



THEOLOGY ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

CONTENT SPECIFICATION

2016

Overview

The purpose of the Theology Admissions Assessment is to determine a candidate's potential to achieve in an academically demanding undergraduate degree course. The assessment is designed to be challenging, in order to differentiate effectively between able applicants, including those who may have achieved the highest possible grades in school examinations.

The assessment will take two hours and consists of two sections:

Section 1

Section 1 is an assessment of candidates' reading skills, including their ability to read critically, understand main ideas in texts, analyse detail and grasp implicit meaning.

Section 1 is in multiple-choice format. 1 hour is allowed for this section of the assessment.

Section 2

In Section 2, candidates will read two short extracts and be required to give a written response to **one** extract only. Each extract will be accompanied by three questions, focusing on different aspects of the text. No prior knowledge of any particular religion will be assumed.

1 hour is allowed for this section of the assessment.

Dictionaries may **not** be used in any part of this assessment.

Section 1

Section 1 of the Theology Admissions Assessment assesses the ability to understand and draw meaning from texts in a multiple-choice format. This section of the assessment is not subject-specific, and texts included will be on a variety of topics and may be drawn from a range of sources.

All academic subjects require the ability to read a variety of sometimes challenging texts for meaning. Specifically, the tasks in Section 1 focus on identifying the way in which the texts are structured, the main ideas being presented, and the way in which these are supported and developed.

Section 1 consists of four tasks, based around text excerpts. Each task will have a set of multiple-choice questions with four options. Questions will not require specialist knowledge or any information beyond what is contained within the texts.

Content

Each task will use recently written texts, from authentic sources, in English. Sources may include works of non-fiction (at a relatively high level conceptually and linguistically but which do not assume specialist subject knowledge), newspapers, general interest magazines, book reviews, abstracts written for research papers or journal articles, and professional websites. Texts will not depend on the understanding of specific aspects of British culture.

Questions will require candidates to:

- look at the main ideas and focus of a text;
- analyse the detail and distinguish opinions and attitudes presented in the text;
- determine the writer's purpose in writing the text, including consideration of intended audience;
- extract implications and implicitly stated elements of the text;
- draw comparisons and contrasts within a text or between different texts.

For all tasks, the emphasis is on identification of opinion, attitude, purpose and inferred meaning rather than the retrieval of directly stated factual details. Questions may also focus on elements of text organisation which support meaning, such as the use of exemplification and comparison.

Format

Section 1 consists of four tasks. **Candidates will be required to answer all questions in all of the tasks.** Each task will consist of one or more text excerpts and a set of four-option multiple-choice questions. There will be no overlap between tasks. Answers to questions will not depend on other questions.

Task 1: Understanding Short Texts

Questions in this task are on two short abstracts, or reviews on a common topic. Texts will be no more than 200 words each. The task assesses a candidate's ability to identify, compare and contrast features of two different texts. The candidate's understanding of the two texts is tested through discrete questions aiming to cover a wide range of focuses with the emphasis on identification of opinion, attitude, purpose and inferred meaning rather than the retrieval of directly stated factual details. Questions may also focus on elements of text organisation which support meaning, such as the use of exemplification, comparison and reference.

Task 2: Multiple-Matching

Questions in this task are on four short extracts, either from four different writers on the same theme or four extracts from the same source. Extracts will be no more than 200 words each. This task requires candidates to locate a text where a particular idea is expressed, discounting ideas in other texts which may appear similar but do not reflect the whole of the question accurately. Each question requires the candidate to scan the four texts to locate the area of text which appears to contain the answer, and then to read this carefully to check that it is the correct answer.

Task 3: Understanding Extended Text

Questions in this task are on one extended text (of no more than 1000 words). The task assesses the understanding of a longer stretch of academic text which may include argument, supported claims, and reference to previous work and ideas in a particular field.

Task 4: Understanding Extended Text

Like Task 3, Task 4 tests the understanding of a longer stretch of academic text (in this case, of up to 1200 words) which may include argument, supported claims, and reference to previous work and ideas in a particular field.

Scoring

All questions are worth 1 mark. Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers, so candidates are advised to answer all questions.

Section 2

In Section 2, candidates will read two short extracts and be required to give a written response to **one** extract only. Each extract will be accompanied by three questions, focusing on different aspects of the text. No prior knowledge of any particular religion will be assumed.

Assessors will be looking for a capacity to understand the texts and their implications, rather than a knowledge of the context from which they arise.

APPENDIX: SPECIMEN QUESTIONS

Section 1

Task 1

Read the two abstracts below, which give summaries of two academic articles relating to cities and urban development. For questions 1 – 6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the texts.

ABSTRACT ONE

Retrofitting cities: Local governance in Sydney, Australia

Robyn Dowling, Pauline McGuirk, Harriet Bulkeley

Transforming cities to a lower carbon future is a key challenge of contemporary urban governance. Retrofitting the city – or modifying existing urban infrastructures, buildings and daily life to suit different energy sources and expectations of energy consumption – is essential to this transformation. In urban studies, little focus has been applied to the shape and character of urban governance frameworks and mechanisms required to successfully retrofit cities. In this paper we address this **lacuna** by exploring the logics, practices and dynamics of retrofitting governance in the Australian city. Using a **governmentality** perspective, the paper identifies the involvements of different scales of government in retrofitting policies and mechanisms and connections between them. Based on our survey of carbon reduction initiatives involving government, business and community actors across Australia's cities, we outline the types of retrofitting solutions being proposed and enacted. Focussing on initiatives from Sydney, Australia's largest city, the paper documents four key techniques through which retrofitting is being governed – self-governing, **holistic**, facilitative and educative. The findings indicate that governance gaps remain in attending to the daily life of technologies and the **materiality** of daily life.

ABSTRACT TWO

Critical research on eco-cities? A walk through the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City, China

Federico Caprotti

This article uses the narrative tool of a walk through Tianjin Eco-City, China, as an entry point in raising and discussing key questions in contemporary eco-city research. Eco-city projects are becoming increasingly prevalent in policy and political-economic discourses in a variety of locations as new urban spaces where blueprints for low carbon economies can be trialled. In light of this, the article highlights the necessity of, firstly, considering scale when analyzing eco-city 'futures'. Secondly, the article argues for the need to interrogate eco-cities' definitions, as well as their evaluation, performance and monitoring frameworks, as this will aid in critical analyses of the marketing and presentation of actually built eco-city projects. Thirdly, the question of **internal social resilience** needs to be assessed: this is of crucial importance in light of the **exclusive, gated nature** of several flagship eco-city **projects under construction** at present. Lastly, the article argues that research on eco-city projects needs to consider not only high-tech, **new urban environments**, but also the low-paid workers who form what the article calls the **'new urban poor'**, forming large, often transient populations on the edges of flagship 'sustainable' urban projects worldwide.

- 1 According to Abstract One, what is the main aim of the article on retrofitting cities?
- A to defend the idea of retrofitting
 - B to point out weaknesses in retrofitting technology
 - C to describe the technology required for retrofitting
 - D to look at methods of achieving retrofitting
- 2 Which word from Abstract One describes the theoretical framework used by the writers in their analysis of retrofitting in Sydney?
- A 'lacuna'
 - B 'governmentality'
 - C 'holistic'
 - D 'materiality'
- 3 In Abstract One, the writers claim that one feature of their research is that
- A they have engaged with an area representing a weakness in the field.
 - B they have proposed a way of integrating key techniques.
 - C they have identified potentially divisive underlying attitudes.
 - D they have employed a controversial methodology.
- 4 In Abstract Two, the writer says that eco-city projects are important because
- A they show that low carbon economies are sustainable.
 - B they provide an opportunity for testing economic models.
 - C they offer new opportunities for disadvantaged groups.
 - D they encourage political involvement in environmental issues.

- 5 In Abstract Two, 'exclusive, gated nature' contrasts with
- A 'internal social resilience'.
 - B 'new urban environments'.
 - C 'new urban poor'.
 - D 'projects under construction'.
- 6 Which abstract refers to the physical experience of a particular city being used as a stylistic device?
- A neither abstract
 - B both abstracts
 - C Abstract One only
 - D Abstract Two only

Key

1 D 2 B 3 A 4 B 5 C 6 D

Section 2

Here are two extracts, one from the New Testament and the other from a German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche. Read both, and the questions attached, then choose **one extract**, and answer the questions that follow.

You should write your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Extract A

Acts 17:16–34

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." ²¹(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

²⁹"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. ³⁰In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

³²When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." ³³At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

1. **On the basis of this extract, which are the different audiences Paul addresses in Athens?**
2. **What does the passage tell us about Paul's message to his Greek hearers?**
3. **What clues, if any, does the passage give as to how Paul thinks about God and Jesus Christ?**

Extract B

Nietzsche: *The Anti-Christ*. Section 33.

In the entire psychology of the 'Gospel' the concept of guilt and punishment is lacking; likewise the concept reward. 'Sin', every kind of distancing relationship between God and man, is abolished – *precisely this is the 'glad tidings'*. Blessedness is not promised, it is not tied to any conditions; it is the *only* reality – the rest is signs for speaking of it...

The *consequence* of such a condition projects itself into a new *practice*, the true evangelical practice. It is not a 'belief' which distinguishes the Christian: the Christian acts, he is distinguished by a *different* mode of acting. Neither by words nor in his heart does he resist the man who does him evil. He makes no distinction between foreigner and native, between Jew and non-Jew (one's neighbour' is properly one's co-religionist, the Jew). He is not angry with anyone, does not disdain anyone. He neither appears in courts of law nor claims their protection ('not swearing'). Under no circumstances, not even in the case of proved unfaithfulness, does he divorce his wife. – All fundamentally *one* law, all consequences of *one* instinct. –

The life of the redeemer was nothing else than *this* practice – his death too was nothing else...He no longer required any formulas, any rites for communicating with God – not even prayer. He has settled his accounts with the whole Jewish penance-and-reconciliation doctrine; he knows that it is through the *practice* of one's life that one feels 'divine', 'blessed', 'evangelic', at all times a 'child of God'. It is *not* 'penance', *not* 'prayer for forgiveness' which leads to God: *evangelic practice alone* leads to God, it *is* God! – What was *abolished* with the Evangel was the Judaism of the concepts 'sin', 'forgiveness of sin', 'faith', 'redemption by faith' – the whole of Jewish *ecclesiastical* teaching was denied in the 'glad tidings'.

The profound instinct for how one would have to *live* in order to feel oneself 'in Heaven', to feel oneself 'eternal', while in every other condition one by *no* means feels oneself 'in Heaven': this alone is the psychological reality of 'redemption'. – A new way of living, *not* a new belief...

1. Summarise Nietzsche's argument in this extract.
2. In what ways can this line of argument be criticised?
3. How do you react to what you read in this passage?

