



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2012**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS1C**

***Report on the Examination***

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# *Unit HIS1C*

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

### **General Comments**

Many students were well-prepared for this examination, both in their range of knowledge and in their conceptual grasp. Each question elicited some excellent responses. In those instances where knowledgeable students under-performed this could often be explained by two inter-related factors: excessively lengthy answers to the 12-mark questions in which students paid expensively for any extra marks achieved through the marks which were lost on the final 24-mark question, and rather rambling responses to the 12-mark questions which did not focus directly enough on identifying and supporting the required three or four analytical points. It was evident that many students' examination techniques were much more sharply honed in respect of the 24-mark questions. Similar sharpness in the 12-mark questions would have enhanced performance in many cases. Students would be well advised to apportion their efforts in the examination in accordance with the time which is available.

### **Question 1**

- 01** Some excellent responses were produced from students whose extensive knowledge of the key issues was allied to a sharp focus on the circumstances of October 1517 and an efficient technique in answering this type of question. Apart from the issue of technique, the main shortcoming in students' responses was the tendency to write in general terms about the origins of the Lutheran Reformation, sometimes with much irrelevant information about what happened after 31 October 1517. On the other hand, many students showed a sound grasp of the concept of solifidianism and could apply that confidently to Luther's attack on indulgences. Students who lacked that grasp sometimes struggled to develop an explanatory framework to answer the question successfully. Some students asserted that Luther was influenced by Erasmus. There is little evidence for this; Erasmian humanism may have influenced the Reformation in general but Luther himself was no humanist.
- 02** Many students were able to produce knowledgeable, well-informed answers. Such answers stressed the importance of Luther's role as a preacher and writer. Other factors, such as the problems faced by Charles V and the role of some of the German princes, were also emphasised. Most students asserted the importance of printing, though relatively few pointed out that this complemented Luther's preaching and writing. A minority of students pointed out the contribution of other reformers, such as Johannes Bugenhagen and Philip Melanchthon, though the pivotal role of the latter through the production of the Confession of Augsburg was mentioned by relatively few. Some answers were marred by a lack of precision, for example, by describing Luther's activities before 1521 without relating them in an evaluative manner to the question or by discussing post-1531 material. There was a vagueness about chronology in some answers. There was also vagueness about the role of princes. Some answers seemed to assume that all German princes supported Luther and that this was evident as early as 1521. Specific evidence about the role of individual princes, often mentioned in previous reports, was missing.

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**Question 2**

- 03** The question elicited a wide range of responses. The best answers were very knowledgeable, showing a broad understanding of the role of New Orders in the process of Catholic renewal. Such answers contained precise explanation about particular orders and were able to draw out appropriate explanations. Unfortunately, however, this was the one question which attracted under-prepared students, some of whom were so lacking in relevant knowledge that they wrote about Anabaptism and Calvinism.
- 04** Students were very well prepared in general terms about the role of the Jesuits. Some produced particularly impressive evaluations of the importance of St. Ignatius in his foundation of the Jesuits, his direction of the Society and the influence of the Spiritual Exercises. Most students were able to place the role of the Jesuits effectively in the wider context of Catholic reform. Knowledge and understanding of this wider context were generally secure and the best answers offered excellent evaluation.

**Question 3**

- 05** This question elicited a wide range of answers. The best answers were excellent, providing comprehensive and succinct analysis covering the range of Anabaptist activity in the 1520s and 1530s. Weaker answers were characterised by vagueness, for example an inability to distinguish between the reformer Thomas Müntzer, who was killed during the Peasants' War in 1525, and events in the city of Münster ten years later. Some students under-performed slightly because of insufficient re-shaping of their material which had been required for a previous question on the weakness of Anabaptism.
- 06** Most students were well prepared to answer this question, often demonstrating an extensive knowledge of Calvinism which they were able to apply effectively to the question. One of the key factors which differentiated performance was understanding of the activities and influence of the Consistory. Some students had only a very vague notion of its importance as an agent of social control in Geneva and a few students dismissed it altogether, usually without arguing the case. The best answers placed the importance of the Consistory effectively in the wider context of reasons for the success of the Reformation in Geneva. Some students who showed the potential to achieve well in response to this question did themselves no favours because they were forced to produce truncated answers as a result of over-writing in their answers to earlier questions.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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