



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS1C**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2009 examination – January series*

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# *Unit HIS1C*

## **Unit 1C: The Reformation in Europe, c1500–1564**

### **Comments from the Chief Examiner: Unit 1**

In this examination session some issues generic to all the Unit 1 papers were noted:

- Candidates are required to answer two questions from a choice of three, each consisting of a part (a) and a part (b), i.e. 4 sub-questions in total. Whether due to timing issues or to a misunderstanding of the rubric, a few candidates either answered all six sub-questions or answered only one question. The format of Unit 1 papers is significantly different from AQA's legacy units, so it is vital that all candidates are aware in advance of what they will be required to do.
- Timing issues caused other problems too. This is a one hour 15 minute paper, thus allowing roughly 12 minutes in which to complete the (a) questions and 25 minutes for the (b) questions. A number of candidates failed to complete the paper and in addition to those who attempted only one question, there were others who missed out a part-question or lapsed into notes. Selecting relevant material and maintaining a strong focus on the question is part of the skill being tested in this examination and candidates need to realise that they will penalise themselves heavily if they fail to tackle the two questions required, in full. Furthermore, since they are asked to write in continuous prose – which is the only way any sense of argument can be conveyed – notes will never score highly.
- It was clear from some scripts that candidates had not studied, or revised, the full specification content for their chosen alternative. It must be emphasised that the three questions may be drawn from any part of that content. Without a secure understanding of the complete content, candidates will find it extremely difficult to perform well.

### **Report from the Principal Examiner**

#### **General Comments**

There was only a relatively small number of candidates who attempted this option. Consequently, there are few definitive conclusions which can be arrived from the body of work assessed. However, the overall level of performance was disappointing. The majority of candidates seemed under-prepared, not only in respect of the subject content in this unit, but also in the basic requirements of the structuring of essay writing at this level. In particular, there was a dearth of evidence of effective planning. On the other hand, there was little evidence that candidates had suffered from time constraints in the examination. Performance across five of the six part question tended to be fairly consistent. Unfortunately, however, performance in Question 2(a) was very weak.

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**Question 1**

- (a) Whilst most candidates demonstrated a reasonable knowledge of Luther's attitude to indulgences, as demonstrated in the Ninety Five Theses, they were much less secure in their grasp of the reasons why Luther's attack on indulgences should have led to a full-scale confrontation with the papacy by 1520. There was little knowledge of the role of Pope Leo X and how his actions, such as the encouragement of Prierias and Eck to attack Luther, widened the scope of the conflict. The significance of the Leipzig Debate between Luther and Eck, in which Eck drove Luther into an openly heretical position, was not understood.
- (b) Whilst most candidates had some reasonable understanding of the range of factors which contributed to the success of the Lutheran Reformation, there was little specific knowledge and understanding of the importance of those princes who took up the Lutheran cause. Most importantly, the pivotal roles of Philip of Hesse and Maurice of Saxony were not understood. It is important that candidates have a grasp of such factors as Philip's key importance in the formulation of the Protest of Speyer and in the foundation of the League of Schmalkalden. Similarly, candidates do need to know about Maurice's break with Charles V following the latter's victory in the War of the League of Schmalkalden. His foundation of the League of Torgau and alliance with the French helped to break Charles's power and ensured the failure of the Augsburg Interim.

**Question 2**

- (a) Unfortunately, this question was answered uniformly badly. Some candidates answered irrelevantly about Calvin or the Jesuits. There was little understanding of the fact that Luther's challenge to the authority of the Catholic Church encouraged the emergence of groups and individuals who lacked his social conservatism. Such radicalism first became evident during Luther's confinement in the Wartburg. In the absence of Luther's leadership the more radical figure of Andreas Karlstadt emerged as the driving force of religious reform. There was a growth in millenarianism, exemplified particularly by the Zwickau Prophets. Luther's former follower, Thomas Müntzer, openly challenged the political authority of the Elector of Saxony, and his leadership contributed to the upsurge in peasant activism which culminated in the rebellion of 1524–1525.
- (b) Some candidates were able to offer a generalised account of the reasons for the success of Calvin in Geneva. However, few candidates were able to offer specific supporting evidenced to bolster their case. Reference to such key documents as the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* tended to be very vague.

**Question 3**

- (a) Once again answers tended to be rather general. There was little understanding of how the lifestyles, excessive expenditure and political errors of individual popes had weakened the Catholic Church.
- (b) Answers, whilst demonstrating a general understanding, failed to focus specifically enough on the key theme of success. As a result, therefore, evaluation remained limited.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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