STUDIES OF RELIGION (REL315116)

This year 221 candidates sat the REL315116 external examination. In this, the second year of the new course, it was pleasing to see candidates had a clear understanding of the structure and requirements of the examination. The overall standard of handwriting was sound although more and more time spent on computers by students is making the task of handwriting over extended periods time more and more difficult for students generally. Mid-year practice examinations and in class essays to improve the ability to write at length under the pressure of time are essential preparation for all students. There were the usual errors in spelling of terms but it is always good to see students attempting to use terms and concepts so critical to the course.

All markers acknowledge the pleasure of reading the essays of strong candidates who have clearly gained much knowledge, insight and understanding into religious traditions and their core beliefs and practices. Understanding of the historical and contemporary challenges of a second tradition, as a requirement of the course, continues to stretch candidates overall but the standard of essays was greatly improved on last year. A good understanding of a range of ethical approaches secular and religious as applied to modern ethical dilemmas was evident. This is a very sophisticated course which encourages its students to be curious, read widely and be alert to different religious and philosophical viewpoints. Teachers passionate about this course continue to encourage students to engage with questions of meaning and religious and philosophical concepts universal to the human condition. A few tips which fall under the category of “perennial” and have been included in the assessment reports each year, still apply in 2017.

Candidates should endeavour to:

- Clearly label the section and question number on the front of examination booklets
- Indent paragraphs within essay responses or leave a blank line between paragraphs to assist the marker
- Address the question in the introductory paragraph clearly and distinctly
- Use a range of evidence (sourced) to support assertions, claims and argument
- Write legibly
- Write at length and in depth

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

CRITERION 1:

This criterion rewards articulation and correct use of a wide range of key terms. It requires the candidate to unpack concepts and knowledge from a wide range of connected sources. The significant word in this criterion is “wide” and this breadth of understanding and knowledge is the end outcome of casting the research net wide throughout the year and reading extensively about the core beliefs and practices of two religious traditions. It requires a current, informed and accurate understanding of a chosen ethical dilemma and at least two ethical theorists. Thirdly, it requires a confident understanding of the way in which a second religious’ tradition has struggled and responded to challenges of a historical and/or contemporary nature from within the tradition itself as a result of external and internal influences. This discussion will only have depth if the candidates makes specific reference to the religion’s sub-traditions. It is difficult to showcase a wide range of knowledge in a brief response. Candidates would be advised to create glossaries of key terms and concepts throughout the year and draw on them regularly to enhance their writing.
CRITERION 2:

This criterion rewards the essay writing technique that has a clear introduction, body and conclusion. The examiner will be looking for evidence of clear paragraphing. It is difficult on any reader to be faced with full pages without indentation of any kind. Strong candidates addressed the skeleton plan of their essay in the introduction and addressed the stimulus and question immediately. Paragraphs that follow a format such as; P— Point, E- Expand, A— analysis, E— evidence and L=link (back to the question) are better able to reach to the evaluative work required for an A rating on Criterion 3 and Criterion 5. As always students who wrote fluently with accurate spelling and grammar and addressed the specific demands of the question were well rewarded. Paraphrasing key words or phrases from the stimulus and/or question will ensure candidates frame their responses in such a way that they are scaffolded to answer the question from the introductory paragraph onward.

CRITERION 3

To gain a high rating on this criterion the candidate must move from re-telling and describing to analysis. Analysis requires a deep examination of ideas and concepts and is the basis on which the candidate can then make the leap to evaluation. Evaluation requires weighing up strengths and weaknesses of ideas and arguments, it requires the candidate to make some judgement about the assertions and claims that can be made based on evidence. This criterion is one that most challenged candidates because it requires confident understanding and citing of evidence that will assist in filtering arguments in order to draw conclusions with confidence. One approach is to continue to build up a supply of evidence on which to draw in making conclusions. Drawing relevant and varied conclusions from the evidence is a key to creating a good discussion in response to the stimulus question.

CRITERION 4

What counts as credible evidence of information, ideas, issues and sources may differ widely depending upon the chosen tradition and chosen historical or contemporary challenge. The following is an incomplete but useful list of examples that constitute evidence: quotations, reference to authority (figures, text, data, relevant dates and fact), addressing the question, backing claims with information, drawing conclusions, illustrations and examples, internal consistency of argument, properly and subtly scoped claims and use of secondary sources. Having a credible source to support individual point of view and argument is essential for an A rating on this criterion.

CRITERION 5

Strong responses consistently made links between the content of beliefs and context of practices. Candidates who were willing to evaluate and critique belief systems (sub traditions) within a tradition and to note the different approaches which may well lead to different responses to the way a belief is lived out, or what motivates believer’s responses to others were well rewarded. On the Ethics question, candidates needed to be able to identify (1) how ethical perspectives/approaches would be practically applied to specific ethical dilemma’s (2) identify similarities and differences between the religious and secular ethical approaches/perspectives and (3) evaluate their relative strengths and weaknesses in response to the ethical issue or dilemma. Stronger candidates will be confident in their knowledge of the religious and secular ethical approaches/perspectives/theories they have chosen and will be able to draw out the similarities and differences between different approaches/perspectives/theories and in so doing further critique the strength and weaknesses of approaches/perspectives/theories with specific relation to issue/s.
SECTION A – QUESTION 1 AND 2

QUESTION 1 – BUDDHISM (GENERAL COMMENTS)

There was a clear temptation for candidates to run with the quotation provided in Question 1. “that there is no place for religion in 21st century Australia” and discuss the merit and place of religion in general terms rather than using their time wisely to apply this stimulus quote directly to the Buddhist tradition. Further to that approach, some candidates did spend too long debating the merits of whether or not Buddhism could be regarded as a religion in Australia or not, given its lack of belief in a transcendent mono-theistic God. Given the number of adherents to Buddhism globally and that Buddhism has many of the phenomenological aspects of a religion, candidates would be better acknowledging Buddhism is in fact a global religion and addressing its place in Australian society as the question demanded. It was a distraction which cost the candidates time better spent in making a case for Buddhism’s place in modern Australian society.

Discussion of the accessibility of Buddhism to modern thinkers had merit. The question required candidates to “argue against” the assertion that “that there was no place for religion in 21st Century Australia”. Strong responses had the courage to make an argument for the place and value of Buddhist teaching as a living and evolving global religion with deep philosophical insights into the human condition and with a definite place in 21st century Australia.

QUESTION 2 – BUDDHISM (GENERAL COMMENTS)

The image of the stick figure above a circling planet did assist candidates in making links to the cycle of samsara and the end outcome of breaking the cycle of rebirths to reach nirvana. Many embraced the stimulus cartoon’s key verbs “do”, “be” or “achieve” with a gusto and provided considered, nuanced and clever selection of Buddhist core beliefs and practices to discuss. The most notable were: the living out the five precepts, accepting the nature of suffering encapsulated in the Four Noble Truths, Three Marks of Existence, beliefs surrounding nirvana, enlightenment and karma. Strong candidates challenged the importance of “achieving” to a Buddhist and instead provided good commentary and analysis of the notion of all being impermanent even short lived achievements or desires. Stronger candidates evaluated the place of practices in Buddhism that draw from these core beliefs in the form of meditation, pilgrimages and sitting mindfully with Buddhist wisdom. Refreshing were the responses that discussed the nature of the human condition and the fact that rather than being pessimistic, the Buddhist approach is a realistic and counter cultural response to the constant bombardment of information and materialism in the modern world. Pleasing too was not an over analysis of the stimulus cartoon as would befit a deconstruction of it as a text in and of itself. To the candidates credit they used it as a lever to deeper and more relevant discussion of Buddhist beliefs and practices.

Buddhist practices needed to be mentioned and given the demand of the question should be addressed seamlessly alongside core beliefs. The markers were impressed with reference to differences in beliefs and practices between sub traditions. In particular, reference to the more individualistic pathway of the Theravada Buddhist as contrasted with the Bodhisattva tradition in responses was well rewarded.

CRITERION 1:

It was essential to discuss core beliefs and practices in equal measure and their inter-relation to one another, strong candidates did this with skill. Understanding the differences between sub traditions in terms of their response to the stimulus cartoon, quote and questions was critical for success on both questions in this section. A Theravada, Mahayana and Zen Buddhist would all have very different responses to the stimuli despite their sharing of many core beliefs and meditative practices. Discussion of these nuances were the hallmark of a stronger candidate’s response. Weaker candidates did not make the connection between beliefs and their practices and their use of terminology was minimal and inaccurate. A list of Buddhist beliefs rote learnt without selected application and judicious use to respond to the cartoon stimulus, quote and questions cannot hope to gain higher ratings.
CRITERION 2

This criterion rewards the essay writing technique with clear paragraphing. This is the criteria where preparedness to address the specific demands of the stimulus cartoon, stimulus quote and question will be well rewarded. Strong conclusions with summary remarks that revisit the question and stimulus were well rewarded. Weaker candidates did not reach to the demands of the essay requirements and resorted to “dumping” large amounts of remembered content within the body of the essay without any consideration of the demands of the question. Careful selection of information within well-structured paragraphs is critical for success on this criterion.

CRITERION 3 – QUESTION 1

It was heartening to observe engagement with core beliefs related to: karma, the value of meditation in a world of constant noise and distraction, vegetarianism, avoiding mindless consumerism and materialism. Discussion of the merit of acts of loving kindness, compassion and realization of the truth of core beliefs around suffering were all welcome. The Eightfold Path and Five Precepts also provided everyday wisdom which Australian Buddhist and non-Buddhist adherents could practice and benefit greatly from in their daily life. This criterion demands that candidates “argue against” the assertion that “that there was no place for religion in 21st Century Australia”. Good responses consistently applied relevant evidence to support their discussion.

CRITERION 3 – QUESTION 2

The ability to identify, articulate and explore differences in approach to the stimulus between the Buddhist sub-traditions is improving each year. Buddhist adherents do share in common the core beliefs and teachings of the Buddha but there are differences in the beliefs and in practices. These differences become apparent when evaluating the Mahayana, Zen or Theravada response to what they should “do” “be” or “achieve” in this life cycle and its karmic consequences on the path to Enlightenment. Likewise, in Question 1 the response to Buddhism’s place in Australian society varied according to the sub traditions within the tradition. The increased use of quotes from authorities such as; the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, sayings attributed to the Buddha and parables all provided stronger support and evidence for critical analysis of information, ideas and issues. Weaker responses identified the rationale that might be used by a Buddhist adherent in response to the stimulus quote and cartoon but provided little and often poorly cited evidence to back their thinking. Weaker candidates did not make the threshold jump from discussion to analysis.

CRITERION 5 – QUESTION 1 AND 2

Stronger responses were able to identify, describe and then evaluate the extent to which Buddhist core beliefs and practices are expressed and lived out in contemporary Australia. The opportunity to cast an appraising eye over modern society and the ills of materialism, consumerism, lack of mental and spiritual peace, break down in community and increased violence were engaging reading. Many candidates articulated with confidence the sense of meaning that Buddhist practices and beliefs offer both Buddhist and non-Buddhist adherents in modern society. The capacity to get “above” the description of core beliefs and practices to able to evaluate their merit, what these practices offer to contemporary society and the counter-cultural nature of them was well rewarded by markers. (Q1) Likewise the lived experience of a Buddhist and their perception of what it means to “do”, “be” or “achieve” was clearly, accurately, creatively and intelligently articulated by stronger candidates. Strong responses consistently made links between the content of beliefs and context of practices. These candidates were willing to evaluate and critique belief systems (sub traditions) within the Buddhist tradition and to note the different Buddhist approaches which may well lead to different responses to the way a belief is lived out, or what motivates believer’s responses to others.
QUESTION 1 AND 2 – JUDAISM (GENERAL COMMENTS)

Candidates displayed a sound knowledge of the ancient beliefs and traditions of Judaism and composed their arguments using a clear essay structure. The majority of candidates were able to identify the core beliefs of the tradition and referred to a number of rituals as a means of expressing these beliefs. Most responses mentioned reference to the covenant or commandments, with some stating that the origin of these beliefs is found in the Torah or Shema, therefore those who provided clear points of evidence from sacred texts or particular mitzvahs were rewarded the highest marks on this criterion. In analysing Question 1, most candidates argued the place of Judaism in a contemporary world. Many deemed the place of Judaism in 21st century Australia due to the consistency of traditions and the longevity of the religion. More sophisticated analysis contextualised the way that Judaism has been dynamic in adapting faith traditions of the past and provided relevance for them in a modern world, some demonstrated this with examples and comparison between the variants of Judaism. Question 2 was more straightforward, analysis centred on adherence and expressions of the covenant as the key reasons adherents “have been put on this planet”.

QUESTION 1 AND 2 – CHRISTIANITY

Candidates demonstrated a fair understanding of the multifaceted beliefs and traditions of Christianity. It is evident that a stylised and formulaic essay structure has evolved in responses to this faith tradition. Therefore, the best responses were those that explored and answered the essay question rather than merely listing each core belief and then attaching a tradition of expression. The majority of responses provided evidence and references, although there was a lack of variety or depth of research. Most essays cited the same parts of text or quotes, however, some students had clearly done wide and demonstrated extensive research which was well rewarded. Traditions were named in prayer, ritual and sacrament, best responses were able to draw back on how they demonstrate the belief. A few candidates were able to illustrate the nuances of expression by comparing devotional differences between the sub-traditions and denominations. Analysis of Question 1 was best answered when contemporary examples were offered on the ways that Christianity provides answers and a place for the religion in the 21st century Australia. Question 2 allowed students to incorporate the beliefs and analyse how beliefs provided meaning for a Christian with the desire for the adherent to ‘achieve’ salvation as their ultimate goal.

QUESTION 1 AND 2 – ISLAM

CRITERION 1

Candidates displayed a confident understanding of the core beliefs and practices of Islam in particular the principles and statements of belief, the requirement to follow the Five Pillars and the ritual expressions of practice involved in daily prayer and rites of passage (birth and death). Students who used terms with confidence and accuracy and those candidates that drew on a wide range of terms and knowledge were well rewarded.

CRITERION 2

A coherent, clear and logical response to Question 1 or Question 2 was sought by the markers. Candidates that addressed the stimulus cartoon/quote and questions from the onset and linked back to these key elements throughout the body of the essay response gained the higher ratings on this criterion. The discussion of core beliefs and practices in equal measure was pleasing to note.

CRITERION 3

This criterion demanded that candidates do more than just describe core beliefs and practices of Muslims each day, through each year and through the life time of the individual adherent. The question required candidates to “argue against” the assertion that “there was no place for religion in 21st Century Australia”. To make a case for Islam’s core beliefs and practices offering something to adherents and non-adherents in modern Australian society was the task required and was challenging. Good responses consistently made the point that there is a
seamless link between core beliefs and practices for Muslims which is based strongly on faith. This made discussion of what an Islamic adherent believes they are put on this planet “to do, be or achieve” straightforward to describe and analyse but far more difficult to evaluate.

CRITERION 5

Muslim adherents live their life submitting to the will of Allah and this finds expression in all that they say and do from birth to death. The capacity to get “above” the description of core beliefs and practices to able to evaluate their merit, what these practices offer to contemporary society and the counter-cultural nature of them was well rewarded by markers. Islam is a demanding religious tradition in its requirement to give over one’s life and agency in total submission to the will of Allah. Strong candidates were able to go beyond describing and analysing this reality for adherents to evaluate its strengths and challenges. (Q1)

Likewise the lived experience of a Muslim and their perception of what it means to “do”, “be” or “achieve” was clearly, accurately, creatively and intelligently articulated by stronger candidates. Strong responses consistently made links between the content of beliefs and context of practices.

SECTION B - CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGE

QUESTION 3 AND 4 – ISLAM

It’s worrying that so many students are covering Islam with the focus being entirely on topics that have been sensationalised through the media and extreme right wing groups – in particular Islamophobia, Female Genital Mutilation, September 11 attack on the Twin Towers and terrorism without a counter balance that showcased understanding of Muslim core beliefs or explaining the concept of Jihad from Islamic teaching. Fortunately, most candidates did point out that Female Genital Mutilation is a cultural issue and nothing to do with Islam but students need to realise that the world of Islam is far broader than the Arab world and North Africa. No answers referred to Islam in the four countries where most Muslims live—Indonesia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh – and some specifically referred to the Middle East and North Africa as the main Muslim populated areas in the world. The focus on September 11 also tended to push candidates into writing about Islam in the USA where again no-one pointed out the diversity in the Muslim community there, as in Australia. Essays needed to move beyond discussion of September 11 to the challenges that have arisen since this global event. Weaker candidates often included more than a page on the details of what happened and some of this was rather confused. The planes were not ‘fighter jets’ and the Twin Towers were not the ‘headquarters of the United States.’ Nor is Al Qaeda a ‘sect’ of Islam. There were a lot of references to ‘Sharia’ law but again no-one pointed out that there is no such one concept or model in Islam—Muslims follow a number of different schools of law, both in the Sunni tradition and amongst the Shi’a. Spelling remains a major issue, including not only Al Qaeda but also words like ‘polygamy.’ Sudan Hussein was another name spelt incorrectly. The best answers – and there were some very good ones—dealt briefly with the challenge itself before going on to analyse the response and how it changed the tradition, rather than spending too much time writing about Pauline Hanson’s “dress up stunt” in the Senate. Several candidates were able to quote the Qur’an on the use of violence in Islam and the meaning of jihad. Others had good text references on the status of women and rules on dress, particularly the diversity in interpretation. Candidates constantly refer to ‘Islamic people’ rather than Muslims (just as you would refer to Christians rather than Christian people).

QUESTION 3 – ISLAM

Candidates chose their question well, and all responses fitted the question. Most responses used Islamophobia, feminism, or terrorism as the challenge. Stronger responses tended to choose feminism and terrorism as the challenge, and were able to embed plenty of evidence from the Quran into their responses, whereas those who chose Islamophobia tended to have weaker evidence.
CRITERION 1

Stronger responses demonstrated a thorough and accurate understanding of Islamic beliefs and embedded relevant terminology in to the discussion. The discussion on the challenge was presented in a sophisticated way, for example how core practices such as Salat or wearing hijab have been impacted.

Weaker responses did not adequately explain Islamic beliefs, and instead focussed solely on providing a recount of the challenge itself. In some cases, there was factual inaccuracies regarding Islam (e.g. that Islam is a religion of the 4th BCE!)

CRITERION 2

Stronger responses in addition to the required structural requirements expected of a strong response, these responses specifically answered the question of the responses to the challenge, and how the tradition had been changed or was undergoing a process of change, as a consequence of the challenge.

Weaker responses a number of responses were modelled on the 2016 exam question, and were an ‘essay dump’ on the consequences of the challenge (positive and negative), and in some cases did this well, however these responses did not address the question of how the tradition had changed. The very weak responses only discussed historical facts (sometimes inaccurately) without discussion of the impact on the tradition.

CRITERION 3

Stronger responses used strong evidence throughout and embedded it within an analytical discussion, e.g. relevant Surahs from the Quran; statements from political and religious leaders; Amman declaration, news articles, evidence from current social discourse. These responses also explained the rationale for change within the tradition.

Weaker responses presented information only, and did not analyse the impact of the challenge; did not use adequate (if any) evidence to support the discussion or provide any rationale for change within the tradition.

CRITERION 4

Stronger responses justified their argument by referring to the key evidence, and critically commented on the evidence, particularly controversial Surahs such as the Sword verses or those comment on the status of women.

Weaker responses offered an opinion or information without any supporting evidence.

QUESTION 3 AND 4 – TIBETAN BUDDHISM

These were well done on the whole, with candidates noting that the focus was on both the positive and negative consequences of the Chinese occupation on the tradition. Good answers referred to the unique nature of Buddhism in Tibet, the reasons for and the impact of the Chinese occupation from 1950 onwards, and the changes that resulted to the tradition in exile. Candidates also referred to the consequent spread of Tibetan Buddhism beyond its geographical isolation prior to 1950 and some of the difficulties that Tibetans encounter being based in India.

SECTION C – ETHICS AND MORALITY

The majority of candidates chose to respond to this question using either Natural Moral Law or Utilitarianism. A smaller number chose Situation Ethics. Some candidates also used Christian ethics as their chosen theory (unsuccessfully, more on that follows). There was also some confusion with weaker responses as to which question they were attempting (Q5 or 6).
CRITERION 1

Stronger responses demonstrated a thorough understanding of one theory by utilising a wide range of relevant terminology and accurately referring to the theorists/philosophical underpinnings, and the historical context of the theory. Detailed elements of theory were clearly explained.

Weaker responses were unable to demonstrate a depth of knowledge of the theory, and used very broad brush strokes in an attempt to cover the information. Some responses did not demonstrate any knowledge of theory, other than naming it, others made errors in confusing basic elements of alternative theories (e.g. conflating NML and Situation Ethics, or Utilitarianism and Situation Ethics). Responses using a Christian ethical framework were opinion pieces on what a Christian would say about the morality of euthanasia or abortion, and had an absence of theory or reference to actual theory (e.g. Divine Command theory).

CRITERION 2

Stronger responses chose their question clearly, and responded to all requirements of the question, including choosing one ethical theory only, and how this theory might interpret an ethical issue or issues in different ways. Overall, these responses were able to demonstrate capability in formal essay-style writing, and presented an argument which was easily understood and coherent. These responses all utilised a relevant introduction, paragraphing which included topic sentences (and generally spoke to one idea only), and a conclusion which emphatically referred back to the essay question.

Weaker responses were unclear as to which question was being answered, as they included more than one theory but ultimately failed to answer the requirements of either Question 5 or 6. Some responses used a scatter-gun approach, dumping as much information as possible on multiple ethical theories (but not in any detail), and consequently did not actually answer either question. Some responses did not identify an ethical issue to discuss.

CRITERION 4

Stronger responses introduced a range of evidence, which supported the consistency of argument. This evidence included the practical application of the sub-element precepts/principles of theory to the issue; referring to key quotes by philosophers/theorists to support their discussion; and consistently referring back to the question.

Weaker responses had a very small pool of evidence, if any. These responses generally presented an opinion without using evidence to support it.

CRITERION 5

Stronger responses these responses used the essay question, particularly the requirement to examine how an ethical theory might view an issue in differing ways, as a springboard for discussion on the strengths and limitations, to critically evaluate the inconsistencies of the theory.

Weaker responses there was an absence of evaluation or discussion on the how the chosen theory might view the chosen ethical issue in different ways. Some responses simply stated that the chosen theory would view the issue as morally right or wrong, but did not examine any limitations or strengths (Fully addressing the requirements of Question 5 would have drawn out this particular requirement).
QUESTION 6

There was a range of ethical dilemmas chosen by candidates but the majority discussed Abortion and Euthanasia. Good answers paid attention to the focus of the question, which was on key issues raised by the topic and then the contrast presented by two ethical approaches. Candidates mainly referred to Natural Law and/or Utilitarianism/Situation Ethics. It was pleasing to see candidates reference the euthanasia debate that was ongoing at the time of the exam. There was an awareness of the current legal situation in Australia with regard to these issues and the best candidates dealt with the questions that these ethical frameworks failed to adequately respond to in modern society.

CRITERION 1

Correct understanding of the ethical theories and approaches with background information on the basic precepts and principles of chosen ethical approaches by candidates were well rewarded. A wide range of terminology and understanding is essential for a higher rating on this criterion. It is essential that students undertake an introductory investigation of a variety of ethical codes of world religious traditions and other ethical frameworks in their study for the year. A strong and confident knowledge of the theories and approaches (philosophical underpinnings and historical context) is an essential basis on which candidates can draw to apply the framework of two ethical perspectives to a specific ethical issue.

CRITERION 2

Well-structured responses with coherent, logical and clear formal essay writing style were well rewarded. Addressing the specific demands of the question was essential. The question demanded that candidates provide two contrasting ethical approaches. The majority of candidates chose Natural Law Theory and contrasted it with Situation Ethics or Utilitarianism which allowed discussion and analysis of the difference between deontological and consequentialist ethical approaches. Many candidates ignored the first part of the question which required the candidate to address the key questions raised by their chosen issue.

CRITERION 4

As was the case in Question 5, stronger responses provided a range of evidence which supported consistent and considered argument. Evidence for this section of the paper was mainly in the practical application of the elements or precepts or principles of the chosen ethical theories or approaches chosen. Use of key quotes by philosophers or theorists to support discussion and back up arguments were well rewarded. Addressing the specific demands of all elements of the question and being consistent in referring back to those elements consistently throughout the essay was the hallmark of an A rating.

CRITERION 5

Most candidates used ethical approaches that contrasted as required by the question. Those who did not choose contrasting approaches limited their opportunity to demonstrate broader knowledge and understanding of ethical approaches. A few candidates limited themselves to ethical positions of religious traditions and did not align or contrast these to broader ethical approaches. Most candidates were familiar with the mainstream ethical approaches but many failed to contrast these or discuss the strengths or weaknesses of these. The question required some reference to context, that is, “some of the key questions raised by the issue” but many candidates ignored this aspect of the question. Generally, candidates had a basic and reasonable understanding of ethical approaches but many responses lacked sophistication and depth or failed to adequately link these back to the issue being discussed. In contrast, some candidates had a deep and sophisticated understanding of ethical positions and were able to strongly link this to evidence and the complexity of issue.