

Examiners' Report

June 2012

GCE Religious Studies 6RS02 1C

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Introduction

The Investigations Paper provides for a balance of teacher-directed and more independent student enquiry. The aim is to involve students as active participants within a process where they undertake individual research into a topic of particular interest. Questions are designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and this is the reason the expression, “with reference to the topic you have investigated” is included in each question. The ability to select and manage individual research to fit the demands of the question is an important discriminator in terms of assessment. The mark scheme is generic and allows for a very wide range of possible approaches – there are no indicative mark schemes for each question because there are so many legitimate ways of answering questions based on independent research. Preparation for this unit is focussed around the two assessment objectives. Candidates are expected to determine whether there is sufficient material to access a variety of appropriate sources (Assessment Objective 1) and to evaluate alternative views (Assessment Objective 2). Candidates may develop their research with reference to the criteria in the level descriptors across both AO1 and AO2. The assessment criteria are typically mentioned in each question through the trigger words, ‘examine’ for AO1 and ‘comment’ for AO2. The candidates work is assessed according to the application of both assessment objectives as in the exam itself there must be explicit attention to these objectives in the examination answer.

In preparation for this examination candidates may find it useful to write up their investigation under exam timed conditions to a variety of different possible questions. They might build up a number of different essay plans to different possible questions. The important point in these activities is to enable candidates to develop their management of material such as how to best structure their content to answer the specific question. However, candidates should be careful not to use a pre-prepared answer in the exam which has not been adapted to the question set or by answering a question that has been written for a topic they have not studied.

June 2012 demonstrated once again a very high level of scholarship evident across all areas of study and many answers demonstrated the engagement that candidates had with their area of investigation. The enthusiasm for and knowledge of the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. Some Centres chose to focus on the same or similar topics for all their candidates, whereas other Centres permitted considerable choice for individual candidates. Candidates were very well prepared for the examination and it was evident that Centres used their specialist resources and interests to encourage candidates to research in depth a particular area of study. Many responses evidenced a wide range of relevant material with substantial background reading used effectively. A feature of high quality answers was the ability to manage research material to integrate an aspect(s) of the question. Candidates performed well across both assessment objectives with detailed content and insightful, cogent argument. There were well-structured responses based on the question and candidates used their knowledge to address the focus of the question.

In some cases candidates did not select their material in accordance with the specific question and could have adapted their material more effectively to address the question. The question was briefly mentioned and in some cases there was only reference to the question in the final section. At the lower levels some candidates drew on sources that were below the standard expected for GCE level. These responses tended to be descriptive rather than analytical and in some cases were too short to cover the topic in any breadth or depth; these responses typically lacked elaboration and lacked GCE level substance.

Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the option that matches their area of study and that candidates are clear about which question they have been prepared for on the paper.

There were still a few examples where entry for a different area of study may have been beneficial to the candidate. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper. There was evidence of candidates choosing a different question on the paper to the question they had clearly prepared for before the examination.

Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was put in a box that did not match the answer.

Question 1

Medical Ethics

This year saw an increase in the number of candidates answering the medical ethics question.

It was encouraging to note that more answers to the medical ethics question were attempted with an eye to scholarship and most candidates had a very wide ranging understanding of ethical theory. There was evidence of more contemporary scholarship being introduced in the best responses. On the whole there was a move towards a more substantive academic style of engagement with the question.

The best responses explored the important religious and ethical issues with reference to well-deployed scholarship and modern day examples. Some candidates also applied Aristotle's virtue ethics and Aquinas' natural law well. Some candidates did not address this question directly; instead they wrote about the topic that they had investigated without relating it to the focus of the question. Once again, centres are encouraged to go beyond the standard range of material and candidates should ensure they do not write pre-prepared answers without answering the question set. Whilst it is good to prepare material in advance it must be remembered that the question needs to be answered. Candidates are to be reminded that they can only achieve the highest levels if their research is used to answer the question.

Some responses can be improved by taking decisive views, based on the evidence and also by paying close attention to the demands of the question. Some answers included issues such as organ transplants and stem cell research/embryology and organ donation and these candidates angled their material to the question with a decisive view as to whether religious and/or ethical principles provide essential guidelines for medical ethics.

Abortion, as a topic, tended to attract candidates who were often working with a wide range of material but who tended to say very little about it.

The best responses had a long and highly discursive conclusion, making it clear that the candidates recognised they were dealing with an issue. However, many candidates presented the material they had prepared and added a four or five line conclusion beginning with 'therefore' or 'in conclusion' when there was little real relationship between this conclusion and the body of the essay.

The following extract illustrates one way of making the best use of time in the examination.

Chosen question number: **Question 1** ✕ **Question 2** ✕ **Question 3** ✕

Euthanasia translates as 'a good death'. The term euthanasia means prematurely ending the life of a terminally ill person in order to prevent suffering. There are two main types of euthanasia: active and passive. Passive has been legal in the UK since 1993. This is an indirect form of euthanasia because it ~~involves~~ involves removing the resources which are keeping a person alive e.g. turning off a life support machine. Active euthanasia is doing something that will directly cause a person's death e.g. giving a lethal injection. This is currently illegal in the UK but is legal in Switzerland and Belgium. It states in the 1961 suicide act that anyone who aids another's suicide could face up to 14 years in prison. However, many people have believed that it should be made legal in the UK to make it easier for British people to end their lives with dignity. Many religious and ethical principles oppose euthanasia and as this country has a Christian heritage, the views of the Church tend to guide the law on medical ethics.



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Examiner Comments

The term Euthanasia is defined, followed by a lengthy explanation of two types of Euthanasia which are exemplified. The debate is not tied very closely to the question as there is only a passing reference to the question at the end. The last sentence might have opened the introduction and this might have resulted in the candidate offering a fuller focus on the debate from the outset.



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Examiner Tip

Do not spend too long on your introduction - especially if you have much material to cover - as you might run out of time. If you do choose to write at length for your introduction the material needs to be tied to the question and the level of debate.

This essay defines terms that are already well known to the reader.

Chosen question number: ☒ Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒ Question 3

Abortion is the premature expulsion of the foetus from the womb. There are many issues raised from abortion, and one of the biggest questions: When does the foetus become a human being? There are many asserted answers given to this question, but we cannot assert a correct one as they are religious and/or moral answers.

~~There is also known as 'P'~~ One of the main issues raised by abortions is whether the mother has complete freedom over her body. Judith Jarvis Thompson wrote an influential book named 'Defence of abortion'. She is a feminist ethically and she is part of pro-choice. She says a woman has complete freedom over her own body, and is therefore allowed an abortion if desired. Judith brings up the violinist situation which is a man waking up on a hospital bed, and he is attached to a famous violinist



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The introduction spends time defining a well known word and does not make any reference to the question.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Look at the question before you begin writing and decide how it might inform the approach you use in your essay.

Selection of material defines the quality of essays as the following extract demonstrates.

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒

Abortion is the legal termination of a pregnancy before the fetus has turned into a baby. It is the ^{*1} removal of a fetus to stop it from growing anymore. ~~it is~~
Abortion is still not legal in all countries and even then it ~~is~~ still has guidelines as to whether it is allowed in different situations. In 1967 the abortion act took place and said that an abortion was allowed as long as they were no further than 28 weeks into the pregnancy. However in 1997 this was changed again and lowered to 24 weeks which it is still now. The reasons for this was that as technology developed babies were liable to live outside of their mothers womb at younger and younger ages. When considering abortion it is in the law that ATLEAST two doctors must have said it is ok, it is allowed if it is majorly going to affect other children/people in the family, if the baby is severley ~~ill~~ ill or has problems or if the mothers mental health is not good enough to care for the baby or cope with the situation.

When looking at abortion many people and religions have different opinions on it. There are absolutists and Relativist/Situationalist approaches to it. ^{One} ~~A~~ absolutist approach is by a man called Aquinas. He believed in the natural moral law. This was that God had intended sexual intercourse for one purpose only: to reproduce. God said 'Be fruitful and multiply'. Aquinas

disagreed with abortion, IVF treatment and the use of contraception as they ~~were~~^{are} all unnatural ways to either have a baby or stop a baby from being born. ~~He~~ He only said that abortion should be allowed in situations where the mother's life has been put at risk. This moral principle does provide essential guidelines in the fact that many people do agree on the idea that if the mother's life is at risk then an abortion should be allowed. (it is also used in the law). However not everyone would agree with Aquinas' natural moral law theory as it is very extreme and now people do not just see sexual intercourse as a way in which to reproduce but also to show love between couples etc. Because of this not all people would agree with his theory making these guidelines not essential but considered by some people. *2



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate defines abortion and uses the first page to describe how, when and why abortion takes place without making any reference to the question and the issues surrounding this topic. The essay only takes off in the second page and even then the question is largely not addressed.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Plan your essays and make sure that your content is not covered at the expense of issues crucial to the question. The question must be answered.

Question 2

The Natural World

There was a decline in the number of candidates answering this question. There were too few responses to enable fuller feedback but it might be helpful to note that a full exemplar essay is included in the Examiners' Reports of June 2009 and June 2010. These exemplars show competent scholarship in this topic.

Question 3

Equality In The Modern World

There was also a decline in the number of responses to this question and something noted for the last few years still occurs, in that a significant number of responses for this question were actually responses more suited to question 1 on medical ethics. Several candidates decided to write about abortion or euthanasia from the position of equality because they thought their material could also be used for question 3 and most were not able to make this link coherent or sensible. Candidates must make sure they answer the question they have prepared for.

There were some excellent essays on contrasting views about homosexuality and effective use was made of contemporary debate, especially from within the Anglican Communion. As with question 1, the best answers tended to be more aware of the contemporary religious, ethical, and political controversy. Good quality answers clarified the various meanings of equality and the complexities of the surrounding ethical debate. There was evidence of competent discussion regarding the philosophical issues that pertain to justice and equality and this was exemplified through a substantive range of sources.

In question 3 it is sometimes possible that emotional advocacy becomes a substitute for ethics scholarship and background information. It is important that candidates are concerned by gender, race, and sexuality, but the passion and interest needs to be tied to genuine knowledge content. Some candidates did not refer to ethical theories at all and gave an account of the problems of homosexuality without answering the question. Some candidates linked their answer on equality to abortion and this was not always well argued or developed.

There were some powerfully stated answers on women's rights. Rather like the abortion questions, answers on gay equality issues tended to follow standard paths. It is not that candidates are marked down but rather they do not include content which would allow them to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Remember answer ONLY ONE question.

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒

Although in an ideal world we would all live in a world in which injustice and inequality would be unheard of and a thing of the past. However we do not in reality. In many places across the world inequality is still very much a daily part of life for some people especially in more deprived parts of the world where corruption, poverty and genocide are still an underlying people problem with no solution. With lessons learnt from past injustices which we all know for certain are immoral you would have thought that a lesson would have been learnt universally that religious and ethical values and attitudes would have to be upheld in order to protect people, sadly this does not happen and thousands of victims of inequality go unhelped and for some even unnoticed a day.

The Holocaust is one of History's most unjust, unfair and tragic events in the past years, one in which ^{consequences} ~~effects~~ are still felt even up to today. The Holocaust we know can never be justified by any means and is a clear example of the type of things which can go unnoticed or even unnoticed up to a point. During the Holocaust people became victims simply for who

they were and largely what religion they were rather than for anything they had done, no crimes had been ^{committed} ~~done~~, nothing, and most caught up were innocent victims who were just trying to live their life which for the majority involved was taken from them because of one man's ideas. The Holocaust undoubtedly had an enormous effect globally and still does today although it has been many years people have not forgotten those who fell victim. In fact because of the Holocaust many have pledged their support to upholding equality and changing religious and moral attitudes to do so. Rudi Oppenheimer who spent most of his childhood with his older brother Paul in a concentration camp is one of the many fighting for the cause instead of spreading a message of anger he instead promotes the idea of speaking out against inequalities so that no one else has to suffer what he went through. Although it is not just individuals fighting battle organizations such as the United Nations strive for equality in the modern world and act on the motto of "We the peoples for a stronger UN" world vigorously to uphold equality throughout the world and was set up after the Holocaust to do so, However have people truly learnt the lesson from such events is questionable.

There are still many unjust events happening throughout the world and equality ^{has} is still not been fully achieved.

globally although some may think inequality is a problem combined to one part of the world but it is not in fact its much wider. For example the spread of prejudice against religion and those who practice certain religions for example Islam. The growth of 'Islamophobia' has increased over the past 30 years. The term itself is a recognized term which is used in reference to the fear or hatred of Islam and surfaced between the 80's and 90's. These days although many not admit it but Islamophobia is a growing problem in the modern world, one in which seems to be going ignored to a degree.

The cause is often put down to lack of knowledge of the religion or it being misinterpreted by influential groups. The term itself is very vague in terms of defining what sort of behaviour is classed as Islamophobic for example treating someone badly differently because they belong to the religion, making insulting remarks or even physical abuse someone all because they follow Islam is typically classed as 'phobic' behaviour. Attitudes like this are often encouraged because of the way a group (often the media) portray the Religion for example the September 11th attacks on the world trade centre in New York had a massive effect on the religion as it was claimed to be caused

out by Islamic extremists however it is important to remember that acts like these are ~~are~~ carried out by those who are classed as extremists and often misinterpret the Quran and its teachings and that in fact at the time a very large majority of Muslim organisations spoke out against the events stating there was no whatsoever justification for such horrific acts and stated "God does not an aggressor."

However Although many never act out on their beliefs of Islamophobia if they do have them over the past few years the number of incidents in regards to Islamophobia has more than doubled. In 2004 in Nigeria 530 Muslims were murdered, twelve Mosques were destroyed and 300 homes destroyed in a massacre carried out by a group who specifically targetted the Islamic community. In 2009, Dresden, Germany a woman was stalked to death in a court room after giving evidence against her racist attacker who had shouted verbal abuse at Mariam El-Sherbini (the victim) for wearing the Islamic Headscarf. In even more recent incidents a Mosque in Ontario Canada was firebombed in which the police stated that the attack was a hate crime towards the religion.

In Conclusion I'd say that Moral and Religious attitudes need to change as well as be upheld in order to protect the world from inequality aimed at innocent

Nicknames whether they be religious, orientation based, gender or race crimes and discrimination. One solution some may say would be to follow the utilitarian theory of Utilitarianism and support the idea of the greatest good for the greatest number of people however the flaws with this may include having to carry out drastic actions which may not justify the ends. Whatever solution the world comes up with it is important for it to be one that protects people universally and until then each individual must strive towards working together to uphold equality by making society a fairer more just and tolerable community in which everyone lives safely and happily.



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Examiner Comments

There is no reference to the question in the introduction of this example and the discussion of Islam-phobia that follows is descriptive. The conclusion makes a valid point but overall the brevity of the essay does not allow for the topic to be treated in much breadth or depth.



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Examiner Tip

A valid argument can be substantiated by a fuller use of appropriate academic sources and religious teachings

This essay is composed of short paragraphs and the style of expression is one way of saving time.

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒

In this essay I will examine on the view that the existence of inequality in the modern world suggests a need for a change in religious and refer it to the ~~to~~ topic I have investigated about the discrimination against homosexuals.

Discrimination is the act of treating an individual or a group of people differently because of their race, gender, age, religion and so on. In the topic I have investigated, the type of discrimination that is used is 'homophobia' or 'homophobic', which means the fear or hatred to homosexuals.

The Stonewall riots was one of the first ~~known~~ ^{glo} known attempts of gays fighting for equal rights. The events of the riots became ~~world~~ known worldwide, and led to the awareness of rights for gays because they are equal and human just like everybody else.

The topic I ~~have~~ will be using in this essay is about a gay couple who were denied a room to stay in, by the Christian hoteliers. They denied the gay couple ~~there~~ a room to stay in because it ~~was~~ is part of ~~their~~ their religious ~~be~~ homosexuality goes against their religious beliefs and their



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Examiner Comments

The use of phrases like: 'In this essay I will investigate ...' and ... 'refer it to the topic I investigated' may mean the candidate runs out of time.



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Examiner Tip

Think about your style of writing before the exam and how you might be able to say more with less words. Time goes by very fast under examination conditions.

~~The essay~~
~~I think that the inequality present~~
~~in the modern world is a result for many~~
~~centuries~~
 I think that the inequality has been present throughout our history, with many aspects of it a result of verses in holy books and presents a need for change in religious attitudes. However, since many have gone on to achieve equality, but the problem of inequality still persists.

'the existence of inequality in the modern world suggests a need for change in religious attitudes'

Antisemitism has been a problem for many centuries. Antisemitism is where a group of people feel hostility and so discriminate towards the Jewish people. It started in biblical



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This essay shows a candidate taking time to settle down to answering the question.

The first sentence is crossed out and written out again almost word for word and this is wasting precious time for the candidate.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Try and enter the examination in a relaxed state of mind. If you have prepared for the exam you will have no trouble in answering the question.

Paper Summary

Key points to remember:

Manage the material to focus on the demands of the question.

Use appropriate sources and, if possible, include recent scholarship.

Demonstrate how well you understand the topic by your selection of material.

Do not forget to comment on your material. Show that you have thought about your research.

Use your evidence to substantiate your argument.

Comment on alternative views if you know them.

Express your viewpoint clearly.

Practice writing under timed conditions as part of your preparation.

Do not spend too long writing out your essay plan to the detriment of the essay itself.

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