



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2024

**AS
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
Option D - An Introduction to the Study of Buddhism
B120UD0-1**

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 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.

AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions [25 marks]</p> <p><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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	<p style="text-align: center;">21-25 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">16-20 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">11-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">6-10 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. <p>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions [25 marks] <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">21-25 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">16-20 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">11-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">6-10 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

EDUQAS GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES

COMPONENT 1: Option D – An Introduction to the Study of Buddhism

SUMMER 2024 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1. (a) **Examine the three types of dukkha found within the Four Noble Truths**
[AO1 25]

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

- The Four Noble Truths were part of the Buddha's first sermon and can be found in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. The Four Noble Truths can be simply explained as we suffer because we become attached to things, if we stop being attached to things, then we become wise to what has caused us this suffering. When this happens we can be free of the suffering.
- The first Noble Truth is dukkha which means suffering. This could be a variety of experiences and not always negative in the extreme. Dukkha is one of the three lakshanas.
- There are three types of suffering identified in Buddhism.
- Dukkha-dukkha is a pain experience. This could be injury or illness or even general discomfort. It relates to what our senses experience. Not only is it physical but it can be mental. This is usually a result of human attachment to things that we consider valuable or have sentimental ties to.
- Viparinama-dukkha is suffering that occurs when we experience change. We are uncomfortable with the fact that things in our life are constantly changing. We experience highs and lows throughout life. We are happy to change from a low to a high but not from a happy high to a sad low.
- Sankhara-dukkha translates as suffering 'in the formations' and is to do with the contingent nature of things which means that things have a limited lifespan. Denise Cush says, 'a more subtle dissatisfaction with life itself rather than any specific problem'. It is this idea of being dissatisfied by a lack of control that we have in life with the changing, arising and passing away.
- The second truth is tanha or craving causing samudaya (arising) and this must be identified and then abandoned.
- The third truth is nirodha which means cessation of the craving.
- The last of the Four Noble Truths is magga which also means the path. It is the actualisation of nirodha so that nibbana can be realised.
- Students may refer to the medical metaphor as part of their explanation.

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

(b) 'The Four Noble Truths contain all the essential Buddhist teachings.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Some would argue that the Four Noble Truths are the basis of Buddhism and therefore important to all Buddhists.
- They are the first teachings of the Buddha and have been considered very important by Buddhists for centuries and are considered to be the golden standard.
- They teach all Buddhists how to apply the Buddha's teachings in a practical way. The fourth Noble Truth, the Eightfold Path, has been a proven method for all Theravada Buddhist monks and nuns.
- Other Buddhist traditions apart from Theravada Buddhists consider the teachings to be a basis of important teachings even if they don't consider them to be as important a guide as other teachings within Buddhism.
- There are so many teachings found within Buddhism that offer guidance to Buddhists. No, one teaching can offer full guidance to achieve the goal of enlightenment.
- The Mahayana Buddhist tradition claims to be the 'greater vehicle'. They believe that they have the more advanced versions of the Buddhists teachings. Mahayana Buddhists have other teachings to focus on to guide them to their goals.
- Tibetan Buddhists would consider other aspects of the Buddha's teachings such as devotion and meditation as a way to reach enlightenment. As part of the Mahayana view that more advanced teachings of the Buddha through the second turning of the Dhamma wheel.
- Another line of argument is that Theravada Buddhism shows that the Four Noble Truths are only important for the monastic element of Theravada Buddhism; the monks and the nuns. They have the time to dedicate themselves to the understanding of the Four Noble Truths whilst it can be argued that lay Buddhists may be focussing on earning good karma and leading a good life. The Four Noble Truths may not be practically important for lay Buddhists. It could be argued that some Lay Buddhists may not understand the teachings and the guidance that they can offer.
- Only the fourth Noble truth can be considered to be guidance, the eightfold path. The earlier three truths are background information and do not offer practical guidance for those seeking enlightenment.
- In Mahayana Buddhism there can be seen a better path than the eightfold path, the bodhisattva path, that may suit some Buddhists better.
- Some say that all of the Buddha's teachings come back to the Four Noble Truths and as such they must be seen as ultimate guidance.
- Some would say that the observations of the Buddha are the most important aspect of his teachings and that the Four Noble Truths are just a basic expression of this.

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

2. (a) Explain the Eightfold Path within the context of the diversity of Buddhism.

[AO1 25]

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

- The Noble Eightfold Path is the fourth part of the Four Noble Truths, magga, which means path. This was part of the Buddha's first teaching and can be found in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. The Eightfold Path is a guide to facilitate the removal of cravings and to prevent suffering as a result. Their aim is to prevent and stop the worries and frustrations of life.
- The Eightfold Path is a key teaching in Buddhism and is represented in the symbol of Buddhism, the eight spoked wheel. The eight spokes represent the eight elements of the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Each of the eight teachings start with the term samma which is the Pali word for right or correct. The teachings do not need to be followed in an order, they are to be developed simultaneously. The middle way is the correct way to follow the Eightfold Path by not going to the excess of each aspect.
- The eight teachings can be grouped into three goals; wisdom/ prajna, morality/ sila and meditation/dhyana.
- The Eightfold Path in Theravada and Tibetan Buddhism, particularly in the monastic element is described as a 'springboard' for higher, more spiritual attainment by scholar Richard Gombrich.
- Applying these teachings of wisdom, morality and meditation in a monastic setting is described by Gombrich and Conze as achieving the ethical ideals of poverty, chastity and inoffensiveness.
- Poverty: Nuns and monks in both Tibetan and Theravada Buddhism exemplify this by having little to no possessions. Their possessions are only those items that are necessary for living, and very basic. Nuns and monks are expected to be homeless, but the idea of having no fixed abode can be said to be a state of mind rather than a strict rule as many live in monasteries. Monks have alms bowls that they use to obtain food and bless those who offer them this food. The purpose of poverty is to fight the drivers of greed, hatred and delusion as they cause attachment and suffering. Poverty is a aid to a more spiritually wholesome life.
- Chastity: This is the separation from family and a dedication to a completely independent life to pursue truth. They make take a new name as a symbol of a new life.
- Inoffensiveness: This links strongly with the Buddhist precept of no harm and also right action. It is directly linked to Karma. It is based on the Hindu concept of ahimsa, non-violence. Many Theravada Buddhists are vegetarian as a result. Eating vegetarian is harder in Tibet due to the climate and therefore it is less common. Conze said that we need to take this idea very seriously and even watch where we tread so as not to inadvertently harm small creatures.
- Meditation and study is another very important part of Theravada Buddhism. This practice of the Buddha is maintained by nuns and monks today. Monastics balance the idea of study (wisdom) and meditation.
- Candidates may explain the two step process of becoming a monk or a nun and discuss the hierarchy of monasteries.

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

(b) 'Awakening can only be achieved through correct behaviour.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Positive and wholesome behaviour can be argued to be the most important part of meditation, the way to achieve awakening. It comes from the traditional Indian ideal that meditation can only be successful to those of high moral character. Moral character can be seen within the Noble Eightfold Path, the outward evidence of inner spiritual development.
- Some would say that the relationship between awakening and right actions is that awakening leads to right actions being committed. When a Buddhist achieves awakening in this life, they experience the cessation of conditioned states. They will no longer feel pain and suffering. Harvey says that the experience '... totally destroys attachment, hatred and delusion'.
- An arhat has achieved enlightenment but has not died and so is within the bounds of samsara. Dukkha still exists but the impact of dukkha is not the same. They have destroyed the three fires and can ensure that they do not act in a way would create karmic results. This would suggest that the relationship between awakening and behaviour is that awakening positively affects the behaviour of a Buddhist, rather than the other way round.
- Meditation is a way to achieve awakening. Loving kindness is a form of mediation on the bodhisattva path. It suggests that when dealing with those who we consider to be enemies we should imagine them as our mothers in a past life. Changing our perception and then ultimately the actions we do. Therefore, awakening is achieved through moral behaviour.
- Buddhism is famous for promoting a peaceful and also tolerant approach to other people. The path to awakening in its many forms can be seen to develop in all who follow it, positive moral behaviours.
- The Buddha clearly taught that positive moral behaviours 'right actions' were the way to live a good life and ultimately achieve awakening.
- Some may argue that the right behaviour is achieved through awakening as when one becomes a bodhisattva there is an outpouring of compassion that can be materialised as right behaviour to others. It encourages interaction with others based on love.
- It could be argued that the point of awakening is to let go and become detached from suffering in all of its forms. This could then lead to a detachment from society to retreat. Influence over and positive interactions with others, that would constitute right behaviour, cannot happen.
- It could be said that both the lead up to awakening and the experience and after effects of awakening both lead to right behaviour.

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

Section B

3. (a) **Examine the concepts of dukkha and anicca, with reference to the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.**

[AO1 25]

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

- Dukkha and anicca are two of the three lakshanas.
- These are part of the first teachings of the Buddha after his enlightenment and can be found in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta; the account of the first turning of the wheel of Dhamma.
- The Buddha delivered the first sermon to a group of five ascetics with whom he once sought help with the journey to enlightenment.
- When the Buddha taught people it was often done in stages to ensure that they were ready for the teachings as they progressed in spiritual difficulty. This can be seen in the Mahijjhima Nikaya when it says that the Buddha gave the person a step by step discourse on giving, virtue and the heavenly worlds before, '...then he expounded to him the elevated Dhamma teaching of the Buddhas: dukkha, its origination, its cessation, the path.'
- Dukkha and the understanding and prevention of it is arguably one of the most important teachings in Buddhism. It is both part of the three lakshanas and the Four Noble Truths.
- Peter Harvey translates the passage in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta to show dukkha as pain; 'Now this, bhikkus, for the spiritually ennobled ones, is the true reality which is pain: birth is painful, aging is painful, illness is painful, death is painful; sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, unhappiness and distress are painful; union with what is disliked is painful; in belief, the five bundles of grasping fuel are painful.' Instead of pain, 'Stress' was a word that was used in the translation of Dukkha in 1993 by Bhikkhu Thanissaro.
- Dukkha is a condition that arises when a person is unaware that things are impermanent. People become attached to things physically and emotionally. Things have no permanent substantial essence (svabhava).
- Anicca means impermanence. It is a term is not actually written in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. But, whilst the term is not used in the sermon the idea of it is prevalent throughout as a mark of existence. When Kondanna (one of the five listening to the sermon), heard the Buddha's teaching he said, 'whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation'. This was the first moment of realisation after the Buddha's enlightenment. This was the first turning of the wheel of Dhamma.
- Anicca as a concept came to the Buddha as a result of the observations of sickness, old age and death. The world is in a constant state of flux. Nothing stays the same and everything is constantly changing.
- A true understanding of anicca can only be understood from a direct meditative insight.

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

(b) 'The three lakshanas are the most important teachings of Buddhism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- The three lakshanas could be argued to be the basis for all of Buddhist philosophy. The three characteristics of existence, dukkha, anicca and anatta are observations about life. The Buddha can be seen to have conducted a scientific experiment involving the gathering of evidence before formulating his conclusions. The three lakshanas are effectively the conclusions gathered from the first three sights.
- The lakshanas are important as one of the first ever teachings of the Buddha found in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. As one of the concepts in his first teaching and the basis of the first turning of the wheel, Buddhists consider it to be a very important teaching.
- Not only is it important as the first insight of the Buddha but it is an important teaching today. When a Buddhist embarks on the quest of enlightenment one of the first teachings they need to fully understand is the concept of dukkha.
- Anicca is an important teaching because it tells us that everything in life is temporary. This teaching that everything changes helps Buddhists to change through the states of meditation and progress to enlightenment. The Buddha demonstrated that he could change and progress through to enlightenment.
- The only thing that is not anicca is nibbana. This is because there are no conditions on nibbana. One could argue that the teaching of nibbana is actually the most important teaching in Buddhism.
- Another teaching that could be seen as more important than the lakshanas is the path to overcome suffering, magga. It could be argued that the way out of something is a better teaching than an understanding of what the situation is.
- Anatta is an important teaching because it allows us to understand what we are. The Buddha meditated but said that he could not find the soul, instead he found various physical and mental states that collectively we call a person. This 'person' is not a permanent state but one that constantly changes.
- The three lakshanas must be the most important teachings because they are the catalysts for the pursuit of enlightenment. Dukkha means suffering but has been explained by Harvey to be 'frustration'. This frustration is linked to anicca as we are frustrated by the impermanence of things, and are too shown to be everchanging (anatta).
- Without this teaching we would not have an explanation of the Buddha's understanding of the first three sights, which led to the Four Noble Truths and ultimately the path to enlightenment. Thus making the lakshanas a very important teaching.

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

4. (a) Explain how vipassana meditation cultivates qualities which lead to awakening.

[AO1 25]

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

- Meditation is a method of reaching enlightenment and is inspired by the Buddha's meditation under the Bodhi tree. However, meditation was in existence long before the time of the Buddha. There are many terms used within the conversation of meditation and the translation of the word to English is not clear cut. Bhavana literally means developing and as a practice has three stages to this development. It is a mental development of our self-awareness. There are many types of meditation that can be favoured by different traditions of Buddhism.
- Vipassana is known as insight meditation and is a very advanced level of meditation that requires a full grasp of samatha meditation first.
- Vipassana meditation enabled the extinguishing of the three fires; greed, hatred and delusion. It is insight meditation that opens up a true appreciation of morality. This insight is not instantaneous but a steady state of deep intuitive perception.
- Vipassana tries to open the mind instead of focussing on a single point. During this type of meditation, the practitioner carefully observes the arising and then passing away of physical or mental phenomena in order to develop a deeper understanding of the three marks of existence.
- Vipassana meditation does not need to involve sitting. Buddhists following this method of meditation may utilise mindful walking. This is a slow pace walk in an open space that has the meditator walking towards a fixed point along a fixed path.
- Vipassana is developed by applying it to life experience. It is considered to be a difficult meditation to master, by those who are highly skilled and have mastered samatha meditation first.
- '...the two aspects of Buddhist meditation, calm (samatha) and insight (vipassana), are seen as together forming the basis for the realisation of the Buddhist goal: when calm and insight meditation are brought together (yuga-naddha), the unconditioned (nirvana) may be experienced.' Rupert Gethin
- There are various stages of vipassana meditation that help to cultivate suitable qualities. The first is to focus on the breathing this then leads to an awareness of the whole body, 'bare attention'. Later the mediator may contemplate death and decay. They then move on to contemplation of the mind and its thoughts and feelings from the perspective of the three marks of existence. The meditator is aware of thought patterns that lead to desire, ignorance and hatred. This leads to 'clear comprehension' and involves mastering complex techniques that can take years alongside striving to follow the eightfold path, to ultimately lead to enlightenment.

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

(b) 'Meditation is not important for all Buddhists.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Meditation is the most important practice a Buddhist can do. This was clearly demonstrated by the Buddha as he sat under the Bodhi tree. The Buddha did not suggest that some should meditate whilst others did not, there was no discrimination, only a teaching that led to enlightenment.
- Meditation is something that is practised by those at all levels within Buddhism and all Buddhist traditions, in some form. It ranges in level of difficulty and can be achieved by the most novice of Buddhists, thus demonstrating how important a tool it is.
- Some would argue that meditation has a greater meaning for those who follow the monastic lifestyle. Within this way of life there is a strong focus on meditation. This can be seen in the forest traditions of Theravada, the Tibetan traditions and the Zen monasteries. These examples, however, show that meditation cannot be of equal importance to all as monastics have much more available time to dedicate to this endeavour.
- The majority of Buddhists, Lay Buddhists, may focus on leading a good life that generates positive karma. This may involve supporting the sangha. Instead of devotion to meditation they may give offerings of support, alms and devotion.
- Meditation can be seen to have more value the better the Buddhist is and the more training they have had. However, meditation should not be viewed as a competition and this can be seen in the parajikas where it tells Buddhists that they should not boast about their spiritual achievements.
- Beyond Buddhism there are elements of meditation that have strong benefits to all of society. This can be seen in the way that counselling, psychiatry and NHS mental health organisations promote mindfulness as a way to improve mental health. It can be seen that this element of meditation, mindfulness, can promote a sense of calm for all that practise it. Regardless of their intention, awakening or the reduction of stress and suffering, meditation can be seen as important for all Buddhists. It strengthens the understanding of the self and can enhance spiritual development.
- Different types of meditation may be seen as more important to different traditions of Buddhism. Zen will be seen as the most important type of meditation for Zen Buddhists whereas Theravada Buddhists may consider samatha meditation to be the most important type of meditation.

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

5. (a) Outline the accounts of the Buddha's Awakening.

[AO1 25]

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

- The Buddha, Siddhatta Gautama, returned to the palace after witnessing the four sights. He met his new born son Rahula and immediately sought freedom and renounced his birth right.
- He began a life of asceticism; cutting his hair, giving up royal clothes and using one robe and a simple alms bowl. He sought out teachers to help him on his journey. Alara Kalama trained him in yoga until he achieved a state of nothingness. Uddaka Ramaputta also taught him in yoga but neither teacher helped him to reach enlightenment. After six years the Buddha realised that this method was not working for him, he was becoming weak. He had been starving himself and eventually he collapsed.
- He was revived by a woman named Sujata and when he regained strength he decided to pursue a different way, the 'middle way' (Majjhima Patipada) between the two extremes of luxury and asceticism.
- The Buddha eventually came to sit under the Bodhi tree, sitting in a state of meditation. He travelled through levels of insight known as jhanas before reaching the state of nirvana.
- There are four meditative absorptions (jhanas) that Gautama went through. The first was the unbroken attachment of an object and a total state of calm. The second was that thoughts were discarded as attachment and joy was found. The third was a state of equanimity, composed but still conscious. The final jhana is a state beyond all pleasure and pain; 'ready to pierce into reality' (Cush).
- The Buddha experienced Mara, the deva of the sense realm of existence. Mara challenged Gautama to give up his quest for enlightenment. Early texts show this encounter to be a simple one but later texts give much more detail.
- The Buddhacarita tells Buddhists about the battle that Gautama faced with Mara's army and the temptations of Mara's daughters.
- The final part of the exchange with Mara is Mara telling Gautama that there are to be no witnesses to his good works in his previous life and this one. Gautama's response is to touch the earth. The earth was the witness to his deeds.
- In the final stages of his enlightenment Gautama's experience gave him three significant insights. The first was his insight into his many past lives. This insight allowed him to deliver a variety of practical examples that can be found in the jataka stories. The second insight was an objective overview of birth, death and rebirth according to the laws of karma. He understood that for enlightenment to occur Buddhists needed to understand the origins of karma. The third part was the insight into pure wisdom and an understanding of how to stop dukkha.

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

(b) 'The Buddha's Awakening is not the most significant aspect of Buddhism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- It can be argued that the enlightenment of the Buddha is the most significant element of Buddhism as it is the central focus for every Buddhist. It is considered to be the ultimate goal for all Buddhists. The inspirational story of Siddharta Gautama as a sammasambuddha who discovered the Dhamma and established the sangha is one that unites Buddhists.
- The Buddha's enlightenment shows all Buddhists that they can reach enlightenment, it shows the possibility and also gives Buddhists direction and guidance. He shared his achievement for all to be able to replicate.
- However, others may say that to focus too much on the Buddha's accomplishment of enlightenment at a time when others had not made this achievement, could lead him to be seen as a deity and worshipped as such. This would be wrong.
- Moreover, it could be argued that a focus on the Buddha and his achievement may become detrimental to those who are trying to find their own path to enlightenment as they may be side-tracked by a focus on his story and not their own. The Buddha wanted Buddhists to follow their own path to enlightenment.
- To focus on the Buddha's enlightenment may be a futile task as only those who have experienced enlightenment can have a full understanding of it. It cannot be expressed fully and is beyond all human understanding, it requires a personal journey by each individual.
- It could be argued that the story is just that, a simple yet inspirational story that appeals to Buddhists of all ages and stages to help them strive to improve themselves, in everyday life.
- Mahayana Buddhism teaches that all humans can reach enlightenment in this life. It could be argued that it is the most significant teaching for this tradition of Buddhism.
- An alternative line of argument is that reaching enlightenment in Mahayana Buddhism is extremely difficult. Any help from those who have achieved enlightenment is therefore readily welcomed. Mahayana Buddhists who seek enlightenment may put their trust in the Bodhisattvas and their personal accounts of their enlightenment.
- Not every Buddhist strives for enlightenment. There are Buddhists who strive to have a better next life instead. In Theravada Buddhism the aim may be to have a better rebirth so that they can develop in the skills of meditation and enhance their morality.
- However; in Theravada Buddhism there are those who are trying to reach enlightenment immediately such as the arhats. These Buddhists would find the enlightenment story to be very important.

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