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# A-LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

7061/1 Philosophy of Religion and Ethics  
Report on the Examination

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7061/1  
June 2023

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Version: 1.0

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**Question 1.1**

A large percentage of students handled this question well. High scoring answers explained the nature of God as limited rather than omnipotent, as a fellow sufferer and Griffin's alternative interpretation of Genesis. The highest scoring answers had excellent focus on exactly how these elements solve the problem of evil.

Lower scoring answers did not refer to Process Theodicy specifically but instead gave a general account of the problem of evil. Some students had a lot of knowledge on the topic but not specifically about Process Theodicy.

**Question 1.2**

There were some excellent answers to this question. Students knew both Hume's criticisms of the design argument and Paley's analogical argument and analysed them well. The highest scoring answers offered a balanced response, exploring both sides of the debate and coming to a well-reasoned conclusion.

A small number of students failed to explore both sides of the issue making their answers unbalanced and therefore could not achieve beyond Level 2. Some lower scoring answers had a focus on whether the design argument was a successful argument, instead of focus on whether Hume had proven the design argument wrong.

**Question 2.1**

This question was generally well answered. Students drew on a wide range of different types of religious experience to demonstrate influence. The best answers demonstrated a variety of influences from pilgrimage to a strengthening of faith, with each point having a clear focus on the question.

Weaker answers often failed to focus on influence and instead described different types of religious experience or confused influence with the problems of verification of religious experience.

**Question 2.2**

This question was answered very well. Many students gave a balanced debate on whether science proves a natural cause for religious experiences and came to their own evaluative conclusion. There was some excellent analysis focused on the fact that even natural explanations could ultimately be caused by the divine and therefore science could never address 'belief in' as opposed to 'belief that'.

Lower scoring answers failed to see the argument from both sides and so could only give an unbalanced response or simply described natural causes for religious experiences.

**Question 3.1**

This was a very well answered question by a large proportion of students. Most students understood the theory and its approach well, explaining that it is deontological, absolutist, and based on reason and faith. The highest scoring answers explained this in detail and used examples to demonstrate their points.

Weaker answers simply described Natural Moral Law without any explanation of its approach to moral decision making. Others had no correct knowledge of the theory, confusing it with Situation Ethics or Virtue Ethics.

### **Question 3.2**

There were some excellent balanced answers to this question. However, many students failed to use the normative ethical theories and instead made general points in their debate for and against the view in the question. This limited their ability to score highly.

Weaker answers gave only a one-sided view of cloning and failed to demonstrate any positive reasons to justify cloning. Other students did not have an accurate understanding of cloning and lacked any discussion of the relevant moral scenarios or thinking.

### **Question 4.1**

This was the highest scoring question in the ethics section. Most students knew both theories well and could apply them both, in detail, to the issue of abortion. Many students could explain the fact that the theories could take a stance on both sides, being able to either approve or disapprove abortion, depending upon the situation.

Weaker answers only explained one of the two theories and missed the other. Some answers gave only a minimal application to abortion or did not address the issue at all.

### **Question 4.2**

This was the highest scoring AO2 question on the paper. There were many excellent answers that gave a balanced two-sided debate and came to a well-reasoned and evaluative conclusion. The best answers used evidence and examples to fully demonstrate both sides well and gave persuasive reasoning behind the position they adopted. Students referred to the flexibility, ability to deal with complexity, and common-sense focus as reasons for why the theory is a good approach.

Weaker answers gave a one sided unbalanced opinion or wrote about a different ethical theory.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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