



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**AS
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 3
AN INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION AND ETHICS**

B120U30-1

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	Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions [25 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	21-25 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. - Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	16-20 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. - Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	11-15 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. - Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	6-10 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. - Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	1-5 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. - 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 A02- 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	21-25 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. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	16-20 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. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	11-15 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. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	6-10 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. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	1-5 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. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	• No relevant analysis or evaluation.

EDUQAS GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES
COMPONENT 3: AN INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION AND ETHICS
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To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

1. (a) Explain how factors of the hedonic calculus can be used to measure pleasure.

[AO1 25]

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

- The hedonic calculus forms part of the theory of Act Utilitarianism, which is a form of moral relativism. It is a consequentialist and teleological theory which builds on the natural human tendency to pursue pleasure and avoid pain.
- Act Utilitarianism is based on the principle of utility and the greatest happiness principle: a good action is one that aims to promote not only pleasure and not pain, but also 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number.'
- In order to calculate the greatest quantity of happiness in a given situation, Jeremy Bentham proposed the hedonic calculus, a set of seven factors which must be considered in each situation:
 - a. Intensity – the stronger the pleasure the more weight it carries
 - b. Duration – longer lasting pleasures create greater happiness
 - c. Certainty – a pleasure that is sure to happen carries more weight than a possibility of pleasure.
 - d. Remoteness (propinquity) – pleasures that are closer in time carry more weight
 - e. Fecundity (richness) – if the pleasure will lead to further pleasures in the future, this gives a greater overall quantity
 - f. Purity – a pleasure that does not contain any pain is better than one in which pleasure and pain are mixed.
 - g. Extent – the greater the number of people affected by the pleasure, the better.
- Each factor is equally valid in the decision-making process and the hedonic calculus should be used to weigh up the quantity of pleasure that will result from each possible course of action before deciding on the best overall option.
- Bentham used the criteria 'can they suffer?' to decide whose happiness should be considered when weighing up the overall utility of an action.
- Candidates may choose to illustrate the use of the Hedonic Calculus by drawing on the issues of animal experimentation or nuclear deterrence to exemplify their points or, alternatively, they may choose examples from other areas of ethics to support their explanations.

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

(b) 'Act utilitarianism clearly promotes justice.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Candidates may choose to define justice as 'fair', 'equitable', or 'equal' treatment of people. Alternatively, they may relate justice to systems of law.
- The principle of utility shows that Act Utilitarianism clearly promotes justice as happiness is sought for as many people as possible. Surely justice comes from serving the interests of the many.
- However, there are many circumstances in which the happiness of the majority could be achieved by the suffering of the few. The example often used by candidates is that of gang rape. This seems to suggest that Act Utilitarianism can be used to promote the very opposite of justice.
- Candidates may, however, discuss whether such examples represent accurate applications of the hedonic calculus which, after all, contains six factors other than extent, and requires the weighing up of both pleasure and pain.
- The fact that this complex 'pleasure measuring' process is required may allow for the conclusion that Act Utilitarianism does promote injustice when used in its most basic form, and that, as people have little time in real situations to make lengthy calculations of pleasure over pain, the basic utility principle will be used most often and so the criticism stands.
- Candidates may, however, consider whether a theory can be criticised on the grounds that it is not followed accurately.
- Another line of argument would be to consider the difficulty of predicting the consequences of an action, particularly in their broadest possible sense. Human nature means that people tend to expect the consequences they want rather than making an objective assessment of the relative merits of all possible consequences of an action. Justice may be better served by having clear-cut rules.
- However, if consequences are not used and a more deontological approach is taken, then examples of injustice may be more likely. It is clear that consequences affect people's lives and, by judging every action on its merits, Act Utilitarianism can be used to promote justice at an individual level.
- Act Utilitarianism can be complex, however, as application of the Hedonic Calculus to every situation is time consuming and not straightforward. Therefore, it could be argued that it does not promote justice and that a form of Rule Utilitarianism would do this better as it is easier to follow the general rules, while still maintaining the benefits of the principles of utility and the greatest happiness principle.

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

2. (a) Apply Bentham's Utilitarianism to the issue of the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

[AO1 25]

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

- As Bentham's Utilitarianism is a relativist theory and does not give definitive moral guidelines about the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent, candidates may apply the theory in different ways to the issue and give different weightings to the quantity of pleasure and pain that results. All reasonable applications should be credited.
- Bentham's Act Utilitarianism is based on the principle of utility - a moral action is one that will maximise pleasure and minimise pain.
- The Hedonic Calculus is a set of criteria designed to measure which course of action will create the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number' in a given moral situation.
- In the case of the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent, the balance of pleasure and pain should be considered using the seven criteria of the calculus.
- Intensity – the strength of pleasure that comes from avoiding nuclear war and from the sense of security a deterrent gives may be considered.
- Duration – the possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent is seen to have contributed to the long-term peace and stability of much of the world following World War 2.
- Certainty – some may suggest that we cannot be certain whether peace in the latter half of the 20th Century stems from the possession of nuclear weapons or from other factors. The weapons may fall into the 'wrong' hands and we would not then be certain that they would be used as a deterrent alone.
- Remoteness – candidates may explain that the happiness that comes from a feeling of security is closer than the pain which may come from the eventual use of nuclear weapons.
- Fecundity – the possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent may lead to further pleasure as countries seek out alternative methods of conflict resolution. Alternatively, the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent may increase distrust globally and lead to international relations based on threats of violence rather than cooperation, which is unlikely to lead to further pleasure.
- Purity – the possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent is not a pure pleasure, as the knowledge of the destructive capabilities of such weapons, and the fear of misuse will cause some pain. Also, the cost of maintaining a nuclear deterrent means that some will experience pain through the choices countries make in funding such weapons.
- Extent – if the deterrent works, then the pleasure extends, at least, to the populations of the countries which possess nuclear weapons. The extent may be greater if groups of allies are considered.

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

(b) 'Pleasure is not the only intrinsic good.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Utilitarianism is based on maximising pleasure and minimising pain, deriving this from the hedonist approach which values pleasure as the basis for morality.
- All humans ultimately value pleasure and therefore basing morality on pleasure means that a moral action is one that fulfils human nature, suggesting that pleasure is the only intrinsic good.
- However, some may argue that this makes humans little better than swine and is a reductionist view of morality. They may argue that there are other intrinsic goods which are more important than pleasure such as justice.
- In order to counter this view, Mill's focus on the quality rather than the quantity of pleasure could be considered here. If 'pleasure' is understood in terms of higher, intellectual pleasures, then this could be seen as intrinsically good as it contributes towards the development of both the individual and of society along the lines of Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia.
- Another line of argument is that pleasure is subjective and therefore an inadequate basis for morality. To develop this argument, alternative applications of the criteria of the hedonic calculus to a particular issue could be used.
- Along similar lines, it could be argued that it is impossible to quantify pleasure in any meaningful way, and that the hedonic calculus does not really help to objectively measure pleasure in real life situations. It is hard to argue for something so subjective to be the only intrinsic good.
- Alternatively, it could be claimed that the hedonic calculus does offer a meaningful way of weighing up which actions are moral and that the answers derived from this process fit in with our general moral intuitions, making it a genuine basis for morality.
- However, examples could be given in which the action which produces 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number' could produce injustice or immorality.
- It could be argued that basing morality on pleasure will always lead to a relativist approach to morality, and that actually humans require moral absolutes to form the true basis for morality.
- Candidates may choose to argue that 'pleasure' needs to be defined more clearly or qualified in order to form the basis for morality. They may argue for an alternative form of utilitarianism such as rule utilitarianism or preference utilitarianism in making their case.
- Candidates may also choose to argue in favour of one of the other ethical theories studied: natural law or situation ethics, as forming a better basis for establishing what, if anything, can be considered as an intrinsic good.

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

Section B

3. (a) Explain challenges to Ethical Egoism.

[AO1 25]

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

- Ethical Egoism claims that an action is moral if it is based on the self-interest of the agent. It assumes that it is right for a person to pursue their own well-being. This claim can be challenged in a number of ways.
- Ethical Egoism could be seen to destroy a community ethos. The focus on the good of the individual in ethical egoism could lead to the good of the community being ignored in a variety of ways.
- For example, if large numbers of individuals regard it as being in their best interests to go against particular laws, then the legal system in a society will be challenged. The state and legal system are set up to benefit the majority but can only function through the decision by individuals to set aside their own particular interests at times to serve the common good.
- States cannot function effectively if individuals can select which laws they will choose to obey. For this reason, Ethical Egoism has often been associated with anarchy and the elimination of the state and, while Stirner did not advocate this, he seemed to regard the collapse of the state as inevitable.
- Another issue is that following Ethical Egoism would lead to social injustice. If everyone pursues their own interests, then it is impossible that these collective interests would not vary and thereby come into conflict and as a result.
- It is clear that in circumstances where the interests of one person or group is in direct opposition to the interests of another person or group, that injustice would occur as the interests of both cannot be served at once.
- Critics of Ethical Egoism would say that minorities within a society are more likely to lose out under this system as they don't have the power or influence to ensure their interests are served in a conflict situation.
- For example, in a situation where resources are scarce, Ethical Egoism would encourage the individual to take what they need rather than considering the needs of others, and this approach is clearly advocated by Stirner.
- This issue could then lead on to the challenge that Ethical Egoism encourages bigotry. Those whose individual interests appear to be aligned would form unions of egoists, according to Stirner, and would cooperate to serve their own interests. It is easy to see how this could lead to intolerance of the needs of other individuals whose interests did not align in the same way.

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

(b) 'Ethical Egoism inevitably leads to moral evil.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Ethical egoism may be seen to lead to moral evil as it gives autonomy to individuals who choose according to their own self-interest rather than being expected to follow any pre-established moral guidelines.
- In fact, being slave to the will of others in terms of morality is seen by Stirner as damaging to the individual and something to be avoided. Therefore, following ethical egoism will surely lead inevitably to moral evil as its adherents will reject traditional views about morality.
- However, it could be argued that many other ethical theories lead to 'moral evil', particularly those which require individuals to act against their own interests in favour of obedience to externally imposed guidelines. Such approaches could be argued to be psychologically damaging for individuals and, as such, could lead to greater 'evils' than those they supposedly prevent.
- In terms of religious belief, Stirner's approach would lead to moral evil as actions such as divorce and premarital sex would be permitted if they served the interests of the individual, whereas many religious guidelines would see these as immoral.
- However, followers of ethical egoism would again claim that these religious restrictions are a form of 'moral evil' in themselves as they lead to unnecessary restrictions to the development of human autonomy.
- Another line of argument would be to question the term 'inevitably' and to consider whether all humans would make 'immoral' decisions when faced with the freedom to act out of self-interest. It could be argued that all supposedly altruistic actions are ultimately self-interested and that ethical egoism is simply honest about this, rather than pretending otherwise. Ethical egoism may allow some to commit acts which may be seen as 'evil' but would lead others to act in a way classed as 'morally good' by other accepted standards.
- The view in the question could be seen as very pessimistic about human nature and ethical egoism could be seen as having a more optimistic, positive approach to human behaviour.
- Alternatively, ethical egoism may be seen as a naïve approach that would lead to total moral chaos. Human nature, it could be argued, is such that clear, objective moral guidelines are necessary in order to maintain civilised societies.

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

4. (a) **Apply Aquinas' Natural Law to the issue of abortion, with reference to primary and secondary precepts.**

[AO1 25]

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

- Aquinas' Natural Law states that a good action is one that fulfils the purpose of the agent. Therefore, in order to apply Aquinas' Natural Law to ethical issues, it is important to consider the purpose of a human being.
- Aquinas claimed that the ultimate purpose of a human being was to develop into the image of God and re-establish a right relationship with God. This could only be done fully in heaven but could be worked towards while on Earth.
- The purpose of human beings on Earth are expressed in Aquinas' primary precepts: preservation of life, living in an ordered society, worship God, educate the young and reproduce. A good action works towards these precepts.
- When applying Aquinas' Natural Law it is necessary to decide whether an action works to support the primary precepts (a real good) or whether it takes humans away from their purpose (an apparent good). From the primary precepts, secondary precepts which give specific rules about how to act can then be derived.
- Abortion refers to the deliberate termination of a pregnancy, either for medical or social reasons. It is legal in the UK under the conditions of the 1967 Abortion Act.
- Aquinas' Natural Law would condemn abortion as inherently evil as it involves the direct killing of an innocent life, going against the primary precept of preservation of life. This applies to all abortions, regardless of circumstance. Therefore the secondary precept 'abortion is wrong' can be derived using reason.
- Obviously, this position depends on holding the view that a foetus counts as a person from the point of conception, which is a contested view. For example, Aquinas himself held that human life only truly starts when the soul is infused into the foetus around 40 days after conception.
- Some may consider Kainz' view that the precepts of order in society and reproduction may support abortion in the case of rape or incest, as these actions clearly go against the right to have children in a way that conforms to social norms and may take away the right to make decisions about reproduction.
- He also points out that there may be two innocent lives at stake in the case of abortion, and that proponents of natural law often make exceptions to the first precept in the case of the foetus in order to preserve the life of the mother.
- The only other exceptions to the rule regarding abortion come under the principle of double effect. For example, it may be acceptable to perform a hysterectomy on a pregnant woman suffering from cancer of the uterus. The intention would be to save her life, the action may well save her life, the known but unintended side effect would be the death of the foetus. This is not the same as permitting abortion to save the life of the mother and candidates should be clear about the distinction.

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

- (b) **‘An absolutist approach to abortion doesn’t work in the modern world.’**

Evaluate this view with reference to Aquinas’ Natural Law. [AO2 25]

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

- Aquinas’ Natural Law approach to abortion makes the decision very clear. Abortion goes against the primary precept of reproduction and therefore is wrong. This approach may not work in the modern world as the circumstances around abortion vary so widely that one approach cannot possibly cover all of these fairly.
- However, this clear approach could be seen as a positive point as it does not rely on predicting the consequences of the abortion, which can be very difficult to do.
- The decisions made according to Aquinas’ Natural Law are based on reason and keep emotion out of the decision-making process – this could be useful in making decisions about abortion where emotions can often run high.
- However, an absolute ban on abortion could be seen to lead to injustice in certain circumstances. For example, many would argue that abortion is justified in the case of rape, whereas Aquinas’ Natural Law may not support this as, even though the rape was an evil action, the resulting foetus would be seen as an innocent whose life was regarded as important.
- This tension between the rights of the mother and the right to life of the unborn child, as a foetus would be described by Aquinas’ Natural Law, is one of the reasons why many would argue that Aquinas’ Natural Law does not work in these cases.
- However, Kainz would argue that this is not the only way to apply Natural Law to the issue of abortion. He offers a way to interpret the precepts in a less absolutist way that would allow for abortion in the case of rape or incest, as these go against the right to have children within the structures of an ordered society. It could be argued that Natural Law could therefore be reinterpreted in a less rigid way that would serve the modern world better.
- In other difficult cases, such as where the mother’s health is at risk as a result of pregnancy, the principle of double effect could also make the Aquinas’ Natural Law response less absolutist. For example, in the case of ectopic pregnancy, it is possible to see the abortion as a known but unintended side effect of the removal of a fallopian tube, and therefore as acceptable. This makes Aquinas’ Natural Law more effective as it has some flexibility.
- Another line of argument would be to argue that Aquinas’ Natural Law is consistent and coherent as it is based on God’s eternal law. Therefore, an absolutist approach could be accepted as a way to pursue humanity’s God given purpose.
- However, it could be argued that Aquinas’ interpretation of the purpose of creation as shown through the primary precepts can be contested. In an over-populated world - is it legitimate to argue that reproduction is the self-evident purpose of humans? Aquinas’ Natural Law response to abortion may not work in the modern world for this reason.

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

5. (a) Examine biblical evidence used to support Fletcher's Situation Ethics.

[AO1 25]

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

- The situational approach to ethics advocated by Fletcher is based on the Christian concept of agape.
- This is supported by the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) in which Jesus demonstrates what the commandment to 'love your neighbour as yourself' means in practice.
- This parable influenced Fletcher's understanding of agape and is reflected in the six fundamental principles.
- Agape is also addressed in St Paul's letter to the Corinthians in which the high status of love in Christian approaches to life is clearly explained (1 Corinthians 13). Again, this teaching is clearly reflected in Fletcher's theory through the centrality of agape as the boss principle and through the fundamental principles.
- The key principles of Situation Ethics have a clear basis in the biblical evidence given above and candidates may choose to refer to these or to other examples from scripture in their examination.
- Personalism follows closely from Jesus' desire to put people before the law. For example, Jesus broke Sabbath laws to heal and did not enact the punishments required by strict law on the woman taken in adultery.
- Relativism also reflects the approach of Jesus when he rejected the Pharisees' insistence on sticking to the letter of the law.
- This is also seen in the fundamental principle 'Love's decisions are made situationally not prescriptively.'
- Positivism focuses on faith and the voluntary acceptance of a loving God, expressed through the person of Christ.
- The six fundamental principles serve to elucidate Fletcher's understanding of agape. These include: 'the ruling norm of Christian decision making in love: nothing else' which again reflects the teachings of Jesus that 'the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.' (Mark 2:27-28). The laws were there to serve people as a guide to show how to love, not to become rigid and fixed at the expense of love.
- 'Love and justice are the same' – in this principle Fletcher demonstrates the active nature of Christian love. Agape relates to doing rather than to feeling.
- 'Love wills the neighbour's good, whether we like him or not.' – again this relates back to Jesus' approach in the Parable of the Good Samaritan and in his approach to those considered to be outsiders in society.

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

(b) 'Situation Ethics promotes moral behaviour.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Situation Ethics can be seen to promote moral behaviour as the focus on agape allows consideration for the people involved in a situation rather than the rigid application of rules. The personalism of Situation Ethics makes it moral.
- However, it could be argued that agape is not a clear enough guideline about how to act. In spite of the working and fundamental principles, it gives no clear guidelines about how to act and so could lead to actions which go against perceived moral rules.
- For example, it is clear from Fletcher's own examples that Situation Ethics would permit both adultery and infanticide if the situation demands it, yet many would argue that these are both immoral actions in any circumstance.
- It may be better to follow a theory which has clear cut moral rules such as Natural Law to avoid the abandonment of traditional moral guidelines caused by the situational approach.
- Situation Ethics is based on the approach taken by Jesus in the gospels, for example his breaking of the Sabbath laws in order to behave morally by healing. Surely any theory which promotes following the example of Jesus will lead to moral behaviour.
- However, it could be argued that, while Jesus appeared able to apply the principle of agape effectively, other humans are less capable of living up to this standard and perhaps should not try to do so.
- People interpret situations according to their own point of view and the love applied is rarely unconditional in practice.
- Also, people may claim to be acting out of love when, in fact, their intentions are quite selfish. This is often the case when situation ethics is applied to relationships and so it might actually promote immoral behaviour.
- However, this is not necessarily a criticism of the theory itself, but the inappropriate way in which it has been applied. If Situation Ethics is used properly then these criticisms could be dismissed.
- Situation Ethics could also be seen as promoting moral behaviour as it is relativist and considers the consequences of an action as well as the action itself. This allows different responses in different circumstances and reflects the complexity of morality.
- However, as consequences can be unpredictable, it may be seen to lead to immoral behaviour because its basis is unreliable. The loving consequences can never be guaranteed and may not be worth breaking an established moral principle.

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