

# Examiners' Report January 2008

GCE

GCE General Studies (8206/9206)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025, our GCSE team on 0844 576 0027, or visit our website at [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk).

January 2008

Publications Code UAO19829

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2008

## Contents

|    |                          |    |
|----|--------------------------|----|
| 1. | 6451/01 Examiners Report | 1  |
| 2. | 6452/02 Examiners Report | 7  |
| 3. | 6453/01 Examiners Report | 11 |
| 4. | 6454/01 Examiners Report | 15 |
| 5. | Appendix A: Statistics   | 19 |



6451/01

## General

The paper followed the same structure as in previous series and generally appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates. There were rather more multiple choice questions than in previous examinations. Section A was designed so that there were questions on all major themes in the specification. There was a certain amount of evidence to suggest that some candidates did not seem to have been adequately prepared to meet the demands of the paper. Knowledge generally was patchy and 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 work 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. It is sad to see the increasing use of 'text-speak' in formal writing.

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. At times candidates appear to have answered a completely wrong question.

In Section C, some 70% of candidates answered Q11 rather than Q9 or Q10. Clearly, Q11 was seen as a fallback for many who felt uneasy about tackling the issues in the other two options. This was evident from the fact that a greater proportion of answers to Q9 and Q10 were knowledgeable and reasoned than for Q11. Candidates appeared to feel that they could answer a question on the media as a matter of course. 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. It is good to see the use of planning for essays, but

the value of a plan that is written at the end of an essay is of very doubtful value either in the preparation of the answer or as guidance to the examiner.

## Section A

### Questions 1, 2 and 3

These were multiple-choice questions. Of these Q1(a) and 2 were fairly straightforward and the majority of candidates answered them correctly. Approximately half of all candidates gave correct answers to Q1(b) and 3.

### Question 4

This proved quite challenging for many candidates. Understanding of the term fundamentalism was patchy. A significant number appeared to be totally confused by it. Better answers were able to recognise that it referred to a more distinctive group than simply religious believers. Many were able to explain it in terms of those who took the teachings of their holy texts literally and the strongest answers were able to give sound illustrations to support their answers. Too often candidates confused fundamentalist beliefs with strong religious beliefs, which can be present in believers of any persuasion. Part (b) was less successful because of lack of clarity in the use of 'problem'. Some answered in terms of characteristics associated with religious fundamentalism and some described specific activities that they perceived as problems. The most frequent responses were, perhaps unsurprisingly, terrorism, suicide bombers and conflict. A number did identify the difficulty of reconciling fundamentalist beliefs with 21<sup>st</sup> century values and understanding of the world. Too often candidates answered simply in terms of religion rather than of fundamentalist forms of religion. Most answers which referred to specific religions identified either Islam or Christianity. Most candidates were able to score 1 mark but relatively few, even at the highest level were able to score all 3 marks.

### Question 5

This was a familiar question but was rarely well answered. Too often candidates make the mistake when defining a term of using the word being explained in the definition. This has little meaning and cannot be rewarded. Ideas of culture varied from very weak to quite sound. Better answers were able to explain that culture referred to values, beliefs and norms of a particular society and also that national culture was generally associated with a particular country in a way that distinguished it from others or which created a sense of national identity. Answers to this question really required examples to illustrate the meaning. Too often the illustrations used were quite trite - such as 'football', fish and chips' and 'cups of tea'. Better answers chose illustrations that helped to show their understanding of the term rather than simply offering stereotypical behaviours. Most candidates were able to score at least 1 mark and about half of those at the higher levels were able to achieve both.

### Question 6

This was again a fairly familiar question. Many answers indicate the importance of reading questions correctly. Too often candidates listed activities they regarded as belonging to or illustrating popular culture rather than the criteria they would use to help classify activities. Most candidates were able to achieve at least 1 mark. Relatively few scored all three marks. Quite often candidates offered repetitious

answers and too many relied on the stereotype of 'working class' culture. Many candidates did appear to have a better understanding of this term than has been apparent in the past. Candidates rarely seem to be happy with questions about artistic style.

### Question 7

Most candidates were able to achieve at least 1 mark for part (a). Too often answers simply listed different styles rather than explained what they were. The answers that scored successfully were able to identify the term as a means of classification works of art (of whatever form) according to either performance or technique as a means of making comparisons. Part (b)(i) presented few problems to the majority of candidates. The main weaknesses here were candidates who gave art forms such as painting, music or sculpture rather than styles such as Renaissance, Impressionism or Pop Art. Those who answered part (b)(i) completely inaccurately were unable to score in part (b)(ii). Many candidates seem very unclear about characteristics of different artistic styles. Questions of this nature have been asked on many occasions and the Specification makes it clear that candidates should be able to distinguish the characteristics of certain styles. Those most frequently (and accurately described) were Impressionism, Surrealism and Pop Art. Cubism was often attempted, but rarely done well. Candidates did spread across each of the art forms and there was not the excessive concentration on modern popular music that is usually apparent. Most candidates scored at least 2 marks on Q7 and a pleasing number were able to score 4 or even 5. The evidence seems to be that candidates who are taught this topic are able to give a good account of themselves, but there are still a significant number who seem to be largely unaware of artistic style.

## Section B

### Questions 8

Parts (a) (b) and (c) were multiple-choice questions. Approximately half of the candidates selected correct answers for (a) and (b) whilst over 80% were correct on part (c). Part (d) was generally poorly answered. It is a matter of concern that not only are candidates unable to identify an inductive argument but that so many of them appear to be unacquainted with the different styles of argument. Candidates came up with a vast range of different terms. Part (e) was very straightforward and the vast majority of candidates were able to score both marks. Candidates often lost marks either by paraphrasing rather than copying out evidence or by presenting too much material from the passage, so that it was not possible to identify the particular evidence that had been selected in answer to the question.

Answers to part (f) 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 are 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 ignore the question and take 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. Too often candidates presented a series of items of evidence but failed to examine the type of evidence they were or commented on their relationship to the quotation. There were still a number of answers which were simply a paraphrase of the passage with no attempt to examine the quality of evidence used. Many candidates, whilst recognising that the passage is essentially opinion based failed to recognise that unsupported opinion provides a weak foundation for any argument. Most of the stronger candidates were able to score 2 marks for AO3 and a further two for communication. Very few reached maximum marks.

Generally communication was sound. There were relatively few (about 10%) 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

### Question 9 (morality)

This proved to be a very demanding question which did not attract a significant number of candidates. There were some very sound answers in which candidates were able to demonstrate a good understanding of different types of moral reasoning. Too often candidates interpreted the question in a narrow sense, interpreting motives as actions and consequences as the outcome (often in terms of society's sanctions) in response to actions. This was a question which required candidates to make their understanding of terms clear. Those who did were usually able to produce sound well structured responses.

### Question 10 (artistic style)

This was answered by a larger proportion of candidates than normally attempt this topic but still only attracted a sixth of the entry. Candidates who were students of any of the creative or performing arts were generally able to present well constructed and well informed answers. Many were able to support the view that in the arts all styles are to a greater or lesser extent derivative. Better prepared candidates were able to demonstrate that in spite of this, individuals were able to add new dimensions to traditional styles and so create something different. Others, particularly those who wrote about popular music were able to show that a lot of 'new' and 'different' aspects of style were more a response to commercial demands than to genuine creativity. Inevitable a proportion of responses came from candidates who were not well prepared. These often wrote about pop music and based their argument on their own likes rather than a true understanding of the qualities that could make something a new development. Too often assertion was left unsupported by evidence. This question did generate some outstandingly good responses which were able to develop a clear and coherent historical perspective in their chosen field.

### Question 11 (media)

This was easily the most popular of the three essays, but was often the least well done. Too often candidates seem to feel that media is something that can be written

about from a common sense point of view rather than from an informed knowledge base. The key aspects of the question related to media influence. Too often candidates failed to offer a reasonable explanation of what they understood by 'weak'. Some well informed responses were able to look at different models of media influence, but most answers simply accepted media influence as fact and argued that we are all influenced by the media. Inevitably perhaps examples of fashion, size and violence provided the majority of examples used. It seemed that many had been attracted by the fact the question was about media and did not give sufficient careful thought to the real difficulties contained in the statement. Many candidates viewed the mass media as inevitably biased and full of misrepresentation and something that many consumers are incapable of discerning. Huge numbers referred to girls' susceptibility to follow the example of size zero models. Too many answers were superficial and simplistic. There were many unsupported assertions and usually only a narrow evidence base was used.

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



6452/01

## General

The format of the paper was very similar to previous series. All items stimulated responses, very few candidates were unable to make a response to an item. The choice of essays in Section C proved to be unbalanced, with 90% of candidates choosing Q11, and only 5% each for Q9 and Q10.

The quality of writing and legibility, and the standard of spelling for a large minority of candidates are very poor. Although it is usually possible to interpret the candidate's meaning, the ease with which that can be done remains a matter for concern.

## Section A

### Question 1

Weak candidates found this a difficult choice, with only a third of them making the correct selection (B). For the better candidates nearly two thirds of them did so, and consequently the item proved to be quite a good discriminator. Responses still indicate a surprisingly high degree of uncertainty about the difference between scientific discoveries and technological inventions.

### Question 2

Most candidates were able to gain 2 or more marks for this question. Candidates often gave multi-purpose generic answers - for example, it is small, could get lost, would be cheap. These did not relate to the specific function of the device or how it differed from devices already on the market, and did not gain credit. On disadvantages, candidates often repeated the same idea - it encouraged burglars or allowed theft - but this could only be credited once. The discrimination shown in this question was not high - probably only 1 mark between the weaker and better candidates. The positive result was that nearly all candidates made mark-worthy responses.

### Question 3

Weaker candidates found this challenging and only a third made the correct response (C), but nearly three quarters of the better candidates did so. The item therefore discriminated well.

### Question 4

The fallacy in this argument is not easy to put into words, and many candidates struggled with this question. Very few gained all 3 marks, but it discriminated well between weaker and stronger candidates. Candidates achieving some success pointed out that the argument assumes that couples only have one child. If many couples have two or more children, which they obviously do, then the line backwards in time contains fewer parents, even fewer grandparents and so on. Mistaken answers made much of different mortality rates over time, the frequency of diseases and other factors that do not bear on the argument.

### Question 5

This question laid bare much misunderstanding of energy transfer, an aspect of KS4 science. Many candidates gained a mark for pointing out that insulation prevents thermal energy transfer (or used words to that effect), or commented on the nature of insulating materials. A much smaller proportion went on to explain how the letter was scientifically illiterate. Some candidates suggested that the writer installed air conditioning, or opened his windows in the summer, but neither of these helped with explaining a basic misunderstanding. A very small number picked up the slur on "scientists" by pointing out that designing and making insulation was a technical matter. This question also discriminated well.

### Question 6

Quite a good response was seen to part (a) - with frequent mention of Darwin and evolution by natural selection, which was a little surprising. A significant, small minority of candidates made the mistake of identifying inventions. Examiners were strict about excluding an answer such as "Gravity". It is the theories explaining gravitational attraction that mark scientific revolutions, not the simple existence of the phenomenon. It would be helpful if centres could make this distinction clear. Part (b) proved to be quite a good discriminator - weaker candidates could, on occasion, bring up one feature, but rarely two.

### Question 7

This proved to be a demanding question, weaker candidates struggling to get one mark, and only a few of the better candidates achieving both. Candidates commonly gained a mark for saying that it was impossible for a scientist to test every instance of an outcome from a theory. Some candidates knew about falsifiability, and made a stronger response.

## Section B

### Question 8

Candidates were able to make full responses to part (a), but had to be careful to read the whole question. It required them to interpret the energy situation of Japan, and extract facts to show why this might make the nation concerned about energy saving. It did not expect them to bring out the results of the energy diary experiment. Quite a few candidates quoted facts about the experiment and its outcome, which did not gain any marks. It was not a very good discriminator since weaker candidate usually managed to get 2 marks while better candidates obtained 3. A common incorrect choice was "Japan is home to many consumer electronic companies".

Part (b) was an easy question - most candidates got this right (C). Part (c) was much harder, although a good discriminator. Candidates may be less familiar with arguments based on cause, but they should understand that this is part of scientific understanding. Most candidates gained 2 marks in part (d), usually by identifying the two factual outcomes - less energy used and changing behaviour after using the diary. It was much less common for candidates to discuss how the results might be challenged - that is, that the evidence is deficient in some way - by noting that only a small number of houses were selected, and that there appeared to be no clear criteria for selecting the sample.

## Section C

### Question 9

This question attracted rather few candidates. Very few of these tackled an important basic element of the assertion - what constitutes an "experiment"? Those who did were usually able to reach upper level 3 or level 4 (11-13) marks, if they followed this up with an understanding of some of the problems dealt with in the four sciences mentioned. Essays that concentrated on "school science", by describing experiments they had carried out, earned low marks, tending to concentrate on some simple characteristics of different sciences. There were a few very good answers which both illustrated the differences or difficulties e.g. ethical considerations, observation as opposed to manipulation, and made clear the similarities between all sciences i.e. hypothesis, testing, induction.

### Question 10

This, too, was an unpopular question and was often poorly answered. Few candidates offered anything more than a simple argument about what a waste of time such thinking was and how can we know about such things. Better answers could draw on an analogy with, for example, our concerns about global warming. It enabled candidates to present similar arguments related to the question and these candidates scored significantly more marks. Few candidates, it appears, thought of why it might be necessary to indulge in futurology, and if the future is predicted, how long into the future this might be, and what the record of past futurologists has been. That said, there were a number of good answers.

### Question 11

The most popular essay choice, probably because it mentioned a common experience for the great majority of candidates. This proved a snare for the unwary or unthinking because their answers focussed on the possibility of banning holiday flights when this would obviously be unthinkable for most people. Good answers correctly brought out whether there might be any evidence that cutting out long distance flights was better than any other possible strategies for reducing carbon emissions. Best answers considered a wide range of factors including means of reducing the number of flights for example, larger or more fuel efficient aircraft, regulation of numbers of passengers or flights to particular destinations, as well as commenting on the relative contribution of other means of travel to carbon emissions.



6453/01

## General

The general standard of performance was commensurate with previous series. The paper followed the same format as in recent years with no change in specification content or assessment objectives. Apart from Q4(e) the paper was accessible to all candidates. There was evidence of good time management by most candidates and there were very few examples of misinterpretation of either the rubric or individual questions.

Marks awarded for Quality of Written Communication in Sections B and C were average or above for this paper. It was also pleasing to note that very few candidates now fail to include an explicit conclusion somewhere in the essay answer in Section C.

## Question 1

In Q1 the multiple choice numerical questions (a-d) were generally not well answered. Less than 50% of candidates were able to respond successfully to (b) and (c). Many candidates still find difficulty in calculating % changes in data and in interpreting data using % calculations.

As the mark scheme indicates there was an extensive range of possible responses to (e). Some candidates lost marks by either stating only one reason for the changes in the number of childless women or by explaining and developing only one reason. The question clearly asked for two reasons to be stated.

## Question 2

In Q2 the numerical calculations proved to be relatively straightforward with many candidates giving correct answers to (a), (b), and (c). The majority of candidates responded confidently to (d) and identified, discussed and analysed some very relevant factors to take into account in setting a charge. Some candidates impressively distinguished between factors of 'demand' (e.g. willingness and ability to afford charges) and supply side factors (e.g. objectives relating to costs, break-even, and profitability). Some candidates got so involved in explaining one specific factor (such as affordability and the strength of the local economy) that they ran out of time and space to propose alternative factors. However as the mark scheme indicates marks were awarded for developing a stated factor. There were some very thoughtful responses to this question such as those candidates who realised that differential pricing could be important during off-peak hours and school holidays.

## Question 3

In Q3 some candidates lost marks in only being able to identify one valid crime or in giving inappropriate or vague reasons for why a crime might not be reported. However this question was extremely well answered by most candidates. Again as the mark scheme shows there were many acceptable crimes and explanations for this question. The most popular responses were those suggesting rape, domestic violence, and petty theft as examples of crimes often not reported to the police.

#### Question 4

Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding in answers given to (a) and (b). A clear differentiation between opinion and fact was made with appropriate references made to subjective and objective knowledge. A minority of candidates however chose to move away from the source material in the passage and ventured information about job availability from their own information and understanding. They missed the opportunity to select source material such as the Fabian Society Survey to provide evidence for factual information.

In (c) most candidates were able to identify and write out an argument from authority in the passage, although some incorrectly used lines 11-14 as evidence. As the mark scheme indicates there were a number of possible correct responses to this question.

Part (d) proved to be difficult for a significant number of candidates. Those who responded well recognised that words such as 'maybe' and statements following such as 'does anyone really believe that' indicated doubt and uncertainty not associated with a belief. Alternatively many candidates correctly suggested that there was evidence in the passage that could be used to disprove the original statement thus undermining the argument for that statement being a belief.

Part (e) was not well answered. Centres need to continue to improve candidates knowledge and understanding of types of argument with particular reference to the difference between deductive and inductive argument. Although the mark scheme allowed for the award of 1 mark for an accurate definition of argument from analogy, very few candidates were able to secure the mark as they grappled unsuccessfully with an explanation of argument from deduction.

Part (f) was well attempted by most candidates although there were many missed opportunities to take advantage of concepts and material relating to previously answered questions (a) to (e). Most candidates were able to score 2 out of the 4 marks available (and at least 2 marks for Quality of Written Communication). However these marks were almost always awarded for identifying and discussing **evidence** rather than **argument**.

Only a minority of candidates recognised the progression from (a) to (f) in relation to references to issues such as fact, opinion, belief, and authority which could be and should have been cited in a discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the arguments used in the passage.

#### Question 5

Q5 was the least popular choice from the 3 essays in Section C of the paper. There were however some impressive responses to this question. The strong answers which achieved a level 4 mark were those that made a clear distinction between inter and intra party conflict and explicitly addressed and discussed both giving relevant examples. Some candidates suggested that with the 3 main parties now occupying the 'middle ground' of politics, attention has switched to the divisions within each party capturing public attention. Specific examples of conflict within political parties included reference to the concerns over the Iraq War and the Blair v Brown camps in the Labour Party. Others used a more distant historical time frame to discuss divisions within the Liberal Party in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were few references to the Conservative Party. As with Q6 and Q7 it was pleasing to

note that more candidates are attempting to consider the relative strengths of the propositions outlined in responses to provocative statements made in these questions.

### Question 6

Q6 was the most popular choice of essay question among candidates but the answers given were quite variable in quality. Some candidates had difficulty in defining and interpreting 'youth market' - some saw it as dealing with jobs and career choices rather than in terms of products and services. Weaker responses concentrated on the first part of the statement dealing with manipulation and commercial interest and failed to assemble an argument dealing with the interests and choices of young people. A very common failure was to embark upon a rant against commercialism without any regard for the need for business to meet market needs and desires. Consequently many answers fell into level 3 mark category with limited analysis and interpretation of the question.

Stronger candidates presented balanced and socially and economically aware answers making mention of such issues as potential manipulation and commercial exploitation through designer brands, pop musicians, technology gadgetry and the ploys of commercial banks. Such answers recognised and addressed the second part of the question and presented arguments relating to the merits of electronic products, the willpower of the young to resist advertising and marketing techniques (make rational decisions yet not be indifferent to peer pressure), the need for business to take account of 'demand' and engage in research and development, and the increasing role of government interference with market forces to protect young people (e.g. obesity concerns).

### Question 7

Q7 was the second most popular choice with the topicality and immediacy of the issues in the question proving attractive to many candidates. However, as with Q6 there was a significant lack of balance in many responses to this question. Weaker candidates tended to concentrate their efforts to discuss 'wicked people', 'terrorist acts', and 'increased security' and failed to make the important link with 'civil liberties' and 'human rights'.

Such answers focused on the interference of anti-terrorism measures with the day to day life of ordinary citizens - with a very common reference to inconvenient lengthy airport searches and restrictions. There were however some impressive answers to this question notably from those candidates who unpacked all the elements (wicked people, terrorist acts, civil liberties, human rights, and security) of the question and analysed and discussed the potential links between them. Many candidates made the distinction between the rights of 'wicked people' and the rights of society in general and discussed both. Issues relating to the length of detention for suspect terrorists and the notion of a 'big brother' state figured prominently in these balanced essays which sought to review the dilemmas associated with the potential conflict between individual freedoms and human rights and collective security. The examples given to illustrate arguments presented were either focused on specific individual cases of suspected terrorism or equally impressively on alternative philosophical approaches to human rights.

It was pleasing to note that in each of the essays in Section C of this paper there were relatively few answers that were considered to be level 2 responses i.e.,

superficial or formulaic. Most candidates were equipped to draw upon a reasonable bank of interpretative skills and evidence to support an essay which was awarded at least a level 3 mark.

6454/01

## General

The paper followed the same structure as in previous series although there were an increased number of multiple-choice and structured questions. Most questions appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates. Section A was designed to give wide coverage 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 and multiple choice 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 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. However there were also candidates who seemed not to have been prepared for the demands of the paper. 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 and in effect answered questions which had not been posed. As such they achieved marks that were lower than their natural ability seemed to justify.

## Section A

### Question 1, 2 and 3

These were multiple-choice questions and straightforward tests of knowledge with about 66% of candidates selecting the correct answer for Q1, 75% selecting the correct response for Q2 and 90% succeeding with Q3.

### Question 4

This was a new style of question and proved to be an effective discriminator. Two thirds of candidates answered part (c) correctly and about  $\frac{1}{4}$  succeeded with parts (a) and (b). Most candidates were able to achieve at least 1 mark. Only a small minority were able to score all 3 marks.

### Question 5

Answers to this question were often disappointing. Few candidates were able to identify two different criteria for high culture and many seemed unaware of what the term meant, often confusing it with popular culture. Many answers were repetitive and far too many associated high culture only with high socio-economic groups.

### Question 6

This resulted in many very disappointing answers. Candidates clearly did not read part (a) with sufficient care. Whilst many gave moral or practical reasons to justify euthanasia very few were able to relate their answers specifically to the utilitarian perspective. This question demonstrated that many candidates have very limited understanding of different moral perspectives. There were however some excellent answers. In contrast (b) was simple and straightforward so that most candidates were able to score both marks.

## Section B

### Question 7

This question was based on the passage. The earlier questions were designed to give help for the final part. Sadly many candidates who did well on the shorter questions failed to carry their knowledge and skill into the final question. This was a great pity as this type of question has been used on many occasions and centres should be well acquainted with its demands.

Part (a) produced better answers on arguments from authority than have been seen previously. Many recognised that the authority was based on knowledge and expertise rather than simply status. Answers to (a)(ii) were rather more disappointing. The majority ignored the instruction to consider a specific argument from authority and instead gave general reasons. Candidates who identified the contradictory views of different 'experts' as the reason for weakness gained the mark.

Parts (b),(c), (d) and (e) were all multiple-choice. About half of candidates correctly answered (b), 75% were correct on (c), 60% were correct on (d) but only 30% on (e). Clearly many candidates have not mastered an understanding of different types of knowledge or of the relationship between them. Part (f) posed few difficulties and 94% of candidates gained both marks.

In part (g) this type of analytical question is asked in each exam. Candidates should recognise that it is not sufficient to gather evidence. To be effective the quality of evidence must be analysed in terms of the given quotation. Too often candidates allowed their own personal opinion about the issues raised in the passage to displace the necessary critical approach. Answers to (g) 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 an evaluation of the quality of the evidence used. To reach such a conclusion it is necessary not only to identify the 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. The passage appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates.

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

### Question 8 (culture and globalisation)

This is never a particularly popular or well answered topic. Candidates who defined the terms used in the statement usually scored better than those who did not. Some candidates seemed to be totally lacking in understanding of globalisation and few gave attention to the meaning of good. Many answers focused on what they saw as the universal benefits of western (ie American) culture. Some recognised that other cultures might be lost but relatively few recognised that western culture could actually be influenced by and absorb aspects of other cultures.

### Question 9 (religious symbols)

This was the second most popular essay but results were often disappointing. Many candidates seemed to be very uncertain about what precisely religious symbols were and what role they played either in the life of believers or non-believers. Too often answers dealt with culture rather than religion. Answers were often simplistic. Whilst many claimed that symbols could offend non-believers, very few presented the counter argument that believers might also be offended by the attitude of non-believers. Most candidates did recognise that such symbols could establish differences but they were less happy with the concept of creating barriers. There were a significant number of references to Hitler's use of the Star of David to identify Jews, but few recognised that this was a misuse of the symbol rather than the symbol itself creating barriers or differences. Some excellent and well balanced answers did argue that symbols of themselves are not likely to create anything, but that it is the attitude of people who often use symbols as an excuse to justify their own prejudices.

### Question 10 (artistic style)

This proved more popular than most essays about the arts, but it did prove quite demanding. It achieved the objective of encouraging candidates to write about literature as well as the other arts. Most answers wrote about the influence of war on art rather than on the development of new artistic styles. There were some broad and very well supported responses to this question.

### Question 11 (media)

This was the most popular essay question but was often quite poorly answered. Far too many candidates seemed to be unaware of the relationship between government and media. It was often assumed that the government owned the media and dictated what could and could not be presented. Others tried to reduce the question to one about censorship and asserted forms of government censorship that do not exist. Better answers were able to examine the disadvantages of private monopolistic ownership in restricting or shaping information. There was little evidence of the use of legislation to restrain the free media. Few paid careful attention to the idea of a free society and understanding of 'fully informed' was often over simplistic. Contrasts were made between western democracies and either modern totalitarian regimes (such as China) or historic ones such as Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. Too many candidates seemed to feel the media (which was often restricted just to TV and newspapers) would not have any information to impart if they were not told what to say by the government.

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

## Appendix A: Statistics

### 6451: Aspects of Culture

| Grade                 | Max. Mark | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark     | 50        | 35 | 31 | 27 | 23 | 20 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 120       | 96 | 84 | 72 | 60 | 48 |

### 6452: Scientific Horizons

| Grade                 | Max. Mark | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark     | 50        | 32 | 29 | 26 | 23 | 21 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 90        | 72 | 63 | 54 | 45 | 36 |

### 6453/01: Social Perspectives (written paper)

| Grade                 | Max. Mark | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark     | 50        | 40 | 36 | 33 | 30 | 27 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 90        | 72 | 63 | 54 | 45 | 36 |

### 6454: Cultural Expressions

| Grade                 | Max. Mark | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark     | 50        | 33 | 30 | 27 | 24 | 21 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 90        | 72 | 63 | 54 | 45 | 36 |

**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.

Further copies of this publication are available from  
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467  
Fax 01623 450481

Email [publications@linneydirect.com](mailto:publications@linneydirect.com)

Order Code UA19794 January 2008

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit [www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications](http://www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications)  
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at [www.edexcel.org.uk/ask](http://www.edexcel.org.uk/ask) or on 0870 240 9800

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750  
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH