



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**AS
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
OPTION D: AN INTRODUCTION TO 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	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 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	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 – COMPONENT 1
OPTION D: AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM
SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1. (a) **Explain Buddhist concepts of anicca and anatta.**

[AO1 25]

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

- The three lakshanas are considered by Buddhists to be universal truths. They are dukkha (suffering); anicca (impermanence) and anatta (not-self).
- 'Without deep insight into the impermanence and insubstantiality of all phenomena of existence there is no attainment of deliverance.' (Nyanatiloka)
- The three lakshanas have their origin in the four sights.
- Dukkha is suffering but it can also be understood as 'unsatisfactoriness' (Peter Harvey) and ranges from mild discomfort physically, mentally and spiritually to extreme forms of suffering or pain.
- It is the starting point for the Buddha's teaching: 'Suffering I teach and a way out of suffering'.
- Anicca can be seen in the first Three Sights of old age, sickness and death. These sights show us that nothing is static and nothing stays the same. Change is inevitable and we are constantly in a state of flux.
- This is compatible with modern science. Sub-atomic level particles are in a constant flux despite giving the appearance of solidity and permanence.
- Anicca can be positive, change is not always decay, it can be growth such as from sickness to health.
- Anatta is the idea of not-self. It is often misunderstood and misinterpreted in the west. 'According to Buddhism, mind is nothing but a complex compound of fleeting mental states... Here there is no identical being, but there is an identity in process.' (Narada Thera)
- The idea of anatta can be seen as the opposite of having a soul. It can be seen as an absence of 'own self' (svabhava) or 'emptiness' (sunyata).
- Buddhists believe that instead of a soul we are made up of 5 fluctuating impermanent skandhas (khandhas [Pali]). They are Rupa (form), Vedana (feeling), Sanna (perception), Sankhara (mental formations), Vinnana (consciousness).
- The Buddha himself decided that he could find no part of himself that was not constantly changing and thus could not identify any permanent part of himself.

- Candidates may refer to the text, 'The Question of King Milinda' (100BCE), it is a non-canonical text that explains the misinterpretation of the idea anatta.
- The three lakshanas are interlinked; we suffer (Dukkha) because we do not understand or accept the impermanence of things (anicca). Because things are impermanent (anicca) we can say that nothing has a self or true form (anatta). Because we depend on and attach to things that are impermanent and have no self, we suffer.

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

(b) 'Anicca is the most important teaching in Buddhism'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- A line of enquiry could be that anicca is part of the three lakshanas which are the foundation for Buddhism, therefore, it is one of the most important aspects of Buddhism. Anicca is found in the first three of the Four Sights - the first teaching of the Buddha.
- The Four Sights as a whole are more important than anicca as they are the starting point of the Buddha's journey to enlightenment and collectively embrace several Buddhist teachings.
- Dukkha can be seen as more important as it is part of the Four Noble Truths. Moreover it is actually a basic feature of, and the starting point for, the Buddha's teaching: 'Suffering I teach and a way out of suffering'.
- To counter, some may say that because dukkha is often not translated properly it loses its meaning and cannot be considered an important concept in Buddhism. For example, John Snelling says that it has a 'wide spectrum of meanings' and Walpola Rahula says that definitions are often 'highly unsatisfactory and misleading.'
- It could be said that anicca is the most important part of Buddhism, rather than dukkha as the suffering described by dukkha is the result of not accepting the impermanence of life.
- One could argue that The Eightfold Path is more important as it helps a Buddhist to embrace the three marks of existence and to reach enlightenment. Magga (the path) provides more guidance, and is more practical, than the teaching of anicca.
- Anicca is often seen as negative however it can be positive and to really understand it is to move towards Awakening / Enlightenment. Without the true understanding of anicca, Awakening / Enlightenment is not possible, thus making it an essential concept in Buddhism.
- Anicca, fully understood, describes the human condition perfectly as it signifies the constant flux of human life. People can relate to this description and see it as an accurate portrayal of reality; therefore its importance is wide-ranging and practical..
- However, anatta could be considered to be of more importance due to the use of the analogy of the chariot, its importance for meditation and its status as unique to Buddhism.
- Another line of argument could be that Buddhist teachings are inter-dependent and that it is difficult to understand them in abstract.
- The notion of impermanence is fundamental to dukkha and anatta but likewise, both anatta and dukkha depend upon other teachings to fully understand them.

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

2. (a) Explain Buddhist teachings about rebirth

[AO1 25]

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

- Rebirth is known as punabhava, which literally translates to 'rebecoming' or 'renewed existence'. Rebirth continues to happen at the end of every life until the human has followed the Noble Eightfold Path and reached a state of being noble and worthy, an arhat.
- A Buddhist aim is to escape the cycle of samsara and enter the state of parinirvana.
- When moksha is achieved by insight and the ending of craving, the wheel of samsara stops turning. The ultimate goal for Buddhists is to reach nirvana.
- Rebirth is different to the concept of reincarnation found in Hinduism and Sikhism as there is no soul transference. The Buddha rejected the concept of the soul instead listing 5 skandhas that flow to the new birth. As Narada Thera states: 'This Buddhist doctrine of rebirth should be distinguished from the theory of reincarnation which implies the transmigration of a soul and its invariable material rebirth'.
- The skandhas are a group of thoughts, feelings and energies that are transferred. The nature of the skandhas was raised in The Questions of King Milinda. Nagasena said that the person is 'neither the same nor different' after rebirth. Nagasena offers three analogies.
- One analogy is that milk changes to butter and curds but is essentially the same ingredients. Each analogy shows that there is change but there are clear elements that remain the same.
- Candidates may draw upon ideas within the Bhavacakra
- There are six realms that a person can be born into. They are: Devas (heavenly realm), Asuras (demi-gods), Manushyas (humans), Tiryakas (animal realm), Pretas (hungry ghost realm) and Narakas (hell realm).
- The most important realm is the human realm as it is only in this realm that spiritual development can be made and parinirvana achieved.
- The realm that one is reborn in is dependent upon an individual's karma and in some cases, the transfer of merit.
- Pratityasamutpada (conditioned arising or dependent origination) means that samsara is one continuous process. It is the arising of the physical and mental phenomena due to causes and conditions. Rebirth is one aspect of this process. There are 12 causes and conditions.
- The concept of rebirth varies slightly between different Buddhist traditions.

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

(b) 'Buddhist teachings about rebirth do not represent reality.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Due to the complex nature of the concept of rebirth, it can lead to a lack of understanding and subsequently believing that the concept does not represent reality. More than this it can also be seen as a religious fantasy.
- Life and rebirth is driven by ignorance according to Buddhism but this does seem to be counter intuitive to the reality that we develop our knowledge as time progresses.
- Buddhists would argue that all teachings of Buddhism are representative of reality as they are to do with our perspective. All of the teachings delivered by the Buddha are geared to dealing with the problem of dukkha and eventually leading to nirvana.
- Some may argue that the Bhavachakra does not help us to understand the concept of rebirth as a reality as it can be interpreted as a symbolic representation mythical ideas rather than a physical reality.
- The teachings about rebirth can be complex, confusing and inconsistent and therefore are not really representative of reality.
- Some may argue that teachings about karma and pratyasamutpada are representative of reality as the notion of cause and effect and the transfer of energies is in line with contemporary thinking and is not dependent upon religious or superstitious ideas..
- Rebirth, however, may not fit with some understanding of science. There is no empirical proof for rebirth and some would argue science deals only with the world that we experience and nothing beyond it nor the metaphysical realms.
- According to Tibetan Buddhism there is proof of rebirth. The 14th Dalai Lama remembered his previous life and demonstrated this by identifying items that he possessed in his previous life. This is how they confirmed that the young child was indeed the Dalai Lama.
- The different realms of existence that include hell realms with demons as long with the cycle of life guarded by the god of death, Yama, do not feel like reality and some would argue that this is mythological or symbolic.
- A final line of argument would be that rebirth is very much part and parcel of the change, development and renewal that we see in the natural world. Indeed most Buddhists would argue that the shift from death to rebirth is no less smooth than the changes that we experience taking place during life.

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

Section B

3. (a) Examine the meanings of the Mara/temptation narratives.

[AO1 25]

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

- Candidates may explain the immediate lead up to this event and this will be credited as contextual.
- For example, the narrative that Siddhartha Gautama sat under a Bodhi tree and meditated until he achieved enlightenment. Traditional Buddhist texts describe a specific night that he sat under the Bodhi tree and had a vivid religious experiences.
- The teachings of the Buddha's enlightenment contain mystical elements such as the presence of devas, particularly Mara. In Buddhism, Mara is the being that binds humanity to the physical world and whose aim is to hinder spiritual development.
- Mara confronts Gautama and tries to get him to abandon his quest for Awakening / Enlightenment. In many Buddhist texts this event is an elaborate description, however, there are some very old texts that suggests that it was a very simple encounter in which Gautama simply refused to be swayed.
- In the more elaborate texts, Mara gave Siddhartha many tests.
- The first test that Mara sent was a spiritual army to defeat Siddhartha. With this army Mara sent deadly weapons but Gautama's resolve was not broken. He summoned all of the ten paramitas (perfections) to ward off the evils of violence. They are those perfected by a Bodhisattva: generosity, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, determination, loving kindness and equanimity.
- After this failed attempt Mara sent temptations by way of promises of glory and pleasure. It did not work either as Gautama immediately rejected them, knowing they were meaningless and like all cravings lead to suffering as they are impermanent and subject to decay.
- Mara then sent more creatures at this point to attack him. They sent arrows but the arrows transformed into flowers as they reached Siddhartha as they fell to the floor. Siddhartha Gautama asked for a flood from a goddess to wash away the dead creatures.
- Mara also sent his daughters to entice and corrupt Gautama, representative of sensual pleasures. They were beautiful maidens; hundreds of them. Gautama recognised them as what they were – impermanent and attached to cravings, despite them taking on every possible desirable physique. He was not swayed.
- The final test is perhaps the most important. The question of legitimacy was placed on Gautama. Was Gautama worthy of sitting there?
- Gautama was asked by Mara to provide a witness to his worthiness. He demonstrated this by touching the ground. The earth would be his witness. The earth is said to have shaken like in an earthquake as it responded to the request. This hand gesture is known as the bhumisparsha mudra and is used a symbolic hand gesture by Buddhists since then.

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

(b) Evaluate this view with reference to Buddhism.

[AO2 25]

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

- One line of enquiry is that the Buddha's awakening can be articulated by simple comparisons. Many Buddhists use simple comparisons such as the deathless, blissfulness, tranquillity and the highest happiness. The Questions of King Milinda uses similes such as a 'lotus unwetted by water' or the medicine that 'protects beings who are poisoned by the defilements. Cures the disease of suffering'.
- A contrasting line of inquiry is that the Buddha's Awakening is not meant to be articulated and cannot be. The Buddha achieved enlightenment after passing through the four jhanas. The jhanas, especially the fourth jhana, is said to be 'a state beyond all differentiation, beyond pleasure and pain, indeed, beyond all sense of joy and thought construction.' Thought construction is the precursor to thought articulation and so if the Buddha was beyond thought construction then he was beyond word articulation.
- A different line of enquiry could be that the Buddha said the best way to express his Awakening was by saying nothing; to express it through silence. 'To know no one teaching, to express nothing, to say nothing, to explain nothing, to announce nothing, to indicate nothing and to designate nothing- that is the entrance into nonduality'.
- A famous example of this is from Mahayana Buddhism and the 'thunderous silence of Vimalakirti' in the Vimalakirti Nirdesha Sutra when Vimalakirti remains (thunderously) silent when asked by Majushri to describe entry into non-duality (nirvana).
- An alternative line of enquiry is that some believe it is best explained by what it 'is not' rather than what it 'is'. Walpola Rahula said it is so hard to put into words what it is but to explain what it cannot be is an easier way to express it. There are alternative ways to articulate the event.
- Sunyata, the Mahayana term, supports the idea that there are some Buddhist ideas that cannot be put into words. For example, nirvana is 'unconstructed' and thus cannot be identified empirically. If something cannot be identified empirically then it cannot be expressed with words.
- It could be argued that the Buddha's Awakening is beyond all forms of articulation and that trying to put it into words is a misconception and illogical question. If there is ultimately no 'me' and 'my' then how can it be explained what it is like as an experience?
- If Buddhists could not articulate the enlightenment of the Buddha then Buddhists would find it harder to make sense of it. There has to be some notion, idea or image even just as an aid for understanding. This would help an unenlightened Buddhist make some sense of enlightenment and help them along their path to enlightenment.

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

4. (a) Explain the chanting practice of going for refuge three times.

[AO1 25]

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

- Going for refuge is a way of affirming a Buddhist's identity. The word refuge is often used to mean a safe place but in this sense it usually means a place to find strength, to be purified and transformed. It is where a Buddhist would go for guidance along their difficult spiritual path.
- There are three parts to this oral tradition which are often called the three jewels. A Buddhist will confirm that they seek refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma (Buddha's teachings) and the Sangha (the spiritual community).
- In practice, the most famous application of the refuges is the chant that dutifully takes place as part of formal monastic procedure.
- Repeating the Triratna underlines for Buddhists the centrality of the three jewels in their lives. Chanting them transforms commitment into a meaningful rite which is often part of many Buddhist ceremonies, devotions and celebrations.
- In Theravada monasteries, the refuges are repeated in themselves three times during chanting practice, and they are chanted at every opportunity by individual Buddhist devotees.
- Chanting the refuges offers a place of spiritual excellence in which a Buddhist can find strength and also to refresh oneself on the journey to Awakening / Enlightenment. The refuges are 'places' to be transformed and purified.
- Buddhist monks often chant the refuges three times. This is an initiation ritual as well as something to be said when in need of the three refuges.
- The three jewels are repeated three times. This is done at the start of the path to enlightenment; either alone to the statue of a buddha or repeated line by line following a monastic. The three refuges are often said daily after this to act as a reminder of the commitment that they have made to achieving enlightenment.
- 'I take refuge in the Buddha' is the first of the three jewels. The Buddha is a figure whose words offer guidance and his actions set an example.
- 'I take refuge in the Dharma' is the second of the three jewels. The Dharma is the whole teaching of the Buddha which eventually became the Pali Canon. Theravada Buddhists would take refuge in the Pali Canon only.
- 'I take refuge in the Sangha' is the third of the three jewels. The Sangha is the Buddhist community and in terms of refuge it provides training. The aim of the Sangha is to help a Buddhist on the path that the Buddha taught and to utilise the knowledge and encouragement of like-minded people on this path.

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

(b) 'The Buddha is the most important refuge for Buddhists.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- One line of argument is that the Buddha is the most important refuge. He is the Dhamma, he found the teachings and so the only refuge needed is the Buddha. There is no Dhamma without the Buddha and without the Buddha there would be no Sangha. The Buddha created the first Sangha and the modern Sangha is- a group of people who look to the methods of the Buddha. The Buddha is the first of the three refuges, when recited. This is no coincidence. The Buddha came first and is the most important of the three refuges.
- The Buddha is not seen in the same way for all Buddhists. For Theravada Buddhists he is just a man, a human who found enlightenment. There are some Mahayana Buddhist who believe that the Buddha has powers that he gained from deep meditation and there are others who do not agree, seeing his powers as mythological.
- Dhamma is the most important refuge as it is the closest account of Buddha available. He said himself, 'to see me is to see the Dhamma'. The Buddha put value in the teachings. The dhamma is the way to enlightenment. It is the answer to the question, it diagnoses the problem and offers a solution by way of the path.
- The Dhamma provides more than just the refuge but it is also a hagiographical account of the Buddha. It gives us a historical account of the Buddha and his life. It is an important gift that all Buddhists who wish to achieve enlightenment follow in some form. It is necessary as well as important.
- The Dhamma, however, is not universal. There are different versions of the Dhamma. Mahayana, Zen and Theravada Buddhists all hold slightly different stories and examples. Those that they share can be seen as different in importance. An example is that Zen Buddhists do not hold the texts in high regard. Because they are all different it can be said that the Dhamma is not the most important refuge for Buddhists.
- Together the three refuges provide the optimum chance for Buddhists to reach enlightenment therefore the three jewels are supposed to be of equal importance. Perhaps it is best to see the three as consolidate. Without one the others are obsolete.
- The Sangha strengthens Buddhism and keeps the teachings alive and relevant. The Sangha can be seen to preserve the religion. It incorporates both the Dhamma and the Buddha.
- The Dhamma is not necessarily accessible to all without the help of the Sangha to interpret the text for modern or new Buddhists. The Sangha is a modern group, compared to an ancient book, and a body of people that evolves and is culturally relative for the people who seek refuge in it.

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

5. (a) **Examine the dasa sila (ten precepts) as training aspirations rather than commandments for the community of believers.**

[AO1 25]

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

- The dasa sila are ten rules that the monks and nuns of Buddhism are expected to follow as part of their duties. Whilst they are often translated as rules they are seen as guidelines and training aspirations.
- The dasa sila are said as vows and then followed in practice. The vows are motivational and aid focus.
- These rules are: (candidates may express these rules with accompanying examples and may not list all ten)
- I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures.
- I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.
- I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.
- I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech.
- I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness.
- I undertake the precept to refrain from eating at the forbidden time (i.e. after midday).
- I undertake the precept to refrain from dancing, singing, music, going to see entertainments.
- I undertake the precept to refrain from wearing garlands, using perfumes, and beautifying the body with cosmetics.
- I undertake the precept to refrain from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place.
- I undertake the precept to refrain from accepting gold and silver (money).
- These moral guidelines correspond to the morality element of the Noble Eightfold Path and thereby serve as a motivational aid on the path to Awakening / Enlightenment.
- The first five rules are to be followed by all Buddhists. The next three are adhered to on Uposatha Days when lay Buddhists increase their meditation. The full ten are upheld on behalf of the Buddhist community by the monks and nuns.
- Peter Harvey says, 'behaving ethically reduces dukkha and increases happiness for oneself and others'. Monks and nuns are on the path to enlightenment and wish to increase merit for all and reduce suffering in the world.

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

- (b) **‘The precepts are no longer relevant to monastic life.’
Evaluate this view with reference to Buddhism.**

[AO2 25]

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

- The dasa sila are the ten rules taken on by monks and nuns in the Buddhist traditions. Thanissaro Bhikku would agree that the best way to regulate a Sangha is to have a clear set of rules that are simple enough to positively govern each action that a monk or nun does. This is what the dasa sila aims to do and if kept simple and not overthought, can do.
- The precise level to which monks and nuns follow these rules varies between the different denominations within Buddhism. If there is no consistency it is hard to state that they are relevant to monastic life as a whole. No-one seems to agree as to what level and how the dasa sila should be observed. Thanissaro Bhikku believes that they are simple ethical rules to be taken at face value and Peter Harvey sees them as being wide ranging guidelines that encompass much more than the original dasa sila set out. This may lead to disparity among Sanghas.
- Perhaps it is unnecessary to have any regulatory rules in play as they are unlikely to do any of the acts mentioned in the rules as they themselves can work out how to behave in a manner conducive to their goal. They simply do not need rules. Each Buddhist needs to regulate themselves by following the footsteps of the Buddha. The Buddha did not have a set of rules to follow and did not stray from the path to enlightenment once he had committed himself to the task.
- One line of argument could be that the dasa sila can in no way be compared the vastness of the Patimokkha which offers 227 -311 rules depending on whether you are a monk or a nun. The sheer number of these rules and the various areas of monastic life that they cover make them much more important rules to follow in the regulation of the Sangha.
- Another line of argument is that the dasa sila remove the need for day to day ethical thoughts that take away from the overall goal. They provide immediate answers so that precious time in this life is not wasted on ethical dilemmas that can be easily remedied by the adherence or flouting of a pre-set rule.
- With smaller numbers of monks and nuns in today’s society the rules are not needed to get people to conform but they do serve as a reminder of what is expected. They help to keep tradition alive and the monks and nuns demonstrate good practise for lay Buddhists on holy days.

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