

GCSE

Religious Studies

**J625/09: Religion, philosophy and ethics in the modern world
from a Buddhist perspective**

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Mark Scheme for June 2025

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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 2025

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

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 a tick to confirm that the work has been seen.

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
	Blank Page – this annotation must be used on all blank pages within an answer booklet (structured or unstructured) and on each page of an additional object where there is no candidate response.
	Noted
	Benefit of Doubt
	Tick
	Cross
	Level 1
	Level 2
	Level 3
	Level 4

8. Awarding Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar to scripts with a coversheet

- a. If a script has a **scribe cover sheet** it is vital to check which boxes are ticked and award as per the instructions and grid below:
 - i. Assess the work for SPaG in accordance with the normal marking criteria. The initial assessment must be made as if the candidate had not used a scribe (or word processor) and was eligible for all the SPaG marks.
 - ii. Check the cover sheet to see what has been dictated (or what facilities were disabled on the word processor) and therefore what proportion of marks is available to the candidate.

iii. Convert the SPaG mark to reflect the correct proportion using the conversion table given below.

SPaG mark awarded	Mark if candidate eligible for one third (e.g. grammar only)	Mark if candidate eligible for two thirds (e.g. grammar and punctuation only)
0	0	0
1	0	1
2	1	1
3	1	2
4	1	3
5	2	3
6	2	4
7	2	5
8	3	5
9	3	6

- b. If a script has a **word processor cover sheet** attached to it the candidate **can** still access SPaG marks (see point 1 above) unless the cover sheet states that the checking functionality is enabled, in which case no SPaG marks are available.
- c. If a script has a **word processor cover sheet AND a scribe cover sheet** attached to it, see point 1 above.
- d. If the script has a **transcript, Oral Language Modifier, Sign Language Interpreter or a Practical Assistant cover sheet**, award SPaG as normal.

13. Subject Specific Marking Instructions

It is important to remember that we are rewarding candidates' attempts at grappling with challenging concepts and skills. Reward candidates for what they know, understand and can do. Be positive. Concentrate on what candidates can do, not on what they cannot do.

[3] mark questions are assessed via points-based marking. For all other questions, your first task is to match the response to the appropriate level of response according to the generic levels of response given after the indicative content. Only when you have done this should you start to think about the mark to be awarded. **Please note – the bandings for Assessment Objectives are not dependent; there is no requirement for a response to be awarded in the same band for AO2 as has been awarded in AO1.**

There are different ways of reaching a high level. Some candidates will go straight to the higher levels. Other candidates will gradually climb their way there by working their way through lower levels first.

The mark scheme for each paper will list responses which a candidate might offer. The list will not be exhaustive; it does not provide 'correct' answers, and where a candidate offers a response which is not listed, examiners will be expected to use their knowledge and discretion as to whether the response is valid. Examiners who are in any doubt should contact their Team Leader immediately.

Specific points

Do not transfer marks from one part of a question to another. All questions, and sub-questions, are marked separately.

Mark what the candidate has written - do not assume that the candidate knows something unless they have written it.

The levels of response start with one from the following list of flag words:

Weak, Limited, Satisfactory, Good

During the standardisation process, examples of work at each level will be used to define the meaning of these flag words for the examination. In particular the word 'good' must not be interpreted as the best possible response. It will be what is judged to be 'good' according to the generic levels of response, although better responses could be offered.

Remember that we are trying to achieve two things in the marking of the scripts:

- (i) to place all the candidates in the correct rank order
- (ii) to use the full range of marks available – right up to the top of the range; ‘Good’ means a good response *from a GCSE candidate* and can therefore be awarded the highest marks.

This means that it is imperative you mark to the agreed standard.

Written communication, Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Written communication covers: clarity of expression, structure of arguments, presentation of ideas, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.

In the marking of these questions the quality of the candidate's written communication will be one factor (other factors include the relevance and amount of supporting detail) that influences whether an answer is placed at the bottom, the middle, or the top, of a level.

The following points should be remembered:

- answers are placed in the appropriate level according to the RS assessment objectives, i.e. no reference is made at this stage to the quality of the written communication;
- the quality of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar must **never** be used to move an answer from the mark band of one level to another;
- accept any reasonable alternative spelling of transliterated words from non-Roman alphabets in learners’ responses.

SPaG is now assessed in part d) of the first and second questions. Please refer to the grid overleaf when awarding the SPaG marks.

The Regulator now requires GCSE Religious Studies to assess the quality of extended responses by candidates. Marks are not specifically given for this assessment however. This assessment takes place in part d) of the third and fourth questions. The levels descriptors for these are embedded in the Levels of Response, specifically AO2, and are *italicised for clarity*.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) Assessment Grid

<i>High performance 3 marks</i>
Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate
<i>Intermediate performance 2 marks</i>
Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate
<i>Threshold performance 1 mark</i>
Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder overall Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate
<i>0 marks</i>
The learner writes nothing The learner's response does not relate to the question The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

- Practice scripts provide you with examples of the standard of each band. The marks awarded for these scripts will have been agreed by the Principal Examiners, Senior Team Leaders and Team Leaders and provide you with 'benchmark' examples of the approach to marking.
- The specific task-related indicative content for part d) of each question will help you to understand how the band descriptors may be applied. However; this indicative content is not an exhaustive list of 'correct' responses: it is material that candidates might use, grouped according to each assessment objective tested by the question. This needs to be used in close conjunction with the relevant Levels of Response marking grid, which is positioned below the indicative content. The guidance column on the right of the mark scheme will provide further exemplification and support as to the interpretation of answers, where required. **Levels of Response marked responses should be read holistically before applying the relevant Levels of Response.**

Assessment objectives (AO)

Assessment Objectives	
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including • beliefs, practices and sources of authority • influence on individuals, communities and societies • similarities and differences within and/or between religions and their beliefs.
AO2	Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion, including their significance and influence.

Question		Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
1	(a)	Outline ONE Buddhist belief about sexuality. Responses might include: • Buddhists might view all sexual relationships, regardless of orientation, as being covered by the same ethical principles • The Buddha gave no specific teachings about homosexuality • Some Buddhists might consider homosexual relationships to be a form of sexual misconduct and so against the Third Precept.	3 AO1	Marks should be awarded for any combination of statements, development and exemplification.

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>
3 (5-6)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: • Good understanding of the question shown by appropriate selection of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed description • Good knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Good knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies • Good knowledge and understanding of the breadth and/or depth of the issues
2 (3-4)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Satisfactory understanding of the question shown by some use of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with superficial description • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the breadth and/or depth of issues
1 (1-2)	Limited/weak demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Limited understanding of the question shown by factual errors or generalised responses with little connection to the question • Points may be listed and/or lacking in relevant detail related to the issues • Weak knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Weak knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit.

Question		Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
1	(b)	Describe how the rules for Buddhist nuns are different to the rules for monks. Learners might consider some of the following: The Vinaya Pittaka lists 311 rules for nuns against 227 for monks. The rules are not wholly different but rather nuns have additional rules on top of the ones that monks obey. These rules include showing respect to monks and consulting monks about particular religious practices before engaging in them. More commonly monastic rules are thought of in relation to the precepts. Buddhist monks vow to live by the Five Precepts that all Buddhists accept as moral guides, but they add an additional rules such as: to avoid eating outside of proper times, to avoid excessive luxury and trivial entertainment. Nuns have an additional eight behavioural rules, the Eight Garudhammas. These include: bowing to any ordained monk, even one junior to her; not spending the rainy season in a residence with no monks in it, and regularly consulting with monks about days of Observance (uposatha).	6 AO1	Examiners should mark according to AO1 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Level (Mark)	<u>A02</u>
3 (5-6)	A good attempt to respond to the topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Good analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Good analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on more than one Buddhist group • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation
2 (3-4)	A satisfactory attempt to respond to the topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Satisfactory analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Satisfactory analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on one or more Buddhist group • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation
1 (1-2)	A weak attempt to respond to topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Little if any analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Little if any analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on Buddhists • Weak or no support from sources of wisdom and authority
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
1 (c)	Explain why Buddhists might have different attitudes to discrimination on the basis of gender. You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer. Learners might consider some of the following: For most Buddhists it is a basic teaching that all human beings are equally capable of achieving Enlightenment, and that there are no fundamental differences between people. This may have been the Buddha's view, and it is often presented as such. However, while the Buddha did found an order of nuns, he did so only after repeated requests. He also made them subordinate to monks and gave them more rules to follow. Some Buddhists might consider this reflective of gender roles at the time, which were already being challenged by allowing the nuns to exist at all. For these Buddhists, such differences are not intentionally discriminatory and might be seen as no longer applying in the modern world. There are other scriptures which suggest, at least to modern eyes, that women are subordinate to men in family life as well. The Anguttara Nikaya offers advice from the Buddha to married women, telling them to please and obey their husbands and not make them angry. Some Buddhists believe that women cannot achieve Enlightenment but must be reborn as men first. This is not supported by the Pali Canon (which states that they can) but is found in other texts within both the Mahayana and Theravada traditions. Some contemporary Buddhist leaders, such as the Dalai Lama, have described men and women as having the same potential for both positive and negative behaviours, but he also claimed that there were natural inclinations for each sex, suggesting women find compassion easier than men, due to their biological role as mothers. This kind of comment could be seen by some Buddhists as asserting equal worth but different roles in life for men and women, while others might suggest such views are inherently discriminatory, judging the value of women on a wholly different basis to that of men.	6 AO2	Examiners should mark according to AO2 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>	Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
3 (3)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the stimulus: • Good understanding of the stimulus shown by appropriate selection of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation • Good knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Good knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies	4 (10-12)	A good attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • A variety of viewpoints explored with good use of reasoned argument and discussion • Good analysis and evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on different Buddhist groups • Evidence of critical evaluation including comment on, and comparison of, arguments from different Buddhist groups • Evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus and a balanced conclusion to the discussion
2 (2)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the stimulus: • Satisfactory understanding of the stimulus shown by some use of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with superficial explanation and/or description • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies	3 (7-9)	A satisfactory attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Different viewpoints offered with some evidence of reasoned argument and/or discussion • Satisfactory analysis and evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on some Buddhist groups • Evidence of comment on, and comparison of, arguments • Evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus and some conclusion to the discussion
1 (1)	Limited/weak demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the stimulus: • Limited understanding of the stimulus shown by factual errors or generalised responses with little connection to the stimulus • Points may be listed and/or lacking in relevant detail related to the issues • Weak knowledge understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism	2 (4-6)	A limited attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Different views may be stated but with little or no development • Limited analysis and/or evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on some Buddhist groups • Response may contain some inaccuracies or misunderstanding of the issue in the stimulus • Little evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>	Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
	Weak knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies		
		1 (1-3)	A weak attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: - A single viewpoint may be stated with little or no support or justification or views may be stated as a list - Response may be simplistic, purely descriptive and/or very brief - No attempt to offer judgement on the issue in the stimulus
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit	0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
1 (d)	‘Pre-marital sex is always wrong’. Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should: Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs, teachings and practices within Buddhism Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Buddhism. Learners might consider some of the following: AO1 Pre-marital sex usually refers to sex between partners who are not married to one another; it makes no assumptions about whether or not they intend to be married in the future. The Third Precept explicitly instructs Buddhists not to engage in sexual misconduct, however what constitutes such misconduct is not set out. Buddhist views on appropriate sexual behaviour are often influenced by their surrounding culture as well as by other moral principles such as not causing harm. Sexual desire can be seen as a source of suffering. The Buddha identified sexual pleasure as a significant object of craving (tanha) and as one of the five hindrances that prevent people progressing to Enlightenment. There is no obligation or expectation within Buddhism that people should be married; Enlightenment can be achieved by anyone who is able to follow the Buddha’s teaching. For some Buddhists, non-attachment might involve avoiding romantic relationships altogether, perhaps to become monks or nuns, while for others it might mean letting go of any expectation of perfection in their partner and accepting the inevitability of change. AO2 Since it is sexual misconduct which is condemned by the Precepts and Buddhism does not require marriage, or regard it as an inherently praiseworthy or virtuous state it would be hard to argue that Buddhism absolutely condemns sexual activity for those who are not married. It might however be seen as sexual misconduct in communities where it would damage someone’s reputation to be discovered having pre-marital sex, as this would cause suffering. It would also be sexual misconduct if the consent of either party had not been freely obtained or if one (or both) parties had taken vows	15 3 AO1 12 AO2 3 SPaG ()	Examiners should mark according to AO1 and AO2 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question. Please refer to the SPaG response grid on page 8.

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
	of celibacy as a monk or a nun. In those cases, the wrongness does not arise from their marital state but from a breach of other moral rules. If it can be argued that craving sexual pleasure is causing a distraction then it might best be dealt with by finding a consensual relationship within which such pleasure can be experienced. While it is possible this might result in attachment or make the person greedy for more (greed being one of the three poisons) it is also possible that it could allow for detachment from the craving and recognition of the pleasure as impermanent, thus helping someone towards their Enlightenment. Marriage would not be an essential element of such a relationship. In terms of the Third Precept, whether or not pre-marital sex is judged to be wrong would be a very personal decision for many Buddhists. It is likely to be influenced by how pre-marital sex is viewed in the society in which they live, also by the intentions of the parties and the likelihood of their relationship to cause harm. For example, if one person is more committed or has more serious expectations than the other and this is not made clear then harm may be caused by their having sex. The likelihood of pregnancy and the consequences for any resulting child having unmarried parents might also be considered relevant.		

Question		Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
2	(a)	Outline what is meant by ‘taking the Refuges’. Responses might include: • There is a formal declaration, ‘I take refuge in the Buddha, the dhamma and the sangha’ which Buddhists take. Together these are the three jewels of Buddhism, which offer a path to liberation • A refuge means a place of safety or protection from suffering; in Buddhism suffering is inevitable unless the teachings of the Buddha are followed so the three jewels are also known as refuges • In a Buddhist context ‘taking refuge’ means an intention or aspiration to lead a life focussed on the Buddha’s teachings	3 AO1	‘Describe...’ style questions: Marks should be awarded for any combination of statements, development and exemplification.

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>
3 (5-6)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: • Good understanding of the question shown by appropriate selection of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed description • Good knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Good knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies • Good knowledge and understanding of the breadth and/or depth of the issues
2 (3-4)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Satisfactory understanding of the question shown by some use of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with superficial description • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the breadth and/or depth of issues
1 (1-2)	Limited/weak demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Limited understanding of the question shown by factual errors or generalised responses with little connection to the question • Points may be listed and/or lacking in relevant detail related to the issues • Weak knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Weak knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit.

Question		Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
2	(b)	Describe the role of the human realm according to Buddhist beliefs about the purpose of the world. Learners might consider some of the following: Many Buddhists view the world as being made out of six realms of existence into which rebirth can take place as different kinds of being. These realms are hungry ghosts, hell, animal, heaven, gods and human. These are sometimes divided into places of positive and negative rebirth, with the human realm being considered a positive or fortunate one. Birth into the human realm carries with it the possibility of liberation. This is not true of all the realms, even the positive ones. The human world is a place of choices and actions, and it is the only realm in which Buddhas emerge. It is described as a realm which is neither so pleasurable that liberation is not desired nor so unpleasant that liberation can't even be imagined. It is also believed by many Buddhists to be the rarest rebirth. It's purpose therefore is to provide those born within it an opportunity to learn how to achieve liberation and to strive for it.	6 AO1	Examiners should mark according to AO1 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
3 (5-6)	A good attempt to respond to the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Good analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Good analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on more than one Buddhist group • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation
2 (3-4)	A satisfactory attempt to respond to the topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Satisfactory analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Satisfactory analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on one or more Buddhist group • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation
1 (1-2)	A weak attempt to respond to topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Little if any analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Little if any analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on Buddhists • Weak or no support from sources of wisdom and authority
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
2 (c)	Explain why a Buddhist might argue that the experience of suffering does not prove the existence of evil. You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer. Learners might consider some of the following: The existence of suffering in the world is sometimes used as the basis for a philosophical argument known as the problem of evil. Since Buddhists are not required to believe in a benevolent deity with an overarching plan, this philosophical problem is not really relevant to Buddhist thinking. From a Buddhist perspective, good and evil are not conscious, opposing forces external to human beings and using the world as a battleground. They are also not inherent characteristics of people, there is no essence of evil present in some people but not in others. Evil is more a description for how some actions and the consequences they create are perceived. Terrible things do, undoubtedly, happen to people who do not deserve them. Sometimes this is explained as karmaphala, the fruits of some former unskilful action but Buddhists do not believe this is an explanation for everything that happens, neither do they consider that people suffering must have deserved it for some past action – this would itself be unskilful thinking. Instead of trying to explain or justify suffering in relation to cosmic forces, Buddhists try to understand what causes us to experience natural, even predictable, things as causing suffering. The Buddha's teaching is, essentially, about recognising this and approaching things in a different way. According to the Buddha, suffering is something people experience but it is not caused by evil, and if a person can learn to detach themselves from suffering, they will see this truth for themselves.	6 AO2	Examiners should mark according to AO1 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>	Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
3 (3)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the stimulus: • Good understanding of the stimulus shown by appropriate selection of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation • Good knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Good knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies	4 (10-12)	A good attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • A variety of viewpoints explored with good use of reasoned argument and discussion • Good analysis and evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on different Buddhist groups • Evidence of critical evaluation including comment on, and comparison of, arguments from different Buddhist groups • Evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus and a balanced conclusion to the discussion
2 (2)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the stimulus: • Satisfactory understanding of the stimulus shown by some use of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with superficial explanation and/or description • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies	3 (7-9)	A satisfactory attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Different viewpoints offered with some evidence of reasoned argument and/or discussion • Satisfactory analysis and evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on some Buddhist groups • Evidence of comment on, and comparison of, arguments • Evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus and some conclusion to the discussion
1 (1)	Limited/weak demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the stimulus: • Limited understanding of the stimulus shown by factual errors or generalised responses with little connection to the stimulus • Points may be listed and/or lacking in relevant detail related to the issues • Weak knowledge understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism	2 (4-6)	A limited attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Different views may be stated but with little or no development • Limited analysis and/or evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on some Buddhist groups • Response may contain some inaccuracies or misunderstanding of the issue in the stimulus • Little evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>	Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
	Weak knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies		
		1 (1-3)	A weak attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: - A single viewpoint may be stated with little or no support or justification or views may be stated as a list - Response may be simplistic, purely descriptive and/or very brief - No attempt to offer judgement on the issue in the stimulus
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit	0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
2 (d)	‘Not all questions about the world need to be answered.’ Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should: Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs, teachings and practices within Buddhism Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Buddhism. Learners might consider some of the following: AO1 Buddhism recognises a category of imponderable, unskilful or unanswerable questions, which the Buddha was asked and refused to answer. He gave the analogy of a man hit by an arrow. The skilful thing is to remove the arrow, not question where it came from; in the same way stopping dukkha or suffering is more important than answering metaphysical questions. Four imponderables are identified in the Acintita Sutta: the knowledge and powers of a Buddha, the powers that can be attained through meditation, the exact working of kamma, and the origin of the cosmos. The Buddha taught that speculation about these things would hinder liberation because reason cannot answer them. The various answers would create frustration and so increase suffering rather than encourage progression towards liberation. Some specific questions relating to these are identified in Buddhist scriptures. They include questions about whether the world is eternal or infinite, the relationship of the self and the body, the existence (or otherwise) of the Buddha after death and the true nature of the self. AO2 It is clear that Buddha refused to answer certain kinds of question and explicitly said that worrying about them was not a constructive mental activity for those seeking liberation. This could be used to argue that not all questions require answers. However, it might also be argued that being told not to think about something is often a very effective way of ensuring someone does think about it and that therefore even a partial answer, or one which is no more than personally satisfying might be a better means of freeing the mind to think about other things than rejecting the question outright.	15 3 AO1 12 AO2 3 SPaG ()	Examiners should mark according to AO1 and AO2 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question. Please refer to the SPaG response grid on page 8.

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
	It could also be argued that by refusing to answer the questions, the Buddha was not saying they were not worth answering at all but rather intended to suggest that some knowledge cannot simply be given by a teacher but must be earned or discovered by oneself. Enlightenment might be described as ultimate truth and if the truth of the universe is known then the answers to all questions must be a part of that. A desire to find such answers could be the thing that starts a person on the path to Enlightenment; after all, the Buddha himself was inspired by the four sights which showed him both the reality of suffering and the peace of being free of it and he wanted to understand these things better. Some of the questions considered as imponderable in Buddhist texts might be considered answered in the contemporary world as science explores the nature of the world around us and the origins of the universe itself. Some Buddhists might use these answers to help them set such questions aside, others might consider this kind of understanding a distraction or as encouraging attachment to the impermanent material world.		

Question		Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
3	(a)	Outline what is meant by absolute pacifism. Responses might include: • The belief that violence can never be justified, under any circumstances • A complete rejection of war or violence as an option, even if one's own life is in danger • Valuing human life so highly that killing a human being is the worst crime that can be committed, one for which there is no mitigation.	3 AO1	Marks should be awarded for any combination of statements, development and exemplification.

Level (Mark)	<u>A01</u>
3 (5-6)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: • Good understanding of the question shown by appropriate selection of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed description • Good knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Good knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies • Good knowledge and understanding of the breadth and/or depth of the issues
2 (3-4)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Satisfactory understanding of the question shown by some use of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with superficial description • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the breadth and/or depth of issues
1 (1-2)	Limited/weak demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Limited understanding of the question shown by factual errors or generalised responses with little connection to the question • Points may be listed and/or lacking in relevant detail related to the issues • Weak knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Weak knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit.

Question		Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
3	(b)	Describe Buddhist beliefs about forgiveness. Learners might consider some of the following: Holding a grudge is bad for a person's mental state and, according to Buddhist teaching, will increase dukkha. It could be understood as a craving (tanha) for things to be different, or as an attachment to the idea that there is a permanent self that can be wronged. Either of these prevents the person from seeing things as they really are and moving towards Enlightenment. Forgiveness is for the benefit of the forgiver, as it allows them to let go of what is holding them, and therefore frees them from the suffering caused by that clinging. Angry thoughts are part of being human and denying they exist could be counter-productive, increasing the grudge. Vipassana meditation allows such feelings to be recognised and accepted for what they are without becoming attached to them, facilitating the process of forgiveness. Forgiveness does not only apply to wrongs done by others. Buddhists also believe that there is need to forgive oneself for things seen as failures or shortcomings. Forgiveness of all kinds is part of metta (loving kindness), which should be practised by all Buddhists. Metta meditation involves practising this feeling of loving kindness and gradually extending it to encompass all things. This helps people to feel compassion for others and consequently to forgive any wrongs they have done.	6 AO1	Examiners should mark according to AO1 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
3 (5-6)	A good attempt to respond to the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Good analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Good analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on more than one Buddhist group • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation
2 (3-4)	A satisfactory attempt to respond to the topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Satisfactory analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Satisfactory analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on one or more Buddhist group • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation
1 (1-2)	A weak attempt to respond to topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Little if any analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Little if any analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on Buddhists • Weak or no support from sources of wisdom and authority
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit

Question		Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
3	(c)	Explain how the idea of the Middle Way might be used to justify war. You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer. Learners might consider some of the following: The Middle Way is a practical path avoiding extremes. It is usually applied to the extremes of a hedonistic or ascetic lifestyle; the Buddha taught that neither of these was the way to end dukkha and achieve Enlightenment, instead Buddhists should walk a path between them ensuring their bodies are comfortable enough that they can think about the real question of how to end dukkha but not so comfortable that this doesn't seem important. This principle can be extended and used to determine a middle ground between any two extremes. Absolute pacifism can be seen as an extreme position, especially if there is a real threat or actual harm being done. Similarly, the total annihilation of an opponent or a war that goes on forever would also be extremes. A proportionate, defensive war, with clear aims to be achieved through the fighting, could be presented as the middle way between one side allowing itself to be wiped out or both being condemned to fight indefinitely. The Middle Way is often equated with the Eightfold Path, and a case could be made, in certain circumstances, for a war to be considered right action.	6 AO2	Examiners should mark according to AO2 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>	Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
3 (3)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: • Good understanding of the question shown by appropriate selection of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation • Good knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Good knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies	4 (10–12)	A good attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • A variety of viewpoints explored with good use of reasoned argument and discussion • Good analysis and evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on different Buddhist groups • Evidence of critical evaluation including comment on, and comparison of, arguments from different Buddhist groups • Evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus and a balanced conclusion to the discussion <i>There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant and logically structured.</i>
2 (2)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Satisfactory understanding of the question shown by some use of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with superficial explanation and/or description • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies	3 (7–9)	A satisfactory attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Different viewpoints offered with some evidence of reasoned argument and/or discussion • Satisfactory analysis and evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on some Buddhist groups • Evidence of comment on, and comparison of, arguments • Evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus and some conclusion to the discussion <i>There is a line of reasoning presented which is mostly relevant and has some structure.</i>
1 (1)	Limited/weak demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Limited understanding of the question shown by factual errors or generalised responses with little connection to the question • Points may be listed and/or lacking in relevant detail related to the issues	2 (4–6)	A limited attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Different views may be stated but with little or no development • Limited analysis and/or evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on some Buddhist groups • Response may contain some inaccuracies or misunderstanding of the issue in the stimulus

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>	Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
	- Weak knowledge understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism - Weak knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies		Little evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus <i>There is a line of reasoning which has some relevance and which is presented with limited structure.</i>
		1 (1–3)	A weak attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: - A single viewpoint may be stated with little or no support or justification or views may be stated as a list - Response may be simplistic, purely descriptive and/or very brief - No attempt to offer judgement on the issue in the stimulus <i>The information is communicated in a basic/unstructured way.</i>
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit	0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
3 (d)	‘Violence will never lead to peace.’ Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should: Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs, teachings and practices within Buddhism Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Buddhism. Learners might consider some of the following: AO1 At the heart of Buddhist ethics is the question of whether suffering is eased or extended by an individual action. Becoming liberated from suffering is the central aim of all Buddhist teaching, so actions that create or exacerbate it are likely to be considered wrong. This is not just a matter of avoiding physical pain or discomfort; actions that move someone away from accepting the central ideas of anicca and anatta would be seen as extending their suffering. The First Precept is a very clear prohibition on killing, it is sometimes interpreted more widely as a requirement to do no harm. This clearly makes physical fighting something Buddhists should avoid. This is not only because of the importance of compassion and the desire to avoid creating suffering. According to Buddhist teaching violence is believed to be damaging to the perpetrator of it as well as to the victim. Violent acts cause suffering of various kinds and so work against progress towards liberation. Violence is also not just a matter of physical actions but also of thoughts. Violent thoughts such as the idea of taking revenge create suffering by attaching the individual having them to the physical world. AO2 It would be hard to argue against the view that if everyone accepted the First Precept as an absolute ban on violence, then the world would be a peaceful place, but since many people consider violence justified in at least some circumstances, this is an ideal rather than a practical position.	15 3 AO1 12 AO2	Examiners should mark according to AO1 and AO2 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
	In a similarly literal vein, unchecked violence could lead to peace in the form of the death of all combatants, but it is not only Buddhists who are likely to find that an unpalatable solution to a problem. Many Buddhists are absolute pacifists, unwilling to fight even in self-defence. This could result in them being victims of violence, with all the suffering that entails. This suffering might lead them even further from peace if it created anger at the injustice of it, or sorrow over the deaths or injuries of others who suffered with them. However, it could be argued that fighting back would spread that kind of suffering to both kinds of the conflict and perhaps Buddhists are better equipped to address and overcome it. It is also true that Buddhists have fought, and justified fighting, throughout their history, usually associating it with defence of the innocent. The Dali Lama once said that it would be reasonable to shoot someone trying to shoot you, if you had a gun, but that you should aim not to kill them. This suggests that the level of violence can be important – killing someone may never have a good outcome but hurting them to defend yourself or others might be the best course of action. Because of the importance of right intention, the motive for the action matters and determines, at least partially, how much harm it does. This implies that violence can lead to peace, if it is considered and proportionate. Compassion could be considered an ethical motive for violence, with the potential for a peaceful outcome, while anger is not.		

Question		Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
4	(a)	Outline the difference between forced and arranged marriage. Responses might include: • A forced marriage is where one or both parties cannot consent or have not consented to the marriage, but it has gone ahead anyway • An arranged marriage is planned by the families of the couple who are asked to consent to it • The difference between them is the need for free consent to the marriage taking place.	3 AO1	Marks should be awarded for any combination of statements, development and exemplification.

Level (Mark)	<u>A01</u>
3 (5-6)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: • Good understanding of the question shown by appropriate selection of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed description • Good knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Good knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies • Good knowledge and understanding of the breadth and/or depth of the issues
2 (3-4)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Satisfactory understanding of the question shown by some use of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with superficial description • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the breadth and/or depth of issues
1 (1-2)	Limited/weak demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Limited understanding of the question shown by factual errors or generalised responses with little connection to the question • Points may be listed and/or lacking in relevant detail related to the issues • Weak knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Weak knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit.

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
4 (b)	Describe the role of Christianity in public holidays and key events in Britain today. In your response, you must consider that the religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse, but mainly Christian. Learners might consider some of the following: There are 8 public holidays in England and Wales, set by custom and tradition. As religious traditions in Great Britain are traditionally and mainly Christian, 4 of the 8 public holidays are impacted by Christianity as they mark Christian occasions. However, since religious traditions in Great Britain are now diverse, with members of other religions and none, people of other faiths are free to celebrate their festivals but need to request time off from work. The Equality Act 2010 protects employees who want to take holidays for religious observance. The extent to which the Christian origin is observed depends on the individuals and communities but the continuing influence of Christianity in the life of the nation is clearly evident. The word holiday has its origins in the idea of a 'holy day', a day to celebrate or to remember aspects of the Christian Faith. Several of the public holidays in Britain have origins in Christianity or the calendar of the Church of England, for example: Good Friday, which remembers the death of Jesus on the cross; Easter Monday which is a bank holiday marking the significance of Easter when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus; Christmas day which celebrates the birth of Jesus; Boxing Day which is also the Feast of St Stephen, which now marks a day when workers were given a Christmas box by their employers; The spring bank holiday has its origins in a previous public holiday, Whit Monday, which celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit to Jesus' followers. Although not public holidays, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday and Lent all have their origins in the church calendar and are observed by many people who are not Christians, as opportunities for celebration (pancake day) and some kind of self-denial or charity work during Lent.	6 AO1	Examiners should mark according to AO1 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
	Sunday, although a work day for many now, is still a day different from others in the week as a holiday, celebrating the Christian belief that Jesus' resurrection took place on a Sunday. In some parts of Britain Sunday is still kept by some people as a Sabbath day when little or no work should be done. Christian services also mark key events in British society, such as the National Service of Remembrance in November. Additionally, meetings of both Houses of Parliament begin with prayers; circuit judges attend a Christian service before they begin to hear trials; royal marriages are Christian and can be spectacular occasions in important Christian venues such as St Pauls or Westminster Abbey; the very public funeral of Queen Elizabeth II was Christian and watched by millions; a coronation, including that of Charles III in 2023, is fundamentally a Christian service.		

Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
3 (5-6)	A good attempt to respond to the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Good analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Good analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on more than one Buddhist group • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation
2 (3-4)	A satisfactory attempt to respond to the topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Satisfactory analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Satisfactory analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on one or more Buddhist group • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation
1 (1-2)	A weak attempt to respond to topic of the question, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Little if any analysis of appropriate religious knowledge • Little if any analysis of the significance and/or influence of the topic on Buddhists • Weak or no support from sources of wisdom and authority
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
4 (c)	Explain why Buddhists might have different attitudes towards Humanism. You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer. Learners might consider some of the following: Humanism can be broadly defined as a philosophy that emphasises the importance of humanity and the qualities associated with being human, usually the ability for reasoned thought. Many Buddhists are likely to share this view, believing human rebirths are the ones from which liberation can be achieved and this is done through understanding the teachings of the Buddha. However, the emphasis on humanity might seem wrong, or at least over-stated, to Buddhists who prefer to focus on humanity as part of nature. They might consider human beings to be only one kind of sentient being and liberation to be accessible to all forms of sentience. While many Humanists are atheists there are also many who are not; however, whatever they believe about the existence of a divine being, most Humanists reject the idea that humanity is dependent upon such a being, in need of salvation, or incapable of understanding the world on their own. These are all principles with which many Buddhists would agree, although it should be remembered that Humanist and Buddhist thought developed in very different contexts with very different understanding of concepts such as 'God' and 'Religion'. Depending on the interpretation put on the idea of salvation some Buddhists might consider human beings in need of it, since the teachings of the Buddha emphasise becoming liberated from suffering and rebirth. However, they would agree that there is no need for divine intervention to achieve this.	6 AO2	Examiners should mark according to AO2 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>	Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
3 (3)	A good demonstration of knowledge and understanding in response to the question: • Good understanding of the question shown by appropriate selection of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with detail and/or developed explanation • Good knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Good knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies	4 (10–12)	A good attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • A variety of viewpoints explored with good use of reasoned argument and discussion • Good analysis and evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on different Buddhist groups • Evidence of critical evaluation including comment on, and comparison of, arguments from different Buddhist groups • Evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus and a balanced conclusion to the discussion <i>There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant and logically structured.</i>
2 (2)	A satisfactory demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Satisfactory understanding of the question shown by some use of religious knowledge • Selection of appropriate sources of wisdom and authority with superficial explanation and/or description • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints within Buddhism • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies	3 (7–9)	A satisfactory attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Different viewpoints offered with some evidence of reasoned argument and/or discussion • Satisfactory analysis and evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on some Buddhist groups • Evidence of comment on, and comparison of, arguments • Evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus and some conclusion to the discussion <i>There is a line of reasoning presented which is mostly relevant and has some structure.</i>
1 (1)	Limited/weak demonstration of knowledge and/or understanding in response to the question: • Limited understanding of the question shown by factual errors or generalised responses with little connection to the question • Points may be listed and/or lacking in relevant detail related to the issues • Weak knowledge understanding of different viewpoints	2 (4–6)	A limited attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: • Different views may be stated but with little or no development • Limited analysis and/or evaluation of the significance and/or influence of the issue on some Buddhist groups • Response may contain some inaccuracies or misunderstanding of the issue in the stimulus • Little evidence of judgement on the issue in the stimulus

Level (Mark)	<u>AO1</u>	Level (Mark)	<u>AO2</u>
	within Buddhism Weak knowledge and understanding of the influence on individuals, communities and societies		<i>There is a line of reasoning which has some relevance and which is presented with limited structure.</i>
		1 (1–3)	A weak attempt to respond to the stimulus, demonstrating some or all of the following: - A single viewpoint may be stated with little or no support or justification or views may be stated as a list - Response may be simplistic, purely descriptive and/or very brief - No attempt to offer judgement on the issue in the stimulus <i>The information is communicated in a basic/unstructured way.</i>
0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit	0 (0)	No response or no response worthy of credit

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
4 (d)	‘Buddhism teaches that secular laws are always right.’ Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should: Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs, teachings and practices within Buddhism Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Buddhism. Learners might consider some of the following: AO1 Buddhists are guided in how to live their lives by the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the Fourth Noble Truth set out by the Buddha and so it is central to the practice of Buddhism. It emphasises a focus on ‘rightness’ in relation to all aspects of life, some of which are very clearly relevant to obeying the laws of the society one lives in: right conduct, for example, would include avoiding actions such as violence and theft, while right livelihood means supporting oneself in ways that are ethical and do no harm. Along with the Eightfold Path are the Five Precepts, which are more directly expressed as moral principles. The First and Second Precepts prohibit murder and theft, which are also a matter for secular law. The other Precepts could also have relevance, depending on the laws of the country the Buddhist is in: The Fifth Precept says to avoid intoxicants and many countries criminalise at least some substances that can have this effect. Secular law is not only concerned with criminal activity; the Eightfold Path and the Fourth Precept both make reference to avoiding wrong, hateful or untruthful speech, which are a matter of concern for laws dealing with a range of things from libel to discrimination. Honesty and integrity are important moral values for Buddhists and could also be said to underpin legal principles around things such as contracts. AO2 It could be argued that by striving always to do what is right, in both the content of their thoughts and their actions, Buddhists must be broadly in line with secular laws which exist to protect people and keep society stable. But it could also be argued that perfect justice is an ideal, which secular laws rarely meet in practice.	15 3 AO1 12 AO2	Examiners should mark according to AO1 and AO2 descriptors. Please refer to the Level of Response grid above when marking this question.

Question	Indicative content	Marks	Guidance
	Buddhists are unlikely to engage in criminal activity; there is broad agreement that violence and theft are criminal, and Buddhist ethical principles are likely to be in line with the law of the country where they live. However, other matters with which the law deals are less universally agreed upon, and Buddhists might find themselves in situations where following the Precepts by, for example, speaking the truth about an issue, is actually against the secular law. The Noble Eightfold Path is open to differing interpretations about precisely what 'rightness' means in specific contexts. Every one life is different, and moral principles interact in different ways. For example, a Buddhist might choose to become a police officer with the intention of helping others and keeping society safe and stable. This would be having right intentions and seeking to follow a right livelihood. However, a police officer also needs to be prepared to face violence and to use force in defence of themselves or others. For many Buddhists, this would break the First Precept and would not be fulfilling the right conduct aspect of the Eightfold Path, but it could also be justified as right conduct in the judgement of that individual, since it is preventing greater harm. This means that individual Buddhists might choose to break specific laws of their country, because doing so allows them to adhere more closely to their understanding of the Precepts. It might also be noted that some Precepts, such as the one against intoxicants, goes further than the law in most countries. This would mean Buddhists obey the law by default because the things it bans are covered by the wider ban of their moral Precepts.		

Question	AO1	AO2	SPaG	Total
1a	3			3
1b	6			6
1c		6		6
1d	3	12	3	18
2a	3			3
2b	6			6
2c		6		6
2d	3	12	3	18
3a	3			3
3b	6			6
3c		6		6
3d	3	12		15
4a	3			3
4b	6			6
4c		6		6
4d	3	12		15
Total	48	72	6	126

Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on

01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on

support@ocr.org.uk

For more information visit



ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder



ocr.org.uk



Twitter/ocrextams



/ocrextams



/company/ocr



/ocrextams



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS & ASSESSMENT

OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored. © OCR 2025 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA.

Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

OCR operates academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers including A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals.

OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up-to-date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.