OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCE

Religious Studies

Unit **G581**: Philosophy of Religion

Advanced GCE

Mark Scheme for June 2016

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this mark scheme.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
L1	Level one – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
L2	Level two – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
L3	Level three – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
L4	Level four – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
L5	Level five – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Highlighting a section of the response that is irrelevant to the awarding of the mark.
SEEN	Point has been seen and noted, e.g. where part of an answer is at the end of the script.

NOTE: AO1 level must be used at the end of each response in the margin, with the AO2 level used immediately below.

A2 Preamble and Instructions to Examiners

The purpose of a marking scheme is to '… enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner' [CoP 1999 25.xiv]. It must 'allow credit to be allocated for what candidates know, understand and can do' [xv] and be 'clear and designed to be easily and consistently applied' [x].

The **Religious Studies Subject Criteria** [1999] define 'what candidates know, understand and can do' in terms of two Assessment Objectives, weighted for the OCR Religious Studies specification as indicated:

All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives.

At A level, candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and their ability to sustain a critical line of argument in greater depth and over a wider range of content than at AS level.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked. Specifications should require that candidates demonstrate the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed.

AO1: Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.

AO2: Sustain a critical line of argument and justify a point of view.

The requirement to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through both assessment objectives.

In order to ensure the marking scheme can be 'easily and consistently applied', and to 'enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner', it defines Levels of Response by which candidates' answers are assessed. This ensures that comparable standards are applied across the various units as well as within the team of examiners marking a particular unit. Levels of Response are defined according to the two Assessment Objectives. In A2, candidates answer a single question but are reminded by a rubric of the need to address both Objectives in their answers. Progression from Advanced Subsidiary to A2 is provided, in part, by assessing their ability to construct a coherent essay, and this is an important part of the Key Skill of Communication which 'must contribute to the assessment of Religious Studies at AS and A level'.

Positive awarding: it is a fundamental principle of OCR's assessment in Religious Studies at Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced GCE that candidates are rewarded for what they 'know, understand and can do' and to this end examiners are required to assess every answer by the Levels according to the extent to which it addresses a reasonable interpretation of the question. In the marking scheme each question is provided with a brief outline of the likely content and/or lines of argument of a 'standard' answer, but this is by no means prescriptive or exhaustive. Examiners are required to have subject knowledge to a high level and the outlines do not attempt to duplicate this.

Examiners must **not** attempt to reward answers according to the extent to which they match the structure of the outline, or mention the points it contains. The specification is designed to allow teachers to approach the content of modules in a variety of ways from any of a number of perspectives, and candidates' answers must be assessed in the light of this flexibility of approach. It is quite possible for an excellent and valid answer to contain knowledge and arguments which do not appear in the outline; each answer must be assessed on its own merits according to the Levels of Response.

Key Skill of Communication: this is assessed at both Advanced Subsidiary and A2 as an integral part of the marking scheme. The principle of positive awarding applies here as well: candidates should be rewarded for good written communication, but marks may not be deducted for inadequate written communication; the quality of communication is integral to the quality of the answer in making its meaning clear. The Key Skill requirements in Communication at Level 3 include the following evidence requirements for documents about complex subjects, which can act as a basis for assessing the Communications skills in an examination answer:

Select and use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to your purpose and complex subject matter.
Organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.
Ensure your text is legible and your spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so your meaning is clear.

*

Synoptic skills and the ability to make connections: these are now assessed at A2 as specification, due to the removal of the Connections papers.

Levels of Response: the descriptions are cumulative, ie a description at one level builds on or improves the descriptions at lower levels. Not all the qualities listed in a level must be demonstrated in an answer for it to fall in that level (some of the qualities are alternatives and therefore mutually exclusive). There is no expectation that an answer will receive marks in the same level for the two AOs.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
1	AO1		**To what extent have philosophers successfully argued that religious language is meaningless?**	21	
			Candidates may begin with an account of the work of the Logical Positivists, possibly even giving an account of the forming of the Vienna Circle and the writings which led these philosophers to come together. Some may mention Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and may be aware that he was not himself a member of the Circle.		
			This may lead to an exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of the Verification Principle, with some demonstration of the self-refuting nature of the principle itself. Some may use examples from religious language of the kinds of statements which the Vienna Circle were accusing of meaninglessness such as: 'God is all-loving, all powerful, your God is a jealous God….'.		
			Some candidates may take their arguments towards an explanation of the later writings of Wittgenstein and introduce the ideas of language games and his claim that language gets its meaning from the context in which it is used or the rules of the game you are playing at any given time.		
			Others may explore the approach taken by the Vienna Circle to analytic and synthetic statements, explaining the need for synthetic statements to be verifiable by empirical evidence if they were to be considered meaningful. In this context some may address the issue of strong and weak verification.		

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
		AO2	In their evaluation candidates may assess the underlying assumption of Logical Positivism that it is only scientific, empirical propositions which can accurately describe the reality of our world. Arguably, not only religious language but also poetry and music contribute a great deal to our understanding of reality. Who would say that a Shakespearian sonnet tells us nothing about the world? Others may assess the extent to which Wittgenstein helped to make all kinds of language meaningful again by his introduction of language games. They may discuss the extent to which he only allowed for communication within the game and the implications for attempts to communicate with people playing a game with different rules. Others may have read philosophers such as Vincent Brummer or D Z Philips, using their work to assess the extent to which treating religious sentences as if they are failed scientific ones is to commit an error of understanding.	14	Some candidates may use their knowledge of the Falsification Symposium to develop their answers on meaninglessness by exploring the wider question of the extent to which a religious proposition has value in any sense. Where this happens, the better use of this material may recognise that Popper and, by extension, Flew, was talking about science and not philosophy and what counts as an assertion with value rather than meaning.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
2	AO1		**Critically assess the philosophical problems surrounding belief in miracles.**	21	
			Candidates may begin by explaining how one or a few philosophers might describe what is meant by the term miracle. Since the question refers to 'belief' in miracles some may begin with an assessment of the kinds of things believers say about miracles. They could for example take a Thomistic approach and talk about events which surpass the faculty of nature or his belief about the purpose of miracles, namely the manifestation of something supernatural.		Successful responses to this question may explore a range of philosophical problems or fewer in more depth. Marking should refer to the levels of response.
			Others may begin with David Hume's famous description of a miracle as a violation of the laws of nature. This might allow them to analyse the empirical approach to miracles where, for example, Hume and others argue that firm and unalterable experience has established these laws and that they are a convincing proof against the probability of miracles. Candidates are likely to recognise that Hume is careful to say that miracles are in fact the least likely of events.		
			Others who have studied the writings of scholars such as Wiles may take a completely different approach to this question and assess the kind of God who would work miracles for some and ignore the suffering of others.		
	AO2		Given the open and general nature of this question candidates may approach their evaluation from a number of angles which will depend on which philosophers the candidates choose to explore.	14	
			Credit may be given for one or two philosophers who are analysed in detail or for a range of philosophers who may have less detail but have been used to argue for a number of issues in this area. For example candidates may evaluate		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			the views of Wiles and Ward or start with New Testament miracles and explore a number of views over the last 2000 years.		
	3	AO1	**To what extent can conversion experiences prove the existence of God?** Candidates may begin by placing this kind of experience within the context of religious experiences in general, as long as they avoid the 'everything I know about religious experience' answer. Some may take a more personal approach and explain conversion through the life of someone such as St Paul or St Augustine. They are likely to approach the proof part of the question through an exploration of the way in which the life of a convert can be seen to be very different from the one they lived before the experience or event. Alternatively candidates may begin by exploring the personal nature of most religious experiences and therefore the intrinsic problem of verification. It is impossible for the observer to verify the experience anyone else claims to have. There are a number of philosophical positions which cast doubt on the reliability of sense experience and this would clearly be amplified if anyone is trying to describe an experience of the numinous. Some might suggest that features of corporate experiences are perhaps verifiable Some may explore the idea that conversion is often not a 'Damascus moment' but rather a slow dawning of the perceived presence of God in someone's life. They may for example use the writings of Mark Wynn to explain how some believe that a particular place or pilgrimage can mediate the presence of God. Whichever route they choose, their responses should focus on both conversion and the	21	Some candidates may validly use William James, although the distinction needs to be made between James on mystical experience (ineffable, noetic quality, transiency, passivity) and him on conversion experience (e.g. pragmatism, saintliness, fruits). Candidates might use other thinkers such as Starbuck or examples of famous converts, as long as the focus is not biographical.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			idea that these experiences may or may not prove the existence of God.		
		AO2	In their evaluation candidates may try to define what for them would count as proof for the existence of God. Depending which scholars the candidates use, they may approach their evaluation positively or negatively; for example some writers may support the idea that significant changes in a convert's life could be seen as evidence of some kind of divine experience whereas others may explore the idea that all such experiences are delusional.	14	
	4	AO1	**'Belief in a soul separate from the body is incoherent.' Discuss.** Candidates may begin their responses by explaining the dualistic thoughts of Plato and thus disagree with the question. They may say that in his thinking the soul was wholly spiritual whereas the body was entirely material. For the soul to live on as an indestructible simple substance and reach its true home in the Realm of the Forms it had to be made from no parts which could disintegrate. They may contrast this with the Aristotelian view, held in most of his writings, that the soul and the body are one and that when the body dies the soul as the 'form' of the body ceases to be as well, in contrast with Plato's eternal realm of the Forms. Some may be aware of the problems in early Christianity where Gnostic teaching led some to believe in a dualistic way that the material body was evil and only the soul could be good, and this led to heresies such as Manichaeism. This led to a great deal of confusion and eventually, in the	21	This question may attract responses that validly gain credit through either a range or depth of material. Be aware of candidates producing a 'knowledge based list of scholars' rather than demonstrating understanding or of candidates who focus on the afterlife without linking it the coherence of the soul.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			Apostles' Creed, bodily resurrection was seen as a Christian promise. Candidates have a large number of scholars from which to choose material for this response and need to be assessed on their ability to use a selection of these writers to address the actual question. The kinds of areas they are likely to choose from are the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Hick, Ryle and Dawkins. Any other relevant scholar should be credited appropriately.		
		AO2	In their evaluation candidates should be addressing the issue of whether or not this belief is coherent. They may for example agree with the statement by taking the reductionist approach espoused by writers such as Dawkins or Atkins, and argue that since we have no empirical evidence for the existence of a soul separate from the body it is indeed incoherent to believe in its separate existence. Alternatively they may use the writings of scholars such as Descartes or Aquinas to put together an evaluation of their views on the coherence of belief in the existence of both bodies and souls.	14	

A2 LEVELS OF RESPONSE

Level	Mark/21	AO1	Mark/14	AO2
0	0	absent/no relevant material	0	absent/no argument
1	1-5	almost completely ignores the question • little relevant material • some concepts inaccurate • shows little knowledge of technical terms　　L1	1-3	very little argument or justification of viewpoint • little or no successful analysis • views asserted with no justification　　L1
		Communication: often unclear or disorganised; can be difficult to understand; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate		
2	6-9	A basic attempt to address the question • knowledge limited and partially accurate • limited understanding • might address the general topic rather than the question directly • selection often inappropriate • limited use of technical terms　　L2	4-6	a basic attempt to sustain an argument and justify a viewpoint • some analysis, but not successful • views asserted but little justification　　L2
		Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate		
3	10-13	satisfactory attempt to address the question • some accurate knowledge • appropriate understanding • some successful selection of material • some accurate use of technical terms　　L3	7-8	the argument is sustained and justified • some successful analysis which may be implicit • views asserted but not fully justified　　L3
		Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate		
4	14-17	a good attempt to address the question • accurate knowledge • good understanding • good selection of material • technical terms mostly accurate　　L4	9-11	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument holistically • some successful and clear analysis • some effective use of evidence • views analysed and developed　　L4
		Communication: generally clear and organised; can be understood as a whole; spelling, punctuation and grammar good		
5	18-21	A very good / excellent attempt to address the question showing understanding and engagement with the material • very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information • accurate use of technical terms　　L5	12-14	A very good / excellent attempt which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument holistically • comprehends the demands of the question • uses a range of evidence • shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints　　L5
		Communication: answer is well constructed and organised; easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good		

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