



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2011**

Religious Studies

RSS04

(Specification 2060)

Unit D Religion, Philosophy and Science

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

There were many good scripts this time and candidates were able to score throughout the whole mark range. A disappointing number tackled Quantum Mechanics and it is to be hoped that, on the basis of a number of past papers, centres will now have the confidence to tackle this question.

The overall standard of the answers was lower than previously seen. There were problems in particular with answering the question as set out on the paper and there were also problems with providing enough AO2 in the analysis questions. Candidates are required for AO2 to weigh up the relative strengths and weaknesses of both the arguments in favour of the thesis in the question and the arguments against.

Question 1

- 01** Many candidates showed a detailed knowledge of the various arguments from both religion and science against the notion of an interventionist deity. Marks were lost if candidates simply reproduced Hume's arguments or if the focus of the answer was not on the understanding of miracles as an 'intervention'.
- 02** In the AO2 question, there was widespread misunderstanding of the demands of the question. It was meant to enable candidates to compare one definition of miracle with another and to consider whether a definition which did not require God to intervene had any merit.

Question 2

- 03** This was a popular question and generally well done. It was pleasing to see that centres had taught the theories concerning the end of the universe. Many candidates gave an impressive amount of detail on the science here. It is important to state, however, that answers were scoring at the top of the mark range without this kind of detail.
- 04** The AO2 allowed candidates a degree of latitude and many wrote well about this debate. Where there were weaknesses, it concerned the lack of analysis or comment which is a requirement of the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Question 3

- 05** This was a popular question. Many candidates, however, relied on a re-hash of Darwin's theory of evolution to help them get by. The specification requires centres to learn about Dawkins' arguments against the design argument and it is to be hoped that centres will be able to improve in this area in the future. Swinburne was tackled more successfully although a number of candidates were genuinely confused about the significance of his arguments about spatial and temporal order.
- 06** In the AO2 section, the temptation to present lists of arguments and counter-arguments without any form of analysis was at its most evident. Better answers considered the meaning of the term 'reasonable' but it was striking that there were not many of these. It is recommended that candidates attempt the AO2 by defining the key terms of the question: here, a definition of the word 'reasonable' would have improved the quality of the answer significantly.

Question 4

07/08 Very few scripts were seen on this question. Candidates who tackled the topic tended to have a good level of knowledge and were able to deploy that knowledge effectively in the answer. The question did require a focus on religious belief. There was a tendency to equate religious belief with mysticism. Candidates need to be careful about this.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.