

Religious Studies

Advanced GCE

Unit **G581**: Philosophy of Religion

Mark Scheme for June 2013

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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.

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Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Level 1 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 2 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 3 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 4 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 5 – 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
	Point has been seen and noted eg where part of an answer is at the end of the script

Subject-specific Marking Instructions

Handling of unexpected answers

If you are not sure how to apply the mark scheme to an answer, you should contact 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.

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	Mark	Guidance
1	<p>AO1</p> <p>Candidates are most likely to use the writings of Paul Tillich in their responses to this question. As this is a comparative question candidates may assess any other approach to religious language, provided that they assess it against symbolic language and not just start by saying that 'symbol is not any use here, the area I revised best is much better and that is what I am going to talk about'.</p> <p>Some may point out that 'according to Tillich' religious language has the characteristics of symbol. If I say, 'God is love', then that utterance is not merely a sign of what God is, but is a participation in the reality of God. Tillich adds that the term is both 'affirmed and negated' by the reality of God. It is affirmed because God really is love, but negated because the human term is so utterly inadequate as a description of God. They may also explore the way Tillich distinguishes between a sign and a symbol. A sign, for him, is merely conventional, in the way a road sign may indicate a hazard, or a bend ahead, or the way a pointing finger may indicate the direction we should follow.</p> <p>He goes on to argue that if a sign is merely a matter of convention, then a symbol points towards something and participates in that to which it points. Consider the Stars-and-Stripes as a flag. Certainly it is a sign which stands for part of what the United States is. But it is also part of what the United States is; without that flag the reality of that country would be different. It is not merely part of our concept of the United States but a key part of its reality. He extends this notion into language, where the words act as symbols.</p> <p>Having made it clear that they do understand what Tillich and others are arguing, they could also explain other forms of religious language which they believe to be more or less successful as a way of talking about God.</p>	35	<p>'Symbolic language is the best way to talk about God.' Discuss.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
	<p>AO2 In their critique candidates may explore weaknesses in the idea of symbol itself, such as the questions which have been raised about the notion that a symbol 'participates in that to which it points'. What, for example, precisely is the symbol in the sentence 'God is good'? Is the symbol the entire proposition? Or is it the underlying concept of 'the goodness of God'? Tillich seems not to explain precisely what he means by 'participation'; and words about God do not participate in his nature in the way that a flag is part of the life of a nation.</p> <p>Alternatively they may take another approach, such as analogy or myth or the <i>via negativa</i>, and contrast it or all of them with the symbolic approach. As said above though, it is important that candidates do compare and contrast if they are taking this approach, and not just explain another form of religious language that they happen to understand better.</p>		

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
2	<p>AO1 Candidates may start by outlining the arguments put forward by Boethius in the <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i>, Book 5. Some may just read the end of the statement and simply discuss whether or not the Christian God is just; these candidates are unlikely to achieve more than level 2.</p> <p>Those who understand Boethius may begin by exploring his understanding of the nature of divine knowledge, exploring what he meant when he said that God's knowledge was eternal. They may perhaps unpack what he meant when he said that eternal knowledge is the 'simultaneous possession of boundless life, which is made clearer by comparison with temporal things'. Many will understand that the concept of God's simultaneous knowledge of our world is the foundation upon which the rest of the argument depends; if God sees the future in a linear fashion then he may well be held to reward and punish unjustly.</p> <p>They may also discuss the distinction Boethius makes between two kinds of necessity, namely the simple kind and the conditional kind. This may lead them to explore what he meant by the difference being located in the addition of the condition. This may help them explain why Boethius is keen to point out that while God may know about an act eternally, if we look at the nature of the act in itself it is entirely free. It is for this reason that Boethius comes to the conclusion that God can justly reward and punish.</p>	35	<p>To what extent does Boethius succeed in proving that the Christian God is just?</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
	<p>AO2</p> <p>There are several approaches which candidates may take to assess whether or not Boethius is successful in his endeavour during his incarceration. They may, for example, attack the critique from the point of view that in order to resolve his problem Boethius ends up defining a God who is intrinsically different from the God of classical theism. He arguably ends up with a deist God who cannot interact with his creation, leaving believers with questions about the incarnation and the injunction from Jesus to 'ask and you will receive'. Petitionary prayer would in fact seem to be pointless on the Boethian model.</p> <p>Others may take the view that Boethius does in fact argue a strong case for the nature of our actions being free, and that given his well-argued distinction between simple and conditional necessity, philosophers have no grounds for considering God to be unjust.</p>		

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
3	<p>AO1</p> <p>Candidates may begin at either end of this issue; they may for example outline the philosophical problems raised by living in a world which would seem to have so much evil in it. Candidates may refer to the theodicies of Augustine, Irenaeus and Hick; alternatively they may explore different ideas of what might be meant by life after death.</p> <p>Some may make a distinction between natural and moral evil, exploring the extent to which those who are made to suffer here by others may look forward to a time when they are rewarded and the others punished. Some may be aware that St Thomas Aquinas believed that part of the joy of being in heaven would be found in the ability to see those who had been deemed evil in their lifetime suffering torments in hell.</p> <p>Others may focus their attention on the kind of afterlife one would need to believe in to resolve problems raised by evil in this lifetime. Is it, for example, necessary to believe in heaven and hell or would it be more just to believe in an afterlife which followed many rebirths into this kind of life in order to become perfect? Some may, in this context, explore the Christian concept of purgatory.</p> <p>Other candidates may explain the writings of thinkers such as Richard Dawkins which could be used in this area, exploring the extent to which we are just very lucky to be here at all, and that there being no afterlife we would need to resolve issues of the existence of evil in other ways.</p>	35	<p>'The existence of evil cannot be justified if there is no life after death.' Discuss.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
	<p>AO2 In their evaluation candidates may assess the success or otherwise of those theodicies which seem to rely on some kind of reward and punishment in an afterlife to make sense of the suffering in this one. This may lead to an evaluation of the kind of God this view brings about, a God who would make people suffer for all eternity for mistakes made during a very short lifetime.</p> <p>They may then evaluate the way, as with other philosophical questions, the proposed solution to one problem raises many others in its wake. Whichever route candidates take, they should have come to some conclusion by the end as to whether or not belief in an afterlife justifies the existence of allegedly so much evil in this world.</p>		

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
4	<p>AO1</p> <p>Candidates may begin with the problems Wiles found in defining a miracle. Candidates may be aware of his critique of Hume’s definition which says that a miracle is a ‘direct act of God that contravenes the laws of nature’. Wiles argues that the laws of nature are continually revisable. He hoped to show that a miracle must not simply be a rare event but that it also has a religious dimension.</p> <p>Many candidates will be aware that Wiles’ principal focus was on the theological significance of miracles. Given the problems of any accounts of miracles, it seemed to him appropriate to ask in what sense Christian belief is dependent on accepting the objective reality of the miraculous as a direct intervention from God.</p> <p>Some candidates may explore the way that Wiles questioned the place of miracles in the Christian faith as a whole. They may be aware of his argument that many biblical miracles stories, including the Virgin birth, are legendary without claim of historical accuracy; for Wiles they are not an essential element for the truth of Christian faith.</p> <p>However, some will point out that he was aware of the importance of miracles for the Christian faith, asking whether it was possible to understand them in a revised way. For example he argued that any attempts to prove the historical accuracy of resurrection and ascension accounts were bound to fail. Having noted that Christian philosophers were willing to read symbolically phrases such as ‘sitting at the right hand of God’ we should be willing to read other entire accounts in a symbolic way.</p>	35	<p>Critically assess Wiles’ view on miracles.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
	<p>Some may also describe how Wiles believed it would be better to believe in an all-good God who did not perform miracles rather than one who chose to ignore those in greatest need. This led him to the view that believing in miracles leads to a concept of God who favours some but not others; Wiles commented that ‘even though miracles are rare by nature, it seems strange that nothing prevented Auschwitz or Hiroshima’. He then uses the example of Jesus turning water into wine to save his host’s embarrassment to assert his belief that some of the miracles in the New Testament appear to be whims of God.</p> <p>AO2 There will be numerous points during candidate’s explanation of Wiles’s views on miracles where they can critically assess the extent to which his beliefs are coherent or philosophically unhelpful. Many may for example focus on the question of what kind of God miracles, if they exist, may lead Christians and others to believe in. They can argue that there are flaws in his arguments, or that they find him convincing in that miracles lead to an arbitrary God unworthy of Christian worship. The important issue for examiners should be whether or not candidates can justify through reasoned argument the conclusion that they come to. Weaker responses are likely to jump right to the conclusion and leave very little room for credit in the AO2 levels of response.</p>		

APPENDIX 1 – A2 LEVELS OF RESPONSE – G581–G589

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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> little relevant material some concepts inaccurate shows little knowledge of technical terms. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L1</i></p>	1–3	very little argument or justification of viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no successful analysis views asserted with no justification. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L1</i></p>
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"> 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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L2</i></p>	4–6	a basic attempt to sustain an argument and justify a viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some analysis, but not successful views asserted but little justification. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L2</i></p>
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"> some accurate knowledge appropriate understanding some successful selection of material some accurate use of technical terms. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L3</i></p>	7–8	the argument is sustained and justified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful analysis which may be implicit views asserted but not fully justified. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L3</i></p>
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"> accurate knowledge good understanding good selection of material technical terms mostly accurate. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L4</i></p>	9–11	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument holistically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful and clear analysis some effective use of evidence views analysed and developed. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L4</i></p>
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information accurate use of technical terms. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L5</i></p>	12–14	A very good/excellent attempt which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument holistically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehends the demands of the question uses a range of evidence shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L5</i></p>
Communication: answer is well constructed and organised - easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good				

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