation to the question.

6RS02_1F_Q02 – New Testament Ethics and Morality

At the top end, the answers to this question were really excellent, offering detailed ethical analysis of New Testament teachings, coupled with a range of useful scholarship and proficient use of religious language.

However, in the mid-range, many concentrated a little too heavily on Situation Ethics and Natural Moral Law at the expense of New Testament exegesis. Answers tended to be 70% Ethics, with New Testament material added as something of an after-thought. Greater parity between New Testament and Ethics content within the response would raise achievement. Whilst it is noted that the context for ethics has a contributory factor from scholars candidates must bear in mind the unique demand of the New Testament area of study. There were some responses that offered very little New Testament material to enrich/support the issues under discussion.

At the lower end, a number of students produced a basic analysis of marriage, abortion and homosexuality, lacking any real depth of discussion or scholarship.

Once again, as noted last year, it must be stressed that some topics share generic ideas across a number of different areas and it is vital that candidates know the **distinctive** features of their investigation. For example, there can be overlap with topics addressed in Area 1C and candidates who focused more on classical ethical theory rather than New Testament ethics might have used the material they investigated more effectively in Area 1C. The same point also applies to the distinctive focus that is required by either a Study of the Old Testament or a Study of the New Testament.

6RS02_1F_Q03 – Life after Death

This was by far the most popular question and responses at the top end demonstrated a clear and concise analysis of New Testament teachings, coupled with philosophical debate. The range of scholarship and textual analysis was impressive and candidates were comfortable with handling their material to answer the question. Some candidates had a very solid knowledge of the New Testament and could use it with confidence as evidence to back up the ideas that they had.

In the mid-range there was too much emphasis on the philosophical arguments about life after death, with the New Testament used as an after-thought. Also, many concentrated solely on Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 15 or on the dilemma of the empty tomb, but lacked the depth of detail and scholarship required for the highest marks.

At the lower end, candidates tended to re-write the biblical narratives and loosely link philosophical arguments to them. Answers lacked continuity and depth of scholarly argument. There was evidence of weaker candidates writing a few pages on Old Testament roots for beliefs regarding Life after Death, and whilst this is acknowledged as contextually relevant material it must be explicitly linked to a study of the New Testament. Candidates were not marked down for this approach but credited for how they used this material within a study of the New Testament – if they managed to make it clear why Old Testament narratives and quotes were essential to their argument. This question evidenced the greatest disparity amongst responses that ranged from candidates being very well prepared, to others having difficulty with answering the question.

Advice for Candidates

- Please directly address the question being asked.
- A generic question is not best answered with a generic answer. The question is made up of two parts. The question itself and the generic phrase 'Examine and comment with reference to the topic you have investigated.' Answer the question.
- Use appropriate sources and, if possible, include recent scholarship.
- Thoughtfully deployed material will show how well you understand your topic and how you are using your material to answer the question.
- Do not forget to comment on your material in relation to the question.
- Use your evidence to substantiate your argument.
- Comment on alternative views if you know them.
- Express your viewpoint clearly.
- Practice writing under timed conditions as part of your preparation.
- Do not spend too much time on your essay plan to the detriment of the essay itself.
- Write legibly.

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 publication.orders@edexcel.com

Order Code DP034370 January 2013

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit
www.edexcel.com/quals

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual




Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

