



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

Religious Studies

RST3D

(Specification 2060)

Unit 3D Old Testament

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Despite there being a small entry size, there was a wide range of ability. There were some sound responses to all four questions, none of which were misunderstood. Candidates had been well prepared for the examination and centres are to be commended for the way in which this unit has been taught. In their answers, candidates of all levels of ability seemed to engage with the topics and texts set for study.

Question 1 *Ways of reading the Old Testament*

- 01** This was by far the least popular question, but it was answered with considerable maturity. The candidates who chose it were clearly well prepared for this topic, considering in some depth a wide range of material.
- 02** As with the first part, this question posed no problems for those who answered it. Both sides of the issue were argued well.

Question 2 *God and humanity*

- 03** This was answered by most candidates, who covered a wide range of textual material within the limits set by the question. The contribution of source criticism was applied well to the creation stories in some responses, but rarely was it applied to Genesis 6-9 and 11. Many candidates commented on the use of anthropomorphic language, although less able candidates stated that God was anthropomorphic and there were some very simplistic statements such as one which stated that God 'was very upset' at humanity's sinfulness.
- 04** Many responses were slightly disappointing. There was limited use of source and form critical analysis, but there was some consideration of the compatibility or lack of it with science and one candidate wrote effectively on the impact of secularisation within society. Some responses said little more than that it depended on whether you were an atheist or a theist.

Question 3 *The ways in which people believed they should live their lives*

- 05** This was the most popular question. It did produce a few very general responses, but candidates on the whole showed greater awareness of the set Wisdom texts than in the past. There was some appropriate reference to scholars, though occasionally it amounted to little more than name-dropping. Some candidates distinguished between prudential and reflective wisdom and also between apodictic and casuistic law.
- 06** Candidates found this very straightforward, applying for the most part effectively the material they had used in the first part of the question.

Question 4 *How the people suffered in times of crisis – suffering and hope*

- 07** There were some highly perceptive responses to this question, exploring often in depth a wide range of the prophet's teaching.
- 08** Candidates had no problem in defending the statement, but many candidates, even the more able, found it hard to develop an effective counter-argument. A fruitful area might have been Isaiah's vision of the imminent return to Judah as a second Exodus.

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