

GCE

Religious Studies

H173/01: Philosophy of religion

AS Level

Mark Scheme for June 2025

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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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Indicative content – Responses might include:	Guidance
1. Critically assess Paley’s teleological argument. AO1 Candidates may demonstrate knowledge and understanding through the use of some of the following ideas: • Paley suggested that complex objects show regularity – for example, the seasons and the rotation of the planets, which suggests a purpose in the world • Paley further suggested that the world seems to have been put together with a purpose – for example the eye, birds’ wings, cells – which point further to a designer • for Paley, this designer was God • Paley’s analogy of the watch suggests that there would be a clear difference in perception of the watch to a rock if it were come across unexpectedly – the watch is clearly designed with a purpose by a watchmaker and given the world is more complex than a watch, by analogy, the world must be designed with a purpose by a creator • anticipating criticism that the world does not act like it is the work of a benevolent creator, Paley observed that even a broken watch would indicate a designer.	
AO2 Candidates may demonstrate evaluation and analysis through the use of some of the following ideas: • Hume rejected the analogy that the world is in some ways like a watch, preferring the suggestion that a closer analogy to the world would be a non-mechanical living thing such as a vegetable • Hume suggested that the teleological argument makes assumptions about the nature of any creator – such as that God is infinite (using the example of the scales) • Hume argued that the designer could have created the world by accident or as a result of trial and error and that regularity and order in the universe could have come about by chance • Hume gave the analogy of a shipbuilder whose ship might be intricate but is not themselves a designer, who does not have to be a single individual and who does not themselves have to be morally perfect • Dawkins uses evolution to criticise Paley’s argument because it provides an alternative explanation for things that appear to have been designed for a purpose, such as birds’ wings and the human eye • Russell argued that evolution adequately explains the appearance of design and that an omniscient God would have designed a better world • Paley’s argument is often found to be strong because of the sheer absurdity of suggesting that everything has come about by chance, and the idea that evolution might be part of god’s plan.	

Indicative content – Responses might include:	Guidance
2. To what extent can materialism be said to be a full explanation for consciousness? AO1 Candidates may demonstrate knowledge and understanding through the use of some of the following ideas: - materialists think that consciousness can be fully explained by material or physical interactions and not by any concept of a separate soul - some materialists, such as Dawkins, take the view that what has been understood historically as a soul could be that which has yet to be explained fully by science; others might add that religious aspects of the soul linked to the divine are simply fabrications of faith systems - materialists such as Ryle could suggest that to talk of consciousness in any way separately to material interactions is a category error – it is simply an aspect of how the body works - some materialists might understand consciousness to be fully explained by learned behaviours, suggesting that mental acts are acts caused on a physical level - some materialists might understand consciousness as epiphenomena caused by physical processes.	
AO2 Candidates may demonstrate evaluation and analysis through the use of some of the following ideas: - the idea that brain scans have provided evidence that the brain is fully active when matters identified as the soul or the mind are in play, suggests a material origin - an analysis of issues to do with interaction and how any separate mind or soul links to the body - the view that the principle of simplicity suggests that a singular explanation of consciousness is more helpful than a dualist one - an analysis of Plato's views that the soul and the world of Forms explain innate knowledge (as recollection) and reality because material things are limited - an analysis of Descartes' views that the body and soul are separate substances as the body can be divided into parts whereas the soul cannot - an exploration of linguistic discussions that come out of dualist approaches and the extent to which, according to Ryle, any concept of soul is like talking of the ghost in the machine - the extent to which materialism can be a full explanation, without leaving an explanatory gap, when it does not explain how or why the body and mind interact - The way in which a person experiences phenomena such as joy or the actual experience of a colour (qualia) has not been adequately explained by scientific study of the brain.	

Indicative content – Responses might include:	Guidance
3. ‘William James does not give any helpful insights into the nature and influence of religious experience.’ Discuss. AO1 Candidates may demonstrate knowledge and understanding through the use of some of the following ideas: • William James was a psychologist who examined religious experiences comprehensively as he thought that they are the foundation of religious belief • even if there are rational explanations for religious experiences, these explanations may not be complete as, for example, the divine might work through bodies or minds • James’ pragmatic approach was as methodical and objective as the subject material allowed • religious experiences can be measured in some way by the effects that they have on the believer – the fruits – which might give a greater awareness of the world, a new centredness or a sense of elation; this is particularly true of conversion experiences • mystical religious experiences have certain common elements to them which also make them identifiable through the characteristics of ineffability, a noetic quality, passivity and transiency (PINT) • religious experiences help bring health to a sick soul; unification to a divided self.	Candidates may give examples of religious and conversion experiences such as the case of Nicky Cruz.
AO2 Candidates may demonstrate evaluation and analysis through the use of some of the following ideas: • an evaluation of the view that empiricism is not the right approach to take when examining issues to do with religious experience • an exploration of the extent to which James’ pluralism restricts the validity of his arguments • an analysis of the four common core characteristics and the extent to which religious experiences can be labelled or grouped • an exploration of the particular nature of conversion experiences and alternative explanations for these • a comparison with other views of religious experience and whether or not it is possible to put encounters with the numinous into words in any way • Swinburne’s principle of testimony/credulity and whether or not we should accept accounts of religious experience at face value • Freud’s suggestion that there are credible alternative explanations for religious experiences that would reject the work of James – such as hysteria or conformity, things repressed into our subconscious or physiological explanations • An analysis of Persinger’s ‘God helmet’ as a physiological explanation for religious experiences.	

Level (Mark)	Levels of Response for AS Level Religious Studies: Assessment Objective 1 (AO1) <i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i> • <i>Religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> • <i>Approaches to the study of religion and belief</i>	Note: The descriptors below must be considered in the context of all listed strands of Assessment Objectives 1 (AO1) and the indicative content in the mark scheme.
5 (13–15)	A very good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question : • focuses on the precise question throughout • very good selection of relevant material which is used appropriately • accurate, and detailed knowledge which demonstrates very good understanding through either the breadth or depth of material used • accurate and appropriate use of technical terms and subject vocabulary. • a very good range of scholarly views, academic approaches, and/or sources of wisdom and authority are used to demonstrate knowledge and understanding	
4 (10–12)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: • addresses the question well • good selection of relevant material, used appropriately on the whole • mostly accurate knowledge which demonstrates good understanding of the material used, which should have reasonable amounts of depth or breadth • mostly accurate and appropriate use of technical terms and subject vocabulary. • a good range of scholarly views, academic approaches, and/or sources of wisdom and authority are used to demonstrate knowledge and understanding	
3 (7–9)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: • generally addresses the question • mostly sound selection of mostly relevant material • some accurate knowledge which demonstrates sound understanding through the material used, which might however be lacking in depth or breadth • generally appropriate use of technical terms and subject vocabulary. • A satisfactory range of scholarly views, academic approaches, and/or sources of wisdom and authority are used to demonstrate knowledge and understanding with only partial success	

Level (Mark)	<u>Levels of Response for AS Level Religious Studies: Assessment Objective 1 (AO1)</u> <i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i> <i>Religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> <i>Approaches to the study of religion and belief</i>	Note: The descriptors below must be considered in the context of all listed strands of Assessment Objectives 1 (AO1) and the indicative content in the mark scheme.
2 (4–6)	A basic demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: - might address the general topic rather than the question directly - limited selection of partially relevant material - some accurate, but limited, knowledge which demonstrates partial understanding - some accurate, but limited, use of technical terms and appropriate subject vocabulary. - a limited range of scholarly views, academic approaches, and/or sources of wisdom and authority are used to demonstrate knowledge and understanding with little success	
1 (1–3)	A weak demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: - almost completely ignores the question - very little relevant material selected - knowledge very limited, demonstrating little understanding - very little use of technical terms or subject vocabulary. - very little or no use of scholarly views, academic approaches and/or sources of wisdom and authority to demonstrate knowledge and understanding	
0 (0)	No creditworthy response	

Level (Mark)	Levels of Response for AS Level Religious Studies: Assessment Objective 2 (AO2) <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study</i>	Note: The descriptors below must be considered in the context of all elements of Assessment Objective 2 (AO2) and the indicative content in the mark scheme.
5 (13–15)	A very good demonstration of analysis and evaluation in response to the question: • clear and convincing argument • successful and clear analysis and evaluation • views very well stated, coherently developed and justified • answers the question set competently • accurate and appropriate use of technical terms and subject vocabulary. • a very good range of scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority used to support analysis and evaluation Assessment of Extended Response: <i>There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant and logically structured.</i>	
4 (10–12)	A good demonstration of analysis and evaluation in response to the question: • argument is generally successful and clear • generally successful analysis and evaluation • views well stated, with some development and justification • answers the question set well • mostly accurate and appropriate use of technical terms and subject vocabulary. • a good range of scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority are used to support analysis and evaluation Assessment of Extended Response: <i>There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear, relevant and logically structured</i>	
3 (7–9)	A satisfactory demonstration of analysis and/evaluation in response to the question: • some successful argument • partially successful analysis and evaluation • views asserted but often not fully justified • mostly answers the set question • generally appropriate use of technical terms and subject vocabulary. • a satisfactory range of scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority are used to support analysis and evaluation with only partial success Assessment of Extended Response: <i>There is a line of reasoning presented which is mostly relevant and which has some structure.</i>	
2 (4–6)	A basic demonstration of analysis and evaluation in response to the question: • some argument attempted, not always successful • little successful analysis and evaluation • views asserted but with little justification	

Level (Mark)	Levels of Response for AS Level Religious Studies: Assessment Objective 2 (AO2) <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study</i>	Note: The descriptors below must be considered in the context of all elements of Assessment Objective 2 (AO2) and the indicative content in the mark scheme.
	- only partially answers the question - some accurate, but limited, use of technical terms and appropriate subject vocabulary. - a limited range of scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority to support analysis and evaluation with little success Assessment of Extended Response: <i>There is a line of reasoning which has some relevance and which is presented with limited structure.</i>	
1 (1–3)	A weak demonstration of analysis and evaluation in response to the question: - very little argument attempted - very little successful analysis and evaluation - views asserted with very little justification - unsuccessful in answering the question - very little use of technical terms or subject vocabulary. - very little or no use of scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority to support analysis and evaluation Assessment of Extended Response: <i>The information is communicated in a basic/unstructured way.</i>	
0 (0)	No creditworthy response	

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS – FOR MARKING ON-SCREEN

June 2025

H173, H573 AS and A Level Religious Studies

PREPARATION FOR MARKING RM ASSESSOR

1. Make sure that you have accessed and completed the relevant training packages for on-screen marking: *RM Assessor Online Training: OCR Essential Guide to Marking*.
2. Make sure that you have read and understood the mark scheme and the question paper for this unit. These are available in RM Assessor
3. Log-in to RM Assessor and mark the **required number** of practice responses (“scripts”) and the **required number** of standardisation responses.

MARKING

1. Mark strictly to the mark scheme.
2. Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.
3. The schedule of dates is very important. It is essential that you meet the RM Assessor 50% and 100% (traditional 40% Batch 1 and 100% Batch 2) deadlines. If you experience problems, you must contact your Team Leader (Supervisor) without delay.
4. If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by telephone or the RM Assessor messaging system, or by email.
5. **Crossed Out Responses**
Where a candidate has crossed out a response and provided a clear alternative then the crossed out response is not marked. Where no alternative response has been provided, examiners may give candidates the benefit of the doubt and mark the crossed out response where legible.

Rubric Error Responses – Optional Questions

Where candidates have a choice of question across a whole paper or a whole section and have provided more answers than required, then all responses are marked and the highest mark allowable within the rubric is given. Enter a mark for each question answered into RM assessor, which will select the highest mark from those awarded. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate has penalised themselves by attempting more questions than necessary in the time allowed.)*

Multiple Choice Question Responses

When a multiple choice question has only a single, correct response and a candidate provides two responses (even if one of these responses is correct), then no mark should be awarded (as it is not possible to determine which was the first response selected by the candidate).

When a question requires candidates to select more than one option/multiple options, then local marking arrangements need to ensure consistency of approach.

Contradictory Responses

When a candidate provides contradictory responses, then no mark should be awarded, even if one of the answers is correct.

Short Answer Questions (requiring only a list by way of a response, usually worth only **one mark per response**)

Where candidates are required to provide a set number of short answer responses then only the set number of responses should be marked. The response space should be marked from left to right on each line and then line by line until the required number of responses have been considered. The remaining responses should not then be marked. Examiners will have to apply judgement as to whether a 'second response' on a line is a development of the 'first response', rather than a separate, discrete response. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate is attempting to hedge their bets and therefore getting undue benefit rather than engaging with the question and giving the most relevant/correct responses.)*

Short Answer Questions (requiring a more developed response, worth **two or more marks**)

If the candidates are required to provide a description of, say, three items or factors and four items or factors are provided, then mark on a similar basis – that is downwards (as it is unlikely in this situation that a candidate will provide more than one response in each section of the response space.)

Longer Answer Questions (requiring a developed response)

Where candidates have provided two (or more) responses to a medium or high tariff question which only required a single (developed) response and not crossed out the first response, then only the first response should be marked. Examiners will need to apply professional judgement as to whether the second (or a subsequent) response is a 'new start' or simply a poorly expressed continuation of the first response.

6. Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there, then add the annotation 'SEEN' to confirm that the work has been seen and mark any responses using the annotations in section 11.

7. There is a NR (**No Response**) option. Award NR (No Response):
- if there is nothing written at all in the answer space
 - OR if there is a comment which does not in any way relate to the question (e.g., 'can't do', 'don't know')
 - OR if there is a mark (e.g., a dash, a question mark) which is not an attempt at the question.

Note: Award 0 marks – for an attempt that earns no credit (including copying out the question).

8. The RM Assessor **comments box** is used by your team leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Please refer to these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**

If you have any questions or comments for your team leader, use the phone, the RM Assessor messaging system, or e-mail.

9. *Assistant Examiners will send a brief report on the performance of candidates to their Team Leader (Supervisor) via email by the end of the marking period. The report should contain notes on particular strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.*

10. For answers marked by levels of response:
- a. **To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
 - b. **To determine the mark within the level**, consider the following

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level

11. Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Level one – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Level two – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Level three – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Level four – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Level five – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	(H573 only) Level six - 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, e.g. where part of an answer is at the end of the script.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

H173, H573 AS and A Level Religious Studies

Introduction

Your first task as an Examiner is to become thoroughly familiar with the material on which the examination depends. You should ensure that you have copies of these materials:

- the specification, especially the assessment objectives
- the question paper and its rubrics
- the mark scheme.

Please ask for help or guidance whenever you need it. Your first point of contact is your Team Leader.

Information and instructions for examiners

The practice scripts provide you with *examples* of the standard of each band. The marks awarded for these scripts will have been agreed by the Lead Marker and Team Leaders.

The specific task-related indicative content for each question will help you to understand how the band descriptors may be applied. However, this indicative content **does not** constitute the mark scheme: it is material that candidates **might** use, grouped according to each assessment objective tested by the question. It is hoped that candidates will respond to questions in a variety of ways. Rigid demands for 'what must be a good answer' would lead to a distorted assessment. Candidates' answers must be relevant to the question. Beware of prepared answers that do not show the candidate's thought and which have not been adapted to the thrust of the question. Beware also of answers where candidates attempt to reproduce interpretations and concepts that they have been taught but have only partially understood.

Using the Mark Scheme

Please study the Mark Scheme carefully. The Mark Scheme is an integral part of the process that begins with the setting of the question paper and ends with the awarding of grades. Question papers and Mark Schemes are developed in association with each other so that issues of differentiation and positive achievement can be addressed from the very start.

This Mark Scheme is a working document; it is not exhaustive; it does not provide 'correct' answers. The Mark Scheme can only provide 'best guesses' about how the question will work out, and it is subject to revision after we have looked at a wide range of scripts.

Please read carefully all the scripts in your allocation and make every effort to look positively for achievement throughout the ability range. Always be prepared to use the full range of marks.

The Mark Scheme contains a description of possible/content only; all legitimate answers and approaches must be credited appropriately. Learners are expected to make use of scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority to support their argument.

The Levels of Response must be used in conjunction with the outlined indicative content.

Assessment Objectives

Two Assessment Objectives are being assessed in all questions:

AO1 (Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief) and

AO2 (Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study).

Responses are credited for **AO1** for selection, detail and accuracy of the knowledge and understanding of religion and belief deployed.

Responses are credited for **AO2** for how well the response addresses the question, for candidates using their knowledge and understanding to draw, express and support conclusions in relation to the question posed. Candidates will be assessed on the quality of the conclusions and points they argue and the clarity and success of their argument.

Levels of Response

Questions in this paper are marked using a levels of response grid. When using this grid examiners must use a **best fit** approach. Where there are both strengths and weaknesses in a particular response or particularly imbalanced responses in terms of the assessment objectives, examiners must carefully consider which level is the best fit for the performance.

Note that candidates can achieve different levels in each assessment objective, for example a Level 3 for AO1, and a Level 2 for AO2.

Please note that the Assessment Objectives being assessed are listed at the top of the mark scheme. Where a candidate does not address all of the Assessment Objective strands listed, the candidate cannot achieve the top level of response.

Assessment of Extended Response

The GCE General Conditions of Recognition state that:

GCE 5.1 In designing and setting the assessments for a GCE qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, and awarding organization must ensure that, taken together, those assessments include questions or tasks which allow Learners to -

- a) provide extended responses

As such, the quality of extended responses are assessed in all questions. While marks are not specifically given for this, descriptors for extended responses can be found in the AO2 Levels of Response *in italics*.

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