

Script: Pre-recorded Event

Event Code:	9RS0/19P1
Event Title:	A Level Religious Studies: Feedback on the June 2019 Series

1. Slide No.	2. Script (verbatim)
Slide 1	Welcome to Pearson Edexcel. This is a presentation for A level Religious Studies: Feedback on the June 2019 Examination series.
Slide 2	<p>This is a pre-recorded session designed for teachers wishing to receive feedback on the Pearson Edexcel A level Religious Studies specification – 2019 series.</p> <p>We will cover a number of components in this session and you can select which areas are relevant to you using the breaks which have been set up throughout the presentation to guide you.</p> <p>There is a delegate download folder which we recommend you download now. This download contains the relevant exemplars, mark schemes and question papers for each of the components we will be covering.</p> <p>If you also wish to read the examiner reports which the exemplars have been taken from, please click on this link to find the reports and all the other examination documents on the website.</p>
Slide 3	<p>During this course, we will provide feedback for you on the overall course but also on some of the most popular components.</p> <p>We have some exemplars for you to download and read as part of the training as well as some 'hints and tips' on how to improve performance.</p>
Slide 4	<p>So, just to re-cap, this is what we will be covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General comments and feedback about what went well • General comments and feedback about what went less well <p>We will then move onto individual components. You can move through to the components most relevant to use by clicking on the breaks and dividers in this presentation.</p>
Slide 5	This is the first part of the presentation: General Feedback – what went well?

Slide 6	<p>In the second sitting of this new specification, there were some excellent and well-crafted responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the highest level, candidates presented answers which drew on a range of detailed and carefully employed knowledge to deconstruct issues and offer sustained and clear reasoning and judgement in relation to the questions. • There was a good range of subject-specific terminology and a variety of scholarship used well in many responses. • In the synoptic question (Question 4), links were used most effectively when clearly signposted and then elaborated in a short paragraph or two on how the topics linked to each other. Some responses created this link throughout an essay with some considerable skill. • The challenge of the anthology was largely well met, with candidates responding positively to the extracts set. • Overall, candidates and their teachers are to be commended for their hard work and application. The majority of candidates did not panic in the exam and their knowledge and skills were effectively applied.
Slide 7	Moving onto the second part of the presentation: General Feedback – what went less well?
Slide 8	<p>There are some areas which went less well for some candidates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were still some issues of time management for centres and candidates to refine. In particular, candidates who overwrote on Question 1 and may, in consequence, have left themselves without sufficient time to give due consideration to Question 4. • Some candidates rely on regurgitating the content of the extract in Question 3a rather than clarifying its meaning. • A significant proportion of answers to Question 4 still failed to demonstrate links to other areas of study, thus denying the candidate access to the highest level. • It remains essential that candidates are equipped to access the whole specification and do not leave out significant areas in their revision. There are no alternatives in the examination, and anything mentioned in the specification could be the subject of a question. • There is no substitute for accurate knowledge and using it to answer the question that has been set, and not the question which the candidate <i>wished</i> had been set.
Slide 9	We are now moving onto feedback on specific components. This part of the presentation will cover Philosophy of Religion – component 1.
Slide 10	We will start with what went well on this paper:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strongest answers to Question 1 succinctly discussed motion, cause and contingency with absolute focus on the question and did not drift into unrequired evaluation. • In Question 2, candidates wrote well on the immortality of the soul and offered strong evidence for existence without a body or in a new body. • There were some excellent responses to the anthology extract (Questions 3a and 3b) and candidates did well when they referred to the passage in short bursts rather than making lengthy quotations. The extract was generally well understood and points were clearly expanded. • In Question 4, the synoptic element was handled well by many candidates and strong answers were well balanced between explaining the problem of evil and theodicies as well as employing their knowledge of Mackie. Good links were made with the New Testament, particularly, the suffering of Jesus, and Virtue Ethics was a popular link made to Religious Ethics.
Slide 11	<p>Moving onto what went less well for some candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some candidates appeared to have hoped for a longer essay on the Cosmological Argument in Question 1 and spent far too long on a lengthy introduction and included too many points in too much detail. • Weaker responses to Question 2 included extensive consideration of the Replica Theory or resurrection, whilst some resorted to a narrative account of Near Death Experiences. • When tackling Question 3a, many candidates did not understand what an assertion is whilst others focused on bliks (Hare) rather than Mitchell's article. • In Question 3b, some candidates failed to focus on verification and continued the discussion of falsification. • Weaker answers to Question 4 spent too long on the problem of suffering or related details of the theodicies in an exclusively AO1 fashion. Some candidates made links to Old Testament, rather than New Testament, material.
Slide 12	<p>This is the part of the presentation where you may want to pause the recording and download the exemplar pack, question paper and mark scheme from your delegate download.</p> <p>Read the exemplars and discuss them with your colleagues. When you have finished your discussions, re-start this recording and move onto the next slide which will discuss the exemplars in more detail.</p>
Slide 13	<p>These are the commentaries for each exemplar in the pack. You may want to pause the recording so you can read the marks and commentaries in more detail.</p>

	These exemplars were taken from the examiner reports and there are more exemplars and more detailed commentary in these reports.
Slide 14	We will now move onto Component 2 – Religion and Ethics
Slide 15	<p>We will start with what went well on this paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to Question 1 were impressive. Candidates were able to refer to a range of environmental and ethical positions as well as to speciesism and world religions. A small number of candidates explained contemporary thought on animal communication and rethinking the status of non-human animals in an anthropocentric world. • In response to Question 2, candidates who had accurate knowledge of PGD were able to make strong links with ethical positions regarding the Sanctity and Quality of Life, personhood and the status of the embryo. • Questions 3a and 3b revealed that most candidates were able to show good knowledge and understanding of Kant's theory and to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. The text was used well when it served as a catalyst for more detailed clarification of the points made. • In Question 4, the best answers on religion and morality were impressive and demonstrated excellent work by centres enabling their candidates to apply knowledge of the scholars and case studies recommended in the specification. The most competent candidates were able to make strong links to the New Testament and to the Study of Religion.
Slide 16	<p>Moving onto what went less well for some candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Question 1, weaker responses did not range beyond the concept of stewardship drawn from Genesis. Overall, centres are encouraged to embrace ideas about the equality of non-human animals put forward by a range of contemporary practitioners such as Anna Breytenbach and James French. • In response to Question 2 a number of candidates were vague about PGD, several suggesting that it took place on a foetus in the womb, leading to many unjustifiable abortions. Others guessed that it was connected to the fate of the embryo or foetus and avoided defining it, but still made some generically helpful suggestions. • Weaker responses to Question 3 were based on a narrow range of material about Kant's theory and over played generic and trivial examples of moral action (the inevitable old lady who needs helping across the road). Many were repetitive and lacked supplementary scholarship. • Answers to Question 4 revealed that some candidates lacked scholarship or contemporary examples and depended on thinking 'off the cuff' or employed a limited range of generic points.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, candidates who did not depend on answering every question with reference to the formal ethical theories were able to access a wider range of marks.
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Slide 19	We will now move onto Component 3 – New Testament Studies.
Slide 20	<p>We will start with what went well on this paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Question 1, specific detailed knowledge of the Johannine text was linked with themes of incarnation, replacement theology and Christology. The best answers were full yet concise and were able to refer to the signs without resorting to simplistic narrative. For Question 2, many candidates were able to refer to a plethora of scholars and offer a range of possibilities for the author and for the Beloved Disciple. Moving onto Question 3a, the strongest responses were able to explore a breadth of interpretations which might have been made with regard to the parable, whilst others highlighted the implications of the parable in the social context of the First Century. Question 3b drew a range of strong answers characterised by a detailed grasp of key texts and related them to the First Century and to the modern reader, whilst making reference to a wide range of prominent contributions. And last for Question 4, most responses were of a good length and the best candidates made effective connections to their other areas of study including religious language and equality. As in previous years, the best answers also included good knowledge of scholarship regarding the timing of eschatological events.
Slide 21	<p>Moving onto what went less well for some candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Question 1, some candidates gave lengthy examinations of the Prologue without making any link with the signs, whilst others retold the story of signs without discussing how it indicated an aspect or characteristic of the person of Jesus.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Question 2, weaker responses gave a brief account of John the Beloved Disciple actually being the author, without any awareness that this simplistic traditional view faces many challenges. Moving onto Question 3a, weaker answers relied on regurgitation of the text whilst others offered ethical sermonising on the principle of 'love your neighbour'. The weakest responses simply retold the parable. For Question 3b, some weaker responses confused what material is in Luke's gospel, including reference, for example, to the woman caught in adultery from John 8. Lastly, in Question 4, weaker responses were incomplete or dealt with general knowledge on what the Kingdom of God might be. Some outlined the parable of the sower or the Good Samaritan (again!).
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Slide 24	We will now move onto Component 4B – Christianity.
Slide 25	<p>We will start with what went well on this paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Question 1, good answers made effective use of Buber and Augustine and candidates handled the idea of God communicating through creation well. For Question 2, strong responses identified why some NRM posed a problem for mainstream Christianity, whilst others explained the implications of those problems, such as taking members away from the larger denominations. In response to Question 3a, many candidates were comfortable untangling the complexities of the passage and understood the essence of Hick's argument, notably that he was arguing for a broader sense of the term 'atonement'.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good answers to Question 3b clarified Hick's position on Jesus as a moral exemplar, whilst a number recognised that Hick may be guilty of twisting the biblical text to suit his own theories.• For Question 4, good answers revealed impressive knowledge of the Bible as revealed theology and were able to discuss problems associated with different interpretations. Strong candidates were also able to understand why natural theology leads on to Natural Moral Law which provided an effective synoptic link.
Slide 26	<p>Moving onto what went less well for some candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Question 1, weaker answers dwelt for too long on God as transcendent and failed to discuss the personal nature of God.• For Question 2, less successful answers focused on brief and limited descriptions and misunderstood the focus of the question leading to simplistic responses.• In response to Question 3a, weaker answers approached the text as an outline of Hick's own view rather than his explanation of various approaches to atonement, whilst weaker responses to 3b repeated material from 3a and failed to identify clear strengths and weaknesses.• Finally, for Question 4, weaker answers lacked sufficient knowledge and tended to avoid any discussion of natural theology.
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Slide 29	<p>We will now move onto our last Component. Component 4D – Islam</p>
Slide 30	<p>We will start with what went well on this paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For Question 1, most candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the key ideas of tawhid and were able to explore the relationship between tawhid and shirk.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Question 2, stronger answers demonstrated a good use of material and showed an understanding of the historical context, focusing on the demands of the question.• In response to Question 3a, stronger answers were detailed and clear, addressing a broad range of religious ideas and beliefs related to the key teachings of the Qur'an on the nature of Allah.• For Question 3b, stronger answers were able to consider whether the Qur'an is the revealed word of Allah and supported their points with reasoned judgments.• Finally, for Question 4, successful answers maintained an objective stance, focusing on a range of approaches to the way men and women are viewed in the Muslim community. Stronger answers made good links with issues relating to equality (Ethics) and the fact that the Caliphs and the immediate disciples of Jesus were all male (New Testament).
Slide 31	<p>Moving onto what went less well for some candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For Question 1, weaker answers were typically too brief, even for this 8-mark question.• For Question 2, weaker responses were heavily descriptive and failed to focus on the wording of the question, whilst others did not provide evidence to back up their views.• Moving onto Questions 3a and 3b. Weaker answers to 3a tended to be brief and were overly reliant on the extract. Responses to 3b were too narrative in style.• And lastly, for Question 4, less successful answers were subjective in their approach and failed to analyse or evaluate at an academic level.
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Slide 34	The last part of this presentation will cover common mistakes and lessons learned.
Slide 35	<p>Firstly, these are some of the common mistakes made by candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing the focus of a question. • Lack of effective revision or failure to recover sufficient specification material. • Mistiming of the paper, especially on the lower tariff questions. • Providing lists of facts rather than an evaluation or a discussion in Questions 2, 3b and 4. • Lack of synopticity and links in Question 4. • Failure to unpack the extract in question 3a and to extend discussion in question 3b.
Slide 36	<p>And to close, here are some lessons learned which are valuable for you and your students to apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the question, then read it again – make sure you understand the focus. • Prepare and revise effectively – don't avoid topics which you perceive to be less important or appealing. • Check how many marks are available for each part of a question and write at an appropriate length. • Practise making links with the topics on the specification. • Practise clarifying extracts from the anthology. • Ensure the full content of the specification is covered during teaching and learning.
Slide 37	As always, we are here to help you with any questions you might have. Please click on this link if you need any further support.
Slide 38	Thank you very much for listening.