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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCE Religious Studies 6RS02/1E

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General Comments

The Investigations Paper of June 2010 demonstrated an encouraging level of engagement with a wide range of topics by candidates who demonstrated a superb level of scholarship across all areas of study. The enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. 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. It is important to note that the overall title of this unit '*Investigations*' has a definite academic purpose. The aim is to involve students as active participants pursuing open-ended enquiries with an emphasis on independent learning. Questions were designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and all valid answers were considered.

Most centres had entered their candidates for the correct option but there were still a few entries for particular areas of study where it might have benefited the candidate more to consider entry for a different area of study. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper.

Variation in achievement was related to the two Assessment Objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Importantly, in the exam itself there must be explicit attention to these objectives in the examination answer. Each question consistently referred to the Assessment Objectives with the trigger word 'Examine' for AO1 and 'Comment on' for AO2. These dictated the structure of the question and helped candidates to plan their answers. It would be advisable for candidates to pay attention to the level descriptors for these assessment objectives as a way of monitoring their development and progress during their investigations. The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' will always appear in the question to ensure that the generic question can be answered with material from any appropriate investigation. The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions. 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, success can be undermined by writing up a rote-learned answer which was not adapted to the question set.

Specific Comments - Area 1E - The Study Of The Old Testament/Jewish Bible

The level of knowledge and scholarship shown in this area is very impressive. Although the Old Testament had the fewest candidates of all the options, the level of responses was notably higher.

The best candidates were able to offer balanced answers, with knowledge and evaluation in proportion. There were, however, a number who spent too long on the Biblical accounts and textual narratives at the expense of exegesis and evaluation. That said, the overall standard for the Old Testament Area of Study was, as ever, impressively high.

Question 1 - Religion And Science

Scholarship in the Old Testament is extensive and is best deployed with the relevant textual extract from which the theological issues emerge. Apart from the excellent answers at the higher end responses to the religion and science question from weaker candidates were generally the only answers that struggled to relate issues within the religion and science debate to a study of the Old Testament. Some candidates were rather one-sided in their approach to the religion and science debate and opportunities to refer to the Old Testament narratives were generally missed.

Question 2 - The Nature Of God

Candidates answered this question with a high level of insight and were well-equipped to examine the notion of God as personal whilst backing up their views with a wide range of very useful and contrasting biblical quotations, both from the Law and the Prophets.

The notion of holy was well-tackled through the use of scholarly opinion backed up by the Prophets and the Psalms. Evaluation was interesting and varied in approach, from the evangelistic notions of God's embracing agape love, through pre-destination, heaven and hell to philosophical notions of free will and epistemic distance. Some candidates had clearly benefited from reading a really useful article in 'RS Review' from a little-known scholar, Theo Knight.

The January 2010 report quotes a whole essay which shows how scholarly commentary can be combined with a sound knowledge of scripture to address the demands of the question.

Question 3 - Job And The Problem Of Evil And Suffering

By far, this question was the most popular and the best done. Candidates were able to examine skilfully the problem of suffering in Job and compare it with textual narratives elsewhere, most notably the Genesis myths. Many then went on to look at philosophical notions, particularly the Augustinian Theodicy and natural and moral evil. Scholarship was clearly evident and impressive references were made to the redeeming and atoning love of Christ.

However, some candidates re-told the Job narratives then wrote about philosophical notions, but were unable to relate the two in a very meaningful way. Candidates really did explore issues deeply within this question, and most answers were full of scholarship, good learning and interesting evaluation.

Grade boundaries

Raw mark boundaries

Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
50	41	36	31	27	23	19	0

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries

Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
100	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

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