



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2012**

Religious Studies

RSS04

(Specification 2060)

Unit D Religion, Philosophy and Science

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

There were a number of good scripts this time round but few at the very top end. The main problem appeared to be the production of set piece answers to questions irrespective of the actual question asked. This was particularly evident in 01 and 04. Answers to 07 and 08 were very few in number.

Question 1 *Miracles*

01 The question focused on the arguments against miracles from science. Hume was not credited unless he was used to make general points about the role of laws of nature. Since many students still gave set answers on Hume, the descriptions of the response of religion were also less effective. There were also a number of answers which included religious problems with miracles. This material could not be credited.

02 This question produced better answers. Most students understood the various arguments about the role of miracles in establishing God's existence. There is still a need for students to go further than merely reciting arguments on either side of the claim in the question. Some assessment of *both* sides is required for the higher level marks at AO2.

Question 2 *Creation*

03 This was a straightforward question which produced some good answers. It is worth noting that creationism does not revolve solely around the question of how old the Earth is. Creationists have much more to say about creation and students who got past the arguments about age between the different groups of creationists and went on to explain the wider understanding of creation scored the higher marks. A number of students confused Intelligent Design with the Design Argument. It is not true to say that Swinburne believes in Intelligent Design.

04 This question proved to be the most demanding on the paper. Many answers simply assessed whether Intelligent Design was a good or a bad thing. The question was much more specific and picks up the wording in the specification. The best answers focused on the requirements for a theory to be scientific and, in these answers, there was some impressive analysis.

Question 3 *The design argument*

05 This question was by far the most popular on the paper. Its open-ended nature proved the undoing of some students who presented more than two versions of the Design Argument. Examiners in such cases marked all versions and calculated the credit for the best two.

06 The answers to this question were often very long. In the main, this was because students gave every possible reason why the Design Argument does not work from Hume to Mill to Dawkins. For AO2, credit is given for a judicious use of the material in evaluating an argument. Many answers consisted entirely of AO1 and could not, therefore, score higher than L4.

Question 4 *Quantum mechanics and a religious world view*

07 There were very few scripts. Those who answered this question tended to have a good knowledge of the different elements outlined in the specification and thus were able to score marks in the higher levels.

08 Some good discussion was seen in the few answers which came forward.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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