



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 3
A STUDY OF RELIGION AND ETHICS
A120U30-1**

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.

Eduqas 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 mainly 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 3

A STUDY OF RELIGION AND ETHICS

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

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 (a) **Explain why Fletcher uses agape as the basis for morality and rejects other approaches to ethics.** [AO1 20]

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

- Candidates may begin by explaining that agape, or the situational approach offers the middle way between legalism and antinomianism, both of which are rejected by Fletcher.
- Legalism being the approach that has fixed moral rules and laws, and antinomianism being the view that there should be no moral rules or laws at all.
- Fletcher rejected legalistic approaches as these were too rigid and could not accurately reflect the changing world, often leading to injustice.
- On the other hand, he did not support the 'anti-law' approach of antinomianism, which was valued by the existentialists, as this could lead to unprincipled moral chaos.
- Instead, he argued for a situational approach in which the Christian principle of agape (selfless love) is used as the basis for moral decision-making.
- A Situationist will not make rules which cover every situation, but rather will apply the demands of selfless love in each individual case.
- Fletcher bases his approach on the teachings of Jesus in Luke 10:25-37 where he places love for God and neighbour at the heart of morality.
- This is echoed by Augustine who stated, 'Love and do what you will,' meaning that Fletcher's approach fits in with traditional Christian thinking about decision-making.
- Fletcher was also influenced by various modern Christian thinkers including Bonhoeffer and Bultmann, who claimed that Jesus' only ethical theory was 'love thy neighbour.'
- Agape is a practical form of love rather than an emotional approach, and this is illustrated by St Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. Fletcher uses agape rather than any of the other types of love as, in his view, this accurately reflects Christian teaching and mirrors the approach of Jesus seen in the Gospels.
- Some candidates may point out that Fletcher rejected traditional views of conscience as the voice of God or societal conditioning because it is a function not a faculty. (A verb not a noun) Instead he saw it as a process of reasoning that is working out how to love others.

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

- (b) **‘Agape is the only intrinsic good.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Supporters of Situation Ethics would agree with Fletcher’s first fundamental principle, basing their agreement on evidence in the Bible, for example, 1 Corinthians in which St Paul says that love is the greatest of the virtues.
- However, it could be argued that, although love is described as the greatest of the virtues, it is not the only one – faith and hope may also be seen as intrinsically good.
- Other believers may argue that all of God’s commandments are intrinsically good, as they derive from the ultimate source of all goodness.
- Therefore, following all of God’s laws could be seen as good, and ignoring these laws in order to prioritise love could be seen as unacceptable.
- On the other hand, there are stories in the Bible where Jesus put aside the law in order to perform loving actions. This could suggest that love is the only thing which is good-in-itself.
- Another issue is that it is difficult to reduce the complexity of moral decision making to one single principle. If love is the only thing that is good in itself, where does this leave other important principles such as justice, wisdom and courage.
- Supporters of Situation Ethics could argue that love encompasses these other ideas, and that Fletcher explains this clearly in the six fundamental principles.
- Some critics of Situation Ethics have argued that some actions are intrinsically good or evil and should not depend on the situation. They might point to examples such as murder being intrinsically evil. Even if there are extreme circumstances in which it might be seen as justifiable, this doesn’t make it good.
- However, Fletcher doesn’t necessarily see love as an action. Instead, he argues it is an attitude towards our actions and aims to allow us to act in a way that reflects a loving God. This is what is good-in-itself.
- This leaves open the debate about the nature of love. For Situation Ethics to work, it relies on a very specific conception of love, namely agape, as illustrated in the 6 Fundamental Principles. However it could be argued that this concept is too idealised for humans to apply correctly, and that they are more likely to misapply the theory through a misunderstanding of agape.
- For this reason, Vardy argues that Situation Ethics is only likely to make sense in the context of Christian faith, as this would lead to a genuine understanding of agape.

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

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 (a) **Examine John Stuart Mill's development of Utilitarianism.** [AO1 20]

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

- Mill's development of Utilitarianism attempts to address the criticisms levelled at Bentham's Act Utilitarianism, for example that pleasure cannot be measured in quantitative terms and that not all pleasures are equal.
- Mill's version of Utilitarianism seems to equate pleasure with well-being and living in a good society, ideas derived from Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia.
- Therefore, in his theory he shifts the emphasis from quantity of pleasure to quality. Higher pleasures associated with the intellect are worth more than lower pleasures associated with the body as only human beings can access these higher pleasures.
- Therefore, while lower pleasures are sometimes necessary for survival, the principle of utility should be fulfilled through a greater balance of higher pleasures looking in the broadest sense at the 'interests of man as a progressive being' rather than focusing on the particular pleasures of individuals.
- Mill argues that it is easy to satisfy those who have never experienced the higher pleasures, but anyone who has experience of both, will find the higher pleasures more satisfying in the long term. Focusing on higher pleasures when considering morality will aid the intellectual development of all people and therefore lead to greater happiness for society as a whole.
- Mill's 'harm principle' works towards securing the principle of utility in its broadest sense as it prevents people from seeking pleasure through the pain of others, while allowing maximum individual freedom to pursue happiness – 'the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others' (On Liberty).
- The principle of utility can be fulfilled through creating 'rules' based on past experience rather than judging each action individually. For example, the rule 'do not murder' would create the greatest overall happiness in society and would support in fulfilling the 'harm principle', even if it may not create happiness in an individual case. This means that each action does not have to be judged using the hedonic calculus and makes utilitarianism easier to apply in practice.
- Mill is seen by many scholars as a 'weak' Rule Utilitarian, in that the rules offer good general guidelines but may be broken in extreme circumstances to better serve utility. This makes Mill's version of Utilitarianism a teleological and deontological hybrid.

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

- (b) **‘Utilitarianism does not offer a practical basis for making moral decisions.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Utilitarianism can be seen as a practical basis for making moral decisions as it draws on universal experience which is accessible to everyone. All human beings can experience pleasure and pain.
- It also fits in with what humans naturally do – seek pleasure and avoid pain, therefore it is practical as it does not go against human nature.
- Also, Bentham’s hedonic calculus could be seen as a practical way to weigh up the correct decision in a given circumstance. It gives a clear range of factors to use when working through a moral dilemma.
- However, it could be argued to be impractical as working through the criteria of the hedonic calculus is time-consuming and not always straightforward. Should a high level of certainty outweigh a shorter duration or vice versa?
- Candidates may choose to argue that Mill’s Utilitarianism is more practical than Bentham’s as he advocates assessing rules based on Utilitarian principles then following the rules. This would make it less time-consuming and easier to apply in the real world.
- However, this may reduce the flexibility of Utilitarianism, which is part of its appeal in the modern world.
- Another line of argument would be that Utilitarianism is practical as it is used in many democracies in the allocation of resources such as healthcare and education. It is impossible to please everybody, so giving happiness to the greatest number is the next best thing.
- However, candidates could argue that this may not meet the needs of minorities and may lead to what Mill calls the ‘tyranny of the majority’ where a minority can be oppressed if the majority gain pleasure from doing so.
- It is also possible to give examples in which maximising pleasure for the majority would lead to extreme pain for suffering for an individual. This may be practical, but it does not appear moral.
- Therefore, Mill’s adaptation to focus on higher pleasures may be seen as more appropriate than Bentham’s approach, but may not necessarily be more practical, as it is difficult to ascertain the correct balance between quantity and quality of pleasure.

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

0 3 (a) Explain how Proportionalism can be seen as a hybrid of Natural Law.
[AO1 20]

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

- Proportionalism is a hybrid deontological/teleological ethic which combines the traditional Natural Law interpretation by the Roman Catholic church with some aspects of Virtue Ethics
- Some would strongly suggest that Natural Law itself is both deontological and teleological, as Hoose states: 'Catholic moral theology has always been predominantly teleological. However, it must be admitted that there are examples of widely taught deontological norms of behaviour in the formulation of which the teleological aspects have either been ignored or not considered important enough to be taken into consideration.'
- Therefore, for Bernard Hoose and many who support Proportionalism as an approach to Natural Law, it is Natural Law itself that is the hybrid of deontology and teleology and so Proportionalism is not at all a hybrid of Natural Law.
- The theory is based on natural law and is a development of Aquinas' principle of double effect – i.e. that it is morally acceptable to perform a bad action if and only if it is the unintended (but foreseeable) side effect of another morally good action. This fits in with Aquinas' requirement that interior and exterior acts should both comply with natural law.
- Proportionalism develops this idea and states that the moral rules derived from the precepts of natural law are not absolute, but rather form strong moral guidelines which should be followed unless there is a proportionate reason not to.
- This can be summed up in the maxim 'there are certain moral rules and it can never be right to go against these unless there is a proportionate reason which would justify it.' (Hoose). The reason for breaking a moral rule must be 'sufficiently unusual and of sufficient magnitude.' (Hoose) Candidates may develop this maxim with examples taken from either immigration, capital punishment or another area of applied ethics.
- For example, it is wrong to kill (as this goes against the primary precept to defend innocent life), but in a war it may be acceptable to kill in order to defend innocent people. The defence of the innocent victims of war may be seen as a proportionate reason to break the moral law which prohibits killing. This formed the basis of Aquinas' ideas on Just War.
- Although the precepts of natural law describe moral perfection, as humans are seen to live in a 'fallen' world, a level of moral compromise is necessary and is described by Proportionalists as ontic evil.
- Hoose states that a good action follows the rules of natural law, but that sometimes the right action is one that may go against one of the precepts in order to create the lesser of two evils. Again, candidates may choose to exemplify this distinction with the use of examples taken from the two named areas of applied ethics or from any other area.
- Hoose and McCormick also distinguish between 'pre-moral' evils, which are part of the nature of the world, such as pain and death, and 'moral' evils where there is a person with the intention to cause such evil. Some actions, such as abortion, are pre-morally evil, as they cause death, morally bad, as they go against the precepts of natural law, but in extreme circumstances the right thing to do, as it may be the lesser of two evils.
- Some might point out that Value Maximising Proportionalists like Hallett, would take the teleological element still further by avoiding the two extremes of consequentialism and precept ethics by value balancing. By

distinguishing between bad and wrong, he can allow a morally bad act to be morally right thereby creating a teleological / deontological hybrid.

- Some candidates might talk about Revisionist Theology Proportionalist theories from people like Selling who apply proportionate reason to double effect whilst also finding other ways to seek the greater good that encourage the development of virtues - a hybrid of double effect which required an absolutist understanding of morality with virtue inspired by Jesus, that is more consequentialist.

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

(b) 'The weaknesses of Proportionalism outweigh its strengths.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Proportionalism can be seen to have many of the strengths of Natural Law, in that it offers a clear-cut approach in most circumstances while including an element of flexibility which prevents some of the injustices caused by absolute rules. It could be seen to offer the best of both worlds and a common-sense approach to decision making in a morally ambiguous world.
- However, in allowing exceptions to Natural Law, some would claim that Proportionalism loses many of the benefits of having clear-cut, objective and unambiguous rules, and complicates decision-making unnecessarily.
- For this reason, Proportionalism has been condemned by the Roman Catholic church. For example, in his encyclical 'Veritatis Splendour', Pope John Paul II stated that Proportionalism was not an acceptable approach as it did not condemn any actions as intrinsically evil.
- Another strength of Proportionalism is that it has a long tradition within Roman Catholic moral thinking which can date back to the work of Aquinas and therefore Hoose's overview simply presents the way in which Natural Law has actually been applied. As Aquinas stated, 'the more you descend into detail, the more it appears how the general rule admits exceptions...'
- Therefore, Proportionalists would argue that their application is the truest version of Natural Law.
- On the other hand, it could be claimed that Proportionalism is simply a way to elevate short-term goals over the long-term development of real human goods. For example, lying to somebody to avoid hurting their feelings may appear to be the right thing to do, but it does not contribute to the real good of creating a strong society based on truth and honesty.
- Supporters of Proportionalism, however, would argue that the example given above is not of sufficient rarity or magnitude to warrant breaking the natural law, but this exposes another difficulty with Proportionalism, namely that of deciding which situations are sufficient to justify a proportionate response. The degree of human judgement involved can be seen as a distinct weakness.
- Proportionalism could be seen as a more compassionate approach than Natural Law as it allows for the inclusion of agape in decision making and will sometimes allow circumstances to be taken into account. This overcomes some of the issues with a rigid application of Natural Law and also avoids the problems of the outdated biological basis of Natural Law
- However, Proportionalism could be too open to interpretation and too reliant on prediction of consequences in order to decide whether there is a proportionate reason to break a rule.
- Some candidates might argue that Proportionalism is not really a moral theory in itself, there are so many different Proportionalists that have different views on how to apply it, that it is not possible to assess it as fully formed. So much disagreement means that it impossible to use without getting it wrong.

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

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

- Intuitionism argues that objective moral laws can be cognitively known, exist independently of human beings and can be discovered through intuition.
- Intuitive ability is believed to be innate to all moral agents, however it requires a mature mind and therefore is not infallible.
- Proponents of Intuitionism state that 'goodness' cannot be defined, or analysed, it is simply self-evident. Attempts to define 'goodness' in other natural terms commit the 'naturalistic fallacy.'
- 'Good' is seen as a simple idea which cannot be broken down into other concepts. Candidates may use Moore's comparison with the colour 'yellow' as a simple idea here.
- Moore's 'open question' argument may also be used – if good can be defined as X, it should make no sense to ask whether X is really good. This is another way to show that Naturalism does not work.
- Moral judgements cannot be proved empirically according to Intuitionism but must be recognised as good, or as actions we ought to do, intuitively.
- Prichard states that our moral obligations are very clear through intuition in the same way that mathematical truths can be clearly apprehended.
- Prichard states that the role of reason in morality is to establish the facts and data about a given situation needed in order to make a decision. However, the facts alone cannot tell people what ought to be done. The actual 'moral thinking' is based on intuition, which shows what people's moral obligations are.
- In the case of conflicting moral obligations, intuition would allow people to see which obligation was greater. No reasons can be given why one obligation is greater than another, as moral duty cannot be proved.
- Prichard does recognise that people have different views of morality. He states that this is because some people's moral thinking has developed further than others. He does not, however, explain why this is or give a means to differentiate whose moral thinking is the most developed.
- Prichard does not establish any hierarchy of moral obligations or duties and has been criticised for offering no clear way to decide in cases of moral stalemate. Ross offers a way out of this dilemma with the idea of prima facie duties. These are based on intuition but combine this with experience to draw out moral principles which are not absolute but give some general guidance.

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

(b) 'Moral statements are best understood by intuition.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Intuitionists would agree with this statement as they believe that there are non-natural 'moral facts' evident in the world which are perceived through intuition.
- This view avoids committing the 'naturalistic fallacy' of defining goodness in other terms such as 'pleasure'. 'Good' is a simple idea which cannot be broken down, nor can it be observed in an empirical way, it can only be understood through intuition.
- However, if good cannot be defined, there is no real ground on which to resolve moral disagreements. Some people's 'intuitions' appear reprehensible to others.
- Intuitionists would argue that this is as a result of under-developed moral thinking.
- Prichard's analogy of moral obligations being self-evident in the same way as mathematical principles could be used to support the Intuitionist perspective.
- However, this analogy could be seen as weak as mathematical principles can be checked and verified, whereas the self-evidence of our duties cannot be checked against external standards. Also, in maths we never have to decide between two conflicting principles, whereas ethics is different.
- Many would argue that the very idea of non-natural 'moral facts' evident in the world is a nonsensical concept. They are seen as a way to avoid justifying moral judgements and to avoid the hard discussions about the meaning of moral terms.
- Ayer would agree with this perspective, claiming that all moral statements are meaningless as they cannot be verified, whereas Naturalists would also agree with the criticism, but would look to define morality in natural terms.
- Another line of argument is to question the self-evident nature of moral intuitions. If moral truths are genuinely known intuitively, then there would be no doubt about what 'goodness' is as, even if some people had a less-developed intuitive sense, the majority would surely agree. As there is clearly disagreement about moral truths, this indicates that they are not known intuitively.
- Also, there is no clear explanation about where these 'moral intuitions' come from or how moral intuitionism works. If reason cannot be used to investigate morality, then this devalues the quality which separates humans from animals.
- Some candidates may refer to Mackie's 'Argument from Queerness' in the sense that it is a strange kind of 'fact' that cannot be verified or falsified.
- Candidates may draw from the other meta-ethical approaches studied to argue that moral statements are best understood in other ways.

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

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 (a) **Examine philosophical and psychological concepts of libertarianism.**
[AO1 20]

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

- Libertarians believe that humans have moral autonomy, in other words, they are free moral agents capable of making and taking responsibility for their own moral decisions.
- Philosophical libertarians such as Sartre reject causal determinism and argue that moral actions are the result of free mental acts.
- Sartre believed there was no God i.e., there is no supreme/higher power controlling humanity, therefore human actions are free from a determining power.
- Sartre also argued that people can understand they have free will because humanity is 'pour-soi' ('being for itself'), unlike animals who are just en-soi ('being in itself') i.e., humans have a self-consciousness.
- Therefore, there is a distance between a person's self-consciousness and the physical world. Sartre calls this 'the gap' and it is this gap that allows people to have free will.
- Sartre claims that the existence of human freedom is obvious because of the way people try to deny their own freedom. Freedom can bring pain; therefore, people will try to avoid the reality of their own freedom - a self-deception, Sartre called 'bad faith'. Candidates may use Sartre's example of the waiter to illustrate this concept.
- Sartre believes freedom is both 'a gift and a curse' for humanity. The gift because people have the freedom of making something out of their lives. The curse because freedom brings the responsibility that a person must develop their own lives.
- The psychological concept of libertarianism relates to the idea that psychological conditioning may exist but is not permanent in the way suggested by determinism.
- For example, Carl Rogers believed that people were born as experiencing beings, who live in the present and have the potential to respond freely to their current situations. However, Rogers concedes that a person's life can become determined by external conditioning
- Rogers, however, rejected that such deterministic factors were permanent. This is because he believed that people can still achieve free will through the process of: 'self-actualisation'.
- Rogers thought that each person has an idea of what they think they would like to be (ideal self) and an image of what they think they are (actual self) These two images are often incongruent and therefore constrained.
- People who are treated with unconditional positive regard and are love and accepted for who they are, can find it easier to be congruent and thus achieve their goal of self actualising.

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

- (b) **Evaluate the view that free moral agents should follow a specific normative ethic.** [AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that free will implies complete freedom to make independent moral decisions. As Sartre points out, this is both a gift and a curse as it makes humans completely responsible for their own decisions and the consequences thereof.
- However, just because humans have free will, this does not mean that they cannot be guided in their moral decision making, and choosing to follow a particular normative ethic, such as utilitarianism, may allow humans to use their free will responsibly.
- Existentialists may argue that this is simply an act of 'bad faith' and a way to try to avoid the individual responsibility of making moral decisions by pushing the responsibility onto an external ethical theory.
- Alternatively, candidates could argue that, if free will is genuine, then normative ethics is absolutely vital as humans should debate the best ways to act morally. Surely it is the responsibility of free moral agents to follow a code of ethics that supports good decision making.
- However, candidates may argue that the flaws in many normative theories mean that humans should not pick a specific normative ethic but should think for themselves about the best way to act. They may give examples from the normative theories studied in order to illustrate this point and argue that free will means complete freedom to make decisions unconfined by normative prescriptions.
- Another line of argument would be to consider the determinist position that free will is an illusion, and therefore the idea that humans are able to choose a particular normative ethic is nonsense.
- Human moral decision making is determined either by God, by genetics or by conditioning and so, if they do follow a specific theory, this is not out of any genuine choice. Expect candidates to illustrate this point with reference to a specific form of determinism.
- Candidates may choose to consider the soft determinist approach, whereby the feeling of freedom of choice is essential to human flourishing and therefore choices about following a specific normative ethic would be important.
- For example, Peter Strawson argues that, in practical terms, no matter how much proof we find of determinism, this will not stop humans believing that people are responsible for their moral actions. This makes moral responsibility a real fact of human life which should be taken seriously and therefore means that deciding on an appropriate normative ethic is important.
- Candidates may also consider a meta-ethical approach and argue that humans do not need to follow a specific normative ethic as they know how to act through moral intuition.

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