

Examiners' Report  
June 2018

GCE Religious Studies 8RS0 02

## Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. 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](http://www.edexcel.com) or [www.btec.co.uk](http://www.btec.co.uk).

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at [www.edexcel.com/contactus](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).



### Giving you insight to inform next steps

ResultsPlus is Pearson's free online service giving instant and detailed analysis of your students' exam results.

- See students' scores for every exam question.
- Understand how your students' performance compares with class and national averages.
- Identify potential topics, skills and types of question where students may need to develop their learning further.

For more information on ResultsPlus, or to log in, visit [www.edexcel.com/resultsplus](http://www.edexcel.com/resultsplus). Your exams officer will be able to set up your ResultsPlus account in minutes via Edexcel Online.

### Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. 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](http://www.pearson.com/uk).

June 2018

Publications Code 8RS0\_02\_1806\_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright  
© Pearson Education Ltd 2018

## Introduction

The second cohort of candidates taking AS Religious Studies appeared to be better prepared and more able to tackle a range of questions based on the specification material. There were fewer questions left unanswered and in many cases candidates were able to reflect a good range of scholarship and awareness of a range of relevant material to support their answers.

In some cases, candidates wrote too much for fewer mark questions which had a knock-on effect on their timing. The examination requires a lot to be done in a short time frame, so candidates should practice writing to time as often as possible.

Some candidates were able to produce exceptional answers across the board and produced papers worthy of full marks. These are to be highly commended as reflecting best practice at AS level, ensuring that answers are not generic or based on common sense or general knowledge material. For candidates who take this examination as an AS qualification in its own right, there is everything to be gained in taking the opportunity to perform to the highest level and to benefit from the UCAS points it has to offer. Candidates who are taking it as a form of practice exam, mock or entry test to Year 2, should take the opportunity to revise Year 1 material thoroughly, and to prepare revision materials which will help substantially in Year 2, reducing the need for revision materials made from scratch at such an intense time.

## **Question 1**

Candidates on the whole coped well with this question. Responses were the main in middle to top Level 3 offering insightful answers regarding principles of Natural Moral Law and displaying a wide range of knowledge and a depth of understanding of the subject matter. There was some evidence of good material on the basics from Thomas Aquinas and some did well to tease out the secondary precepts and cardinal virtues. Some strong answers went on to give valid statements about the work of Bernard Hoose. Some candidates extended their answers to include evaluative material which was not required and could have had an effect on their overall time management.

Explorations into the key concepts of Natural Moral Law were rather terse in the weaker answers, with some expounding on the benefits of finding “nature” in all kinds of ethical dilemmas. Really good answers found it hard to squeeze Goods/Apparent Goods with External/Internal behaviours on top of all the precepts, origins and modern versions of the theory. They would have earned 8 marks with half of the material.

This answer is awarded 8 marks

## 1 Explore the key concepts of Natural Moral Law.

Aristotle was a key influence of Aquinas as he developed Natural Moral Law (NML). Aristotle thought everyone had a purpose and when we achieve our purpose to the best we can we reach eudaimonia. Aquinas Christianized this idea and said that God gave us the ability to reason. ~~we~~ <sup>even</sup> without a belief in God we can use this ~~idea~~ <sup>reason</sup> to make morally right decisions. NML is deontological (rule based) and <sup>absolutist (actions can be inherently good/bad)</sup>

Aquinas came up with five primary precepts: protect the innocent, order society, worship God, educate the young and reproduce. He said these precepts cannot be broken and he came up with secondary precepts that are derived from the primary precepts. Some of these include 'do not abort unborn babies' to protect the innocent or 'do not use contraception' to reproduce. It can be noted that secondary precepts can be broken to uphold primary precepts.

Aquinas believed in four levels of law: eternal (only God fully knows it), divine (which comes from the Bible, it is part of the revealed eternal law), natural law (which every human has innately, it does not contradict divine and eternal) and human law, which is derived from divine and natural law.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



A clear example of a full mark answer which includes appropriate scholarly material, outlining the principles of theory concisely enough to keep to one page but with sufficient detail to show a high level of knowledge.



Use of technical terms gives this candidate's answer far greater authority.

This answer is awarded 7 marks

### 1 Explore the key concepts of Natural Moral Law.

Natural Moral Law was first mentioned by the Stoics and their idea that God was everywhere and in everything and we had a divine spark that made us act in the way of God. Aristotle was also a big influence on Aquinas' natural law. He Christianized ideas of Aristotle like the four causes: form, efficient, final and material. For Aquinas, natural moral law was an unchangeable and universal way to act that God implanted on the earth.

The four causes were part of Aquinas' moral law.

Also in moral law were the primary precepts that help us live in accordance to how God wanted and secondary precepts were ways in how we could fulfil them. The primary precepts are: protect the innocent, ordered society, worship God, education and reproduce. Secondary precepts like marriage, go to church and free education are ways of achieving primary precepts.

Also within natural law was interior and exterior acts meaning when you do something the intention must be good and so must the action to be actually good. Also in natural law were the cardinal virtues, an idea Aquinas Christianized from Aristotle but he changed it slightly. <sup>Some of his 4</sup> cardinal virtues were prudence and temperance, his 3 theological virtues were faith, love and hope.



Another strong answer which just falls short of full marks. Compared with the previous answer there is slightly less detail and relevant AO1 content.



As both these candidates have done, it is helpful to avoid too much exemplary material or case studies.



## **Question 2**

Sexual Ethics is always an invitation to express confident opinions and candidates were not afraid to respond to the need to assess their material. Whilst weaker answers struggled here to stay close enough to the question or to provide detailed assessments, the best candidates assessed a range of teachings and views while others did not delve deep enough or gave general responses. Most managed to confine themselves to one world religion, though a lot confined themselves to Catholicism, which although legitimate, sometimes restricted and encouraged repetition in the answer. The best answers brought in a good range of material explored in the discussion on sexual ethics. Some candidates limited their response to just one topic, for example, homosexuality and often did less well. The best responses contained good referencing from a sacred text, evidence of scholarship, and illustrated a sensitive grasp of modern responses. A few responses made for devotional reading.

Most answers generate marks in the range from level 2 to the middle of level 3, just lacking that extra finesse to show the full range of all the elements required in analytical and evaluative skills.

This answer is awarded 8 marks

2 Assess the teaching of **one** world religion in relation to sexual ethics.

Christianity - children - no sex before marriage - adultery - contraception - gay people  
- sex, body, temple

Christianity has many teachings and beliefs regarding sexual ethics and sexual relationships. The main teaching is that sex is a sacred thing and should not be abused, rather saved for marriage. In Genesis, it reads, "That is why a man leaves his mother and father, to unite with his wife and become one flesh." This shows the Bible regards sex as something that should be exclusive within marriage, and ultimately saved for marriage. In my opinion, this view is outdated and is not respected in today's society; couples co-habit with one another without being married and have safe sex - there is no moral issue here; only that they are not married. The bible is flawed in that it teaches a couple can only be happy and respected if they're married. Many choose not to marry for financial or personal issues - it is not necessarily a religious thing.

Christianity also teaches that homosexuality is a sin and that it is punishable by death. In the ~~new~~ Bible, it states, "one should not lie with man as though a woman", showing it believes heterosexuality is the morally correct standard of living. In modern society this view is critiqued largely, because LGBT rights are hugely campaigned for and made aware. For this reason, arguably the Bible is out-dated. However, this belief of heterosexuality being correct is common among other religions, such as Islam. For this reason, it could be argued that universally, religion teaches that homosexuality is wrong.

It also teaches that the purpose of sex is to have children, as God commanded Adam and Eve in Genesis: "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it." However, many are unable to have children, for medical and social reasons, so arguably the Bible doesn't take all circumstances into account and arguably is weak and vague. However, many also believe that children complete a family, so would potentially agree with this Christian teaching.

Overall, I believe Christian teaching regarding sexual ethics is outdated and not appropriate for today's society. However, some would agree with its traditional beliefs.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

Another well-argued response dealing with Christian approaches to sexual relationships. It just fights shy of full marks.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Ensure you have scholarly material to use when writing about sexual ethics.

2 Assess the teaching of **one** world religion in relation to sexual ethics.

Within Christianity there are many different arguments concerning sexual ethics. With regard to pre-marital sex, Roman Catholics believe this is the sin of fornication so it should never be done. Christians take Bible verses, for example from Genesis 2:24, 'that is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, so two become one flesh'. This makes it clear to Christians that sex is just for within marriage, so pre-marital sex is not something God wants. Some Christians may disagree and say that if you know that the couple will be together forever it is okay to have pre-marital sex, but I think this is a weak argument because it is impossible to predict what will happen in the future.

Christians believe adultery is always wrong, this is agreed on the basis of that it is sex outside of marriage, which goes against what it says in Genesis 2:24, and also in the Bible, in Jesus says, 'if your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out, for it is better to lose one body part than for your whole body to go to burn in hell'. This makes it clear that Jesus was against adultery.

others make the argument that Jesus forgave the adulterous woman so maybe he was okay with it, but I think this is weak because Jesus tells her to change her ways and ~~she~~ she will be saved, so he still doesn't agree with it.

The Bible is mainly against homosexuality with arguments from Leviticus, 'do not lie with a man and one does with a woman, that is detestable' and 1 Corinthians: 'men who have sex with men will not enter the kingdom of God'. Some argue this only refers to homosexual rape.

In conclusion, Christians are very against adultery, mainly against premarital sex and homosexuality, as some arguments are made in *Genesis* (Total for Question 2 = 9 marks) of them



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This candidate has included useful biblical material and kept a clear focus on Christian approaches on sexual relationships. Although it is not sophisticated, it is well organised and does the job efficiently.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Develop an argument in these questions in which AO2 is the primary focus. Candidates are credited for their ability to assess the material, not just to narrate it.



### **Question 3**

Utilitarianism was a very popular topic, and many candidates tried to squeeze their whole essay into a page and a half. For the most part candidates were able to demonstrate a good range of knowledge, specialist language and the correct terminology. There were many ways of achieving 9 marks, which was a delight to see, with many branching out into modern forms, though rarely with attribution or assessment. Quite a few got so carried away with the wealth of material that the assessment did not receive enough attention. Better answers (and some weaker ones) did apply the theory to actual ethical dilemmas, to their advantage. The best answers made good distinctions between the differing types of Utilitarianism and made sound reasoning in how such an ethic can be applied, although it was a surprise to some examiners that popular current issues such as the NHS or Brexit were not used as relevant examples.

Some weaker answers failed to notice that the question asked about strengths of Utilitarianism and their assessment was entirely about weaknesses. Although an assessment of strengths can give rise to a consideration of weaknesses, candidates should be aware of the specific demand of the question and focus their material appropriately.

This answer is awarded 9 marks

### 3 Assess the strengths of Utilitarianism as an approach to ethical decision-making.

One key strength of both Act and Rule Utilitarianism is that it maximises utility. With Act utilitarianism (AU), if you always do what you calculate to be result in the most utility, then utility will be maximised. With rule utilitarianism (RU), it ~~means~~ <sup>means</sup> that there is no room for human error so utility will be maximised by making a rule that results in the most utility. This can be seen as a good strength because it is good to have maximal utility, but it is too hard to predict the consequences of your actions so we don't know what will maximise utility in every situation. With AU it is also difficult to work out the utility produced ~~because~~ because there are ~~so~~ so many different factors.

Another strength is that the majority of utilitarianism is flexible. With AU, you work out what action results in the most utility each time, so you are not bound by a rule to always have to make the same option. With RU also acts like this, it follows a set of rules but you are able to break them if you know it will result in greater utility.





**3 Assess the strengths of Utilitarianism as an approach to ethical decision-making.**

Utilitarianism sprung during the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as the rich tyrannized the poor and poverty, disease, prostitution and more ran rampant, so utilitarianism was supposed as a hedonist approach, bring about the most or best happiness possible for the greatest number of people. One strength of utilitarianism is that in all forms it can maximize happiness as an action is always done to maximize utility. For example, both an act and rule utilitarianism would choose to legally prosecute a murderer than kill them as it would produce the most happiness for the families affected. However it can be argued some forms like rule utilitarianism could not as its deontological nature would allow you to possibly spare the murderer as the murderer is killing other murderers for example. However one could conclude that this example and similar ones are irrelevant as they disregard human experience that is key to making the rules as according to John Stewart Mill.

Another strength of utilitarianism is that it is an impartial ethic, meaning that for the most part everybody's happiness is taken into account through universalisability. This means for an unbiased action to take place so the aggregate happiness will increase, not just the one making the decision for example. The problem with this however is that possibly not

everyone's happiness is worth the same and in the case of preference utilitarianism, everyone's preference. For most it is the equality of humans that make everyone's happiness and preferences equal, <sup>in the eyes of God</sup> however as utilitarianism can be a secular approach it falls through as surely one's preference will is not equal to one's preference to care.

In conclusion, I think that utilitarianism is a strong ethic for solving moral dilemmas, but only in some forms, probably weak rule utilitarianism, as otherwise any action can be justified and even preferences of killing are equal to caring, ~~and it doesn't~~ but that doesn't mean utilitarianism doesn't have flaws.

(Total for Question 3 = 9 marks)



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

Another full mark response which is justified by its clear structure, relevant and accurate material and focus on the question, all efficiently contained within the given answer space.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Note how both answers have avoided anecdotal case studies.

## Question 4

### Question 4(a)

Quite a large number of candidates did not seem to know anything at all about passivism and a surprising number left this answer blank. Given the relatively high quality of answers to Q4(b) this was somewhat counter-intuitive. Several answers waffled and few managed to make any mention of both religious and ethical pacifism. Some candidates knew the ethical arguments, while rather more were able to quote common biblical references. Some of the weakest answers were focused on the work of Martin Luther King.

Candidates who were confident in their knowledge were able to fit a good deal of material into the one page provided – with different types of pacifism, expositors, quotation and examples cited.

### Question 4(b)

Candidates were much more confident tackling this aspect of the topic. The best responses looked at both strengths and weaknesses in assessing Just War Theory as a mean to going to war with developed layers of criticism and evaluation and lots of detail and views. Others were superficial or lacked the depth or sophistication seen in many candidates' good responses.

Few candidates specifically answered the question "Can a war be just", and a prepared answer on Just War Theory was widely used by many candidates, but in many cases to good effect. Few examples were given to as examples of poor *Jus post bellum*, such as the Treaty of Versailles – far fewer than references to Westboro Baptist Church for Question 2. But there was good exemplar material in the better answers, and many were rewarding reading. Only those candidates with very large handwriting managed to fill the space and it would have been nice to award more reference to scholarship and some narrative where there was space to do so.

This answer is awarded 22 marks in total for part (a) and part (b)

4 (a) Explore religious and ethical perspectives on pacifism.

(8)

The Bible teaches those who live by the sword will die by the sword and that ~~those~~ violence should not be used. The Bible encourages pacifism as exemplified in Jesus' ministry where he ~~command~~ commands people to love your enemies and to do good on to those who do bad on to you. To turn the other cheek to violence is argued over an eye for an eye. Thus pacifism is strongly approved of by the Bible and therefore should be encouraged. Some would say that the Bible teaches selective pacifism as violence is approved by Acts in which evil is ~~to~~ to be overcome rather than let it overtake you. ~~It~~

Absolute pacifism is where violence of all kinds is refrained. Active pacifism is the effort in which people take to reduce violence or restore peace such as ~~the~~ conscientious objectors who serve as medics in war who do not contribute towards violence. ~~Nowadays~~ Nowadays nuclear pacifism is used to refrain from using weapons of mass destruction as it is very deadly. Pacifism by figures today such as Martin Luther King have proven to be very effective.



- Legit ~~force~~ <sup>aim</sup>, Success, Just cause, Proportionality
- (b) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the Just War Theory as a means of assessing whether to go to war. *Just ad bellum*

(20)

Just War (Jw) theory is a Strong approach in deciding to go to War as it is a clear standard in which many philosophers have contributed over time to create a solution in to justify War. Jw is even more relevant today, and Just ad bellum helps keep the peace.

Just ad bellum is a Strong ethical approach towards War decision as it is a Strict criteria ~~is~~ which must be met for War to take place. As the criteria is Strong the likelihood for going to War is reduced and peace is sustained for longer. Jw argues the likelihood for success must be high for War to be declared. Some may argue that no longer Jw is relevant as the likelihood of success is always high but at an even higher cost to society because of new and advanced weapons which have been developed. That is why proportionality of Jw is important as for example a country would not respond to a soldier crossing a border with nuclear war but maybe ~~take~~ a line at most. Jw helps prevent war on large scales from happening thus is a key strength in assessing to go to war or not. Jw also is a strength in bringing justice to those who are in defenceless and unable to protect themselves. For example the Second World War was justified by Jw as it set to protect the countries invaded by Germany. Jw also led to the restoring

of peace in Germany who had been committing ~~the~~ crimes against humanity. If Jw had not been implemented via a just case then this would have continued and suffering would continue. WWII was fought by legitimate authorities and proportionately. Despite the likely hood of success Bern Law, the war was even said by pacifists such as Bertrand Russell as some of the few wars worth fighting for.

Some may argue that Jw is no longer relevant to society today with weapons which are on a new scale of destruction. This however gives more reason why Jw should be used in deciding ~~that~~ whether to go to war or not as the Jw criteria is so strict going to war must be for a good cause. The relevance of Jw has only intensified as humanity has progressed due to the need not to fight ~~the~~ because of the dangers being so high. Jw is not out of date also ~~the~~ as the actual concept of people in conflict with each other to win or loose has not changed. The only thing which has changed is the weapons, deciding to go to war or not has not. Thus the claim Jw is out of date is ~~the~~ wrong.

A strength of Just ad bellum is it must be declared by a legitimate authority meaning for someone to go to war it must be tricky. For example for the UK to go to war, unless

in certain circumstances, the house of commons must be called to justify to go to war or not. This is a strength as the discussion in going to war can be debated meaning a just cause may be found.

Overall, JW theory, just ad bellum to go to war is strong over all and is a mechanism in keeping peace between countries and preventing ~~that~~ unnecessary conflicts from happening meaning the peace of the world is unlikely with the criteria being so well thought out by key philosophers like Augustine or Hippo ~~and~~ ~~who~~ who came up with JW. ~~With the~~



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

Q4(a) is basic but appropriate and earns the candidate 6 marks. They have shown their understanding of pacifism effectively but there is room to develop the response.

Q4(b) is a workmanlike response, showing good knowledge of the Just War Theory and reaching a conclusion. More credit could have been gained by greater use of examples and scholarship.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

It is important to maximise your marks by scoring well in both parts of this question. They are invariably connected, so make sure that your knowledge of the specification is secure.



4 (a) Explore religious and ethical perspectives on pacifism.

(8)

Pacifism was encouraged by Jesus many times in the Bible, for ~~an~~ example he said 'turn the other cheek' and 'love your enemies' which show that he was not a violent person and encouraged others to do the same. Absolute pacifism ~~mean~~ means the refusal to fight at all, it is supported by Exodus 20: 'do not kill', however it is important to note that absolute pacifists can still help with war efforts, e.g. they could be medics.

Another type of pacifism is non-violent protests, Gandhi used this in his 'fight' for independence in India. It must be organised and co-ordinated for it to work, and Gandhi used hunger strikes, and peaceful protests to get independence. It is noted that this has not always worked in the past, in Arab Spring this actually led to more bloodshed.

Political pacifism is the idea that people are pacifist if the war is being fought to gain something politically and nuclear pacifism is only pacifist towards nuclear wars. Christians sometimes believe in pacifism because Jesus said, 'those who live by the sword will die by the sword'.



(b) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the Just War Theory as a means of assessing whether to go to war.

(20)

Many support the Just War Theory because it has been developed over a long period of time by many people, a few being Augustine and Aquinas. This is likely to make it a stronger theory because it has been well thought through and refined over many years. I think this is a strong argument because by adding to it, it has many great people have agreed with the concept, so it is widely supported. Along the same lines as this, we see nowadays that many nations abide by the criteria set out by the theory, an example is ~~that~~ before we declared war on Germany in World War Two, England used war as a last resort, first trying to come to an agreement with Hitler.

An argument against this, however, is that in that example, as we prolonged war and tried to do other things before using war as a last resort, Hitler grew stronger and more powerful with his amount of weapons. If we had just went to war straight away, that would not have happened and we might have won the war sooner. I think this is a good point against the theory however in most cases war should

be a last resort as I believe it is unnecessary to go to war if there is a hostility that could be settled with a conversation.

Another strength of the Just War Theory is that it seems to agree with Natural Moral Law<sup>(NML)</sup>. One of the primary precepts of NML is 'protect the innocent', so sometimes going to war to defend the people in your country is the only option. The Just War Theory states that we should discriminate between combatants and non-combatants in the war which should result in less civilian casualties, which also supports the this primary precept. The just war theory can also work with utilitarianism because it is concerned with the consequences of your actions during and after the war. I think this is a strong argument in ~~theory~~<sup>support</sup> of the theory because it is shown to work with ethical theories that many people believe to be moral and true, so many people should support the theory.

The just war theory stops ~~the~~ ~~from~~ there being unjust ~~or~~ ~~low~~ causes or

wrong intentions of going to war. I think this is important because someone may wish to start a war with someone or because they want to use the country for its resources, like oil or gold. This is ~~an~~ wrong intention to go to war because it shows the country to only be looking out for itself and their resources, so many people would agree it to be morally wrong. With the just war theory in place, this is stopped because it is not classed as a right intention so no one would be able to declare war on those grounds. Another strength is that the theory makes sure there is a good chance of success in war, so many lives of soldiers aren't taken for no reason.

Arguments against these, however, are that only rightful authorities can ~~not~~ declare war so if there is injustice within a country, or oppressed groups that aren't the government cannot ~~not~~ declare war. Another weakness is that it is difficult to predict the outcome of war so it is not always possible to say how great the likelihood of success is. I think this is a fair point however in certain situations it will be clear if there is

a likelihood of success, and because success can come in many forms, (e.g. overthrowing a ruthless dictator, winning the war, or having the least casualties) it is easy to say whether there is a good chance of success.

In conclusion I think that the just war theory is a good way of assessing whether to go to war because as ~~Austin~~ John Stott said, 'war is a necessary pain'; so with the just war theory we can determine whether it is necessary in certain situations and it helps us focus on losing the least amount of lives.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

Q4(a) offers a stylish answer which covers some interesting ground with confidence. It just falls short of full marks and could have been more tightly focused to include more AO1 detail.

Q4(b) is also clear, confident and well structured, aimed at the question set. In the top band, it just falls short of full marks which could have been gained by further exemplification and analysis.



## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- They should ensure that all the specification content is covered.
- They should practice writing to timed conditions as often as possible.
- Do not over write on the shorter answers – notably the 8 and 9 mark questions.
- Ensure that AO2 material is clearly evident in Questions 2, 3 and 4b.
- Ensure that responses are scholarly and based on a firm knowledge of appropriate reference material.
- Make the most of the marks available in Question 4. It may be worth considering answering this question first to ensure it is given enough time.

## 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>



