



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 2
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

A120U20-1

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:

Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

Rules for Marking

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Awarding no marks to a response

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 20 marks <i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i> - <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> - <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i> - <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i> - <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
5	17-20 marks • Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples. • Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	13-16 marks • Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. • Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	9-12 marks • Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples. • Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied. • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	5-8 marks • Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance. • A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples. • Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied. • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	1-4 marks • Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance. • A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question. • The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples. • Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'
0	• No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 30 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	25-30 marks • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. • Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	19-24 marks • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. • Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	13-18 marks • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. • Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	7-12 marks • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context. • Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	1-6 marks • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. • Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	• No relevant analysis or evaluation.

GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 2

A STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

1. (a) **Examine ways in which religious experience is of value for religious communities.** [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may respond to this question in a variety of ways citing the founders/beliefs/practices of different world religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.
- Key to answering this question is the use of pertinent exemplification from one or more religious traditions and understanding of how religious experience is of value to the religious community.
- Religious experience may be seen as being of value because it provides affirmation of belief system.
- The religious experience of the founder of the religion/major figures of the religion/others in the same religious community can be seen as providing affirmation of the beliefs of that religion.
- For example, the Awakening/Enlightenment of the Buddha may provide affirmation of the truth of the importance of meditation and the possibility of Buddhists achieving Awakening/Enlightenment.
- Religious experience may be seen as being of value because it promotes the faith value system.
- The religious experience of the founder of the religion/major figures of the religion/others in the same religious community receiving through, for example, divine revelation commandments/rules/laws about how to live a moral life can be seen as providing the evidence and basis for the ethical/value system of the religious community.
- For example, the revelations received in the Qur'an may be seen as providing key sources for Islamic law.
- Religious experience may be seen as being of value because it strengthens the cohesion of the religious community.
- Recalling the past religious experience of the founder of the religion/major figures of the religion in, for example, daily/weekly/annual rituals/festivals/celebrations can unite the religious community not only in remembering the past religious experience but also in opening up members of the religious community to new and shared religious experience.
- For example, some Christians may celebrate on a regular basis eucharistic services recalling the Last Supper which unites the worshipping community and gives them the opportunity for renewed religious experience.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) 'Religious communities are entirely dependent on religious experience.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may agree with the statement because without the initial religious experience of the founder of the religion, there would be no religious community in existence. For example, without Guru Nanak's revelation, Sikhism might not have come into being.
- It may also be argued that the continued religious experiences of major followers of the founder over time are essential in order to keep the religious community alive in the present and the future. For example, the vision of St Bernadette in the 19th century led to the founding of the major Catholic shrine at Lourdes.
- Candidates may argue that the religious community is entirely dependent on religious experience because it relies on new religious experiences being possible in order for it to continue. For example, Buddhists are taught that achieving Awakening/Enlightenment remains possible for them today.
- It may be argued that religious communities are entirely dependent on religious experience because they shape and form beliefs and practices and provide a goal for those within the religious community. For example, in completing the seven steps of the Hajj, Muslim pilgrims return renewed and closer to God as a result of their experience.
- Candidates may argue that the increase in secularism/atheism in the West is a result of religious communities not having enough evidence of continued religious experiences showing how much such experience needs to be depended upon.
- **Conversely**, it may be argued that religious experience alone cannot be enough for any religious community – there has to be regular repeated evidence of belief and practice which may not result in religious experience. For example, putting religious belief into practice may involve charity, support for the poor, service for the religious community and following an ethical lifestyle – these may not require religious experience but rather personal conviction.
- Candidates may argue that religious experience cannot be relied upon particularly in the modern world given the insights of psychology/physiology. For example, visions of followers of religion in the past may be seen today as hallucinations/wish-fulfilment/the chemical effects on the brain of fasting etc.
- It may be argued that there can never be any scientific proof for religious experience as having even happened and therefore religious communities cannot be dependent on it. For example, what were in the past seen as miracles can today be seen as exaggerations/misinterpretations of natural occurrences.
- Candidates may argue that religious experience alone is not something which religious communities should be dependent upon because they need instead rational/logical evidence which can be assessed and which is open to scrutiny.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

2. (a) **Explain the challenges identified by Caroline Franks Davis to the objectivity and authenticity of religious experience.** [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Caroline Frank Davis identified challenges that have been made to the validity claims of religious experience in 'The Evidential Force of Religious Experience' (1989).
- Frank Davis begins by detailing the six categories of religious experience that have been challenged: (1) Interpretive Experiences (2) Quasi-sensory Experiences (3) Revelatory Experiences (4) Regenerative experiences (5) Numinous experiences (6) Mystical experiences
- She then divides the challenges to these experiences into three general sections: (1) Description-related challenges (2) Subject-related challenges (3) Object-related challenges.
- **(1) Description-related challenges** focus on the description given of the experience with the challenges being as to the reliability of the account.
- These challenges include the account being inconsistent in itself or contradictory to daily experience. There may be ambiguity in the terms used and misunderstanding. In addition, the experience is interpreted in the light of already accepted beliefs. There may be exaggerating and misremembering etc.
- Since the claim is that there has been an experience of the divine then a claim is being made for which there can be no substantive proof.
- **(2) Subject-related challenges** focus on the person who has had the religious experience and on their reliability.
- These challenges include doubts as to the person's understanding being unreliable and on the fact that they have not been trained to understand what they are alleging they have experienced. There may be some form of mental illness or substance-induced hallucinations. There may be psychological or physiological states involved etc.
- Since the subject is in themselves questionable, their testimony as to what they have experienced needs to be dismissed.
- **(3) Object-related challenges** focus on the experience itself and its likelihood.
- Challenges include that the object of the experience (e.g., a vision) is not present in the way described (e.g., it is a combination of light and shadow). The object of the experience may be derived from sociological, anthropological or psychological influences and needs etc.
- Since the object is not what it appears to be then it cannot be trusted as reliable in terms of being a religious experience.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) 'The challenges to religious experience are valid.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may introduce a variety of challenges to religious experience for which credit can be given; equally candidates may focus on the challenges identified by Franks Davis.
- (1) With regard to description-related challenges, it may be argued that these are very persuasive because it is, for example, part of human nature to exaggerate and dramatize things; in addition, human beings may have a tendency to economical with the truth about such things.
- (2) With regard to subject-related challenges, it may be argued that a person's emotional/psychological/physiological state can never be fully determined and thus other factors might be at work during the time of an alleged religious experience e.g., guilt, isolation, effects of fasting, sleep deprivation etc.
- (3) With regard to object-related challenges, it may be argued that the likelihood of someone experiencing God is as unlikely as the most unlikely thing we can imagine (e.g., seeing an alien) and should therefore be disregarded.
- Candidates may agree that the challenges taken together are therefore very persuasive.
- **Conversely**, it may be argued that Franks Davis herself concludes her work on religious experience by stating that the cumulative effect of descriptions of religious experience cannot be ignored and that her book is entitled 'The Evidential Force of Religious Experience'.
- (1) With regard to description-related challenges, it may be argued that what is being described is ineffable (literally 'not capable of being expressed') and therefore will inevitably suffer from all the limitations of human language which is shaped by the person's zeitgeist.
- (2) With regard to subject-related challenges, it may be argued that rather than making the subject unreliable, emotional/psychological/physiological states might provide precisely the pathway needed for a true religious experience to take place.
- (3) With regard to object-related challenges, it may be argued that these are based on the assumption that God does not exist and do not take into account the view that God might choose the how/when/why he appears along with the 'who' he appears to.
- **Additionally**, candidates may include reference to the principles of credulity and testimony cited by Franks Davis along with the cumulative argument proposed by Swinburne and accepted by Franks Davis.
- **Alternatively**, candidates may argue that other challenges to religious experience are more persuasive such as those suggested by logical positivism, the falsification principle, Freud's view of religion as a neurosis and the modern secular scientific materialist reductionist approach of, for example, Dawkins.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Section B

3. (a) Examine the following alternative scientific explanations as a challenge to inductive arguments for the existence of God:
- i) the Big Bang theory
and
 - ii) Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- **The Big Bang theory** was first postulated by Abbe Georges Lemaître (a RC priest/cosmologist) in 1926 in his work on the expanding universe.
- The theory was supported by various other discoveries including Edwin Hubble's Red Shift evidence showing that galaxies are moving away from earth and that the universe is expanding.
- CMB (cosmic background radiation) was discovered in the mid-1960s and provides evidence for the theory of the expansion of the universe from a starting point – the big bang.
- The Big Bang theory can be summarised in various ways but generally speaking it states that the universe began with an infinitely hot and dense single point that inflated and stretched time to form stars and galaxies.
- This starting point is referred to as a singularity and happened 13.8 billion years ago: the singularity inflated, expanded and cooled leading to the still-expanding cosmos we have today.
- Since the Big Bang was the starting point, there was nothing before the Big Bang i.e., no time or any 'thing' and the big bang was sufficient in and of itself as an explanation of the universe without recourse to a creator God.
- The Big Bang theory is generally accepted by the majority of the astronomical scientific community.
- **Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection** was first proposed in Charles Darwin's 'The Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection' published in 1859.
- The theory states that over millions of years variations developed in organisms through heredity – these variations allowed species to adapt and survive in the natural world.
- Natural selection is based on the view that finite resources of food etc., cannot provide for an infinite number of organisms and that those organisms which developed advantageous variations were able to adapt to their environment and survive whereas other organisms were not able to do so.
- An organism's natural environment – such as geographical isolation on an island – determined its advantageous variations and adaptations over time which ensured the survival of the fittest and the best able to adapt.
- Darwin's theory did not attempt to include or be reconciled with the then favoured natural theology which proposed that organisms were created in the finished form they were by an intelligent designer i.e., God.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) 'Scientific explanations are much more persuasive than philosophical explanations for the universe's existence.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may agree with the statement because science is based on rational empirical evidence which is subject to verification and falsification.
- It may be argued as Dawkins does that, from a common-sense perspective, Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection makes sense and is completely supported by the latest DNA evidence.
- Candidates might agree because philosophical/religious arguments such as the teleological and cosmological ones depend on an a priori acceptance of a creator God for which there is no empirical evidence.
- It may be argued that the statement is correct because the evidence-based rationale of scientific explanations is always able to adopt and adapt to updated knowledge made through new cosmological discoveries.
- Candidates may agree because science has the backing of cumulative and supportive amounts of evidence – e.g., Darwin's 19th century theory of evolution being supported by the 20th century discovery of DNA.
- It may be argued that scientific explanations are always more helpful because they are only concerned with 'how' and not 'why' questions because the latter are purely speculative.
- **Conversely**, candidates may disagree by arguing that even scientific explanations concerning cosmology are theories rather than proof because ultimately no-one knows about the origins of the universe because no one was there at that moment.
- It may be argued that scientific explanations are always very limited by the scope of their enquiry and in themselves are not able to answer the most important 'why' type of questions.
- Candidates may argue that the teleological and cosmological arguments have a great deal of historical support from brilliant minds of the past which surpasses that of scientific explanations.
- It may be argued that scientific explanations are not simple and straightforward but are much more complex and questionable being based entirely on mathematical equations and deductions based on complex quantum physics which are little understood by most people.
- Candidates may argue that scientific arguments about the origins of the universe are based entirely on causality – that event *a* leads to event *b* – and that this itself remains an unproven theory.
- **Alternatively**, it may be argued that neither a scientific nor a philosophical explanation is more persuasive since each can be seen as complementary in supporting the other e.g., philosophers can accept the big bang theory but still provide explanations for what caused the big bang or what 'existed' before the Big Bang.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

4. (a) Explain what is meant by 'Irenaean type theodicy' as a religious response to the problem of evil. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may respond to the question by simply providing an explanation of Irenaean theodicy for which credit should be given.
- The poet John Keats (1795-1821) wrote against those who called this world a 'vale of tears' because of its evil and suffering and instead argued that the world was a 'vale of soul-making'.
- Keats wrote: "Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways!"
- Hick adopted this view of Keats and used the phrase 'vale of soul-making' to describe his development and adaptation of Irenaean theodicy.
- Irenaeus' basic theodicy rests on the biblical verses in Genesis 1:26-27 regarding the image and likeness of God. For Irenaeus, humans were created in the image and likeness of God (body and soul) but needed further growth in likeness through the perfection of the soul with the Spirit of God.
- Hick developed Irenaeus' idea of being perfected in likeness through the Spirit of God.
- Soul-making means that humans have to develop and grow into the likeness of God – from imperfection to perfection.
- Irenaeus proposed that God could not always appear to be loving and close to humans in preventing evil and suffering because that would limit human free will.
- Human free will cannot be forced in anyway and this means that there needs to be an epistemic distance – the distance between humans and God - in terms of knowledge.
- This distance is essential because if God's presence were too close, humans would obey God not because they had chosen to out of their own free choice but because they felt he was overlooking their every move.
- Developing second order goods such as compassion and courage are essential for humans to develop from being in the image of God into the likeness of God - therefore the world has to be an imperfect vale of soul-making where this is possible.
- Finally, eschatological justification refers to the belief that rejection of God or living a life of evil do not condemn a person to hell but instead can lead them to continue in the process of developing into the likeness of God after death – this justifies God's plan of creating humankind.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **'Irenaean type theodicies are completely unsuccessful in defending the God of Classical Theism.'**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may begin by defining the God of Classical Theism as being omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent and as being the God described in the Bible and in statements of the Christian Church.
- It may be argued in agreement with the statement that God cannot be seen as being the creator of evil which helps humans to grow into the likeness of God as that is contrary to the biblical evidence and to concepts of God's omnibenevolence.
- Candidates may argue that if God is a perfect being (ttwngcbc) it cannot be the case that he can create imperfection or something which is lacking in goodness as that would be contrary to his nature.
- It may be argued that the God of Classical Theism is omniscient – Irenaeus's theodicy insists on an epistemic distant between God and humans which cannot exist as God knows the choices humans will make.
- Candidates may argue that Irenaeus's theodicy requires an arbitrary God who condemns some people to excessive pain and suffering in order for them to grow into his likeness and others hardly any pain and suffering.
- It may be argued that the God of Classical Theism is a just God but Irenaeus removes any possibility of God being just since it allows for all humans – even the most evil/wicked – to eventually grow into God's likeness.
- **Conversely**, candidates may disagree with the statement as Irenaeus's theodicy is much more successful in defending the God of theism than Augustine because it allows more room for free will.
- It may be argued that the type of God described by Irenaeus fits in much more with a God who is omnibenevolent since eventually there is the opportunity for all humans to move towards and then be with God.
- Candidates may argue that the statement is incorrect because Irenaeus satisfactorily explains the problem of evil as being created and licensed by God in order to promote human growth and development.
- It may be argued that what Irenaeus proposes allows room for the God of Classical Theism because God can still be omniscient – providing humans with free will and knowing all the possible choices which they might make.
- Candidates may argue that the statement is incorrect because the God of Classical Theism is omnipotent and only an omnipotent God can have the power to allow the progress humans make in growing into the likeness of God to continue after death.
- It may be argued that the statement is incorrect because the God of Classical Theism is a God of logic, order and reason and Irenaeus' theodicy is logical, ordered and much more reasonable than Augustinian theodicy.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

5. (a) Examine the following deductive arguments by Anselm:

- i) God as the greatest possible being (Proslogion 2)
- and
- ii) God has necessary existence (Proslogion 3). [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may explain the Proslogion in different ways which should be credited accordingly for accuracy.
- Anselm's Proslogion presents a deductive argument which is a priori and which is not based on any empirical evidence.
- Anselm's Proslogion was originally entitled 'Fides quaerens intellectum' (faith seeking understanding) and it established the ontological argument.
- **Proslogion 2** begins with the words that "the fool has said in his heart that there is no God".
- God is 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' (ttwngcbc) and even the fool knows this in his understanding (in intellectu) even if the fool does not understand that God really exists (in re).
- "It is one thing for a thing to be in the understanding (in intellectu) and another to understand that the thing really exists (in re)"
- A painter has the painting in their understanding (in intellectu) before they start painting it and once it is painted it also really exists (in re).
- Ttwngcbc must exist not only in understanding (in intellectu) but must also really exist (in re) otherwise it would not be ttwngcbc.
- If ttwngcbc existed only in understanding (in intellectu) it could not be ttwngcbc because it would be lacking in real existence (in re).
- Therefore, ttwngcbc must logically exist both in understanding (in intellectu) and in real existence (in re).
- **Proslogion 3** develops the ontological argument further having established that God is ttwngcbc.
- God has necessary existence because a God who cannot be thought not to exist is the greatest possible being.
- An object whose non-existence is inconceivable is necessarily greater than any object whose non-existence is conceivable.
- If ttwngcbc can be conceived not to exist then ttwngcbc cannot be ttwngcbc because something greater can be conceived – an object whose non-existence is inconceivable.
- This proves that ttwngcbc "exists in so true a sense, that it cannot be conceived not exist: and this thing art Thou, O Lord our God!"
- **In summation: (Proslogion 2** if the concept of God can be held in the mind, then God must exist in reality because that which exists in reality is always greater than that which exists only in the mind. **(Proslogion 3)** Since God is ttwngcbc his non-existence is rendered impossible.
- For **Proslogion 3**, candidates may refer to contingency and necessity which although is Aquinas' 3rd Way it loosely corresponds to the 'creature' / 'Creator' distinction that Anselm makes in P3; however, for full accuracy God as 'cannot be thought not to exist' is the main element and Anselm's argument is one of logical necessity and is not based in empirical distinctions.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) **'The most persuasive arguments for God's existence are 'a priori'.'**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may agree with this statement because the only tools/evidence needed for 'a priori' reasoning are provided by language and logic both of which are clear, comprehensive and reliable.
- It may be argued that the statement is correct because 'a priori' reasoning is pure in the sense that it does not rely on subjective experience or evidence.
- 'A priori' reasoning may be seen as the most persuasive form of arguments because they are deductive and follow a logical chain of thought where the premise inevitable takes one to the conclusion.
- Candidates may agree with the statement because if all the language is correct and the logic is sound then the arguments must be rational and what reason shows to be true cannot be dismissed.
- It may be argued that arguments for God's existence based in 'a priori' reasoning are very persuasive because over time they can be developed with other forms of clear and logical argument e.g., Descartes and Malcolm.
- With regard to Anselm, his definition of God as *totius mundi creator* is comprehensive and accurate and it makes his 'a priori' argument very persuasive.
- **Conversely**, it may be argued that deductive arguments based in 'a priori' reasoning are nothing more than a linguistic game where everything depends on accepting the meaning of words and the validity of the logic used.
- Candidates may argue that inductive arguments based in 'a posteriori' reasoning are much more persuasive since they are based on facts and can be verified and falsified.
- It may be argued that when it comes to persuasiveness, nothing is superior to empirical evidence which all can perceive and which all can test.
- Candidates may argue that inductive arguments based in 'a posteriori' reasoning such as the cosmological and teleological arguments are much more persuasive because in the 21st century they are more in tune with the scientific mind and the need for premises and conclusions to be subject to 'a posteriori' research.
- It may be argued that 'a priori' reasoning is always 'all in the mind' and that any conclusions reached can only be conceptual and hypothetical rather than real.
- With regard to Anselm, it might be argued that all his 'a priori' reasoning and deductive arguments show is that that it is logical for God to exist not that God actually exists.
- Arguments based in 'a priori' reasoning such as those of Anselm, Descartes and Malcolm are never very persuasive because the 'a priori' position of each of these is a position of faith already being there in God as *totius mundi creator*.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised