

STUDIES OF RELIGION (REL315116)

It was clear that most students had prepared well for the REL315116, Studies of Religion exam for 2018. It is a very content rich course which also requires analytical and critical philosophical thinking to adapt the candidates' knowledge to specifically address the demands of an unseen stimulus cartoon and questions. This year, students who performed well did so because they read the questions demands very carefully and crafted their responses accordingly. It is a temptation to just "tell all you know" on a topic but resist, resist, resist in favour of specifically meeting the demands of the question.

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Take note of the instructions regarding the exam itself – for example, each question is to be completed in a separate booklet; and, booklets need to be clearly labelled with which question is in the booklet.
- Legibility of scripts is critical – your ratings could be affected should an examiner struggle to read your writing.
- 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
- Poor or inaccurate grammatical expression can limit your ability to make points clearly and succinctly.
- Incorrect spelling, especially of terms specific to religious traditions, will detract from your response.

- The use of evidence to support your argument/discussion is critical. You will not achieve satisfactory ratings for C4 if you do not use evidence. Furthermore, the use of evidence adds sophistication to your writing and demonstrates your ability to engage critically with the essay question.
- Avoid:
 - ‘dumping’ all that you know about a topic into your essay. While it is important to include much detail and explanation, it is critical that this is used as part of your engagement with the specifics of the stimulus items;
 - making judgments about religious traditions or ethical issues. Your task is to engage your scholarship in an examination of religious traditions and ethical perspectives.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS: EXTERNALLY ASSESSED CRITERIA

(AS PER 2017 REPORT BUT STILL IMPORTANT TO HIGH LIGHT TO CANDIDATES ENTERING THIS SUBJECT IN 2019)

CRITERION I

This criterion rewards articulation and correct use of a **wide** range of key terms, concepts and ideas. This discussion will only have range and depth if the candidates makes specific reference to the religion’s sub-traditions. Specific reference to sub-variants was critical for success in framing responses to Historical and Contemporary Challenges. Many markers were dismayed by the lack of use of specific conceptual terms within responses on religious traditions.

It is difficult to showcase a wide range of knowledge in a brief response, it is always disappointing to see a script a few paragraphs only in length. Candidates would be advised to continue to create glossaries of key terms and concepts throughout the year and draw on them regularly to enhance their writing.

CRITERION 2

As stated in 2017, 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.

CRITERION 3

To gain a high rating on this criterion the candidate must be able to engage in a deep examination of ideas and concepts as a building block for moving on 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. A good strategy is to build a supply of evidence on which to create 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.

The usefulness and contestability of sources is worth considering as the year unfolds so that students will be able to show their discernment of the fact that all evidence/sources/ideas are written within a richer context and mirror varying world views which in turn greatly shapes the way the evidence can be used and discussed. Close reading and analysis of sources throughout the year will support candidate's ability to provide a context for their sources in the final examination setting.

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.

QUESTION 1 - JUDAISM

The responses to Question 1 and Question 2 identified clear understanding of the beliefs of the Jewish people and discussed rituals of the faithful. The majority of responses detailed the monotheistic God of Abraham and were able to draw on the bonds of the Covenant as a core belief and driver of practices and traditions. Across the responses, candidates were able to name a number of rituals, festivals or traditions.

Candidates who wrote a short response that merely listed rituals and the steps followed during the ritual did not address the deeper question of ways that the rituals express core beliefs and provide a sense of meaning. Some candidates employed specific Jewish terminology or supported their knowledge with quotes and references to the Torah or Talmud. It would have been good to see more of this across the whole cohort.

Question 1 required candidates to address the afterlife and detail the consequences for a Jewish adherent. As the afterlife is a belief not often widely recorded or discussed in Judaism, candidates had some difficulty here.

A few responses used the term afterlife, however, many failed to make any connections in their responses (this is a syllabus point of the TASC curriculum and candidates might have demonstrated knowledge by mentioning Sheol, Olam HaBa, or the 13th Article of Faith by Maimonides). Question 2 required candidates to analyse the relationship between humans and the world that priorities social justice and climate change. A few excellent responses were able to reference Tikkon Olam and detail the expression of this belief by connecting the notion of 'world repair' as social justice. Best responses were able to identify a core belief, analyse the adaptations to the expressions through the variants from Orthodox, Reform and Liberal adherents and to examine the ways that belief and meaning is dynamic, can change or remain the same across culture and time.

QUESTION 1 – ISLAM

Candidates that performed well on this question were able to use the stimulus cartoon and its phrasing "How much do you know? And how much do you suspect?" to their great advantage with respect to Islamic belief in the Day of Judgement and the recording of good and bad deeds by Angels throughout the Muslim adherent's life.

Strong links between observance of rituals and practices and upholding beliefs in direct relation to the direct consequences in the afterlife were well articulated by candidates in the main. Strong candidates noted that Allah is not depicted in any visual form in Islamic belief. The seeming contradiction of Allah's omniscience in knowing the heart, intention and choices of each person whilst still believing in free will was intelligently analysed by strong candidates. Strong candidates were able to make the link between the Articles of Faith (core beliefs of Islam) and their interdependence on the Pillars of Faith (rituals and practices) in supporting Muslim adherents to live in complete submission to Allah in word, heart and deed. Accurate and confident use of a wide repertoire of terminology and a breadth of understanding of concepts referencing Islamic terms was pleasing to note.

Weaker candidates ignored the cartoon and stimulus questions entirely or only addressed the cartoon and stimulus questions in part.

Weaker candidates provided a prepared body of knowledge about the Pillars of Islam and the Articles of Faith with little connection to the specific demands of the question which required candidates to specifically draw on understanding the response of the tradition to death, consequences of the Day of Judgement, the afterlife and nature of the divine.

Candidates would benefit from continuing to anticipate that the stimulus question in Section A will provide diverse pathways into analysing a faith tradition as described in the learning outcomes of the syllabus: namely; the nature of the divine and metaphysical, purpose and meaning of human existence, the nature of human condition, relationships between human beings and the world, explanations for suffering, death and the afterlife.

Markers continue to look for candidates who can use the knowledge and understanding of core beliefs and practices of a tradition with confidence and apply that knowledge and understanding under the pressure of time to varying stimuli. Markers continue to reward candidates who courageously and confidently address the specific demands of the question provided.

Q2. There were only twelve responses to Question 2, with reference to Islam and its response to social justice and climate change. There were strong responses overall this year with better ones not only outlining key beliefs but tying them to social justice on issues like gender or helping the poor and needy, or demonstrating knowledge of Islam's interest in the environment as a basis for concern about climate change. A strong response commented on the fact that Islamic scholars would certainly consider the threat to Allah's creation posed by climate change and link it to Islam's historic concern for the environment as well as referring to Mohammed's concern for the less fortunate in life.

This could be linked particularly to the meaning of Zakat and donations to the poor and needy at the time of the Eid el-Adha as well as the significance of Ramadan.

QUESTION 1 – BUDDHISM

The majority of candidates in the State applied their study of Buddhism to respond to this cartoon stimulus. Overall, candidates responding to this question from a Buddhist perspective provided good responses explaining the difference between this image and Buddhist concepts of, not a single afterlife, but a continual cycle of death and rebirth (samsara) resulting from the consequences of one's good and bad actions (karma), from which one can ultimately escape by accepting and putting into practice Buddhist teachings so as to gain enlightenment (nirvana).

The weakest responses ignored the cartoon, and demonstrated little if any technical knowledge of Buddhism. Too many basic responses retold the life of the Buddha in fulsome detail, before mentioning in a formulaic manner The Four Sights, The Four Noble truths, The Eightfold Path, The Five Precepts, and so forth – but without continually referring back to the actual question, and without detailing only those teachings that specifically relate to how the consequences of one's actions lead to the next reincarnation, or, if enlightenment is achieved, allow for escape from endless rebirth. Better answers gave more relevant details that linked those Buddhist teachings already mentioned (as well as The Three Jewels, The Three Poisons, The Three Marks of Existence, The Twelve Stages of Dependent Origination, The Five Aggregates, The Four Great Illimitables or Immeasurables, and so forth – often using the Sanskrit or Pali terms for many of these) to the cycle of death and rebirth as driven by karma, and the Buddhist goal of escaping this endless merry-go-round of suffering.

The most successful responses specifically rejected the scenario of the cartoon, noting that Buddhism has a quite different notion, without a supreme deity or recording angel, let alone a single afterlife, but commenting on some aspects of the image that can be reinterpreted – for example, karma is ineluctable and the Buddha claimed to have gained true knowledge of samsara and how to achieve enlightenment, so in both senses the answer to the quotation is that all is known, nothing suspected, as Buddhism is a passage from unknowingness to enlightenment; others noted that the Buddha specifically rejected the asking of useless questions; some noted that the briefcase carried by the person could symbolise their ongoing attachments that would hold them back from achieving enlightenment and would condemn them to rebirth,

while the scales could symbolise their overall totals of good and bad karma, and the book being consulted could either record their actions, or be instead the dharma, with the angel being viewed as an enlightened figure.

The best answers provided: quotations from Buddhist sources, retold appropriate parables, mentioned the six realms into which rebirth can occur, of which only the human realm allows for beings to gain enlightenment, emphasized Buddhism as a practice more than a theory, including both private and public devotional practices and meditation. Stronger responses noted relevant differences between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, such the former favouring a more individualistic quest for enlightenment which only members of the sangha can attain in this life, while the latter is more communally oriented, believing in bodhisattvas who delay their departure from samsara in favour of assisting all beings to gain enlightenment, which can be accessed by all practitioners, monastic or lay.

MARKER 2 - BUDDHISM

There was a tendency to just list basic beliefs but not link it to the stimulus. Some candidates even wrote a page on the life story of Siddhartha but without any connection to the question. There was also some confusion over the concept of Nirvana with some candidates trying to equate to 'heaven' which it is not, and certainly not 'the Christian heaven.' It is also important to make the distinction between the Precept that calls for abstaining from sexual misconduct which is not the same as not entering into sexual relations at all!

Strong candidates did include basic beliefs, including the Buddhist precepts emphasising how to live, but would connect it to the stimulus, making the point that there is no external judge in Buddhism as you create your own karma for the next life. What was disappointing was the failure to explain the difference between the Theravada and Mahayana traditions, particularly the idea of a bodhisattva coming back to help others. Some candidates did make the distinction between the sub traditions but then made the mistake of equating the idea of 'gods' in the Mahayana tradition with the judging 'God' in the cartoon.

QUESTION 2 - BUDDHISM

Responses to this question were far ranging from candidates who simply outlined basic Buddhist beliefs to those who sought to link these to the question asked. There was a widespread divergence of views expressed as some candidates felt that Buddhism was not concerned with social justice or climate change while others thought it was.

Unless students had some idea of the Dalai Lama's reflections on social justice (stressing the importance of compassion) and climate change (which he has related to changes in the Himalayan glaciers and on the fragile Tibetan plateau) or were aware of Buddhist organisations in countries like Thailand where both eco-monks and laity are active on environmental issues or working for social justice, then they were obliged to think very carefully about how Buddhist traditions might connect with the two concerns raised by the question. As in Q1, spelling of Buddhist terms remains a problem, especially the constant mis-spelling of NOBLE by NOBEL (presumably with the Nobel Prizes in mind). "Buddism" instead of Buddhism is less forgivable!

QUESTION 3 AND QUESTION 4 – JUDAISM

The responses to Question 3 and Question 4 – contained considerable overlap. The Holocaust or Shoah (as it is more respectfully named) was universally identified as both a significant historical and contemporary challenge which has had significant impact since the Second World War both on the Jewish diaspora and on wider society. The genocide of the Jewish people in an act of state sanctioned murder is still foremost in contemporary thinking of both those within the tradition and wider society. Candidates noted examples of anti-Semitic writing and acts of violence towards those of the Jewish faith still in evidence globally in 2018. The responses to the questions demonstrated an excellent understanding of the core beliefs and practices of Judaism. The majority of candidates were able to name the ways in which the tradition had been impacted by the horrific death and trauma of Shoah not only in the tragic genocide of the Jewish people, the ongoing trauma of its survivors but specifically in its impact and varied responses within the tradition.

Strong candidates identified the emergence of four distinct responses from adherents within the tradition which were broadly referenced as atheistic, Orthodox, Reformed or Liberal. Strong candidates answered the specific demands of the question by reflecting on the impact not just on adherents of the horrors of Shoah but the impact and response of wider society and in particular Christians to these atrocities. Strong candidates discussed the complex and challenging road of inter-faith dialogue and attempts to respectfully acknowledge in remembrance and liturgically the pain and losses of the Jewish people. Stronger responses critically evaluated the usefulness and contestability of sources of information comparing and contrasting viewpoints from sub variants within the Jewish faith in a considered and analytical manner.

Stronger responses engaged with the complex and varied ways in which individuals and the collective found meaning in their profound suffering and evaluated the significance it has had to both the individual and collective since.

Weaker responses did not reach to supporting their assertions with a wide range of knowledge, terminology and supporting quotes and evidence and engaged in a retelling of the events and facts linked to Shoah and accounts of the Holocaust event without explaining their impact on the tradition and the responses of the Jewish people to this significant challenge to faith. It was pleasing to see candidates able to reference stories and first-hand accounts of survivors of the Holocaust who emigrated to Australia. Candidates were able to highlight the lifelong trauma of Holocaust survivors and their varied response in faith as individuals, its impact within their family and as adherents within the Australian cultural, social and religious context.

QUESTION 3 – ISLAM (MARKER 1)

Strong candidates used their strong foundational understanding of the core beliefs of Islam and its practices on which to develop a nuanced understanding of the sub variants within the tradition and the challenges experienced both in Australia and globally in being an observant Muslim. Strong candidates discussed the way that Muslims are addressing negative stereotypes of Islam within the local, national and global community in the media reporting.

References to: the Islamic response to bombings in the UK, the Ride with Me campaign after the Lindt Café siege in Sydney, greater emphasis on education of the wider community about Islam and meeting with local Imams by political leaders in Western societies to further promote inter-faith dialogue were all good examples of responses by those of Islamic faith to the reality of acts of violent terrorism. As with all faith traditions, Muslim adherents are diverse too in their practice not just in being Sunni or Shi'a adherents. Even within those sub-traditions strong candidates articulated what might be loosely and inadequately labelled a range of differing Muslim adherents namely; liberal Muslims or feminist thinkers or conservative commentators or observant commentators or more strictly observant in adherence especially in more patriarchal societies.

The responses of individuals and communities across this breadth and depth of expression of Islamic faith needs to be named for its challenge, complexity and nuance. Weak responses are focussing the majority of their essays on the events of September 11, 2001 in a graphic, detailed retelling of this day in history. There is an important need to reference the work of academic writers such as the Australian expert and demographer Abdullah Saeed who provides strong historical, cultural and religious context to the make-up of those of Islamic faith in Australia.

Islam is not a monolithic religion it is made of complex and diverse cultural groups each with their own expression of Islamic practice. Identifying the range of faith responses to challenges such as the rise of terrorism carried out by a minority of radicalized extremists purporting to act in the name of Islam and invoking violence needs to be challenged as not being a true representation of the core beliefs of Islam. Links to the Articles of Belief supported by reference to the Pillars of Faith within the tradition would high light and support the case that Islam is a religion that promotes peace over violence and the daily struggle to be a person of faith. It is essential that reliable, academic sources are identified and quoted and the distorted views of a minority of radicalized individuals are put into context.

QUESTION 3 – ISLAM (MARKER 2)

The quality of responses to Q. 3 was weak across all ratings. Overall, it was observed that those candidates who chose feminism/gender as the challenge, fared better than those who chose 9/11 and the rise of ISIS.

Whilst some candidates included discussion of the Five Pillars, many failed to incorporate a discussion on actual Muslim beliefs - only one candidate used a range of essential terms such as *tawhid*. There was a disappointing absence of Arabic terminology overall, other than jihad, hijab, burqa, salat.

The stronger responses who chose feminism as the challenge used a sound array of sources such as verses from the Qur'an and commentary from Muslim feminists. The discussions ranged into how verses from the Qur'an may be open to interpretation, particularly around headwear and domestic violence.

Overall, strong essays incorporated discussions about how the wider community has responded both to dress codes and to terrorism, and linked back to overall Islamic beliefs.

Weaker responses skirted around the questions and did not adequately engage, and lacked use of evidence, analysis, and terms and concepts.

QUESTION 4

The quality of responses to Q. 4 was very low. Many candidates chose the question poorly, as this was the 'historical challenge' question, yet some wrote about feminism. This was not penalised in the marking process.

The majority of responses were about 9/11 and the rise of ISIS. A substantial number of responses wrote a chronological, historical piece and spent a great deal of time recounting the events of 9/11, and did not actually answer the questions in terms of the impact of the responses of Islam. A number of these responses also had factual inaccuracies (confusion over place names and dates).

Many responses did not incorporate any information about Islamic beliefs or practices, and there was a paucity of terminology, terms and concepts. Candidates who included terms such as jihad, salat, Quran, were rewarded accordingly.

The best response dedicated a small amount of writing (less than half a page) on the events of 9/11, and devoted the majority of the essay to drawing connections between concepts and evidence. This response used sound evidence, including analysing the 'Sword verses' and counter arguments, and explained the internal struggle within Islam between extremism and moderates.

The majority of responses did not delve into Islamic beliefs at all (apart from a handful who discussed jihad), and as such were unable to adequately go into discussion about how the impact of the challenge on the tradition.

Future candidates should ensure they do not dedicate all of their essay space to a historical recount of 9/11!

QUESTION 4 – BUDDHISM – HISTORICAL CHALLENGE

The challenge in maintaining religious observance and practices particular to the Tibetan branch of Buddhism in the historical wake of Chinese's Peoples Liberation Army sweeping through Tibet in 1950 and removing the four olds "custom, habits, ideas and values" was clearly described and analysed by the majority of candidates. Chairman Mao's opposition to religion and deep seated hatred of religious rituals and practices was clearly articulated.

In the immediate wake of the Chinese invasion there was loss of life, culture, language and access to sacred places, people and times. Strong responses chronologically outlined the loss of language linked to rituals, physical loss of connection to the country of Tibet by the multitude in exile and those who have since inter-married outside the tradition. In the aftermath of the Chinese invasion, strong candidates analysed the profound impact on the Tibetan Buddhist religion through; the destruction of monasteries, slaying of monks and nuns, destruction of sacred objects, the closing of schools and cultural centres and the forced exile of the Tibetan spiritual and political leader, the Dalai Lama.

Strong candidates identified as a response to this challenge the uptake of Buddhism through the charisma, humour, spirituality and wisdom of the Dalai Lama himself through his constant travel (in exile) to the west.

Strong responses showcased a good understanding of the reality of the fact that countries which support the Dalai Lama have been punished by China through powerful political and economic sanctions. Once again, strong candidates identified that take up of Tibetan Buddhism in first world nations can be selective and secular in its nature.

Fear for the safety of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese influence in his successor were also identified. Stronger candidates made a link between the survival of Tibetan Buddhism in exile as a labour of love through the creation of Tibetan schools, communities and a government in exile which as an active response to keeping the Tibetan culture, religion and history alive. Maintaining, sustaining and growing understanding of Tibetan Buddhism in its strong links to core beliefs of Buddhism as a non-violent pathway has had its challenges for adherents especially those who have experienced torture for peaceful protests, famine through adopting different farm practices and isolation from their religious core as identified by strong candidates.

Both loss of faith and strong connection to faith have been two contrasting responses that have resulted from these experiences as strong candidates were able to extrapolate. Responses to the seemingly insurmountable challenge of this historical event seem varied from acts of extreme protest by self-immolation, to pressuring the Chinese government through sanctions by stronger allies, to peaceful acceptance of the Middle Way and were all discussed by stronger candidates.

There is also an argument to be made that the Chinese invasion has brought positive changes to the previously feudal like existence of the Tibetan people which is a contestable point that the Dalai Lama would not reject entirely. Weaker candidates did not move from recounting the events surrounding the expulsion of the Dalai Lama from Tibet and the invasion of the Chinese in 1950 with the ways it has impacted explicitly on the faith traditions core beliefs and practices and transmission of the faith to those in exile both in India and Switzerland in particular. Weaker candidates outlined the challenge and responses but did not consider fully the impact on the religious tradition for individuals and communities within Tibet and for those who have been in exile now for two generations or more.

QUESTION 3 – HINDUISM

There were just six responses to a challenge to Hinduism posed by Indian independence. A successful answer here would have stressed India's decision to opt for a secular constitution rather than following the direction of Pakistan, although Nehru is somewhat discredited these days as India has moved towards a stronger Hindu emphasis under the BJP government.

Candidates did refer to Britain's divide and rule strategy up to 1947 and the disastrous consequences, as well as Dr Ambedkar's role as a Dalit in drawing up India's constitution.

QUESTION 3 AND QUESTION 4 – ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY

The responses to Question 3 and Question 4 – contained similar discussions on the emergence of Colonisation and the impacts of this event on the Aboriginal people of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands. Most candidates detailed the key points of Aboriginal Spirituality including the connection to Land and oral tradition. Candidates then went on to identify the key challenges including but not limited to; the removal of Aboriginal people from land, years of violence and massacres, The Stolen Generation, Christian Missionary and Assimilation policies having detrimental impacts on Aboriginal culture and Spirituality. Contemporary essays were able to address the ways that the impact continues to challenge Australian society today and deal with the insufficiencies of many responses.

Candidates who noted specific examples from various Aboriginal Nations or case studies provided clear connections to the impact and challenges, with many providing specific places, dates and names as excellent points of evidence. The majority of candidates were strong in facts and detailing quoted sources. The strongest candidates were able to answer the specific demands of the question by discussing the complex and challenging road to reconciliation and attempts to say 'Sorry' for wrongs of the past. Very few responses critically evaluated the usefulness and contestability of sources of information comparing and contrasting viewpoints of the Government by critically analysing the Redfern Address or Rudd's Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples. It was pleasing to see candidates move beyond an essay that merely recalled events, those who provided sustained connections between the challenge and the impact on Aboriginal Spirituality were well rewarded.

SECTION C, QUESTIONS 5 & 6

GENERAL FEEDBACK FROM MARKERS

- 1) It was difficult to decipher some of the students handwriting.
- 2) Markers note that more competent students were able to clearly structure their responses to the questions and used appropriate philosophical ideas, logic and reasoning and arguments.
- 3) However, many weaker students ignored the specific demands of the question and attempted to provide responses which focused on definitions. Indeed, in some responses there is clearly an issue with students' sources of knowledge, for example, the origins of Natural Law Theory.
- 4) Students who did poorly in this section failed to clearly explain the ethical frameworks they had chosen.
- 5) Students who did well gave clear detailed explanation of the issue they had chosen and how the ethical frameworks would deal with that issue.
- 6) Markers were looking for evidence of deep understanding and a critical evaluation of the frameworks in relation to the issues.

CRITERION 1: Uses ideas and concepts in discussing religious traditions and ethical perspectives

Both questions did not use a stimulus, rather the questions were open-ended which had the advantage of enabling students to use the knowledge they have learned during the year. The majority of scripts addressed contemporary or historical ethical challenges and this supported the ability of markers to reward students. Many students who accurately described and detailed the relevant issues were able to make connections between theories and practices with others providing an outline only of the issues.

CRITERION 2: Structure and communicate ideas and information

The scripts that offered strong responses used clear, detailed and a cohesive structure with ideas being composed coherently and cohesive arguments presented. Many scripts were attentive to grammatical conventions with appropriate terms defined and explained.

CRITERION 3: Analyse religious and non-religious traditions and ethical perspectives

The scripts that offered strong responses were able to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding and sound analysis of religious and non-religious traditions and provide commentary on the points of similarity and difference between the two in question 5 or in-depth in question 6. Moreover, the robust responses were able to provide appropriate examples or illustrations to demonstrate their understanding of the different schools of thought.

CRITERION 4: Analyse the expression of religious and ethical viewpoints in society

The impressive and noteworthy scripts were greatly improved by the use of evidence, appropriate examples, quotations and explanations. Many students appear to have taken seriously the demands of this criterion and in particular, the need to refer to an authority and include either a religious or non-religious argument and ethical viewpoint and indeed some students offered an extract quotation from a specific tradition. The quotes were in the main a support and not just an addendum to impress the marker. Unsupported opinions and argument were more characteristic of a weaker response.