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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCE Religious Studies 6RS02/1F

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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 1F - The Study of The New Testament

For the New Testament, candidates once again drew on a range of interesting and sometimes original material, with scholarship from Aquinas, Marsh, Drane, Smalley and, inevitably, Dawkins. The most popular question was question 3.

Question 1 - Religion And Science

This question was answered by very few candidates, however, a popular approach to this question was a study of the miracles of Jesus or the resurrection, and contrasting the religious ideas with scientific studies of divine intervention and with philosophical ideas. Most candidates were able to offer good, scholarly argument both in support of miracles/resurrection and scientific arguments against. There was a genuine attempt to answer the question set by the majority of candidates.

Question 2 - New Testament Ethics And Morality

This was a more popular question and some candidates linked their response to ethical studies. Most candidates concentrated on either Jesus' teachings at the Sermon on the Mount, or the parables and applied them to the moral issues chosen. There were useful references to Old Testament Law, particularly the more gruesome aspects of Deuteronomy, contrasted with the agape love of Christ. Some candidates highlighted the discrepancies in Christ's teaching, for instance, on divorce.

It is worth noting that some topics share generic ideas across a number of different areas and it is vital that candidates know the distinctive features of their investigation for example; there can be overlap with topics addressed in Area 1C and candidates who focussed more on classical ethical theory rather than the New Testament ethics might have used the material they investigated more effectively in Area 1C.

Question 3 - Life After Death

This was the most popular question on this paper and was very well done by the majority of candidates, although a number of mid range responses spent too long re-telling the resurrection accounts. Most candidates contrasted the resurrection narratives and Paul's teachings from 1 Corinthians 15 with philosophical arguments surrounding the immortality of the soul, reincarnation and bodily resurrection. Scholarship and evaluation were impressive for this question and most candidates addressed the question effectively from the outset.

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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