

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

H573

For first teaching in 2016

H573/05 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 5 series overview	4
Question 1	6
Question 2	8
Question 3	10
Question 4	10

 **Would you prefer a Word version?**

 Did you know that you can save this pdf as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Save As Other . . .** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for *pdf to word converter*).



We value your feedback

We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the icon above you will help us to ensure that our resources work for you.

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 5 series overview

There were many outstanding answers and the knowledge and understanding shown by many candidates was of a very high level. Many candidates produced very detailed responses with 'good' or 'very good' knowledge' and understanding of the specification content. These candidates were able to manipulate scholarly views, sources of wisdom and authority and academic approaches to create coherent, developed and justified arguments. Many responses were a pleasure to read and showed a high level of sophistication and clear engagement with set texts and wider reading. Some candidates engaged at a very high level with complex and challenging material and these answers showed maturity and development of thought.

Some answers were very short with little or no reference to the specification content; these answers did not score highly as candidates was unable to show anything other than a basic demonstration of knowledge and understanding. The lower marked answers often did not engage with scholarly or academic learning or approaches; this resulted in a less developed and sophisticated answers due to a lack of critical engagement. Some centres may wish to engage with the specification and the curriculum planner materials on the OCR website which offer suggestions as to academic approaches and scholarship that could be used to develop higher order thinking and to show a range of views.

	<p>OCR support</p>	<p>See the curriculum planner: https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/351831-developments-in-jewish-thought-curriculum-planner-.pdf</p>
--	---------------------------	---

As the 2018 report, it is very pleasing that new areas of the specification have been approached, in the main, with a high level of rigour. It was very pleasing to see candidates grappling at a high level with the Jewish feminism component (Q3). It was evident that candidates had engaged first hand with the suggested primary reading for this section of the specification.

The best responses addressed the specific question asked, considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way and were supported with careful analysis. When candidates did not achieve higher marks, it was usually because they did not answer the question set and instead provided an answer for a question they had pre-prepared for and/or did not refer to a range of scholarly views, religious sources or academic approaches. Some answers did try to adopt a more 'synoptic' style and attempted to use learning from across the specification to produce a sustained line of reasoning. Some candidates were able to do this skilfully, however, some of the answers became unfocused and wandered from the set question. While it can be very useful to approach a question synoptically, candidates should be aware that this requires knowledge to be used to deepen evaluative discussion; the additional material should be related back to the set question in order that it does not become superfluous.

<p><i>Most successful candidate answers</i></p>	<p><i>Least successful candidate answers</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated an understanding and familiarity with the different command verbs e.g. evaluate, to what extent • Demonstrated an awareness of the section of the specification which the set question was examining and very clearly related Knowledge and Understanding to the agreed specification content • Used a range of academic scholarship • Cited academic scholarship and religious text with ease, sophistication and accuracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found it difficult to apply what they had learnt to different scenarios. They may often use 'pre-prepared' responses which did not answer the set question sufficiently • Used a limited range or no academic scholarship • May present the views and teachings of school teachers and/or religious leaders in their community • Unable to confidently cite academic scholarship or religious texts with ease.

The marks awarded covered the Levels of Response at both Ao1 and Ao2; the questions differentiated well between candidates producing a range of marks. All questions were attempted with question 2 being the most popular. There were no rubric errors and all candidates answered 3 questions in full.

Question 1

- 1* Evaluate the extent to which the development of science and rational thought has challenged Jewish belief and the Jewish way of life. [40]

This question was popular and produced answers across the Levels of Response. There were some 'excellent' and 'very good' responses for Ao1 and Ao2 which engaged critically with the question, textual exegesis and scholarship. There were some answers that received nearly full marks however, some answers were only able to show weak or basic demonstration of knowledge and understanding as they lacked detailed awareness of the specification content. This question was asking candidates to recall learning from *Section 4: Developments*, of the specification specifically '*The Jewish Haskalah and Jewish Emancipation*'. In fact the wording of the question is taken directly from the specification. While candidates **may** take an approach which focuses on breadth or depth of response, some focus on specification content learning is required and /or the learning and argument they are using synoptically needs to address the set question.

There was a lack of reference in some answers to scholarly views; centres would benefit from ensuring that a range of scholarly views are looked at. Centres may also benefit from ensuring that candidates are aware of the terminology and structure of the specification content to ensure candidate answers are engaging with the set content. Some answers did not score highly as they discussed at length *halakah* rather than the *Haskalah*, while approaching the question from the perspective of *halakah* is acceptable many answers did not engage at a high enough level with the question focus on science and rational thought to achieve higher Levels of Response.

Exemplar 1

Firstly, Jewish orthodox beliefs about sexual relations can be viewed as outdated and conflicting with modern society. For example, orthodox Jews view 'man shall not lie with man as he does with a woman' as a direct warning against homosexuality. Similarly, views on ~~spinning~~ 'wasting the seed' contradict medical advances in contraception. Halacha instills morals within Jewish issues, one of these being sexual intercourse.

The Torah instructs 'be fruitful and multiply' however denegades the act if it is done purely for pleasure benefits. Halacha would instruct a man's values during sex to be focused on his wife, treating her well and not ~~thinking~~ thinking of another woman while in the act. It is believed that what is said between a man and woman during sex will be judged by G-d. Therefore, Halacha would argue one must comply with these beliefs of monogamy and faithfulness in a relationship rather than developments in societal values regarding sexual relations. Furthermore, Reform Jews would argue that homosexuality ~~and~~ is intrinsically allowed due to a man not physically lying the same way with a man as he would a woman. Orthodox however, believe these views. Although rational in retrospect, allow for further changes and new developments within society. Disregarding tradition and Halacha. Therefore, although there have been scientific advancements such as the pill allowing sexual pleasure even when a child is not wanted, this would conflict Halacha as it still 'wastes the seed' and disregards traditional Jewish beliefs.

This candidate was awarded Level 2 'basic' demonstration of knowledge in relation to the set question. As above, this question is testing candidate knowledge and learning of **Section 4: Developments**, specifically '**The Jewish Haskalah and Jewish Emancipation**'. While candidates *may* take an approach which focuses on breadth or depth of response, some focus on specification content learning is required and/or the learning and evaluation shown needs to link back to the set question specifically. This response, despite showing good knowledge of sexual ethics does not address the set question specifically but rather 'general topic'. The candidate was awarded Level 3 for Ao2 as there was 'some successful argument'.

	AfL	<p>Although centres may provide model answers for candidates this may disadvantage candidates if they do not relate the learning to the specification content that is being tested by the question.</p> <p>It can be useful to go through answers with a highlighter and highlight every time the key words in the question have been used (<i>rational thought, science</i>) and/or specification topic area (<i>Haskalah</i>).</p>
---	------------	--

Question 2

2* 'Anti-Zionism is merely a new form of anti-Semitism.' Discuss.

[40]

This was the most popular question and was answered very well by many. Most answers were very detailed, focused and showed clear engagement with the specification content. Many candidates were able to discuss with ease a historical overview of Zionism and the development of Zionism including political, cultural and modern Zionism (as outlined within the specification). The overview of anti-Semitism was handled well although some answers needed to develop a more detailed and balanced argument in order to achieve high marks. Some answers only focused on one aspect of the question (either anti-Zionism or anti-Semitism) and as such did not score highly.

Many responses were also able to discuss with ease that current 'hostility' towards Judaism could be seen as rooted in opposition towards Israeli policies and the State of Israel. Some answers showed a very high level of engagement with current politics and policy and used this learning confidently and in a very mature fashion within the Ao2 evaluation.

The highest-level answers were those which went above a basic description different types of Zionism and an overview of anti-Semitism. Many of the high level answers included learning on the views of the *Haredi*, *Neturei Karta* etc. as Jewish groups that are staunchly anti-Zionistic. There were some excellent answers which scored full marks; these showed skilful manipulation of learning to construct a high level and detailed response to the question.

The introduction and first main paragraph of Exemplar 2 below is very high level – it remains focused on the question throughout and shows a high level of engagement with specification learning and sources of academic learning and wisdom and authority. Exemplar 2 engages with evaluation from the start and successfully brings in synoptic learning through a focused and relevant discussion of the Biblical claim to Land.

Exemplar 2

9 The belief and new idea that anti-zionism is merely a form of anti-semitism is a contemporary issue which still remains unanswered today. The land is a central concept to Jewish faith; particular supporters of zionism, the idea that Jews have a right to dwell in their "promised land" by scriptural and historical claim, are Gush Emunim who would whole-heartedly claim anti-zionism

and anti-semitism are ~~strongly~~ inextricably intertwined as the land is so central to the covenant and Jewish people. However; as the Church of England has spoken out and the actions seen of Israel against Palestine, it appears that criticising the secular, Israel regime cannot be deemed as anti-semitic as it is a world power / government on this level, not a religion. However a popular denotation is that today anti-zionism is simply used as a mask against anti-semitism and is thus excused. However considering both sides; it appears unfair to claim anti-zionism is merely a new form of anti-semitism.

The Abrahamic Covenant has land at the centre of it; where God promised Abraham and his "descendants after you" the land ^{as an "everlasting possession"} in return for keeping Brit Millah; or the covenant of cutting. In the Mosaic Covenant the idea of the "land of the milk and honey" is seen as the land becomes a reward for keeping the Covenant once again. Breuggeman claim "^{Land} ~~Land~~ is central, if not the central, theme of Biblical faith" showing how crucial land is to the Jewish faith and its symbol. Thus; for strongly pro-zionist groups such as Gush Emunim; settling in the land is seen as their God-given right and is intrinsic to their faith. Any form of anti-zionism is anti-semitism as it attacks the foundations of covenant; agreeing with the statement.

Question 3

3* To what extent has Judith Plaskow reclaimed the Torah for women?

[40]

This was the least popular question, however, the answers were very high level; candidates were able to skilfully construct fluid argument which showed a detailed and sophisticated understanding of the specification content. This is a new component of study for this specification and centres should be congratulated for the way this has been taught; those that answered this question showed very good knowledge, understanding and maturity of response. Very good answers were able to engage in an overview of the wider views of Judith Plaskow in relation to women: reshaping Jewish memory (Torah) to reclaim the Torah for women and the discussion surrounding Sinai and the covenant. Many candidates were also able at a high level to discuss Judith Plaskow's notion of recovering Torah and recovering women's history and how this may reflect wider non-Jewish feminist and literary theories.

Responses which were not marked as highly focused on Adler rather than Plaskow and as such did not engage fully with the set question.

The level of A02 analysis and evaluation was very high and candidates were able to draw upon Adler to offer an alternative way of deconstructing the question. The answers to this question were very pleasing and all examiners commented on how candidates had approached this question with a high level of knowledge, understanding and criticality.

Question 4

4* 'As the Babylonian Talmud was written by humans it cannot be the word of G-d.' Discuss. [40]

Many candidates were able to engage with this question successfully. Good answers were those which were able to discuss the history of the transmission, formation, and/or literary content of the Talmud as recounted by Jewish tradition and theological scholarship. Very good answers also included learning from the specification on *Perkei Avot*, the development of *halakhah* and *Shulkhan Arukh* and the importance of the Oral and Written Torah for Jewish belief and life.

High level answers were those that were also able to discuss the set question from a variety of critical viewpoints and cite the views of academic scholarship. While many candidates were able to discuss that Torah and Talmud are a witness and record of G-d's revelation, less were able to confidently discuss that the process of textual formation can be interpreted in many different ways - religiously, historically and academically.

Many of the answers for this question showed clear structure and the candidates worked through the specification content in a logical manner, so demonstrating good subject knowledge and understanding. There were some pleasing and high level answers to this question showing a depth and breadth of learning and evaluation. Responses which were given lower marks did not engage with the specification content. These often presented a more simplistic response in its style and approach and could only be awarded Level 2 'basic' in the levels of marking response due to limited knowledge and understanding of the A Level specification content.

Supporting you

For further details of this qualification please visit the subject webpage.

Review of results

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our review of results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#). If university places are at stake you may wish to consider priority service 2 reviews of marking which have an earlier deadline to ensure your reviews are processed in time for university applications.

activeresults

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. Available for GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Nationals.

It allows you to:

- review and run analysis reports on exam performance
- analyse results at question and/or topic level*
- compare your centre with OCR national averages
- identify trends across the centre
- facilitate effective planning and delivery of courses
- identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle
- help pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of students and teaching departments.

*To find out which reports are available for a specific subject, please visit ocr.org.uk/administration/support-and-tools/active-results/

Find out more at ocr.org.uk/activeresults

CPD Training

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear exam feedback directly from a senior assessor or drop in to an online Q&A session.

Please find details for all our courses on the relevant subject page on our website.

www.ocr.org.uk

OCR Resources: *the small print*

OCR's resources are provided to support the delivery of OCR qualifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by OCR. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this small print remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

Our documents are updated over time. Whilst every effort is made to check all documents, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, therefore please use the information on the latest specification at all times. Where changes are made to specifications these will be indicated within the document, there will be a new version number indicated, and a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource please contact us at: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk.

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR, or are considering switching from your current provider/awarding organisation, you can request more information by completing the Expression of Interest form which can be found here: www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk

Looking for a resource?

There is now a quick and easy search tool to help find **free** resources for your qualification:

www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/find-resources/

www.ocr.org.uk

OCR Customer Support Centre

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

OCR is part of Cambridge Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge. *For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.*

© **OCR 2019** Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.



Cambridge
Assessment

