

# Examiners' Report January 2007

GCE

## GCE General Studies (8206/9206)

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## Contents

Unit 6451/01	Page 1
Unit 6452/01	Page 5
Unit 6453/01	Page 10
Unit 6454/01	Page 14
Appendix A (Statistics)	Page 18



## **Unit 6451/01: Aspects of Culture**

### **Introduction**

The paper followed the same structure as in previous series and appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates. Section A was designed so that there were questions on all six major areas of the specification. Many candidates appeared to have been prepared to meet the demands of the paper, but work is still required in teaching Section B (thinking and analytical skills).

There were few rubric infringements. However a number of short questions were not attempted by some candidates. This is unfortunate as it means marks cannot be gained. If a question, especially a multiple choice type, is attempted there is always the possibility of gaining a mark. This is not possible if a candidate does not provide an answer.

A major problem that appears to be becoming more serious is a noticeable decline in the standard of handwriting. Work that is illegible is difficult to mark. If it is impossible to read then marks cannot be awarded for what might otherwise be a sound answer. There also appears to be an increase in poor expression generally.

Although there were some excellent examples of candidates who have a broad knowledge and understanding of the specification, most appear to have at best a patchy and too often a superficial knowledge. This can seriously affect marks for Section A which deals with AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and can restrict the marks achieved in Section C (dealing with AO3) where candidates lack sufficient evidence to marshal in order to support their arguments. Some sections of the Specification (Religion and Media) are considerably better known and understood than others (especially aesthetic evaluation and creativity and innovation).

A problem that is becoming increasingly evident is that candidates do not read questions with sufficient care. This can result in missing key words or ideas, misinterpreting what has been asked for and writing in too great detail about material that is clearly not required. In particular candidates need to take note of qualifying words, especially in essay titles.

### **Comments on individual questions**

#### **Question 1**

Q1 was fairly straightforward and many candidates were able to select the correct answer.

#### **Question 2**

Q2(a) was quite accessible and many were able to score the mark. Part (b) was generally disappointing, especially as it has appeared in various forms in several recent exam series. Better candidates were able to offer clear differences that showed good understanding that Western culture is a generalisation of many cultures whereas UK (or national culture) is unique. Generally when differences were offered they were very superficial. Too often candidates believed that UK culture was multi-cultural whereas western culture was not or that the UK had many different religions but western culture only had one. Inevitably some felt western culture related to cowboys and Indians rather than the culture of the western world. Occasionally the question was turned into one about high and popular culture, and so failed to gain any marks.

### **Question 3**

Q3 showed how important it is to read questions carefully. This was not about the nature of religious belief, neither was it about how lives could be influenced by religion. The key idea was 'purpose'. Those candidates who understood this in the sense of either a goal to aim for or a reason for doing so were likely to score both marks. Too often answers only related to the Christian religion. Some candidates simply rephrased the question but did not add any value of their own. Overall the question was answered successfully by many candidates.

### **Question 4**

Q4 was again a fairly familiar question that was often answered poorly. In order to explain differences candidates need to be able to show an understanding of the two terms. Most were able to associate morality in some way with ideas of right and wrong. Relatively few attempted to explain the idea of moral beliefs other than simply in terms of morals that were believed. Moral reasoning is even less well understood. Too often it was equated with reasoning or debating with somebody rather than with the process by which moral codes are developed and applied. Too often moral beliefs were seen as rigid and inflexible whereas moral reasoning was seen as something open to variation and change. Candidates who used examples to show their understanding, or better still identified different types of moral reasoning were likely to score reasonably well. Few candidates were able to access the third mark which depended on clearly differentiating between the two terms. Candidates must recognise that if they are asked to explain or define a term they will not score marks if they simply re-use the words that they are supposed to explain.

### **Question 5**

Many candidates in answering (a) failed to take note of the requirement to name a work. Too often they lost marks by naming a style and an artist. It was interesting to note that the number of candidates relying on popular music rather than other art forms seems to have declined. Candidates who failed to answer (a) correctly were still able to gain marks in (b), provided they had identified a style. Although not strictly within the scope of the question those who described the characteristics of their chosen style were credited with one mark, however candidates who described the influences on their chosen work rather than style were not.

### **Question 6**

Q6 was fairly straightforward and generally high scoring. Most candidates were able to show that censorship was about the restriction on the availability of information. Most were able to give an example of censorship, the most popular being the 9.00 watershed. Reasons generally included protecting children, protecting people from offence, protecting individuals and secrecy during war time. However there were still a significant number who confused censorship with taking a census. Few candidates failed to achieve at least two of the four marks available.

### **Section B**

Candidates should recognise that all questions in this section relate to AO4 and that 'commonsense' answers are not likely to gain marks. The passage seemed to be quite accessible to the majority of candidates.

### **Question 7**

Part (a) was generally answered well, as was (b). Most candidates seemed able to distinguish between fact and opinion but were slightly less comfortable with the idea of scientific knowledge. Most candidates were able to answer (c) correctly. The most frequent weaknesses were in the selection of phrases from the wrong paragraph or of only partially quoting a relevant phrase. Both parts of the phrase "the BBC is

responsible for 23% of spending ... but wins 37% of all audiences" were needed in order to make sense and match the requirements of the question.

Many candidates were able to select the correct statement in (d) (i). A significant number though selected statement C even though there is no clear link to value for money. Part (d) (ii) was often answered on the basis of common sense. It was necessary to get part (d) (ii) correct in order to gain both marks in part (d) (ii). Correct answers were able to reason that statement B did refer to value for money indirectly and that C was largely irrelevant. A number of candidates thought part C referred to adverts (commercials on BBC channels). Candidates seemed happier in explaining why they rejected statement B than they were when it came to explaining the rejection of C. A significant number of answers were simply restatements of the content of the statements rather than a direct answer to the question set. A surprising number claimed that statement A showed the BBC did not offer value for money. The question was fairly straightforward for those who were prepared to approach it in a logical way.

Answers to (e) were mixed. There was evidence that many centres have attempted to teach the skills needed for this question. Once again a problem was that candidates did not carefully read what they were asked to do. Many candidates seemed unfamiliar with the skills required to analyse a passage and so experienced difficulty in locating 'hooks' in the passage on which to hang the points they wanted to make. Weaker candidates were still describing the content of the passage rather than analysing the style of argument and evidence used. Candidates should remember that thinking and analytical skills should not be described in the abstract but should be applied critically to the passage. To gain the higher marks there must be specific reference to the passage and candidates should explicitly consider the strength or weakness of the support provided by the evidence used. Many candidates wrote at great length but only made a single clear point. Often candidates scored well by writing briefly and making a number of different points about the passage. Occasionally candidates ignored the question and took issue with the content of the passage in spite of the clear instructions that are given in the rubric. This question required a conclusion in answer to 'How successfully ...'. Candidates who failed to assess the degree of success could not achieve full marks.

Generally communication was sound. There were relatively few answers that were poorly expressed. Major weaknesses continue to be illegible or poor handwriting and the misspelling of common words or words copied from the passage.

### **Section C**

It was pleasing to see that more were prepared to attempt answers on culture and aesthetics than has been evident in the past. Too often candidates still show that they have some interesting ideas but are not able to support them with appropriate evidence. Conclusions are too often seen almost as a 'bolt on' to finish the essay, rather than as a drawing together of opposing arguments in order to reach a justified decision about the issue under consideration. Many candidates would benefit from structured work on the creation of appropriate conclusions. There is insufficient attempt to evaluate the relative merits of evidence used in support of opinions. Too often all evidence and opinions are accepted as of equal worth.

### **Question 8 (religious symbols)**

This was the most popular choice. It was often quite well done by better prepared candidates. The main weakness was that candidates failed to define key terms such as 'true meaning' and 'believers'. Some answers confused the idea of 'meaning' completely and were drawn into discussions of fashion and sentimental attachments.

Arguments for the statement were often stronger than for the opposing view. Generally there was quite a pleasing standard of knowledge shown, although some answers diverted into discussions relating to race rather than religion. The weakest answers failed to give any examples of religious symbols and relied on unsupported assertions. Some answers were twisted to become whether it is right for non-believers to wear religious symbols.

**Question 9** (aesthetic evaluation)

This question was answered by a larger proportion of candidates than normally attempt this topic. The majority of better answers were able to distinguish between 'appreciating' and 'knowing about'. This helped them to deal appropriately with the statement. Some of the better answers were able to focus on specific works of art, but the majority tended to generalise. An interesting distinction was drawn by candidates who wrote about all four of the art forms. It was often felt, for example that you could enjoy music or painting without 'understanding' them, but that you needed to understand literature before you could really enjoy it. Candidates who had studied the topic were able to give well argued and well supported answers. Some interesting answers suggested that whereas you didn't need to understand art in order to enjoy it, greater understanding could enhance enjoyment. A major weakness was in failure to define precisely what was understood by 'enjoy' and 'understand'.

**Question 10** (popular culture)

This was perhaps the least well done of the three essays. The major weakness was that candidates failed to explain what they understood by lasting qualities. Most had a sound grasp of what the term popular culture embraced. Most were able to give examples of popular culture. Many turned the question into a comparison with high culture, but few recognised that those examples of old high culture that still exist are simply those which have survived, in exactly the same way that only some examples of popular culture possess the necessary qualities to survive. There is considerable confusion over what was popular culture in the past. Mozart operas, Jane Austen novels, Leonardo's paintings and Shakespeare's plays are often described as examples of popular culture that have 'crossed over' successfully to become high culture. Weaker candidates tended to make wide (and sometimes wild) generalisations but there were many examples of better answers that were well informed and showed perception.

Comments made about quality of communication in Section B apply also to Section C.

## **Unit 6452/01: Scientific Horizons**

### **Introduction**

The paper was of similar difficulty to previous January sessions, but the questions were more accessible. No changes to the format of the paper were introduced. Very few candidates left blank spaces in any of their answers, and they warmed to questions that were intended to challenge in subjects that are of topical interest to the general public.

Section A tested candidate's knowledge and understanding of the heliocentric revolution, recycling, ethical issues in medicine, the meaning of "finite", and scientific testing of a hypothesis. Nearly all candidates made attempts to answer all of these questions.

Section B used a piece of source text, testing candidates capability to read and judge the nature and quality of knowledge used in arguments. Questions consisted of several multiple-choice items, and a longer item to evaluate evidence and quality of communication.

Section C, where candidates' ability to devise arguments and deploy their wits in a longer piece of writing, provided a choice of three essay topics. Candidates' choices were broader than in previous years - Q8 attracted about half the candidates, Q7 and Q9 about a quarter each. Some refinements in the level mark scheme were introduced for this session, in an attempt to broaden the range of candidates' marks.

Most answers were legible, and there was only a tiny number of candidates who failed to make an appropriate response to the question in their answers. This is in contrast to the summer sessions of the examination.

## **Section A (testing AO1)**

### **Question 1**

Candidates only rarely gained both marks for this question; the great majority were able to answer only one of the questions. In (a), apparently the harder part, candidates often chose A or C, and missed the more thoughtful, correct response, D. This question did not discriminate well between candidates.

In (b), a much higher proportion correctly chose B. This may have been because the answer was slightly cued (teaching) in the stem. This was a better discriminator between lower and higher scoring candidates.

### **Question 2**

This question called for some knowledge of recycling, but most of all for the application of their understanding to what is now a major issue with householders. Most answers gained at least one mark for making some attempt at a comparison of melting costs with reusing costs. Many good answers referred to the problems that arise if straightforward reuse was contemplated – hygiene and the cleaning of the containers, the problem of breakages or damaged containers (which would need to be melted) and the storage of containers. A substantial number of answers digressed on the canvassing of householders for their views on what should be done, and surveying manufacturers to see if they would be willing to accept reused containers. These points were considered to be peripheral to the question, and therefore did not receive credit.

### **Question 3**

Part (a) showed that there still seems to be a lack of understanding as to the meaning of “ethical issue”. Some candidates lost marks because they described the situation without clearly stating whether the action was right or wrong e.g. “the father is older” or “the son has longer to live”. A minority of candidates only mentioned medical problems. More answers mixed up the medical and ethical issues. Marks were available for candidates who mentioned forms of moral reasoning – such as Utilitarianism or The Social Contract – but few answers referred to these specifically.

In (b) many answers referred to the age of the kidney rather than greater risk to father. Candidates often failed to gain marks by failing to say why the answer they chose was right or wrong.

### **Question 4**

The typical response was to say that there was only limited stock, or that it would only be available for a defined time, and that customers needed to hurry to get the benefits of the deals. This gained up to 2 marks, and only the better candidates went further to comment on the use of a technical mathematical term, and contrast “finite” with “infinite” correctly. A minority of candidates who scored no marks clearly did not understand the meaning of finite and often confused it with “final” or “definite”. A few thought that “finite” meant “unlimited”, and were thus muddling it with “infinite”. A small number of candidates did go on to point out that to have “infinite” deals would be totally impossible.

### **Question 5**

Answers covered a very broad range of understanding of the problem itself and possible ways of testing the hypothesis that a graphologist is able to read personality from a specimen of handwriting. A small number of candidates made the serious mistake of trying to analyse handwriting into sets of characteristics, which they thought could then be associated with personality traits – small neat handwriting meant the person was calm and controlled, sprawled writing meant a personal shambles and so on. This completely missed the point of the question by not mentioning the graphologist at all. Most answers, however, did show a commendable grasp of simple aspects of a necessary scientific method to test the claim. Many candidates realised that you needed a sample of people, whose personalities might be assessed in some kind of objective test. They also specified that the writing samples must be standardised in some way, and that the graphologist should be tested by being kept in the dark as to the origin of the samples. The best answers described how the results might be tested statistically, by comparing a graphologist's assessments with the objective personality tests. A few candidates suggested another regime – by giving the same single sample to a number of graphologists, and comparing their assessments. This is a less robust test of the hypothesis, but could still score well on the mark scheme.

### **Section B (testing AO4 and AO2)**

#### **Question 6**

Part (a) was a reasonably straightforward question, with C the correct response. Nearly all the high scoring candidates gained the mark, against two thirds of the lower scorers. Part (b) clearly confused candidates, and unfortunately failed to discriminate.

Part (c) (i) still seems to be a difficult question, as candidates are still not confident in discerning different types of argument. The correct response was C. Only around 20% of the lower scorers gained this mark, but 40% of the high scorers, so that the question discriminated well.

Only two thirds of high scorers were able to distinguish the quotation as an opinion (response B) in (c) (ii). Just under half the lower scorers were able to do so.

In (d) most candidates were able to select at least one reasoned conclusion from the two correct responses available – C and E.

In (e) candidates found it relatively easy to pick up 2 marks for suggesting the correct evidence. However, candidates tend to over-elaborate and use unnecessary extracts from the passage, and they had a tendency to ramble. Candidates often failed to earn the marks for recognising evidence as opinion, belief or substantiated fact. Some candidates talked about the passage being opinionated but failed to relate this to a specific piece of evidence. Many candidates did not gain available marks either because they quoted examples from the passage but failed to identify them as opinion or fact, or because they correctly identified most of the evidence in the passage as opinion but failed to give any examples. A substantial number of candidates appear to believe that an argument is good, and its conclusion justified, if the writer writes clearly, or is forceful and definite, or even sounds believable. This is of concern because it indicates a lack of understanding of the structure and mechanisms of argument, and the value of different kinds of evidence in different kinds of argument – all matters that are central to the specification and, particularly, to assessment objective AO4.

The quality of communication in this section is judged on a shorter piece of writing than the essays in section C, and examiners are looking for clarity and coherence in candidates' prose, and an appropriate style. This could be less discursive than in an essay, but should not be in note form. The great majority of candidates made an assessable response to this question, rather better than in previous examination series. Examiners still have concerns about clarity of handwriting, and quality of spelling and punctuation, but no more than in other years.

### **Section C (testing AO3 and AO2)**

The most popular essay, attempted by half the candidates was Q8. Q7 and Q9 each attracted a quarter of the candidates, so it would appear that all the essays were perceived as accessible. There is evidence from all the essays that candidates are having more practice at answering essay questions. There are still some who only look at one viewpoint but more candidates seem to be trying to look at answers from two points of view. It would help if they identified more clearly what the points of view are.

#### **Question 7**

This was possibly the most conventional essay on offer, and it was clear that many candidates had been exposed to some debate about new technological developments and how they might affect society. Many candidates produced good reasoned arguments. Some excellent answers focused on the point that unforeseen consequences are problematic precisely because they cannot be anticipated and very good answers also often made a useful distinction between the role or responsibility of an inventor and legislators or governments who control applications. The main inventions and innovations discussed were nuclear weapons, the motorcar, the Internet and the computer. However the major common flaw in answers was to ignore the issue of **controlling** the activities of inventors. It was this aspect that could lead them to reach level 4, because it allowed the presentation of arguments about whether we should or shouldn't control inventors. A minority of candidates pointed out that scientific discovery was not something over which it was possible to have any control – it depended very much on what problems scientists saw as significant or important, and how can you stop people thinking? Another, substantial, minority pointed out that many inventions are responses to problems faced by humanity, and that if a problem is being solved – then little thought may be given to the consequences. Not many candidates referred to the financial rewards of invention.

#### **Question 8**

This question attracted many candidates who clearly had an interest in the topic of dieting and who were quite knowledgeable on the subject. Many candidates expanded at length on the diets on offer, and the role of the media in promoting them. The difficult part of the topic was to do with obtaining "absolute" scientific evidence – which only a small number of candidates pointed out was an illusion. Good answers did reflect on the fact that it would be incredibly expensive and time-consuming to produce exhaustive testing on diets, and that people are different and respond in different ways to diets. A substantial minority took the view that a great deal was already known about nutrition, and that eating sensibly from a range of foods would lead to a healthy body. In that case, it matters little what kind of diet a magazine or TV programme might promote. Many candidates expressed concern over the "Size Zero" model debate, which has been discussed widely in the press before and during the examination period.

**Question 9**

A small minority of candidates confused astrology and astronomy, arguing that since astrologers are scientists and astrology is a university course they should be taken seriously. A few excellent answers mentioned the historical links between astrology and early science. Many answers were able to present good arguments both for and against astrology. The majority of candidates think that astrology is not to be taken seriously, but if it provides support to some people, who may be encouraged to think more positively about the day ahead, then who is to stop it? Some of the more scientifically minded expanded on the fact that there is no evidence to support the assertions of astrologers, and that the predictions are self-fulfilling. A good range of answers ensued, some entertaining.

## **Unit 6453/01: Social Perspectives**

### **Introduction**

The format of the paper was the same as in recent years with no changes in specification content or assessment objectives. Section A gave candidates an opportunity to undertake numerical calculations and there was a range of multiple choice questions testing their knowledge and understanding over a range of topics from different parts of the specification. Some of these questions proved to be challenging to candidates.

The insert for Section B, which was divided into three parts, proved both accessible and interesting to candidates, judging by the comments made and their obvious engagement with the topic. Candidates continue to reveal considerable confusion over the differences between inductive and deductive arguments.

In the Section C questions, nearly all candidates offered different perspectives or points of view in relation to the issue raised by the question they had chosen, though sometimes the conclusion drawn was not linked as closely as it could have been to the preceding discussion. Q 12 proved to be more popular than Q 10 or 11. A common weakness seen in answers to all three questions was the absence of evaluation – candidates often failed to explain precisely why they found one aspect more persuasive than another. To express a purely personal point of view at the end of an essay answer is unhelpful unless it takes the form of a reasoned discussion which is closely linked to the arguments and evidence previously presented.

### **Question 1**

In (a)(i) candidates generally realised that the median for 'distance travelled' would be the fifth value and they correctly gave an answer of '82 miles'.

Some candidates did not read (a)(ii) as carefully as they should have done – they stated either that the most popular sport was 'swimming' or that 'the mode is four'. In fact to score a mark they needed to give both pieces of information. Many did but some didn't.

Answers to (a)(iii) about the mean age of the original group were usually correctly given as '16 years'.

This exam was the first time candidates were asked to recalculate a mean after a change occurs. In (b)(i) the answer '27 years' was given by many but not all candidates. Some candidates understood the method they needed to follow but were let down by simple arithmetical errors. In some cases it was impossible for examiners to consider whether a 'method' mark should be awarded for an incorrect answer, because – in spite of the instruction on the paper – no or little working was shown.

Some of the candidates who had answered (a)(i) correctly were defeated by (b)(ii) which asked them to identify the median for the enlarged group – often forgetting that two new members had joined the group; many, however, did successfully give '60 miles' as their answer.

Part (b)(iii) was successfully answered by many candidates who identified 'tennis' as the favourite sport of the new members.

**Question 2**

Some candidates did not pay as much attention as was required to the years for which estimated numbers were required, undertaking calculations based on earlier or later years than those specified. Generally, though, the number of casualties involving 'serious injury' was estimated in (a) to be between 2,500 and 3,500 in most cases.

As long as candidates correctly identified the change within this range and remembered how to calculate a percentage to answer (b) they were assured of full marks. Those who made a mistake could gain one mark in (b) if they showed their working and had adopted an appropriate method – those who showed no working were inevitably liable to lose out.

**Question 3**

Many candidates mistakenly asserted that 'socialisation' involved 'socialising with friends' or 'becoming a socialist'. Stronger answers gained marks for mentioning the process of 'learning society's norms and values' or alternatively 'the practice of nationalising private industry'.

**Question 4**

Stronger candidates knew that Labour (option C) was the UK party with the closest links to trade unions, though a variety of other answers were offered by the less well informed.

**Question 5**

Although a minority of candidates thought it was Labour or the Scottish Nationalists who started the policy of selling off nationalised industries, most answers did identify the Conservatives here (option A).

**Question 6**

When answering this question about the European Parliament, many candidates mistakenly chose option C (making laws) rather than option E (elected by PR).

**Question 7**

A significant proportion of candidates failed to recognise a secular society as being non-religious (option C).

**Question 8**

Most candidates secured at least one mark for their answer to this question about the ageing population – many successfully gained both marks for choosing options C and E. Some candidates put a cross in one box only when they should in fact have included two crosses.

**Question 9**

In (a) 'Just like the shock, horror and righteous indignation of a scandalous Victorian melodrama...' was seen by many candidates as being an argument from analogy (option A).

In (b) some candidates mistakenly considered the argument in lines 21 - 27 to be deductive, when in fact it was inductive.

Some candidates offered two choices as an answer to (c) even though each of the options offered included two descriptions; generally, though, candidates correctly chose option C.

Answers such as '41,000 voted in Sittingborne and Sheppey' or 'the MP's majority of 79' or '2,200 prisoners on the Isle of Sheppey' were correctly given by many candidates in response to (d). Those who allowed an opinion into their answer (eg 'sober' Daily Telegraph or 'tiny' majority) when they were asked for a fact were not awarded a mark. Those who chose a quotation from other paragraphs also gained no mark, nor did those who unselectively wrote out the whole of the specified paragraph!

In (e) candidates needed to refer to the well known attributes of facts (eg can be verified by research, based on evidence) or opinions (eg a personal view, would not be agreed by everyone, value judgement) in explaining whether the statement offered was fact, opinion or both. Although some answers were fairly vague, candidates who reached beyond simple assertions 'this bit is opinion and that bit fact' to offer an explanation usually gained marks.

Although (e) asked candidates to choose which of two conclusions was best justified, some lost marks by failing to do this. Many candidates mentioned the data in Source 2 but failed to comment on the fact that it was barely supported by the conclusion while the conclusion to Source 3 was at least consistent with earlier parts of the paragraph. Candidates who explicitly pointed to different types of argument – both passages are inductive and also contain arguments from authority – did better than those who offered vaguer answers. This part of question 9 also carried up to three marks for quality of written communication so it was particularly disappointing to see some candidates not writing anything at all, leading to an inevitable 0 out of 7.

#### **Question 10**

Although this was less popular than other Section C questions, there were some good answers. To achieve a successful response candidates made sure they offered at least two different views and, having stated these, they then reasoned their way through to a justified conclusion, carefully explaining why they believed one position to be stronger than the other. The strength and appropriateness of examples chosen was a discriminator – those who pointed to the ultimate effectiveness of the suffragettes or the anti-poll tax demonstrations compared to the relative ineffectiveness of mass protests over the hunting ban or the Iraq war had the makings of a good answer. Often 'insider' and 'outsider' groups were mentioned and sometimes other concepts such as democracy, pluralism, elitism and authoritarianism.

#### **Question 11**

Although some candidates confused 'full employment' with 'full-time work' most responses revealed a good awareness of economic principles or the concerns of business. Keynesian and neo-conservative approaches were often rehearsed and the opportunities a full employment situation would offer - in terms of potential growth, improved standard of living, less need for benefits, more income from taxation for the government - were often thoughtfully discussed. Some good answers also pointed to the need for training, investment, the danger of poor productivity which could arise from such a policy and possibly also higher levels of inflation. Those who recognised that the ageing population in the UK meant that economic migrants could have a positive role in helping to produce the essential goods and services which must be part of our economy, generally did well - especially when they also pointed out that no-one need lack a job if they are flexible enough and willing to accept training to enhance their skills so they can meet employers' needs. Some very perceptive answers did, however, use this as a starting point for a discussion about the reasonableness of expecting everyone to do paid work as opposed to voluntary work or work in the household bringing up the family.

**Question 12**

Some candidates saw 'blame' in terms of punishment and prosecution as opposed to being the private judgement of observers and onlookers – often the recent development of parents of truants being sent to prison was mentioned. Others focussed on poor parenting, parents out of control and referred to television programmes such as 'Supernanny' – answers which would have been a great deal stronger if the candidates using this line had understood the concept of socialisation or maybe even primary and secondary socialisation. The roles of the media and of peer groups were much discussed, as was the age at which children might become responsible for their own misbehaviour rather than parents or teachers. Although this was the most popular Section C question by far, many responses shared two problems in particular – first, they were written in an anecdotal style flitting from one point to another without developing an overall argument or supporting a case with suitable evidence and, second, they barely reached a conclusion that could be justified by the arguments and evidence actually offered.

## **Unit 6454/01: Cultural Expressions**

### **Introduction**

The paper followed the same structure as in previous series and appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates. Section A was designed to give good coverage of the specification.

There were few rubric infringements. However a number of short questions and multiple choice questions were not attempted by some candidates. If a question, especially a multiple choice type, is attempted there is always the possibility of gaining a mark. This is not possible if a candidate does not provide an answer.

A significant and increasing problem is a decline in the standard of handwriting. Poor handwriting limits the ability of the candidate to communicate effectively with the examiner and can result in poor marks.

Some candidates demonstrated an excellent range of knowledge and were able to deploy their knowledge well. A number of essays showed very high levels of thought and argument. Success, especially in Section B depends on an awareness of the required skills and knowledge. Similarly essays that consist of unsupported assertion will rarely score well. Poor understanding of the Specification can adversely affect marks, especially in Section A which deals exclusively with AO1 (knowledge and understanding). It can also limit the marks achieved in Section C (dealing with AO3) if candidates lack sufficient evidence to marshal in order to support their arguments. Some sections of the Specification (Religion and Media) are considerably better known and understood than others (especially aesthetic evaluation and creativity and innovation). The majority of candidates did appear to have a sound grasp of what was expected of them, even if at times they were not able to deliver. Inevitably there were a handful of candidates who felt it desirable to criticise General Studies rather than to show their ability by answering the questions that were set.

A problem that is becoming increasingly evident is that candidates do not read questions with sufficient care. The result is that key words or ideas are missed or misinterpreted. As a result some candidates wrote at excessive length about material that did not relate to the question. As such they achieved marks that were lower than their natural ability seemed to justify.

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

Q1(a) seemed a straightforward test of knowledge but many candidates were not able to select the correct answer. Part (b) was generally answered quite poorly. Even when candidates were able to select a correct name from the list they were rarely able to name an associated form of moral reasoning. Those who did answer correctly usually selected either Bentham and Utilitarianism or Hobbes and Social Contract theory. Too many candidates tried to describe the theory rather than name it. Failure to observe the question meant that marks were lost. The most frequent wrong answer was Freud, but few named a theory associated with him. A few attempted to answer with a name not on the list provided and so could not score. Some actually selected a name in (b) that they had in effect rejected in (a).

**Question 2**

Q2 was generally answered accurately. Most candidates seemed able to identify correctly beliefs that are not associated with Christianity. Questions on religion generally do score quite well on this paper.

**Question 3**

Too many answers to Q3 were vague or repetitive. Many candidates treated the question simply as one about media influence and ignored the qualification of time of tension. Some simply asserted influence without actually attempting to state 'how' the influence was achieved. There were however some excellent well informed answers. Many candidates appeared to be quite knowledgeable but were not too sure about how to apply their knowledge to answering the set question.

**Question 4**

Answers to Q4 were often disappointing. Relatively few candidates were able to achieve all three marks. Responses tended to be quite superficial and 'commonsensical' rather than based on clear understanding. Candidates who used examples to illustrate their points generally scored well. War and economic depression were regularly seen as key influences. Too often economic circumstances were related to the artists own condition rather than of society in general. Answers therefore tended to be limited to inability to buy expensive materials. Candidates did not generally show a good understanding of the term artistic creativity. Weaker candidates sometimes either described a work of art or simply rephrased the question.

**Question 5**

Aesthetic evaluation is rarely well done. Some answers to Q5 were a pleasing exception to this. Many candidates clearly benefited from the structured nature of the questions and most were able to give at least one sound reason in support of their chosen criterion. Better answers were able to explain why they rejected two of the criteria in favour of their chosen one. The most common weakness was confusing form with content. Sadly a large proportion of candidates seemed to think the term 'value' related to monetary cost rather than aesthetic value. Equally sadly the Mona Lisa appeared far too often as an example of longevity. It is good that candidates are at last using examples, but greater variety would be appreciated.

**Section B****Question 6**

Q6(a) on arguments from analogy has appeared on a number of occasions in different guises. Sadly the vast majority of candidates do not understand it. Too often they felt it related to analysis of evidence or simply opinion. Relatively few were able to see it as a way of using comparison to draw conclusions based on the outcome of similar circumstances. Answers to (b) were also very disappointing. Strangely a number of candidates who had wrongly answered (or even not attempted) (a) were able to provide a reasonable answer to (b). Again candidates who used an example to illustrate their answer and show their understanding of the term were likely to score higher marks than those who did not. The most common example was Paley's watch. Some candidates attempted to create their own example of analogies but frequently with near disastrous results. This question was undoubtedly the most poorly answered on the paper.

### **Question 7**

Q7 was based on the passage. The earlier questions are designed to give help for the final part. Sadly many candidates who do well on the shorter questions fail to carry their knowledge and skill into the final question. This is a great pity as this type of question has been used on many occasions and candidates should be well acquainted with its demands. Part (a) and (b) were usually answered correctly, with (b) being slightly less successful. Many candidates were able to suggest an appropriate way of testing the statement in (c) but often failed to achieve the second mark because they failed to develop their explanation. Candidates should recognise that it is not sufficient to gather evidence. To be effective the evidence must be analysed. In this particular case it needs to be based on a variety of socio-economic groups to allow effective comparison before a conclusion is drawn. There were a few quite offensive and unethical answers to this question. Such responses did not score any marks. Too often candidates allowed their own personal opinion about the issues raised in the passage to displace the necessary critical approach.

Most candidates were able to select the correct answer in (d) (i). The most frequent wrong answer being A. This was another good example of candidates failing to read questions carefully. Many confused multi-cultural and integrated. Answers to (d) (ii) were often disappointing. Many candidates still seem to feel that all they have to do is summarise the passage. This question by asking 'how successfully ...' clearly requires a conclusion based on the evidence used. To reach this conclusion it is necessary not only to identify evidence used, but to distinguish the different types of evidence and also assess the strength or weakness of the support provided by the evidence. It was pleasing that many candidates were able to identify the use of argument by authority, with a few going further and recognising potential weakness. Many candidates recognised that the passage was almost entirely opinion with little supporting fact. Some better answers were able to identify the types of evidence the author should have used in order to give his claims greater credibility.

Quality of communication was generally sound. Some candidates failed to use an appropriate style of writing and too often candidates misspelt words from the passage or the question itself. As pointed out on many occasions, one of the gravest weaknesses in communication is poor or illegible handwriting.

### **Section C**

Two of the essays proved to be considerably more attractive to candidates than the others. To an extent this popularity was reflected in the marks obtained.

### **Question 8**

Q8 concerned aesthetic evaluation. This is never a popular question and answers tend to polarise between those that are well crafted and show good understanding and those which are weak and often quite at sea. Few candidates took advantage of the guidance given to them in question 5. Many candidates clearly knew the different terms of aesthetic evaluation but lacked sound understanding of how they could be applied. The majority of responses, perhaps inevitable felt that personal taste was of greater significance than any form of evaluation. Few candidates made use of the clue in the use of 'objective'. Few showed any real awareness of specific works of art and preferred to talk in terms of art forms. Those candidates who did show knowledge of specific works were able to achieve high marks.

**Question 9**

The least popular and probably least well done essay was Q9. Many candidates were able to identify and talk about contemporary moral issues (notably abortion, euthanasia and President Bush) but few really showed any understanding of moral reasoning. The best answers were those that were able to show how different forms of moral reasoning could be applied to specific issues and lead to different outcomes. Candidates did not often pay attention to the significance of post-hoc justification.

**Question 10**

Q10 proved very popular and was often well answered. Candidates were often able to identify theoretical benefits of religious influence on government decision making and were often able to show that religion has influenced many laws. Answers were better able to explain why they would reject this solution even though they could see some of the potential benefits. Some of the better answers were able to discuss countries which were ruled on religious principles today and others were able to consider evidence from history of the power of religion. Sadly there were some candidates who took the opportunity to ignore the question and write their own personal condemnation of religion in general. Some answers wrongly equated religion with race and allowed their own prejudices to replace reasoned argument. Such answers did not achieve good marks.

**Question 11**

The other very popular question was Q11 on the mass media. Candidates are often quite confused about the role and powers of media ownership. Generally answers were able to show that audiences benefited even when owners did. There were far too many detailed examinations of the recent 'Big Brother' programme. These often showed a high level of cynicism about the motivation of the television company. Too often candidates failed to observe the instruction to consider more than one form of media. Many candidates appear to be very unclear about the way the BBC operates.

Comments made under Section B about communication apply equally to Section C.

## Appendix A Statistics

### 6451/01

Grade	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	37	33	29	26	23
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

### 6452/01

Grade	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	33	30	27	24	22
	90	72	63	54	45	36

### 6453/01

Grade	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	39	36	33	30	28
	90	72	63	54	45	36

### 6454/01

Grade	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	36	33	30	27	24
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Notes

**Maximum Mark (Raw):** the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

**Boundary Mark:** the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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