

GCSE

Religious Studies B (Philosophy and Applied Ethics)

General Certificate of Education **GCSE J621**

General Certificate of Education (Short Course) **GCSE J121**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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B601 Philosophy 1 (deity, religious and spiritual experience, end of life)

General Comments:

The paper proved accessible to most candidates and the vast majority of candidates were able to fulfil the demands of the paper within the allocated time. There were few rubric infringements.

A minority of candidates responded to the questions 'out of order' beginning with the e) part of the questions. There is no rule against this but it was noted that some of these candidates spent far too long on the e) parts, writing as much as 4 sides for each response. This approach was least successful when candidates flitted between questions, for example; 2e, 14e, 2d, 14d, 2c, 14c, 2b, 14b, 2a then 14a). Some of these candidates were unable to sustain logical lines of thought, which affected the quality of their responses.

Many candidates offered clear and appropriate responses to the questions in parts a) to c) of each section where short answers or even a one word response are required. Some candidates gave unnecessarily extended responses to these sections however, especially to part c) of the question. This must have affected their overall time management. In order to limit the amount a candidate might offer in a part c) response, the questions are, when appropriate, constructed to require that candidates consider only one aspect of the topic. Candidates who address the task in a straightforward way fare best as they naturally offer a statement about the topic, develop the response and then exemplify or further develop the response, gaining three marks. It is noticeable that some candidates start by referring to one aspect and then move to a different aspect coming back to the first at the end of their response. This approach tends to limit the marks that can be awarded and can mean that only the first response can be credited. Centres should be aware that responses will be marked in the order in which they are written. Where a candidate offers several responses, for example to a part a) which is asking for one response, the candidate's first response will be marked. If that response is wrong, no other responses will be credited even if they are correct. This rule applies to all the point marked parts of the questions, parts a), b) and c).

In part d), where candidates are required to demonstrate their understanding of an issue, some candidates offered responses which demonstrated a sound grasp of the significance of the issue for the religion of their choice. Knowledge of underpinning teaching was often vague. Candidates who supported their understanding with useful references to accurate religious teaching or offered support from religious texts and / or the life and attitudes of key figures within the religion, fared best. A few candidates limited the value of their response by offering a discussion of the topic, including their own opinion along the lines of a part e) response.

There some excellent responses to the e) part of each question although reaching the full marks for this part is a challenge. Responses from many candidates consisted of well presented arguments on either side of the debate and clear evidence of a personal viewpoint. The personal viewpoint was often offered as a distinct section but many of the best responses showed the personal viewpoint as series comments, weighing the various arguments and woven into the discussion as a whole. Many candidates, as required by the rubric, considered the issue in the stimulus with clear reference to the religion of their choice. On occasions, the candidate's knowledge unfortunately dominated the response to the detriment of the argument. Other candidates offered a general religious response, sometimes repeating the same religious teaching to support different issues which limited the value of their response. A few candidates failed to offer any religious content at all, whilst some developed an argument for one side of the issue but with no consideration of alternative views or shades of opinion. These latter sorts of response, along with those which did not offer any personal comment could not be given much credit.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A: Belief about Deity

- a) The majority of candidates offered a satisfactory response in the form of a definition or short phrase. Some gave examples of intervention which could not be credited as the question asked for the meaning of the word.
- b) Responses across the religions were good to this part. The word belief was understood to refer to theological beliefs as well as assertions about historical aspects of religious figures.
- c) The question asked for three words, so some candidates who offered descriptions failed to gain all or any of the marks. The 'omni' words (or their English forms) were most commonly offered.
- d) The question asked candidates to explain the importance of miracles, which some candidates did using examples where appropriate. The move from an explanation of the significance of particular miracles to an explanation of the importance of miracles generally for believers was achieved in some responses. Other responses consisted of a description of miracles which left the examiner to decide on their importance and gained little credit as a result.
- e) The stimulus provoked some complex and sophisticated philosophical discussions. A tendency to offer significant detailed knowledge about proofs for the existence of the divine hampered some otherwise good responses and some focused on the issue of existence and failed to address the stimulus at all. Many however referred to knowledge of the divine being based on religious experience, sacred texts, miracles and so on. Some candidates developed the view that human understanding of divine was bound to be provisional, flawed and inadequate and that it depends on the extent to which the divine chooses to reveal their nature. Others drew a parallel between a personal knowledge of the divine which would be partial, with our knowledge of other people which is similarly partial and open to sometimes surprising revelations.

Section B: Religious and Spiritual Experience

- a) Responses to this part across the religions were good and usually sufficiently precise to be given the mark.
- b) Responses to this part were also good across the religions with the exception of Christianity where many candidates struggled to give two ways music might be used in worship. Sometimes the two ways were too similar to be credited with two marks or very vague and general and not worthy of credit at all.
- c) In this part some candidates offered good descriptions of symbols which might be used to worship in the home but did not say how they might be used. Some responses offered several symbols and ways they might be used. The question asked for one way and only the first way offered was credited. Responses to this question from religions other than Christianity were often good as were responses to 10c) (Islam).
- d) This was a broad question which could be taken to refer to traditional festivals as well as festivals in the sense of events where religious people might gather to share their faith with others with whom they might not regularly mix. Some candidates struggled to offer much about spiritual benefits but most suggested that the believers enjoyed the value of community, sharing in worship and the opportunity to focus on things beyond the concerns of daily life. Some referred to the spiritual benefits of taking part in significant rituals such as the Eucharist or focusing on the basis of the festival and its significance for believers.

- e) The stimulus was easily understood by candidates and it provoked some excellent discussions about the benefits of corporate, versus private worship. Some of the best responses alluded to knowledge of practice in public and private worship. Other responses which focused on practical issues such as the ability to concentrate better in private and the value of sharing experiences of worship with other believers, without reference to how this might actually be achieved in the religions of choice, could only be awarded limited credit.

Section C: End of Life

- a) Some candidates failed to see the word 'before' in the question and offered things that were actually part of the funeral, but most suggested an appropriate way in which respect might be shown to the dead body before the funereal. Saying a prayer was a common response.
- b) Responses were good to this part. For questions 14 – 18, most responses referred to the distinction between body and soul and the belief in the immortality of the soul.
- c) Although the questions differed depending on the religion chosen, the problem encountered by candidates in this part was common to all; that of making a success of linking two things; moral behaviour and life after death / judgment and life after death / obedience and life after death. Some candidates struggled to stick to one belief and gave extensive descriptions of belief about the afterlife which could not be given full credit.
- d) In a similar way, many candidates found it hard to link belief and practice in this part of the question. Knowledge of funeral rituals was often poor and their association with beliefs weak. The best responses focused on two or more rituals and linked them to appropriate beliefs with explanation of their significance for believers.
- e) Candidates who focused on the issue of whether there is any point in believing in life after death were able to develop good responses addressing issues such as; whether people should live their lives with the next life as the main focus of their current life, or whether the question of what happens after death is one to be set aside, to enable people to concentrate on enjoying and making a success of their current life. Some candidates offered a response which just discussed whether belief in life after death was true or not and failed to address the issue in the stimulus effectively. Whilst this could be an appropriate aspect of the discussion it meant that some lengthy and well informed responses had to be credited as limited rather than competent or good.

B602 Philosophy 2 (good and evil, revelation, science)

General Comments:

Most questions differentiated as intended. Some examiners felt that the paper was more challenging than previous papers (see detailed comments below).

During the course of the marking a noticeable issue arose with 2d (see detailed comments below), which seemed to reflect candidate understanding of technical religious terms listed in the specification. It was also noted that when answering questions 7-12 the d part was more commonly left unattempted than was the case with other questions. There were very few wholly blank scripts, and most candidates attempted all parts of the question they had chosen. There also seem to be fewer rubric errors than in previous years.

All religions were represented, with a noticeably larger number of Judaism and Islam scripts in particular than in previous years. Sikhism remains the least popular choice and Christianity markedly the most popular. There has been a noticeable increase in candidates choosing to answer each question from a different religious perspective. As in previous years sections A and C remain the most common choices, but Section B seemed better represented this year than in some past sessions.

Many candidates continue to write far more than is required for their answers to (a) (b) and (c) parts, consequently reducing the time available for parts (d) and (e). Most candidates were able to finish both their chosen questions. Some (e) parts were felt to have produced responses drawing more heavily on the content from the Ethics sections of the specification than the philosophy ones, but such synoptic thinking was credited according to its relevance to the question set and the level descriptors.

As noted during the last session there seems to be an increasing tendency towards formulaic answers for part (e).. These responses are generally restricted in the available marks as they tend to take the form of blocks of knowledge, discursive only in that they relate to differing views on the statement. They therefore struggle to achieve the 'justified arguments' and 'discussion' elements of the higher levels. The best responses avoided this kind of structure and presented a thoughtful and engaged consideration of the statements given in the question – some explicitly identified points of weakness or strength in a view before offering an alternative, and some presented the arguments as more of a back-and-forth conversation. There are still a larger than expected number of candidates who do not include any material specific to the religion on which they were answering in their response, and thus some otherwise high calibre responses were restricted to the lower levels.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A : Questions 1-6

Part a: Most candidates gained this mark, equating suffering with pain or distress. Those candidates who did not attain the mark had given only an example rather than the definition required or had not elaborated on the terms given in the question, using phrases like 'it is when you suffer'.

Part b: This question was generally well answered, with most candidates giving examples of actions as required. General attitudes such as 'being nice' were not sufficiently active to meet the requirements of the question but very few candidates gave this kind of response. On the same basis responses that were unclear about where the goodness might come in were not creditable; the most common example of these was the generic response of 'helping someone do something'. Since it is as possible to help someone carry out an immoral action as it is a moral one this was felt to be too ambiguous. However most candidates who referenced 'helping' qualified it appropriately to gain the mark. A small minority of candidates read the question as asking for reasons why someone might choose to be morally good. Engaging in religious ritual such as prayer was not credited as a morally good action, unless it was qualified with a reference to moral intention such as praying for the relief of suffering.

Part c: Although the philosophical concept of the 'the problem of evil' is required on all sections of the specification many candidates appeared unfamiliar with the term or its meaning in the context of philosophy of religion. A lot of candidates responded with ideas about personal responses to particular acts of evil and consequently gained no marks. Interestingly this was less of a concern for candidates answering from Hindu and Buddhist perspectives, where arguably the philosophical term has less meaning – nonetheless these candidates were able to engage with it and respond from an appropriate religious perspective while those answering from religions for which it is a more specific theological issue struggled. Some candidates gave practical responses which communicated ideas about having faith in a divine plan, or growth through suffering and these were credited appropriately. Those candidates who recognised the philosophical term often offered excellent philosophical and/or theological responses.

Part d: With especial reference to 2d this section did not differentiate as expected. Examiners expressed particular concern with candidates knowledge in relation to 2d, reporting giving lower marks in general than would be expected for a d part because candidates appeared to be unfamiliar with the concept of redemption. Some were simply unaware of the Christian use of the term and reflected on the ordinary English usage but many appeared wholly unfamiliar with the word in any context. Some equated it absolutely with forgiveness, and in these cases the available marks depended on how that idea was then explored and expanded since the two concepts are not synonymous. Other confusions equated it with revenge, retribution, reconciliation and, more generally, the aims of punishment. Since the term 'redemption' does appear on the specification, and since where it was recognised answers across the full range of marks were seen, this does not appear to be an issue with the question per se. Candidates answering the same structure of question set for the other religions did not appear to find it inaccessible.

Part e: Most candidates engaged well on a personal level with this question, engaging with ideas such as choosing the lesser of two evils and issues of intention and consequence as means of judging the moral value of an action. Various philosophical perspectives were employed by some candidates, although some of these discussions turned into a more generalised discussion of the existence of evil in the world than on moral choices. Specific reference to religions was variable, with some candidates engaging well with specific religious teachings relating to moral behaviour, judgement, free will, forgiveness and similar. However others focussed on these more generically. A general misunderstanding of the story of Job was common across candidates answering 2e, the point of the story is that Job had not chosen evil and continued not to choose evil even though he was tested, but a large minority of candidates reported the story as being a warning against choosing evil in order to avoid punishment like Job received. Material drawn from the ethics sections of the specification was commonly used, and generally to good effect – euthanasia, abortion, Just War theory and the actions of individuals such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer were the best used examples.

Section B : Questions 7-12

Part a: Generally answered well and with the expected responses. Candidates responding from Judaism showed a particularly good knowledge of some of the less well known scriptures within the tradition. A minority of lower-ability candidates did not register that 'written' authority was specified in the question, and thus failed to gain the mark.

Part b: While most candidates were able to access these marks there was some confusion around what 'religious experience' might mean in the context of this specification. The difference between the Buddhism question and those on the other religions was marked, with candidates answering from the Buddhist perspective being much clearer on both what meditation is and what was being asked for with the word 'features'.

Part c: In general candidates found this question accessible with the wide range of possible answers operating in their favour. Candidates who did not gain all three marks were generally either giving more than one teaching or had mis-attributed the teaching they selected – giving Old Testament teaching as revealed by Jesus, or sections from the Rig Veda instead of the Bhagavad Gita.

Part d: This was a challenging question, and it was recognised as such in the setting of the standard. Most candidates who attempted it were able to access the lower levels as they did understand the concept of revelation but many then struggled to get beyond the statement that revelation is direct from the divine while other knowledge is not. Some candidates equated revelation with religious experience and considered the difference in the effects of religious experience and everyday experience and some talked about the scale or longevity of revelation in comparison with the constant flux of other forms of human knowledge. A minority of candidates answering from the Christian perspective wrote about the Book of Revelation as knowledge of the future rather than the past and this was creditable although rather self-limiting. Candidates answering from the Muslim perspective seemed to do rather better than candidates answering on other religions. However some candidates were wholly confused by the concept of revelation.

Part e: Most candidates engaged with the question well and were able to discuss the issue from different sides. Some examiners reported a lack of religious specific knowledge in relation to spiritual experiences but others noted candidates able to draw in ideas about conversion, mysticism and different forms of revelation. The conversion of Saul into St Paul was a common example and often explored in detail; however a significant number of candidates seemed unaware that this was a conversion from one religion to another presenting it instead as a discovery of religion by someone previously wholly opposed. Some candidates utilised the ideas of Richard Dawkins and others to consider whether spiritual experiences are delusions or simply unexplainable. Another interesting and philosophical approach was to consider whether acceptance of the statement impacted on religious views of the nature of God; if there are people God cannot contact then Gods power must be limited.

Section C: Questions 13-18

Part a: While the definitions given in response to this question varied broadly in their level of sophistication, almost all candidates were able to offer a creditable definition and so gained the mark.

Part b: Most candidates correctly identified an environmental problem and a potential solution to it. Those who did not gain both marks either identified a problem which is human rather than environmental (such as poverty) or did not connect the solution with the problem they had identified (such as 'littering' and 'walking to work').

Part c: This was an accessible question with most candidates who attempted it gaining at least some of the marks. Some candidates gave more than one teaching, instead of developing the one asked for by the question. This resulted in them not gaining all the available marks.

Part d: Candidates appeared to find this more accessible than other part d questions on the paper, although there was still more confusion than might be expected with the Christianity responses and the meaning of 'stewardship'. It was interesting to note that while candidates might have connected part d with part c very few chose to do so. The most common weakness with responses was in descriptive rather than explanatory answers which did not fully address the issue of importance.

Part e: This question elicited strong personal responses from many candidates, and although some preferred simply to recount a range of militant atheist views in support of the statement there were also some thoughtful and mature responses able to look beyond their own views and give a considered response exploring the purposes religion might serve or unpacking the idea of 'need' in this context. Religious content was often disappointingly generic however and mid-range candidates had a tendency to focus more on the issue of creationism than the broader issue required by the question.

B603 Ethics 1 (Relationships, Medical Ethics, Poverty and Wealth)

General Comments:

The paper proved accessible to most candidates and the vast majority of candidates were able to fulfil the demands of the paper within the allocated time. There were few rubric infringements.

A minority of candidates responded to the questions 'out of order' beginning with the e) part of the questions. There is no rule against this but it was noted that some of these candidates spent far too long on the e) parts, writing as much as 4 sides for each response. This approach was least successful when candidates flitted between questions, for example; 2e, 14e, 2d, 14d, 2, c, 14c, 2b, 14b, 2a then 14a). Some of these candidates were unable to sustain logical lines of thought, which affected the quality of their responses.

Many candidates offered clear and appropriate responses to the questions in parts a) to c) of each section where short answers or even a one word response are required. Some candidates gave unnecessarily extended responses to these sections however, especially to part c) of the question. This must have affected their overall time management. In order to limit the amount a candidate might offer in a part c) response, the questions are, when appropriate, constructed to require that candidates consider only one aspect of the topic. Candidates who address the task in a straightforward way fare best as they naturally offer a statement about the topic and then develop the response and then exemplify or further develop the response gaining three marks. It is noticeable that some candidates start by referring to one aspect and then move to a different aspect coming back to the first at the end of their response. This tends to limit the marks that can be awarded and can mean that only the first response can be credited. Centres should be aware that responses will be marked in the order in which they are written. Where a candidate offers several responses, for example to a part a) which is asking for one response, the candidate's first response will be marked. If that response is wrong, no other responses will be credited even if they are correct. This rule applies to all the point marked parts of the questions, parts a), b) and c).

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There some excellent responses to the e) part of each question although reaching the full marks for this part is challenging. Responses from many candidates consisted of well presented arguments on either side of the debate and clear evidence of a personal viewpoint. The personal viewpoint was often offered as a distinct section but many of the best answers wove the personal response into the discussion as a whole. . Many candidates, as required by the rubric, considered the issue in the stimulus with clear reference to the religion of their choice. On occasions, the candidate's knowledge unfortunately dominated the response to the detriment of the argument. Other candidates offered a general religious response, sometimes repeating the same religious teaching to support different issues which limited the value of their response. A few candidates failed to offer any religious content at all, whilst some developed an argument for one side of the issue but with no consideration of alternative views or shades of opinion. These latter sorts of response, along with responses which did not offer any personal comment at all could not be given much credit.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A: Religion and Human Relationships

- a) Responses which referred to the legal ending of a marriage or its dissolution or which showed that the candidate understood that a divorce meant that the marriage no longer existed were credited.
- b) Very few candidates failed to offer at least one correct response to this section. In Buddhism, common responses were about the avoidance of craving or attachment whilst in Christianity the vows and exchange of rings were frequently offered.
- c) Apart from a few candidates who misunderstood the concept of a civil partnership, the majority focused on the issues same-sex relationships raised for the chosen religion..
- d) Many candidates succeeded in linking aspects of marriage with associated beliefs in their chosen religion. The understanding required by the AO1 objective in this part of the question was demonstrated by some candidates addressing a couple of beliefs in depth while other candidates addressed several beliefs more briefly. These responses could still be credited with satisfactory or good understanding, as it was demonstrated by range rather than depth.
- e) The stimulus provoked many excellent well argued responses which considered several aspects of the issue and a personal, response in relation to the religion chosen. Some candidates failed to consider the issue of contraception within marriage, offering instead a discussion of the ethics of contraception per se. These responses could be given some credit but were generally judged as limited rather than competent.

Section B: Religion and Medical Ethics

- a) An appropriate response was given by most candidates.
- b) Most candidates offered appropriate responses. Most frequently candidates referred to the mother's life being in danger if the pregnancy was not terminated and the possibility and issues to do with the health of the baby or the social welfare of the mother.
- c) Most candidates focused effectively on the issues surrounding human cloning as opposed to cloning generally. This question did not ask for one response so several brief comments as well as a developed response could be credited for full marks.
- d) Candidates were well often well informed about the attitudes of their chosen religion to euthanasia. The best responses explained the underlying reasons for the attitudes drawing support from traditions within the religion or sacred texts and authoritative figures.
- e) The topic in the stimulus generated some lively discussion which were sometimes characterised by strong personal reactions. On occasions these dominated the overall response to the extent that the views of the religion chosen were sometimes obscured or even omitted altogether.

Section C: Religion, Poverty and Wealth

- a) Most candidates managed to offer a suitable definition or description of poverty. A wide range of responses were credited in the light of the difficulty of defining it.

- b) Most candidates found little difficulty in offering at least one teaching about caring for others.
- c) Good responses were backed up with the description of the attitude with reference to examples of teaching or the work of key figures in the faith.
- d) There were some excellent responses which focused on the reasons people would give for choosing a moral occupation. Some candidates turned the question around and offered knowledge of the occupations people would not choose, because they were immoral occupations. Responses which took that tack were rarely judged to be worth more than Level 1.
- e) Many candidates argued convincingly that there were far better uses of money, even if it was 'disposable income' than gambling. Some candidates seemed to assume that winning was inevitable and therefore the negative side of gambling would be offset by the chance to do 'good' with winnings. Love of money and greed as the root of all evil remained the centre piece of most answers.

B604 Ethics 2 (Peace and Justice, Equality, Media)

General Comments:

In general candidates performed well on this paper and a good level of differentiation was achieved. The full range of marks was used although there was evidence that fewer candidates achieved level 4 on part e questions than in previous years. There has been a steep decline in the number of rubric errors over the last few years and this year was no exception with very few rubric violations in evidence. Where rubric errors did occur it was generally because candidates had answered all three sections. In a minority of cases there was evidence that this approach had been recommended by Centres, presumably in an attempt to maximise the marks of their candidates. This is a very bad policy as it invariably results in rushed responses, which are lacking in depth and development. Since the majority of marks for each question come from part d and e, which are marked using level descriptors, this almost always leads to candidates receiving fewer marks than they would otherwise have done.

Another tactic that a significant number of candidates are employing is to answer the questions 'in reverse' (that is from part e to part a). It is clear that they are doing this in order to devote more time to the parts of the paper where most marks are on offer however there is no evidence that candidates who do this achieve better marks than those who answer the paper in the order that it is printed. Many candidates who do answer in reverse actually achieve lower marks overall as they run out of time and do not answer all question parts. Other candidates add to the d and e 'piecemeal' as ideas occur to them resulting in a 'bitty' response that does not 'flow' well.

Most candidates were able to complete the paper in the time allowed. Where this was not the case, it was generally because the candidate had written more for parts a-c than was required to gain the marks. This continues to be an issue, and teachers should be aware that extended writing is only required in parts d and e. The level descriptors give a good idea of the length and depth of response required in parts d and e in order to reach the top levels.

While the great majority of responses are still on the Christian questions (2, 8 and 14) there is a large minority of around 20% of Islamic responses. Other religions are much rarer but are more in evidence than in previous years and in particular there has been a noticeable increase in responses from the Eastern religions. Very few candidates indeed attempted the paper from a Sikh perspective. An increasing number of candidates are choosing to answer one question from Christianity and another from a different religion.

As usual most candidates answered sections A and B although more than in previous years attempted section C. C is generally the weakest section although candidates are starting to engage with the religious knowledge required for this section in a more effective way. Generally speaking the strongest responses have been in section B.

Very few candidates had left the paper blank and almost all had had a serious attempt at the paper within their ability suggesting that candidates value the subject and the examination. This is a significant change from the situation a few years ago and is very encouraging.

Where candidates performed less well it was often because of generic or descriptive responses to part e or d questions. In part d it was common for responses to be descriptive and not clearly focussed on the question.

Some part e responses were repetitive and tended to state viewpoints rather than to back them up with Biblical teaching or specific religious knowledge. Often candidates had written all they knew about a topic rather than applying their knowledge to the specific question that had been asked. There is increasing evidence of candidates being trained to write to a frame or given structure for part e questions which in many cases limits the capacity for full evaluation and discussion and so the potential for able students to reach the higher levels. For many candidates there is still a real lack of understanding of the differences between Christian denominations with a general feeling that Roman Catholics are 'strict' and Anglicans and free churches less strict. This does sometimes limit the level a candidate is able to achieve.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A: War Peace and Justice. Question No. 1-6

- a) Most candidates were able to gain the mark for this question. Where they did not, it was generally because they had confused 'justice' with 'punishment' or 'revenge'. Candidates who suggested that justice was receiving fair punishment for a crime gained the mark but the idea of fairness or reciprocity had to be present. Some confused 'justice' with 'forgiveness', which was not credited.
- b) Most were able to gain the marks here with no difficulty. The most common responses were 'capital punishment', imprisonment' and 'community service' all of which were credited. Some candidates gave aims rather than types of punishment and where the aim was linked to prevention of crime this was credited (deterrence and retribution). Responses such as reformation and rehabilitation were not credited, as they were not a correct response to the question asked.
- c) This was generally well answered across all religions. Any reason why a religious person might choose to go to war was credited, rather than specifically religious reasons although a good range of these were offered. Where candidates did not gain all three marks it was usually because they had given the same reason more than once using different wording.
- d) Candidates focussed on criminal justice, liberation theology, social justice, God as a source of justice, concepts of justice in the Old Testament and the importance of Judgement Day. Good answers focussed on more than one of these and made effective use of Biblical teaching. Social justice occurred less prevalently than might have been expected. Some candidates lost marks because they drifted off topic, usually into the area of forgiveness, without explicitly linking their comments to justice.
- e) This was generally well answered although there is still a worryingly large minority of candidates who do not know what 'pacifism' is despite the fact that the word appears on the specification. Candidates frequently attempted to use 'equality' instead. Candidates often raised the story of Jesus overturning tables in the temple as justification for the use of violence with only the strongest candidates pointing out that this is not, in fact, justification as it is an example of righteous anger rather than use of violence. Candidates were generally able to give different view points supported with scriptural material and religious teaching.

Section B: Religion and Equality Question No. 7-12

- a) Most candidates gave the response 'sexism' with a few giving 'sexist' or 'discrimination', which were also credited. A very few gave 'feminism' or 'misogyny', which were also allowed. A worrying minority still seem to think that 'racism' is a generic term for any form of discrimination and quite a few offered 'homophobia', presumably because of the reference to gender in the question.

- b) Most were able to gain the marks here with no difficulty. Although specifically religious responses were not required, many candidates offered very apposite religious reasons. Common responses included the Lord's Prayer and Jesus' teaching about forgiving 70 X 7 times.
- c) The question asked for ways in which Christians had worked for equality and as such some sort of action was required in the response. Passive responses such as 'allowing women to become priests' were not credited. This was the most common reason for candidates failing to gain marks on this question. Some gave a variety of ways and since the question specifically asked for one this limited the marks available. The other reason why candidates failed to gain marks was because they gave answers focussed purely on politics (such as the Suffragette movement) with no mention at all of religion. This question provides a good example of the importance of candidates being taught to read the question very carefully.
- d) There were some excellent responses to this question showing sound understanding of religious teaching and technical terminology. Candidates are showing a better awareness than in previous years of the meaning of 'pluralist', 'exclusivist' and 'inclusivist'. Having said this, a significant number of candidates struggled with this question and resorted to descriptive answers about how religions attract followers, or gave very generic responses such as 'it's nice to have new followers'. Those attempting to answer this question from perspectives other than Christianity generally did so very well.
- e) This was the best answered of the part e questions with a pleasing proportion of level 4 responses. The negative wording of the question encouraged candidates to give a balanced answer with supported views on both sides and most were able to make good use of scriptural material and religious teaching. Frequent mention was made of the topical issue of same sex marriage and the perception that religions do not treat homosexuals equally. Many candidates also picked up material from section A and suggested that criminals are not, and indeed should not, be treated equally although there was some confusion over what 'equal treatment' might mean in this context. The role of women in the home and in religion was another area where there was good debate.

Section C: War Peace and Justice. Question No. 13-18

- a) Most were able to give a good dictionary style definition of 'freedom of speech', although a worrying minority gave 'censorship' as a response. Responses that just repeated the question (such as 'the right to speak freely') were not credited.
- b) Many candidates struggled to give examples of 'influence' offering instead examples of types of media or ways in which religious believers might use them to influence others; meaning that this question was generally poorly answered. Successful responses generally considered ways in which the media could influence religious people to be generous, or to protest against an injustice, or to become hardened to violence and suffering.
- c) Most candidates gained these marks without difficulty unless they gave the same reason, rephrased, more than once. Some tended to write far more than was necessary for this question so limiting the time they had available for parts d and e.
- d) This question was the least well answered on the paper with a few candidates missing it out altogether. Many gave examples of freedom of speech but failed to engage with the specific issue of importance. Candidates that did give level 2 or 3 responses talked about a variety of issues including the pursuit of social justice, the freedom to evangelise and the importance of avoiding totalitarian regimes. Hindu responses generally showed a superficial understanding of karma, which was not always related directly to the question.

- e) Many candidates here limited the marks they were able to receive as they offered a very 'sociological' response with little or no reference made to the religion studied. Many arguments focussed heavily on freedom of choice as well as giving examples of ways in which watching violence might lead to violence (the case of James Bulger being frequently cited.) Many candidates were able to suggest that being well informed about violence around the world was necessary to a Christian although few were able to offer good examples of why this might be. Islamic responses frequently made relevant points about the portrayal of Islamist extremist violence in the Middle East in the media being a vehicle for the radicalisation of Muslim youths. This line of debate, where offered, was skilful and showed good understanding.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

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Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

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