



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES ROUTE B
COMPONENTS 1 AND 2 – C120U80-1
AND C120U90-1
GCSE**

SUMMER 2022

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1: FOUNDATIONAL CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

General Comments

The report should be read in conjunction with the mark scheme which contains the assessment criteria and indicative content for each question.

Many candidates engaged with the exam paper with few missed responses. In some cases non-attempted questions were the result of running out of time, as some candidates were continuing (c). and (d). responses onto additional pages which may have cost them time when reaching the end of the exam paper. The paper differentiated well with all questions accessible across all marking bands. Generally, candidates were aware of the structure of the paper, the demands of the questions and the specification content. Many showed an understanding of different religious and non-religious beliefs. The advanced notice enabled many candidates to have a secure knowledge of the area of study but this sometimes impacted on the formulation of judgements in the (d) questions because candidates were simply writing all they knew about the topic. Although there is not right or wrong way to approach this, it should be noted that in some responses the phrase, 'This a strong /weak argument' was stated but the justification was underdeveloped or did not apply to the content cited, or lacked focus on the demands of the question. Alternatively, some candidates used a concluding paragraph at the end of response but for some this was repeat of what had already been said or "because I said so in my first/second paragraph" and so adding nothing to the response.

Many exam papers showed that candidates were aware of the demands of the assessment criteria and were able to apply relevant skills to the demands of each question. There were many examples of candidates highlighting relevant key words in questions to help them focus on the demands of the question. There was evidence of planning tools, such as mind maps, used to support (d) questions but some were so extensive the candidate ran out of time.

The use of appropriate religious/specialist language is a key requirement in this specification. Some candidates confidently used key religious, philosophical, and ethical terms to express their arguments. Although candidates might have used some of the key concepts from the specification in their responses, there was sometimes a lack of reference to sources of wisdom in some responses. Candidates are expected to refer to sacred texts and other sources of wisdom and authority where appropriate and the form of reference is not dictated. It is more important that the source is used in the context of the demands of the question. Selecting a few appropriate references to reinforce explanation or evaluation would gain more credit than the approach of listing sources of wisdom with no further unpacking or contextualisation. Direct references are not required, but some candidates seemed to think that by placing quotation marks around a statement of their own, this would gain credit. It was, however, pleasing to see that some candidates were aware of different interpretations of some sources. This was particularly apparent in (d) questions when candidates discussed validity of interpretations of different sources of wisdom. Many candidates were able to show understanding of different opinions and beliefs within different religious traditions and were able to correctly identify different denominations of Christianity and specify differences in beliefs and practices. However, there were still some misconceptions regarding beliefs of different denominations within Christianity.

Candidates must remember to clearly state the number of the question(s) they are continuing to answer on any additional writing pages they use e.g. 1d. 2c. It is extremely challenging to try and match up their responses if they don't make this clear and whilst we would not want to deter candidates from using the continuation space, the fact that so many did not make this obvious has caused significant delays to the marking process this Summer.

Candidates must also avoid writing on pages that clearly state 'Do Not Write on This Page' as content may be missed during the scanning process.

The demands of each type of question are distinct and, it is appropriate to consider candidate performance in each type of question before scrutinising responses to individual questions.

(a) Questions – Candidates are required to give a definition of one of the key concepts. These questions are always based on the key concepts. Generally, these were answered well and, although it is not required, many candidates appeared to have learned the set definition from Eduqas. However, many successful candidates wrote their own valid response from their understanding, in their own words. Either approach is acceptable. Often candidates supported their definition with an example which, as indicated in the mark scheme, gains some credit. However, for full credit there must be an accurate definition. It is important to remember that in addition to answering an (a) question, the use of key concepts can be credited, where used appropriately, as part of the criteria for (b), (c) and (d) questions which require the use of 'religious/specialist' terms.

(b) Questions – These questions require candidates to select and describe relevant information using specific religious language in response to the question. There is no necessity for any form of explanation or evaluation. Candidates are expected to refer to a source of authority, where relevant. Candidates need to read the question carefully in to respond to the demands of the question, e.g. if the question requires 'features' more than one would be required, but two described well is enough to meet the requirement of the question.

(c) Questions – These questions require candidates to demonstrate an understanding of an area of specification content from Christianity or from Catholic and Jewish perspectives. Candidates structured these answers in a variety of ways. In Component 1 some candidates lost marks as they only wrote about one religious tradition, where two are required. Many responses included a clear structure of a paragraph on each of the two traditions they had studied, the first sentence making clear the tradition they were addressing and then writing a relevant explanation under each heading. This approach usually resulted in focussed answers which met the rubric demands. Some candidates debated between the two traditions, which is not a requirement of the question and so wasted time. In a few responses the two traditions were not identified, and it was difficult to be certain which traditions were being referred to. It is recognised within the marking criteria that there will sometimes be overlap between beliefs regarding certain issues and that a response will be judged upon the evidence, including the specific religious language and interpretation of sources of authority. However, no credit is awarded for references to Humanism and other non-religious traditions in responses for (c) questions.

(d) Questions – The different demands of this type of question requires an extended piece of writing, and many were well prepared for the focus of the question. A range of planning tools enable clear preparation for responses, but care must be taken regarding timing and length of responses in order to complete the paper. Although candidates were well prepared, the response requires a quality of argument which incorporates the selection of relevant evidence rather than an opportunity to 'describe all you know'. It is the argument and evaluative discussion which makes this question different to the demands of a (c) question. Candidates are expected to select evidence to reinforce and exemplify their arguments. This is a very different skill to explaining about a teaching. Sometimes it appeared responses contained too much information but little development into an evaluative discussion. Some candidates explained the views of three different perspectives in successive paragraphs which often limited responses to an explanation rather than an analysis of arguments. Some responses included analysis and judgement although some were underdeveloped. Some stronger responses began each paragraph with a connection linked to the previous paragraph and a response to this. Some candidates referred to each point in terms of it being a strong or weak argument, this is creditworthy if an explanation is given as to why it would be considered a strong or weak argument rather than a repeat of the point that has already been made.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The demands of each type of question are distinct and, it is appropriate to consider candidate performance in each type of question before scrutinising responses to individual questions.

- Q.1 (a) (i) What do Catholics mean by 'omnipotence'?**
 Many candidates had learned the specification definitions for the key concepts and were very precise in their responses. A lot of full mark responses were evident, for 'omnipotent' it was required that there was a reference to God being all-powerful for full marks, as some had just written 'all – powerful'.
- (ii) What do Catholics mean by 'inspiration'? (2)**
 This was generally answered correctly, but some candidates lost focus by talking about people that inspired them, and just repeating the term.
- (b) (i) Describe Catholic attitudes about caring for the planet. (5)**
 Most students answered this question well, referring to more than one attitude about caring for the planet, using religious language and sources of wisdom and authority.
- (ii) Describe how Catholic teachings are shown in Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*. (5)**
 This question required more than one teaching shown in Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*, and some candidates successfully linked this to Genesis to develop their description. Some responses were repetitive in their description.
- (c) (i) Explain, from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism or two Christian traditions, attitudes about abortion. (8)**
 This question on abortion was clearly a popular question and the most frequent error was that candidates' responses were too long and repetitive.

It was generally well answered, with the only common cause of marks being lost being a failure to remember that two different perspectives needed to be explained. Some candidates misunderstand the Catholic perspective, it is not the case that the Church allows abortion in the case of rape or when the unborn child has a disability. Although this could be answered without explanation of the doctrine of double effect, some included this very effectively. Some candidates included a Humanist view which did not gain them any marks because of the very clear directive of the question.

(ii) Explain from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism or two Christian traditions, beliefs about the interpretation of the Creation accounts in Genesis. (8)

This question was mainly well-answered, but again many responses were too long and repetitive, which could impact timing further into the paper.

(d) 'Evolution proves that God does not exist.' (15)

This question was well answered in general, but some focused on knowledge and understanding with a detailed description of Charles Darwin and his life, and did not address the demands of an evaluation question. Some responses were weakened by focusing on Creation in general rather than on the origins of human beings, or an argument about the existence of God, but without linking it back to the question and the clear focus on 'evolution'.

Q.2 (a) What do Catholics mean by 'sin'? (2)

A well-answered question, many using the specification definition to respond. However, some candidates mixed up 'evil' and 'sin'.

(b) Describe two features of Natural Law. (5)

This question on Natural Law was generally challenging for most candidates, many responses were just giving the definition, but the more successful ones had a clear knowledge of St Thomas Aquinas and Natural Law. Some did not attempt this question.

(c) Explain, from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism or two Christian traditions, attitudes about the use of sculpture and statues in worship. (8)

This was a very well answered question. Many candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the use of statues by Catholics, using *The Pietà* as a source of wisdom and authority and of the Jewish commitment to monotheism, through the Ten Commandments and The Shema, very effectively.

(d) (i) 'All evil is created by humans.' (15)

This question was generally well answered, using religious and non-religious views. However, some candidates lost focus on the question and there was confusion regarding the Inconsistent Triad. Some candidates focussed on an explanation between natural and moral evil, lacking evaluation and analysis of different viewpoints.

(ii) **‘Pilgrimage is the most important religious practice for Catholics.’ (15)**

This was a trickier question for some candidates. The best responses explored the question of *the most important religious practice*, but some lost focus on the question by discussing generally if someone should go on pilgrimage or not, from different religious traditions. Some candidates wrote long responses but were lists of what happens on pilgrimage and what different traditions believe about pilgrimage and did not evaluate the statement. Many candidates attempted a non-religious perspective which did not address the requirements of the question: ‘...for Catholics’

Summary of key points

- Read the question and ensure candidates focus of the specific demands of the question.
- Focus on the skill demands of each question, describe for (a), (b). question, and explaining beliefs of Catholic Christianity and Judaism of two Christian traditions for the (c). questions.
- Encourage the use of appropriate sources of wisdom, including different types e.g. artifacts and paintings.
- Evaluation responses should focus on coherent lines of argument that lead to justified conclusions and avoid an explanation of everything they know.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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COMPONENT 2: APPLIED CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

Comments on individual questions/sections

General Comments

Many candidates continued their answers on continuation pages. However, much it was repetitive and could have a negative impact on the paper overall as many ran out of time and rushed the last questions. We would not want to deter candidates from continuing to answer (if time allows), but repetition cannot be credited.

The general comments on this component do not differ significantly from the comments on Component 1. For the important, generic comments on the different question types please see the Principal Examiner's report for Component 1: Foundational Catholic Theology. The generic comments on question types apply equally to both Components, except that the (c) questions of Component 2 do not require two religious perspectives and question 1(d) does not require non-religious perspectives.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 (a) What do Catholics mean by 'heaven'? (2)**
This question was generally answered well, again, many candidates had learned the key concept document definition, and many were successful with their own interpretation. Some missed the point of heaven being eternal or missed marks by describing their own interpretation of what heaven should/might be like.
- (b) Describe Catholic teachings about euthanasia. (5)**
This question was answered well, using sources of wisdom and authority to support the description. Again, there were some candidates who were repetitive in their description of more than one teaching. Surprisingly, it was the one question across both papers that was most often misunderstood.
- (c) Explain Catholic beliefs about the importance of prayer. (8)**
This question was answered well, with candidates focusing on the requirement of the question to explain the importance of prayer by using the word 'because' and other connectives successfully. Some candidates, however, limited themselves with a description of different types of prayer and when they were used, rather than dealing with *the importance*.
- (d) (i) 'Religious funerals are pointless.' (15)**
This question was pointing candidates towards the debates surrounding the relevance of religious funerals, and although not required, there were some valid non-religious arguments. However, some strayed into an argument on the existence of God without linking back to the question.

Some less successful responses gave very long explanations of funerals, symbols, what happens and why but missed the evaluation and judgement element required in (d) responses. However, on the whole responses to this question were very good.

(ii) 'The paschal candle is the best way of showing Catholic beliefs about the resurrection.' (15)

This, for some candidates, proved to be a tricky question, as they had secure knowledge and understanding of the paschal candle but again this resulted in an explanation of beliefs. Some successful responses debated between the paschal candle and the iconography in Christian Sarcophagi and which was better at showing beliefs about the resurrection.

Q.2 (a) (i) What do Catholics mean by 'Eucharist'? (2)

The definition of 'Eucharist' was given successfully in a range of ways, but the occasional candidate mixed the term up with euthanasia.

(ii) What do Catholics mean by 'sin'? (2)

Most candidates answered this correctly, with many giving examples.

(b) (i) Describe two features of absolute morality. (5)

This question proved tricky for many candidates, but some gained the full range of marks by using examples and the Ten Commandments as sources of wisdom and authority. Less successful candidates repeated a definition of absolute morality in different ways.

(ii) Describe the use of two sacred objects within a Catholic church. (5)

Many candidates performed well on this question and a large range of sacred objects and their use were described in detail. Some candidates did not read the question carefully and just described the object and not the use.

(c) (i) Explain Catholic beliefs about capital punishment (8)

This question was answered well overall, with many focusing on the dignity of the person and sanctity of life. The teaching of the Church on capital punishment has changed from the understanding that capital punishment was allowed in cases where it was the only means of protecting society from an aggressor, but that other means should be found, if possible. The teaching has now been modified. The entry in the Catechism now states:

"2267. Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good. Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.

Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”

Given that the amendment is relatively recent and that many text books will reflect the original position, candidates who gave either response (that it is sometimes admissible and that it is never admissible) had access to the full range of marks.

(ii) Explain Catholic beliefs about the nature of the Church. (8)

It is important again to stress that (c) questions need to be explanatory and not just descriptive. When this question was well answered candidates gave a clear explanation of two or more Catholic beliefs about the nature of the Church. But some explained two or more features of a church building, which did not respond to the requirements of the question.

(d) ‘Evangelisation is the main duty for Catholics.’ (15)

This proved to be a trickier evaluation question for some candidates, with some focusing on an explanation of evangelisation. Some struggled by trying to argue from a non-religious viewpoint, which was well outside the remit of this question. There were many stronger responses when they drew on their knowledge from Component 1 and argued that caring for the environment or preserving the sanctity of life was the main duty. However, Component 2 content was just as successful when deployed meaningfully e.g. that sacraments were more important.

Summary of key points

- Candidates should ensure their response meets the demands of the question e.g. ‘features’ and ‘beliefs’ requires more than one description or explanation.
- Draw on knowledge and understanding from across the specification – especially when responding to unexpected (d) part questions which do not have to be opposing views.
- Encourage focus on question responses to be clear and concise to avoid running out of time by responses that are too long and often repetitive. In (d) questions it is important to select some pertinent information as central to each argument rather than a ‘scatter gun’ of facts with no further development or analysis. Sometimes less (but well analysed) is more effective than more.
- A non-religious view should only be used if relevant to a (d). question, and not used as a generic statement about belief.



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