



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2024

**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.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 20 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;">17-20 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. • 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	<p style="text-align: center;">13-16 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. • 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	<p style="text-align: center;">9-12 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. • 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	<p style="text-align: center;">5-8 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. • 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	<p style="text-align: center;">1-4 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. • 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. <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	<p align="center">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></p>
5	<p align="center">25-30 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. • 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	<p align="center">19-24 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. • 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	<p align="center">13-18 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. • 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	<p align="center">7-12 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. • 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	<p align="center">1-6 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. • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES
COMPONENT 3: A STUDY OF RELIGION AND ETHICS
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To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

1. (a) **Explain the role of grace in free will, with reference to Pelagius and Arminius.**

[AO1 20]

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

- **Pelagius** argued that humans have free will granted by God. He stated that a loving God would not punish all of humanity for the Fall, as it was a necessary stage in human development which allowed humans to grow to maturity through expecting people to take responsibility for their moral choices.
- God supports humans in using their free will to make positive choices through moral laws such as the 10 Commandments and through the example of Jesus. Pelagius accepts that God's grace is necessary to support humans using their free will correctly using God's laws as guidance in choosing to do 'good works'. He believes that prayer is an important factor in gaining grace.
- He also believes that forgiveness is open to all through God's grace and Christ's atonement and will be granted to those who repent.
- **Arminius**, in contrast, accepted that original sin was damaging for humanity and limited human ability to make correct decisions using free will, however he argues that God's grace, granted through the power of the Holy Spirit, was sufficient to remove the taint of original sin and permit the appropriate use of free will.
- Middle knowledge' means that God knows exactly how much grace to give so we can freely choose.
- God's prevenient grace permits all moral agents to do good works as long as they freely choose to accept grace and follow God's guidance through the Holy Spirit to move towards moral goodness.
- Arminius rejected Calvin's concept of unconditional election and argued that election is conditional on faith. This meant that some humans could reject the offer of salvation of their own free will. Arminius' arguments are summed up in the Five Articles of Remonstrance offered in protest against Calvin's doctrine of predestination. These are conditional election, unlimited atonement, total depravity, resistible grace and the idea that evil can be resisted. These show that humans are able to make free moral choices about whether to do good or not.
- Arminius' ideas were rejected as heresy by the Synod of Dort but remained popular in certain branches of the church who pointed to the clear scriptural evidence that could be given in support. The Methodist Church in England, founded by the Wesley brothers, adopted Arminian beliefs about free will, prevenient grace and about the role of faith in salvation.

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

(b) 'Religious views about free will are convincing.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that religious views about free will are convincing as there is scriptural evidence to support the concept, for example Joshua 24.15.
- However, there is also scriptural evidence to support predestination such as Romans 8:29-30. Candidates may engage with the issue of how far such evidence can be convincing for either side of the issue when taken out of context.
- Another line of argument would be to consider the wider support religious views about free will have gained. For example, Pelagius' views on free will were seen as heretical. Also, the Synod of Dort clearly endorsed Calvin's doctrine of predestination and rejected Arminius' views on free will as unacceptable.
- However, candidates could consider Karl Barth's view that Christianity in the UK is 'incurably Pelagian' and could look at the influence of Arminian beliefs about free will on denominations such as Methodism when deciding how convincing such beliefs are. Candidates could choose to contrast this with the global influence of Calvin's views.
- Belief in free will could be seen as convincing as it makes prayer relevant. Beings with free will can both seek guidance from God through prayer and ask for forgiveness for sinful acts. As Pelagius points out, 'free will is in all good works always assisted by divine aid.'
- Support for this point could also be taken from Arminius who saw prayer as a means to enhance the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, which again shows that belief in free will fits with the way many believers understand prayer.
- However, this could be seen as questioning the sovereignty of God by suggesting that human requests and actions could influence their own salvation. This was a key reason why Augustine and Calvin argued for predestination and maintaining the nature of the God of Classical Theism could be seen as a more convincing position.
- Free will also means that humans are free to reject salvation as well as to accept it. For some believers, this is more convincing than the belief in unconditional election held by supporters of predestination.
- Religious views about free will appear compatible with God's benevolence, as God is not seen as 'the author of all sin' and does not predestine anyone to eternity in hell, which makes free will convincing for many believers.
- However, candidates could draw on Augustine's ideas about the origins of evil in original sin and the benevolence of God in saving the elect to counter this point.
- Candidates may choose to link religious views about free will to the modern debate surrounding libertarianism and determinism and argue that scientific, psychological or philosophical approaches offer support to one side of the debate more than the other.

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

2. (a) **Examine the implications of libertarianism for:**
- i. **the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts and**
 - ii. **the usefulness of normative ethics**

[AO1 20]

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

The value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts

- Libertarians believe that human life is largely free from deterministic factors and therefore humans have control over their moral attitudes and choices.
- This means that humans have to take responsibility for their own actions and cannot hide from this responsibility with the excuse of some form of determinism, whether this is biological, philosophical or psychological. This is sometimes contrasted with animals who, having no free will, lack moral responsibility.
- This leads onto the obvious conclusion that humans can be praised for correct moral decisions and blamed for making poor moral choices. Candidates could exemplify this using case studies.
- This makes punishment fair, as humans had a choice over how to act, but can also be seen as a burden or a 'curse' on humanity, as Sartre puts it.
- Accepting that humans have freedom of choice over morality therefore has implications for our legal systems, as these are used to hold adult humans accountable for the moral decisions they make. It also means that humans need to decide at what age children can be held responsible for their choices under the law.
- This then means that adult humans have a responsibility to shape the values and character of children to enable them to make correct moral decisions.
- **A further implication of libertarianism relates to the value of normative ethics.** If moral agents have free will then it is useful to have some form of guidance about how to exercise this free will.
- This means that normative ethical theories are important, and debates about which theories most accurately guide moral decisions making are vital for humanity as humans have to decide how best to exercise their moral freedom.
- Candidates could explain which normative theories allow for greater autonomy and so are more likely to be valued by supporters of libertarianism – for example, Utilitarianism allows for a greater degree of moral autonomy than Natural Law.

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

- (b) **‘Libertarianism clearly shows that human ideas about right and wrong are important.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that Libertarianism implies complete freedom for each individual 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.
- Existentialists may therefore argue that each individual has the responsibility of making moral decisions and needs to think carefully about right and wrong.
- Candidates could argue that, if free will is genuine, then studying human ideas about right and wrong is absolutely vital as humans should debate the best ways to act morally.
- However, candidates may argue human ideas about right and wrong are codified into a variety of flawed normative theories. This shows that human ideas about right and wrong are not important as we cannot agree. They may give examples from the normative theories studied in order to illustrate this point.
- Another line of argument would be to consider the determinist position that free will is an illusion, and therefore humans ideas about right and wrong are not really that important as they have little influence on what happens in the world.
- Human moral decision making is determined either by God, by genetics or by conditioning and so human ideas about right and wrong are pointless as they do not reflect 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 human ideas about right and wrong are a vital part of this.
- 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 human ideas about right and wrong should be valued.

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

Section B

3. (a) **Examine Aquinas' understanding of different types of virtues and goods in Natural Law.**

[AO1 20]

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

- In Aquinas' **Natural Law the virtues** should be cultivated in order to ensure that a person is capable of correct reasoning. In other words, they are the dispositions that allow a person to apply the other aspects of natural law well.
- There are three 'theological' or 'revealed' virtues which come from the Bible: faith, hope and love (charity), which Aquinas refers to as 'articles of faith.'
- The **theological virtues** are given in 1 Corinthians 13 and set the standard for human virtue. Where it states, "So **faith, hope, love** remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love." They can only be developed through the grace of God.
- For Aquinas, these virtues allow insight into God's vision for creation and therefore allow a better understanding of the purposes towards which moral actions should be directed.
- There are also **four 'cardinal' virtues** which are seen as the most important natural virtues for morality. These are: **prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice.**
- These relate back to the thinking of Aristotle and can also be found in the writings of Plato and Augustine.
- For Aquinas, these are the human qualities that allow for the best application of the principles of natural law.
- '**Goods**' in Aquinas Natural Law relate to correct reasoning. Aquinas argues that all humans want to do good, but that sometimes they reason incorrectly.
- '**Real** **goods**' are actions which allow humans to fulfil their purpose as identified in the primary precepts. They allow humans to work towards moral perfection.
- '**Apparent** **goods**' are actions which humans believe to be good at the time, but do not actually fulfil the goals identified in the primary precepts. For example, compassionate voluntary euthanasia may appear good but it does not fulfil the primary precept of the preservation of life.
- Cultivation of the virtues allows a person to distinguish more easily between real and apparent goods and to undertake good moral actions.

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

- (b) **‘The absolutist nature of Natural Law does not work in contemporary society.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that the absolutist nature of Natural Law does not match the nature of a modern, diverse society and that a theory that does not acknowledge the complexity of moral decision making in this society is not helpful.
- This view could be supported with examples of situations in which the deontological approach of Natural Law seems to lead to injustice and intolerance.
- Supporters of Natural Law may argue that an absolutist theory is better for modern society as it makes decisions clear cut and does not rely on uncertain predictions of consequences which are unlikely to be accurate. They may argue that moral certainty is an essential bedrock in a changing world.
- Another argument is that, while absolute rules could be seen as positive when it comes to establishing general principles of moral behaviour, they fail to be useful when it comes to the detail of moral decision making, where more flexibility is needed to accommodate different circumstances. Aquinas himself stated that ‘the more you descend into detail, the more it appears how the general rule admits exceptions, so that you have to hedge it with caution and qualification.’
- Aquinas’ own application of Natural Law, the concepts of casuistry and the Principle of Double Effect could be seen to offer some of the flexibility necessary for a theory to work in modern society, however this could be contrasted with the absolutist and legalistic application of Natural Law seen over the years.
- Another line of argument is that most modern legal systems are based on an absolutist approach such as Natural Law. The ideas of Natural Law underpin our modern systems of justice and human rights and therefore clearly do work in contemporary society. Again, the discussion here could revolve around the inflexible application of the laws.
- A different line of reasoning could be that Natural Law is divine in origin and is therefore universal, applying equally well in the modern world as it did in Aquinas’ time.
- However, the secular nature of modern society means that a theory based on God-given order may not be seen as the best way to make decisions.

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

4. (a) Apply Situation Ethics to the issue of homosexual relationships.

[AO1 20]

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

- Situation Ethics is a relativist theory that will not give a definitive moral guideline about same sex relationships. Each relationship will be assessed relative to the law of agape in the same way that any human relationship would be. This means that candidates have considerable freedom to interpret how the theory may be applied and may take a range of different approaches to their answer.
- What is clear from Fletcher's own writings is that he was frustrated with the inconsistent approach taken towards homosexuality when compared with other human relationships and, while he did not specifically apply Situation Ethics to this issue, he made it clear that discrimination on the grounds of sexuality was something he considered unacceptable.
- Fletcher argued that all sexual relationships should be restricted by three basic criteria under the law: the age of consent, public decency and acts involving harm. Sexual relationships of any kind should not be subject to further legal restrictions derived from religious ideas about 'sin'.
- Candidates may apply the four working principles and six fundamental principles to consider issues relating to homosexual relationships.
- For example, pragmatism – the chosen course of action must work in practice towards the most loving outcome. Candidates may point out that the position taken by some Christians that gay couples may live together but must not have a physical relationship could be regarded as immoral as it is not a pragmatic requirement and is likely to lead to frustration rather than a loving outcome.
- Also, 'the ruling norm of Christian decision making is love,' – candidates may explain that this principle could lead to Christians acting out of agape rather than obedience to a narrow interpretation of certain passages in scripture when it comes to homosexual relationships.
- Candidates may explain alternative interpretations of biblical passages related to homosexuality. For example, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah may be interpreted as condemning all homosexual relationships, or as condemning any non-consensual physical relationship, or as being a condemnation of the lack of hospitality shown to strangers. Candidates may discuss these interpretations in the light of the fundamental principle.
- 'Love wills the neighbour's good, whether we like them or not.' This principle could be linked to Jesus' approach to those considered 'outsiders' in his society and candidates could explain how this approach could influence the views of some Christians towards same sex relationships such as the case of Alan Turing.

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

(b) 'Situation Ethics is an effective way to make moral decisions.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Situation Ethics could be seen as an effective way to make moral decisions as it requires humans to consider the consequences of their actions, and this is a normal approach to decision making. Consequences have a real effect on human well-being and so it is useful to consider these in every moral decision.
- However, it is difficult to accurately predict the consequences of an action and so working out what will give the most pragmatic, loving decision is not as straightforward as it sounds.
- Situation ethics can also be seen as effective as it allows individuals freedom to make decisions for themselves, which is a far more attractive approach in the modern world than a legalistic approach which may appear very dated.
- However, candidates may argue that many people prefer to have clear-cut moral guidelines. The relativist approach of Situation Ethics could mean that some actions which are clearly condemned in religious scriptures may be seen as moral.
- Another line of argument would be to consider the religious basis of Situation Ethics and to argue that it must be effective as it mirrors the moral approach of Jesus.
- However, candidates may argue that human beings find it difficult to apply agape in an unselfish way and may end up making decisions which suit themselves rather than acting in a genuinely agapeistic way.
- Candidates may consider the approach taken by Vardy and Grosch that Situation Ethics is a theory designed to be used by Christians who are acting sincerely within their faith and aiming to love as God loves to the best of their ability. Outside this religious framework, the rationale for using Situation Ethics is less clear as people may not have a clear enough understanding of agape to use it effectively.
- On the other hand, the principles of Situation Ethics make it clear how the theory is to be applied and offer a useful practical method to make decisions in tough situations when, from a legalistic perspective, all actions seem wrong.

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

5. (a) Explain Divine Command theory.

[AO1 20]

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

- Divine Command Theory is the theory which sees God as the origin and regulator of morality – what is good is what God says is good. For example, stealing is morally wrong if God says it is wrong, and a person who follows God's command not to steal achieves moral goodness.
- Divine Command theory argues that God has established eternal principles of morality and shares these with humans, usually in the form of sacred texts, therefore, moral goodness is achieved by complying with what is commanded by God. For example, in Christianity, the general moral commands can be found in the Decalogue and a morally good person will follow these commands.
- Right and wrong are seen as objective truths based on God's will as the divine lawgiver. These truths should form the foundation of any human system of morality.
- There is no standard of morality outside God as he is the origin of what is good. This is compatible with God's omnipotence. This means that human opinions, feelings and reasoning have no impact on the morality of a given action. It also means that God can command actions which go against His more general guidelines in specific circumstances and complying with these commands will be morally good e.g. the story of Abraham and Isaac.
- The issue of the Euthyphro dilemma raised by Plato may be discussed in this context: is something approved by God because it is good, or is it good because it is approved by God? In other words, does goodness exist separately from God's approval or is goodness a consequence of God's approval?
- Adams offers a modified version of Divine Command Theory and states that an action is moral if it obeys the commands of a loving God.
- This avoids some of the more obvious criticisms of the theory relating to whether God can command as good things which we would consider to be evil (the arbitrariness problem.)
- A God who is loving and perfectly good will command actions in keeping with God's nature – his commands will reflect his omnibenevolence and so he would not command anything arbitrary.
- This makes morality a feature of God's nature – God is the moral law therefore the moral law must be good as omnibenevolence is part of God's unchanging nature.

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

- (b) **‘Divine Command Theory is a better approach to ethics than Ethical Egoism.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Divine Command Theory is rooted in the will and nature of God, who is in Himself the originator of all morality. Therefore, Divine Command Theory is clearly a better approach to ethics than Ethical Egoism, which is based solely on the individual.
- It is also universal and absolute. The morality outlined by Divine Command Theory has served humanity well for hundreds of years and cannot be swayed by human bias, unlike Ethical Egoism.
- However, Divine Command Theory could be seen to be inflexible and unsuited to decision making in the modern era. It does not offer specific guidance about issues such as IVF or abortion, beyond the blanket prohibition of murder. Ethical Egoism is better in this sense as it allows for individual autonomy and makes it possible for differences in approach to be tolerated in matters of private morality.
- Divine Command Theory could be seen to restrict individual autonomy and human development. Surely humans should be allowed to exercise their own reason and judgement in matters of morality rather than being blindly obedient. Ethical egoism is better as it requires humans to take responsibility for their own decision-making and to act in a rational manner.
- On the other hand, human decision-making is often flawed. Humans tend to prioritise short-term over long term interests and struggle to act in unselfish ways. This shows that a structured theory such as Divine Command Theory is better as it overrides the problem of human nature.
- Divine Command Theory could be seen as superior by religious believers who wish to act in obedience to God’s will, but is unlikely to be preferred by non-believers, who would reject the basis of the entire theory. Non-believers may point out the dangers of acting out of ‘blind faith’ by identifying examples of horrific acts allegedly carried out according to divine commands. They may also point to the difficulty of pluralism, and the problem of identifying which commands, if any, are genuinely divine.
- However, ethical egoism may not be seen as a better approach as it is equally likely to cause conflict over whose interests should be prioritised at any given opportunity, potentially leading to bigotry and intolerance.

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