

# Religious Studies

Advanced GCE

Unit **G581**: Philosophy of Religion

## **Mark Scheme for January 2012**

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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.

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## Annotations

Only use annotations emboldened in the Levels of Response.

As scripts may be returned to centres, you should use the minimum of comments and make sure that these are related to the award of a mark or marks and are matched to statements in the mark scheme.

Do not include general comments on a candidate's work.

Record any annotation in the body of the answer, or in the margin next to the point where the decision is made to award, or not award, the mark.

## Recording of marks

- Record numerical marks for responses to part-questions **unringed** in the right-hand margin. Show the total for each question (or, in specific cases, for each page) as a single **ringed** mark in the right-hand margin at the end of each question.
- Transfer ringed totals to the front page of the script, where they should be totalled.
- Show evidence that you have seen the work on every page of a script on which the candidate has made a response.
- Cross through every blank page to show that you have seen it.

## Subject-specific Marking Instructions

The Standardisation meeting will include discussion of marking issues, including:

- consideration of the mark scheme to reach a decision about the range of acceptable responses and the marks appropriate to them
- comparable marking standards for optional questions
- the handling of unexpected, yet acceptable, answers.

If you are not sure how to apply the mark scheme to an answer, you should telephone your Team Leader.

## 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.

### **Practical application of the Marking Scheme**

General administrative information and instructions are issued separately by OCR.

Apart from preliminary marking for standardisation purposes, which must be carried out in pencil, the first marking of a script should be in red ink. There should be a clear indication on every page that it has been read by the examiner, and the total mark for the question must be ringed and written in the margin at the end of the script; at A2 the two sub-marks for the AOs must be written here as well. Half-marks may not be used.

To avoid giving the impression of point-marking, ticks should not be used within an answer. Examiners should follow the separate instructions about annotation of scripts; remember that the marks awarded make the assigned Levels of Response completely explicit.

**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	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
1	<p><b>AO1</b></p> <p>Candidates may begin by defining what might be meant by a 'corporate religious experience', though others may begin with a more general account of what religious experience might be. Whichever route the candidates choose they should focus their response towards the extent to which this one type of religious experience does or does not lead to a proof of God's existence.</p> <p>There is no need for candidates to list all the kinds of religious experience which may be considered to be 'corporate' nor should examiners limit credit to those mentioned in the old specification. Everything from Evensong through the sacraments to the Toronto Blessing is available for discussion.</p> <p>Some candidates may use the writings of William James or Richard Swinburne to explore the validity of these experiences and to explain what may or may allow an experience to be called religious.</p> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <p>In evaluating this issue, candidates may assess the strength of the arguments put forward by the classical writers mentioned above or others whom they have studied.</p> <p>In contrast, those who wish to argue against corporate religious experience being a reality may make use of the writings of writers such as Marx, Freud or Dawkins; taking a sociological, psychological or reductionist scientific approach to their explorations of the issues.</p> <p>While personal beliefs are likely to be expressed by some candidates, it is important that credit is given through the levels of response to the views which candidates are able to justify and not to arguments by assertion.</p>	35	

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
2	<p><b>AO1</b></p> <p>Candidates usually begin this response by outlining their understanding of the concept of miracle which is fine as long as it does not turn into their pre-prepared Hume answer.</p> <p>Better responses will explain what it is about this concept which for some philosophers makes it impossible to believe in a Good God in any sense. Many will be aware of the writings of Maurice Wiles and the kind of God he believes would be implicit in a world where He would seem to be behaving in a partial and unfair manner.</p> <p>Some may alternatively attack the statement from a Dawkins kind of position where there is no God and miracles are therefore just events which science cannot yet explain but will be able to some day.</p> <p>Others may explain the writings of philosophers such as Keith Ward and explore what a universe would be like if God intervened all the time and the implications of that for the way we would have to interact with our world. Would we, for example, seek to use science to cure illness when we could just pray hard and move mountains?</p> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <p>In their evaluations candidates may be tempted to slip into responses which are more correctly directed at whether or not miracles can or do happen. This can only be credited at a general topic level; to answer the above question fully candidates must address the issue of whether or not we can at the same time hold that God is benevolent and intervening in the world to help a few people.</p>	35	

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
3	<p><b>AO1</b></p> <p>Candidates may begin by making the assertion that Falsifiability is not a criterion to determine whether something is meaningful or not, only whether it has the status of a scientific assertion. They may make use of Flew's view that unlike the Verification Principle of the Logical Positivists, this was put forward as a criterion not of meaning but of scientific status.</p> <p>They may then point to the fact that Flew, in the University Debate, begins by referring to John Wisdom's parable of the gardener, from his article 'Gods'. The story is simple. Two explorers come upon a clearing in the jungle. Some parts look tended, others do not. In Wisdom's original parable, he is making the point that the world is rather like that. In the original, one man takes the view there is a gardener who comes to tend the ground, while the other thinks there is not. Neither can find the gardener, neither experience anything the other does not, yet their belief about the clearing is very different.</p> <p>They may then explain Flew's challenge that religious people would seem to allow nothing to count against their beliefs.</p> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <p>In evaluating Flew's argument and the extent to which he did or did not successfully challenge religious beliefs candidates may evaluate the arguments put forward by Hare and Mitchell during the symposium. They may for example assess the validity of the idea of 'Bliks' and their use is allowing religious belief to make sense. Others may apply the story of the partisan using Mitchell's original or possibly some may even use the character of Snape from the Harry Potter stories. Mitchell points out that a believer who does not accept the weight of evidence against his belief is guilty of failure of faith as well as logic. Candidates might also use arguments from Hick, including his additions to Mitchell.</p>	35	

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
4	<p><b>AO1</b></p> <p>Some candidates may begin with an explanation of what it might mean to say that God is omnipotent. For some Christians the definition may be straight-forward in the sense of being without limits. However candidates may be able to explain that philosophically the definition is much more complex. They may, for example, address the question of whether God could create a stone too heavy for Him to lift.</p> <p>It is important however that they go beyond the discussion involved in the definition and address the issue of whether or not there is evidence for there being a God with this attribute within our universe.</p> <p>Some may, for example, explore the issue of what would count as evidence in this context. They may, in a contrary way, explore the extent to which the existence of evil in some form or other would point to a lack of evidence for an omnipotent God.</p> <p>Alternatively, some may look at the complexity and order in the universe and use them as evidence that not only does God exist but that He would need to be all powerful to have arranged such a large and well ordered universe.</p> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <p>Again it is important that in their AO 2 response candidates focus on an evaluation of the evidence for or against the existence of an omnipotent God and not just slip into an answer to the question. Does an omnipotent God exist? Their evaluations should be integral to the particular line they take and not be a separate part of the essay; that way the views they express will come out of the explanations they are making and not be attached as a sort of GCSE appendix. So, for example, if they are using a scientific explanation for the issue of God's omnipotence they may critically assess the views of scholars such as Hawking, Dawkins or Polkinghorne.</p>	35	

**APPENDIX 1**  
**A2 LEVELS OF RESPONSE**

Band	Mark /21	AO1	Mark /14	AO2
0	0	absent/no relevant material	0	absent/no argument
1	1 – 5	almost completely ignores the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>little relevant material</li> <li>some concepts inaccurate</li> <li>shows little knowledge of technical terms</li> </ul> <i>a.c.i.q</i>	1 – 3	very little argument or justification of viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>little or no successful analysis</li> <li>views asserted with no justification</li> </ul> <i>v lit arg</i>
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>knowledge limited and partially accurate</li> <li>limited understanding</li> <li>might address the general topic rather than the question directly</li> <li>selection often inappropriate</li> <li>limited use of technical terms</li> </ul> <i>b att</i>	4 – 6	a basic attempt to sustain an argument and justify a viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some analysis, but not successful</li> <li>views asserted but little justification</li> </ul> <i>b att</i>
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some accurate knowledge</li> <li>appropriate understanding</li> <li>some successful selection of material</li> <li>some accurate use of technical terms</li> </ul> <i>sat att</i>	7 – 8	the argument is sustained and justified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some successful analysis which may be implicit</li> <li>views asserted but not fully justified</li> </ul> <i>sust/just</i>
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accurate knowledge</li> <li>good understanding</li> <li>good selection of material</li> <li>technical terms mostly accurate</li> </ul> <i>g att</i>	9 – 11	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument holistically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some successful and clear analysis</li> <li>some effective use of evidence</li> <li>views analysed and developed</li> </ul> <i>g att</i>
Communication: generally clear and organised; can be understood as a whole - spelling, punctuation and grammar good				
Band	Mark /21	AO1	Mark /14	AO2
5	18 – 21	A very good/excellent attempt to address the question showing understanding and engagement with the material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information</li> <li>accurate use of technical terms</li> </ul> <i>vg/e att</i>	12 – 14	A very good/excellent attempt which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument holistically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comprehends the demands of the question</li> <li>uses a range of evidence</li> <li>shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints</li> </ul> <i>vg/e att</i>
Communication: answer is well constructed and organised - easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good				

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