
AS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

7061/1: Philosophy of religion and ethics
Report on the Examination

7061
June 2019

Version: 1.0

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General

The performance this year demonstrated some excellent student knowledge and understanding, and has improved slightly from last year. There were many impressive scripts and even some papers were awarded full marks. Students on the whole missed out fewer questions this year than last, demonstrating increasing capacity for revision of a wider range of topics. Technically, some students need greater familiarity with the structure of the different types of AO1 target questions, as there are four and students in general have greater confidence with AO1:1 than the other three targets. In order for students to improve performance on AO2, questions from level 3 answers to level 4 and 5 they must incorporate evaluation into their answers and reach a personal and justified conclusion.

Section A: Philosophy of religion

Question 1

1.1

This question was well answered by students who responded to the exact demand of the question. This question has the assessment objective target AO1.4. Higher scoring answers explained in detail the approach taken by the design argument accurately: its nature, reasoning and use of philosophical techniques such as analogy.

The question was less well answered by students who did not respond to the exact demand of the question being an AO1.4 and simply gave an explanation for the design argument itself. Some students confused the design argument with the cosmological argument and/or spent time on evaluation of the design argument which is not relevant to this question.

1.2

This question was well answered as most students were familiar with writing an AO2 response by covering different points of view and evaluating the arguments to reach their own conclusion. The most successful answers maintained focus on the freewill defence, whereas less effective answers made brief reference to the freewill defence and then evaluated whether other responses were better without focus on freewill. Some students merely juxtaposed the differing views without evaluation or conclusion which failed to score highly.

Question 2

2.1

This was the better scoring AO1 answer and students seemed familiar with AO1:1. Higher scoring answers explained the nature of mystical experiences in detail using key terminology. Students covered the works of James and Stace and many also included Otto, using examples well to demonstrate knowledge.

Lower scoring answers knew James' work on mysticism in brief or confused mystical experiences with visions. Some students simply described a famous mystical event without making any explanatory comment about its nature.

2.2

This was the best answered AO2 question, as most students composed different lines of reasoning relating to the value for faith by using a wide range of evidence and arguments. The most effective answers also discriminated between experiences with great value and those of less value for faith with reasoning. Most students could evaluate the differing views and come to their own conclusions. Less effective answers merely juxtaposed the differing views without evaluating and coming to their own conclusions.

Section B: Ethics

Question 3

3.1

Most students had good knowledge of natural moral law and could explain it clearly. Students who responded to the Assessment Objective Target AO1.2 scored more highly than those who did not. These answers applied natural moral law to the situation of lying to demonstrate how the ethical theory worked. More effective answers also explained alternative responses of Aquinas, such as withholding truth and the use of the doctrine of double effect well.

Some students failed to respond to the application part of the question and did not use lying to demonstrate the theory. Less effective answers applied the theory incorrectly or confused natural moral law with Situation ethics.

3.2

This was a very well answered question, as students seemed well prepared for evaluating the ethical theory and providing a coherent structure. The most effective answers used arguments from differing points of view to evaluate the theory and came to well justified conclusions. Certain answers juxtaposed different views or focused entirely on either supporting or attacking the theory, which failed to achieve the level of evaluation required for levels 4 and 5.

Question 4

4.1

This was the least well answered of all the AO1 questions. As this question had an assessment objective target, AO1.3, the focus of the answers should have been on explaining the reasons for the different conclusions. Unfortunately, some students explained situation ethics and different possible conclusions but did not explain the reasons behind the conclusions correctly or in sufficient detail.

The higher scoring answers explained different conclusions about the use of animals for organ transplants and used some interesting examples of how to apply the four working principles to reach opposing conclusions.

4.2

This was the least well answered of all the AO2 questions. The more effective answers maintained focus on the clarity of guidance from situation ethics, offered differing views and evaluated how convincing these arguments were. Others, however, lost focus on situation ethics and became a

discussion on the general morality and purpose behind the issue of 'designer babies'. Some students failed to evaluate the arguments and come to their own conclusion.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.