

## **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 2014**

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

© OCR 2014

## **CONTENTS**

### **General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Religious Studies B (Philosophy and Applied Ethics) (J621)**

**General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course)**

**Religious Studies B (Philosophy and Applied Ethics) (J121)**

### **OCR REPORT TO CENTRES**

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
B601 Philosophy 1 (deity, religious and spiritual experience, end of life)	1
B602 Philosophy 2 (good and evil, revelation, science)	7
B603 Ethics 1 (Relationships, Medical Ethics, Poverty and Wealth)	11
B604 Ethics 2 (Peace and Justice, Equality, Media)	14

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

### **General Comments:**

The paper was totally accessible, producing a full range of responses. By far the most popular combination of questions answered was that of Questions 2 and 14. Responses comprised all six world religions. The vast majority answered a combination of the Christianity questions. The next popular combination of questions was those from Islam. It is interesting to note the increase in candidates answering questions from two faith perspectives, in some cases to comply with local Agreed Syllabuses, perhaps. Candidates seemed to have little problem with understanding any of the questions but quite a few marks were lost due to candidates not reading the question carefully and simply 'writing all they knew' on certain topics.

The paper comprised comprehensive coverage of the syllabus affording ample scope for effective differentiation between candidates. It was very rare that pupils were unable to make any comments at all for a particular question. Where that did happen, there was evidence of candidates not being prepared fully for the exam because they wrote that they had never heard of certain concepts, for example Hinduism 'unattached actions' ( Q 15 c) or Christianity and 'salvation'. (Q14b).

It was very pleasing to see a number of candidates transferring, and using correctly, religious studies knowledge from other papers and sections, thus demonstrating sound understanding of theological and philosophical concepts, particularly in response to Q 2-6c or Q 1-6 e. Many more candidates are showing an understanding of diversity within faiths and are able to articulate differences between interpretations of sacred texts or practices. However some candidates still make blanket and inaccurate statements such as " all Christians believe in the creation story in the bible and do not believe in science."

A full range of responses were seen with D type questions. Occasionally candidates saw a word in the question and wrote all they knew e.g. Q1-6 d about 'miracles' or Q14-18d about ' soul' and failed to address the question set. In both d and e questions, many candidates appeared to assign denominational labels at random, ascribing beliefs to Roman Catholic or Church of England which are not unique to those churches, or indeed not taught by them at all.

E type questions resulted in a wide range of responses. Many candidates demonstrated the skill of writing a dialogue of views, revealing a range of responses to an issue, using justified arguments, with sound religious studies knowledge to support the views, as well as providing a well developed personal view. However where there were lower levels of response it was due to candidates not answering the question asked; not including sufficiently developed views with support; producing formulaic answers with insufficient RS knowledge and application, or there was a lack of connection made between different points. Some tended to write defensively from a particular religious perspective, which led to bias and or failed to offer other opinions. Some rehearsed answers to previous questions in part d and e.

### **Comments on Individual Questions:**

The mark scheme was very detailed and provides the details of possible responses to the questions. It is not a definitive scheme but includes a range of suggestions that were accredited.

## Section A Belief and Deity

### Question No.

- Q1(a) Candidates gained the mark
- Q1(b) Candidates gained the marks, though tended to spend too long on describing the beliefs rather than just stating them
- Q1(c) All candidates gained marks where they had given **a** reason, and developed the reason in more detail. The question asked for **one** reason. Candidates that provided more than one reason were penalised for not answering the question.
- Q1(d)-6(d) 'Different' in this question did not mean 'for and against' miracles. Some candidates tended to think this when answering this question. Most gave a couple of basic points about literalists and non literalist view points about miracles. There was sometimes too much focus on describing different miracles, with generalist comments how religious people respond to miracles. The question was looking for candidates to explain in detail why and how people from various faiths view 'miracles'.

From a Buddhist perspective, this was very simplistically answered with many stating that the Buddha did not encourage miracles and so some found it difficult to comment upon the 'different responses' to miracles. Different Buddhist traditions and individual differences between Buddhists needed to be explored.

From a Christian perspective, many candidates explained or classified different types of miracles (using Aquinas), without explaining different responses to them. Other candidates contrasted liberal, charismatic and conservative responses; many used the example of Lourdes, or biblical miracles. Some found this hard to answer. They had misunderstood the 'different responses' part of the question. Those who had understood the question have answered it well though.

Most candidates were able to articulate why miracles are very important to Muslims as ayahs given by Allah, but were less able to explain the 'different responses' by Muslims to miracles, though some did say they were only significant if one experienced them nowadays.

- Q1(e)-6(e) This statement was accessible and of interest to candidates. Most candidates wrote supportive points of views with relevant teaching and adding a personal point of view. The range of ability was reflected in the range of marks awarded. The focus of the question was on 'creator' God, rather than arguing for existence of a God. Some candidates sometimes forgot the focus. Some candidates reproduced a practised essay in their heads about the existence of God and did not address the issue of a creator God.

There was a lot of very strong philosophical knowledge particularly high level explanation of Paley, Darwin, Aquinas with a number of candidates mentioning Polkinghorne, Hume and Newman. However, this knowledge wasn't always applied and discussed - simply referenced and explained with students not always making a link to and using alongside the statement of an e question.

From a Buddhist perspective, candidates focused upon the Buddha's teaching about God or the limited status of God/gods in their answers but sometimes failed to address the notion of a 'creator' god or the 'should' part of the question.

Inaccurate knowledge was conveyed when candidates stated that all Christians believe in the creation story literally and are against science. So arguments were very simplistically argued i.e. science versus religion. The higher level responses recognised the diversity between Christians, as well as non Christians and articulated the range of philosophical arguments for a creator God. Also some focused upon 'should' and vice versa. Both were accredited. Some interpreted 'should' as linking with free will and wrote rather resentfully about a coercion to believe in a creator God.

From a Muslim perspective, candidates found it harder to argue against the stimulus. There was no question that one had to believe in a creator God. Some candidates focused upon the argument about having free will to believe in a creator God.

- Q2(a), Q4(a), & Q6(a) Nearly every candidate gained the mark except where they failed to understand the word 'nature' in the question.
- Q2(b) Most candidates were able to articulate two simplistic beliefs such as it is part of the trinity or it guides people every day. Some candidates muddled the term with 'spirit' or 'soul' and failed to get marks.
- Q2(c)-6(c) Most responses were related to either miracles, teachings related to sacred texts or the life and work of the prophets. Most candidates achieved full marks by expanding or developing the detail to achieve full marks. There was a wide range of responses. The question asked for **one** way and sometimes candidates introduced two ways or more and were penalised for failing to address the question. Examiners were unable to award marks even if the 'second way' was more developed. Some candidates didn't understand 'intervene' with the obvious adverse effect on their responses.
- Q3(a) Candidates gained the mark showing they understood the term 'Trimurti'.
- Q3(b) Most popular answers included that Brahman is formless and in everything.
- Q4(b) Candidates gained the marks with the two most common miracles cited as 'the giving of the Qur'an to Muhammad (pbuh) and The ascent'

## **Section B Religious and Spiritual Experiences**

- Q7(a)-12(a) Most candidates were able to explain the term meaning to 'give praise or devotion' to something or someone. Where candidates were not credited was usually when they gave examples of how to worship thus failing to address the question. A few candidates did not understand the meaning of the phrase "state the meaning of..."
- Q7(b) No problems with this question. Most cited offering food to bhikkhus and food offered at a Buddhist shrine
- Q7(c)-12(c) There were no issues with the question. From a Buddhist perspective, candidates responded largely by describing what the Buddha had taught about fasting because of his own his own personal experiences. From a Christian perspective, most candidates comfortably achieved full marks here, describing Lent, Jesus' 40 days and nights, solidarity with the poor and hungry etc; from a Muslim perspective, most developed ideas around the significance of Ramadan and being one of the Five Pillars.

- Q7(d)-12 (d) Candidates were well prepared for this question and gave a wide variety of responses to the importance of prayer or meditation to believers. Responses included largely helping increase one's faith, to communicate with God or gods, to develop one spiritually, to consider the needs of others, to rid one of selfish desires. Examples rather than the importance of prayer necessarily limited marks awarded to some candidates.
- Q7(e)-12(e) This stimulus allowed candidates to explain a wide variety of symbols and their use in worship. However candidates sometimes failed to add the issue of 'need' in the question. The most successful candidates distinguished three different strands of argument – symbols are essential to worship, symbols are helpful but not essential, symbols are unnecessary and possibly dangerous. The best answers noted a wide variety of symbols related to the denominational differences. E.g. Orthodox use of icons, cross-denominational use of the Eucharist, Protestant objections based on the 2nd commandment and Quaker simplicity. However, some candidates interpreted the question as being about the use of art in worship, as opposed to more general symbolism. Many candidates simply listed examples of symbols, explaining each one's meaning but did not explicitly concluding whether they were needed in worship.
- Q8(b) Most were able to achieve 1 mark for the festival but not always the food. Some gave examples of fasts e.g Lent. This was not credited. The question asked for festivals. Credit was given for any festival, not necessarily related to the religion studied, though the majority answered from the religion they had studied.
- Q9(b) Candidates achieved marks for this question. They referred to foods on a puja tray
- Q10(b) Most common answers were Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha. Credit was given for festivals associated with particular rites of passage events
- Q11(b) No problems with the question. All candidates identified kosher food such as meat that had been prepared properly or fruits without blemish
- Q12(b) Sharing food with everyone and offering of prashad were the two most common uses cited in response to this question.

### **Section C End of Life**

- Q13(a) Candidates gained the mark by referring mainly 'freeing from the three poisons'
- Q13(b) Candidates found this question difficult to answer as they tended to discuss what is anatta, rather than give a reasons for believing in it. Those who secured the marks were able to state that there is no evidence for a soul and that the Buddha said there is no self.
- Q13(c) Most candidates achieved full marks and could describe what samsara was and how people could escape from it.
- Q13(d) Candidates had to make the link between beliefs about nibbana and how this might impact upon Buddhist views about the end of life. Candidates handled this well and were able to explain how when reaching nibbana it results in being enlightened so one stops having rebirths and deaths. This something worthy for which to aim.
- Q13(e) Most candidates did not argue that Buddhist beliefs do not make sense but rather explained why they did make sense and contrasted them with other religions that talked about a heaven or hell. They found it harder to agree with the statement.

- Q14(a)-Q15(a) Q18(b) Nearly all candidates identified a rite associated with a funeral e.g. cracking the skull of a dead person in Hindu faith, or throwing soil on a body at a burial.. Occasionally candidates did not know what the word 'rite' meant and talk about 'rights' instead.
- Q14(b) The majority of candidates achieved both marks demonstrating sound theological understanding of the concept. The most common responses were that Jesus was the saviour of everyone and secondly it was through the sacrifice on the cross that Christians are saved. Where candidates did not respond it was clear they had not been taught about it. Some confused this with Salvation Army and helping people more generally. Some reinterpreted salvation to mean forgiveness.
- Q14(c) Those candidates who answered the question did so well. Some wrote about suffering more generally, not the suffering of Christ. Most candidates wrote about the events of Christ's suffering (the Romans nailing him to the cross etc) to pay the price of sin and thus allowing a way to heaven for all who accepted this.
- Q14(d)-18(d) Those that understood this question provided excellent answers however, the majority of candidates answers were satisfactory and lacked in depth religious studies knowledge/understanding. Some candidates answered very generally and wrote little about the relationship between the two elements. Some neglected to concentrate on the relationship between body and soul and concentrated totally on what happens to the soul after death. The higher level responses discussed St Paul, Plato and Aristotle, the idea of the soul and body working together, or them being in conflict. Better answers referred to dualism and monism, different beliefs about the resurrection of the body, or reincarnation and the atman being reborn in another body. One saw many listing ideas about the body and then listing ideas about the soul, but not addressing the 'relationship' part of the question.
- Q14(e)-18(e) This question resulted in differentiating stronger candidates. This was again the better answered E part with a good analysis as to whether funeral benefitted the living or the dead and the religious implications. Most candidates gave appropriate personal responses. The ability to discuss the benefits for the deceased and for the bereaved, and to give both Christian and atheist arguments in favour of funerals, marked out some candidates. A lot of candidates seemed to know very little about either funeral liturgies, or the purpose of funerals. There was a lack of religious references linking belief and funeral aspect, although most explained basic knowledge of funeral services important to Catholics. A number of candidates thought that Christians believed in reincarnation and many strange views were expressed about souls getting trapped in limbo through cremation. When answering from both Christian and Muslim perspectives, candidates were able to talk about the funeral as an aid into the next life and ultimately heaven. Some characterised atheism as cold hearted and disrespectful. Many were able to coherently weave a balanced argument, but a few repeated material used for their personal view, leading to circular discussions.
- Q15(b) Candidates achieved the marks. Most cited that one's dharma is connected to social class, duty or stage in life
- Q15(c) Very few candidates understood the term 'unattached action'.
- Q16(a) Candidates achieved the mark. Most referred to washing the body before burial
- Q16(b) Candidates achieved both marks. Most cited that Muslim mourn by wailing loudly, or by set periods of mourning.



*OCR Report to Centres - June 2014*

- Q16(c) Many candidates achieved full marks for this question. They cited the importance of paradise to Muslims related to beliefs about The Day of Judgement, and whether they were fit to enter paradise.
- Q17(a) Candidates achieved the mark. Most referred to washing the body before burial by men or women respectively
- Q17(b) Candidates achieved both marks. Most stated that Jews mourn by observing shiva and tearing a garment.
- Q17(c) Although there were fewer Jewish responses this year, those that answered this question described this as a later belief in Judaism and were able to link it to the genesis story around the garden of Eden.
- Q18(a) Very few Sikh responses seen. Those that were seen gained the mark stating the term meant someone who is suffering because of losing a person they knew to death.
- Q18(c) Very few Sikh responses seen. The most common belief was that it is through God's grace that people are freed.

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

### **General Comments:**

Most candidates answered questions well. There were very few wholly blank scripts, and most candidates attempted all parts of the question they had chosen.

All religions were represented, with a noticeably larger number of Judaism and Islam scripts in particular than in previous years. However Christianity remains the most popular option. Sections A and C were, as always, the most popular by a significant margin. However the performance of those candidates who chose section B was in line with the other sections.

Many candidates wrote far more than was required for their answers to (a) (b) and (c) parts, consequently reducing the time available for (d) and (e) part responses. There were also a lot of candidates who answered from the general topic area rather than the specific part of the specification which was being asked about – for example the question about the existence of good and evil was answered as a question on moral decision making, and many candidates viewed the ‘origins of the world’ and the ‘origins of humanity’ as interchangeable issues (see detailed comments below).

There seems to be an increasing tendency towards formulaic answers for e part questions, and these are in general 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 coherent and sustained arguments – 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. A surprisingly large number (given how often this has been commented on in the past) neglected to include any material specific to the religion on which they were answering in their response, and thus some good and insightful responses were restricted to the lower levels

### **Comments on Individual Questions:**

#### **Section A: Questions 1-6**

Part a: most candidates gained this mark. By far the most common response was that it was ‘evil caused by human action’ and this was credited as carrying the clear implication of a choice/intention to be immoral. A small minority gave examples instead of the definition asked for, and an even smaller one defined moral evil as doing an evil thing for a good reason, which was not creditable. There were also a few candidates who equated ‘evil’ with ‘suffering’ in too broad a way to gain the mark - suffering caused by human agency is not inherently an evil in either a generic or a religious context and this phrasing does not carry the same meaning of deliberate or malicious wrong-doing which was the requirement to gain the mark. Very few candidates repeated the terms from the question in their entirety; such repetition was not a bar to the mark provided there was still a meaningful response when the repeated terms were disregarded.

Part b: generally well answered, if generically.

A small number of responses gave reasons to behave morally (such as Judgement day, or heaven and hell), rather than ‘sources of moral behaviour’ as required by the question. Similarly responses which gave consequences of immoral behaviour which occur after the decision has been made (such as ‘being arrested when you’ve done wrong’), or which focus on considering

the rightness of the decision post event (such as 'going to court') were not credited. There were also a few responses given which did not identify a resource accessible for an individual ('the government') and these were not considered to be responses to the question set.. These types of response were made only by a very small number of candidates.

Part c: most candidates gained at least some of the available marks for this question. The question specified 'the existence of good and evil' and therefore both had to be present in the response before credit could be given. The standardisation established that within religious concepts such as 'temptation' and 'judgement' there is an implicit recognition of the two moral stances and therefore this recognition of the two did not have to be explicit. Teachings such as the Fall (Christianity) and concepts like karma also inherently incorporate recognition of both good and evil, and it is these teachings where the majority of answers were expected.

Although 'the existence of good and evil' is present on the specification for all religions and there are teachings across all the religions which address precisely this there were some candidates who were confused and addressed only one or the other – reasons for this are unclear. There was also an unexpected difficulty with candidates apparently unclear as to the differences between the teachings of Christianity, Islam and Judaism mainly in to the concept of Satan/Lucifer/Shaytan/Iblis but to a lesser extent in other areas such as original sin; this mainly took the form of candidates answering from a non-Christian perspective with Christian teachings.

Some candidates gave a list of different relevant teachings, and they were restricted to one mark as one teaching was specified in the question. Other candidates seemed to focus wholly on the term "teaching", rather than good and evil. This led to some unexpected responses, where the candidate tried (sometimes very successfully) to apply parables to the issue of the existence of good and evil.

A minority of candidates gave very sophisticated answers about theodicy, or the relativistic nature of evil drawing on theological concepts to do so.

Overall a range of different approaches was available and creditable, and the full range of marks from 0-3 was utilised.

Part d: This response was answered well in general, with many demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of the importance of Jesus' suffering on the cross, as well as the idea of God's omnipotent nature and the idea of a divine plan. However, it was not uncommon for candidates to focus more on actions and responses rather than beliefs, and this restricted the candidates to the lower levels. Some candidates interpreted the question as 'how a Christian would help someone who was suffering' to cope, which was creditable to a degree but made access to the higher levels more challenging.

Part e: This question provoked some engaging responses, and candidates had a lot to say about the issue, although religious material was sometimes lacking. There was a great deal of generic material focussing on 'evil people' like Hitler or murderers in prison – some candidates seemed to draw heavily on their response to section A on B604 by bringing in discussions of capital punishment and prison. This synoptic approach is creditable, and, as long as the material is reworked to apply to the question asked there is no bar to gaining the higher levels inherent in doing so.

There were also the stereotypical exemplars of stealing to feed a starving child and helping an old lady across the road. There were some thoughtful ways of dealing with these areas though, with a few candidates arguing some good in Hitler by commenting on his love for animals and the fact he was a vegetarian. A few then went on to weight these 'goods' up against the 'evils' in their conclusion. On the whole the responses largely focused on forgiveness, redemption, original sin, the devil and what constitutes 'bad.' A few commented on the fact only God is good,

or that only God can make a judgement as to good and bad. Some candidates appeared to have been taught they must argue for and against a statement, which has never been a requirement (the question only specifies different views), some candidates struggled with this, occasionally inventing religious doctrine to help them. Better answers developed several reasons for disagreeing, or used ideas on the influence of nature or nurture on an individual's personality. At the lower end, candidates tended to concentrate on whether this was a nice or nasty thing to say about 'bad' people. Overall the question was engaged with reasonably well and a range of approaches were utilised and credited.

### **Section B: Questions 7-12**

Part a : almost all candidates who attempted this gained the mark. The most common response relating to having power over others, but some referred to authority as a source of knowledge which was creditable.

Part b : This was poorly answered with most candidates offering vague and generic statements like 'a special book'. Responses like this could apply to many things other than sacred texts both within and beyond a religious context and were thus too broad to gain the mark. Another common error was to define only one of the terms (e.g. 'Holy texts'); while usage of the terms from the question did not in themselves render an answer uncreditable there needed to be a meaningful and correct answer remaining if those terms were disregarded, and candidates proved less able to achieve that in this context than in other similarly constructed questions. Almost all candidates did gain the mark for bii.

Part c : Most candidates gained at least one mark here, with answers focussing in general on the nature of God or moral rules. However some candidates (of all abilities) failed to develop their answers sufficiently for three marks.

Part d : This seemed challenging for some candidates; most were able to describe different types of religious experience, and/or different ways of responding to them but they struggled with why these responses might be different. Answers were usually correct and gave an account of relevant material but many were also brief and lacking in detail.

Part e : The majority of candidates interpreted the question in an unexpected way, focussing on whether an individual person comes to religion following a revelation or for other reasons such as upbringing. This was a valid interpretation but it made it harder to gain the higher levels as there is less religious specific material to draw upon. There were also a worrying number of candidates who seemed unaware of what a revelation is – more than one candidate argued that the statement was incorrect because Islam didn't begin with a revelation, it began when Muhammad received the Qur'an. However where candidates were familiar with the terminology there were some detailed and insightful responses.

### **Section C: Questions 13-18**

Part a : the vast majority of candidates gained the mark, and of those who gained it almost all of them said 'Big Bang theory'. A minority of candidates read 'origins of humanity' rather than 'origin of the world' and said 'evolution', which was not credited. 'Cosmology' was accepted, as the overall name for this branch of science. Some candidates gave philosophical arguments instead of scientific ones, and these were not creditable.

Part b : again most candidates gained both marks, very few who attempted the question gained no marks. Where a mark was lost it was either because the candidate had effectively given the same response twice or because they had given a generic and/or highly contentious or unjustifiable claims such as animals being unable to survive without the human race, or animals being stupid. However the idea of rational or logical thought was accepted.

Part c : Most candidates answered well, with a clear recognition of the connection between stewardship and environmental concerns. Most began by defining stewardship, which was creditable although full marks could be gained without it. Where examples were given they were relevant and well connected to the question. Other candidates approached it by looking at the consequences of rejecting or ignoring stewardship. Where marks were not gained it was because candidates focussed on animals rather than the environment, or because they gave repetitive answers along the lines of 'stewardship says we must look after the environment because we have to look after it'.

Part d : Many candidates ignored the reference to humanity in the question and gave responses wholly focussed on the creation of the world – this was broadly relevant, but without explicit development in relation to the question asked responses were restricted to level one. A lot of answers tended to be descriptive, giving an account of the genesis story followed by an account of evolution. However, candidates who referenced literalists, fundamentalists or liberal interpretations of scripture were credited as tackling the 'why' element of the question.

Part e : Candidates engaged well with this question although some tended to rather polemical responses. While the main focus was on questions about origins of the world and of life there was also scope for interesting philosophical insight and candidates explored issues of whether disagreement is inherently a bad thing, whether the scientific method is an adequate means of understanding anything and everything, the place of morality in scientific research and the idea of 'God of the gaps'. There were some good answers which incorporated synoptic thinking from candidates work on other papers on the specification with issues such as medical research or control of populations and resources being brought into the discussion. There were again a large number of responses which struggled to bring in religious material, this was a greater issue for candidates responding from a Christian perspective than from other religions; this could be because they felt that generic observations about God as a creator were sufficient, instead of engaging with issues about whether God created ex nihilo or whether God created perfection as candidates answering from other religious perspectives tended to do.

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

### **General Comments:**

The paper proved accessible and candidates were able to fulfil its demands within the allocated time. There were few rubric infringements reported.

It was noted that some candidates responded to the parts of their chosen questions 'out of order' beginning with the e) part of the questions. Whilst this makes sense from the point of view of tackling the highest mark part of the question first, there is a danger that too much time is spent on that part to the detriment of the other sections.

Many candidates offered clear and appropriate responses to the questions in parts a) to c) of each section where short answers or even one word responses are required. However, some candidates offered more than the required number of responses. 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. If a candidate gives two responses when only one is required and they are contradictory, no mark can be awarded.

In part d), where candidates are required to demonstrate their understanding of an issue, some candidates offered responses showing a sound grasp of the significance of the issue for the religion of their choice. Candidates who supported their understanding with reference 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 tendency was observed in this section to offer a description of views rather than an explanation which focused on the way that the question had been asked. 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.

Responses from many candidates to the e) parts of the questions consisted of well presented arguments about the issue in the stimulus and clear evidence of a personal viewpoint. The personal viewpoint tends to be offered as a distinct section of the response by many candidates. Some of the best responses however contained the personal viewpoint as a series of comments throughout the response demonstrating the candidate's engagement with the issue and their ability to respond well to the demands of AO2.

### **Comments on Individual Questions:**

#### **Section A: Religion and Human Relationships**

Question No. 1- 6

- a) The correct response (Divorce) was given by most candidates with a small number offering annulment which could not be credited
- b) In response to this part, candidates correctly referred to love and companionship, the desire to provide a secure environment for the upbringing of children and the opportunity for the couple to show public commitment to each other.

- c) The role of women in the family was often described in very traditional terms sometimes supported by reference to sacred texts. This view was balanced by some candidates with the recognition that many families depended on an equality of roles in order to function in the modern world. The focus of the question was on the role in the family which was missed by some candidates who provided responses about the role of women generally or in religious institutions. Little, if anything could be salvaged from such responses.
- d) Candidates offered some very thoughtful responses to this part. The importance of sexual relationships within the marital relationship (heterosexual and same sex) was emphasised by candidates. Reference was made to the importance of a sexual relationship as a way of expressing love and as a way to bond a marriage. Candidates responding to the Christianity questions referred to the idea of becoming one flesh as well as the need to fulfil the command to procreate. The tendency to offer a description of views about sex, rather than to focus on the importance of sexual relationships meant that some very full, factual responses failed to reach the higher marks.
- e) Responses to the stimulus frequently focused on the way in which a religion views marital breakdown, which of course has an impact on the way a couple from that religion might view difficulties in their relationship. Some responses quite appropriately therefore concentrated on a discussion of the attitude to divorce of the religion they had chosen. Candidates also evaluated the extent to which sharing a faith might support a couple who made it a central part of family life. The view was commonly expressed that if religion was a significant part of the couple's individual lives, being able to share it with their partner would be a very positive thing for the couple but not necessarily something which could be guaranteed to prevent marital breakdown.

## Section B: Religion and Medical Ethics

### Question No 7 – 12

- a) Suicide, as the correct response was offered by most candidates. Euthanasia, offered by some candidates was not accepted as a response.
- b) Candidates sometimes struggled to find two different beliefs. Most offered the belief that cloning was wrong as it puts humans in the position of creating life which is the role of God alone. The belief in the uniqueness of each person as created by God which would be lost if human cloning ever became possible, figured in many responses as did the belief that therapeutic cloning could be a positive benefit to humanity.
- c) Candidates were required to focus on describing **one** attitude which most managed to achieve very successfully. Some responses were very long to this part which must have affected time management for those candidates. Candidates should bear in mind the mark allocation for each part of the question, which is an indication of the amount they need to write.
- d) The question asked candidates to explain why there are different attitudes but many responses were just descriptions of different attitudes, without explanation as to why different people from the same religion might have those different attitudes. Whilst some credit could be given for that kind of response, candidates could not achieve the highest level of marks unless they addressed the underlying reason for differences in some way. Those who did referred, for example, to the fact that sacred texts were written well before fertility treatment was made available. Others explained that some believers would see the ethical imperatives of the sanctity of life and the command to go forth and multiply as competing on an issue such as this, which led to different ethical stances and attitudes amongst believers.

- e) The stimulus was intended to get candidates to discuss the issue of choice and to draw on their knowledge and understanding of the suicide and euthanasia debates. Some achieved this and offered well argued responses which contained mature comment throughout. Many responses were just a rehearsal of the euthanasia debate and failed to address the issue of choice at all. Knowledge of arguments was sometimes offered rather than a discussion of the issue in the stimulus. This reduced the amount of credit that could be awarded as that type of response was generally judged to be limited rather than competent or good.

### **Section C: Religion, Poverty and Wealth**

#### Question No 13 - 18

- a) Donations of money or time were appropriate responses to this part.
- b) Candidates were able to offer a sentence describing at least one relevant teaching and most offered two. Some responding to the questions on Christianity, just listed the titles of two parables which needed to be described or explained briefly for the marks to be awarded.
- c) The need to concentrate on one belief and describe or develop it in order to respond fully to the question meant that some candidates failed to achieve full marks as they offered two or more beliefs. Responses which just listed immoral occupations could also be given little, if any credit. The best responses stated the belief and supported it with further development and appropriate exemplification.
- d) The question made it clear that candidates should refer to the teaching of the religion chosen to explain why, according to that religion, there is so much poverty in the world. Whilst some credit could be given for responses which referred to practical reasons to do with geography, politics or economics, the best responses offered a religious interpretation. Reference to the tendency for humans to be greedy and to be unable to seek the middle way or to allow the poor to languish as did Lazarus in Jesus' parable, enabled candidates to achieve the higher levels. The view that poverty is very much the result of human failure to obey the command to love one's neighbour was a common theme in many responses.
- e) The stimulus seemed to surprise some candidates and as a result evoked some excellent responses. For some it was obvious that religion was actually the driving force behind much of the charitable work which is done to support the poor across the world. Candidates referred to charities and to the way in which they were the practical outworking of the moral attitudes of the believers. Some candidates distinguished between the response of religion which might be spiritual and therefore of little practical use and the response of religious people, which was undeniably practical and valuable. There were good examples of a thread of argument being followed through a response, which meant that high marks could be awarded as the candidates fulfilled the requirements to provide a discussion of the issue and a personal viewpoint, well supported.



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

### **General Comments:**

In general candidates appeared to be well prepared for the exam. As usual sections A and B were the most popular although those candidates who did attempt section C have generally performed better than in previous years. The great majority of candidates have answered on Christianity, with Islam (often as one of the two questions attempted on the paper) being second most popular with a very significant number of candidates. Judaism was also quite widely attempted and where this was the case, often to a very high standard. There were comparatively few responses from the Eastern religions but where these were attempted the full range of marks was encountered.

There were few rubric errors than in previous sessions with most candidates attempting all parts of two questions. Few candidates left question parts unanswered within the questions they had chosen suggesting that the paper was accessible to most candidates. The great majority completed the paper within the time allowed and the standard of literacy, including the use of specialist terms was generally good.

Where candidates answered on Christianity Biblical knowledge was generally sound and this was reflected in the other Abrahamic religions although candidates seem less likely to use scriptural justification for their arguments in the Eastern religions.

There were some excellent responses to part e questions which allowed able candidates scope for debate and evaluation.

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.

In part c questions there is still a tendency for able candidates to write far more than is required and often more than they do for part d. This obviously has implications for the time available on the higher scoring parts of the paper and Centres should make sure that candidates are aware of this.

Overall the paper performed as expected with the full range of marks being achieved and evidence that candidates are being taught the necessary skills and are being well prepared for the examination.

## Comments on Individual Questions:

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

- a) The majority of candidates gained the mark. Where they did not it was generally because they did not give a full definition and referred simply to killing someone for what they had done without making clear that this was carried out by the state, so failing to clearly distinguish it from a revenge killing. A small number of candidates thought that the term 'capital punishment' referred to any serious punishment or a punishment for a serious crime, or confused it with corporal punishment.
- b) Most candidates had no difficulty with this question although a number did suggest 'reformation' as an aim of capital punishment. Answers that described rather than named one of the aims were credited as long as they were clear. Answers that amounted to 'punishing the criminal' were not allowed as this amounts to a re-statement of the question. Some candidates suggested reducing numbers in prison, which was also not credited as an aim, although it might be a consequence.
- c) Some candidates had difficulty gaining the marks. Some answers were very generic rather than specifically Christian, for example 'to reduce suffering' or 'to make the world a better place' but where these were accurate they were credited. Where candidates failed to gain full marks it tended to be because they had developed one point rather than giving three distinct points as the question required. Some, however, confused peace with social justice "so that everyone will be treated the same" which is not an answer to this particular question. Others repeated the same point in different words ("Because they are pacifist and because they think violence is always wrong.") Hindu responses were strong here, referring to moksha, ahimsa and the example of Gandhi. 4c asked for ways in which Muslims might work for peace rather than reasons and many candidates struggled to identify three specific ways.
- d) Most candidates could identify two different beliefs, generally Just War Theory and pacifism and could usually develop these well enough to gain level 2. Many did not reach level 3 as they did not explain why Christians might hold these different views, merely described the views themselves. Some described the Just War Theory in detail but did not move on to a second viewpoint. The most able candidates were able to make excellent use of religious and Biblical knowledge in this question. In Islamic responses surprisingly few mentioned lesser jihad.
- e) Many candidates approached this question by examining the aims of punishment and the extent to which prison fulfilled them, which was a reasonable approach to take as long as they also included specifically Christian teaching and/or beliefs, which is a prerequisite for reaching level 3. A significant number wrote what amounted to very good sociology essays with no mention of specifically religious teachings and so limited themselves, usually, to level 2. Some candidates compared the merits of prison and execution/capital punishment without considering any other options such as restorative justice or meeting with victims, which was a shame. Some considered that the only alternative to punishment was total forgiveness with no punitive action at all suggesting that Christians would be in favour of this because of the teachings of Christ with very few candidates able to discuss the relationship between personal forgiveness and state punishment. Some answers seemed to focus almost entirely on the merits and demerits of capital punishment with little consideration of the question. The majority of responses fell into level 2 or 3 with comparatively few reaching level 4, although there were some outstanding responses. In the best responses personal opinions were woven through the response and brought a new dimension to the discussion rather than just summarising what had gone before.

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

- a) Most candidates gained the mark for this question but where they did not it was almost always because they added a wrong response into the answer (most usually religion) and so triggered the rule about contradictory responses. It is very important that candidates are made aware of this rule as in most cases the response would have been creditable if they had not added the extra word. Some gave an example of racism rather than a definition.
- b) Candidates were asked for examples of inequality so examples of prejudice or attitudes were not creditable. A few used the example of homosexuals not being able to marry which was not creditable as it is based on sexuality rather than gender. The majority of candidates talked about women not being able to vote or become priests in some churches or certain jobs depending on gender which were all acceptable responses. Some wrote about inequality generally rather than relating it to gender.
- c) This question was generally well answered with candidates following a clear train of thought through the response and showing good religious knowledge. Where candidates did not gain the mark it was because they gave more than one distinct point whereas the question asked them to describe one belief. This was a rare mistake though and most candidates gained the mark without difficulty.
- d) The full range of marks was seen on this question. Most candidates achieved level 2 and most were able to give examples of religious teachings about equality. Some then tried to 'pad out' a short response by talking about Martin Luther King, which was not generally relevant to the question while others looked at examples of inequality within the religion, which was also not credited, as it did not answer the question. The weakest responses focussed entirely on the ideas of 'fairness' or 'niceness' without including any religious material. There were, however, some outstanding responses which showed good analysis and cut to the heart of the issue with the idea of obeying God, preventing suffering and even bringing about the Messianic kingdom.
- e) There was huge variation in the quality of responses here. Many responses were rambling and based on the idea that we have freedom of choice with little further development or application of this idea in a specifically Christian sense. Most could be interpreted as 'God gave us free will so he doesn't mind.' Stronger responses looked at the issues of evangelism and the best understood and used the ideas of exclusivism, pluralism and inclusivism to good effect. Surprisingly few talked about conversion although, as this was not a requirement of the question, it did not affect the outcome. There was a tendency to respond to a different question about conversion or whether it is acceptable to evangelise and some were determined to write about ecumenism although it had no relation to the question. There were some very interesting Islamic responses and some Hindu responses that made excellent use of religious knowledge and some candidates answering from a Christian perspective successfully used Eastern religions to explain a second viewpoint. Having said that some Jewish and Hindu responses were encountered which included very little religious teaching and were limited to level 2.

**Section C: Religion and the Media. Question No. 13-18**

- a) Almost all candidates achieved the mark for this question and there was a huge range of creditable responses.
- b) Most candidates gained the marks here, usually for incorrect factual portrayal of the faith or 'poking fun' at it. Some Jewish and Islamic responses specifically mentioned incitement to anti-Semitism or Islamophobia. Where candidates did not gain both marks it tended to be because they gave only one reason or paraphrased one reason twice.
- c) This question produced mixed responses with many merely giving examples of religion appearing in the media or describing how it was used to 'spread the word' without addressing the issue of how it was used to teach about the faith to existing followers which was the thrust of the question. For this reason many candidates limited the marks they were able to receive. Some looked at how Christians are shown in the media or merely named forms of media (for example 'Songs of Praise'.) The best responses looked at how such programmes help Christians in their homes or how forums can help Christians to discuss their faith with each other and so learn more about it.
- d) Many candidates missed the idea of 'important' Christians and wrote generally about the way Christians or Christianity is shown in the media. Some, missing the point somewhat, suggested that important Christians should not be shown at all as this could lead to idol worship. Where candidates wrote about TV characters such as the vicar of Dibley this was creditable as 'vicars' could be seen as 'important Christians'. However reference to figures such as Ned Simpson or God (in Bruce Almighty) were not. Answers about Jesus were fairly common and were credited. This was not generally well answered with few candidates moving out of level 2 and many in level 1. Many omitted to deal with the issue of how Christians might be affected by media portrayals.
- e) This was generally well answered with many candidates achieving level 3. It is particularly encouraging to see candidates applying religious and Biblical teaching to section C, which has not always been the case in previous sessions. There were some mature insights into issues such as pornography, the objectification of women, the sin of lust and the respective responsibility of the State, the Church and the family. Most candidates concentrated on sexual content on the television and, occasionally, the Internet rather than media such as advertising or books. Some candidates concentrated on religious teachings about sex in general rather than on whether it should be banned from the media.

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

**OCR Customer Contact Centre**

**Education and Learning**

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

**[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)**

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

**Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations**  
**is a Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Registered in England**  
**Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU**  
**Registered Company Number: 3484466**  
**OCR is an exempt Charity**

**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
**Head office**  
**Telephone: 01223 552552**  
**Facsimile: 01223 552553**

© OCR 2014

