



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**AS
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
Option E - An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism
B120UE0-1**

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 1: Option E – An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1. (a) Explain the role of Holi in shaping Hindu religious identity.

[AO1 25]

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

- Holi reminds people that those who love God will be saved and that those who abuse his devotees will suffer. This is a basic tenet in Hinduism and in many other world religions. It is a belief that gives devotees their trust in God to protect them against their adversaries. It also gives devotees the strength and confidence to follow the teachings of their religion even in the face of violent opposition.
- It like all Hindu festivals can inspire faith in God. It celebrates God's victory over evil and his ability to protect his devotees. Celebrating the events that are the basis for the festival allow Hindus to express awe and wonder at God's power and actions. It spiritually allows devotees to express the greatness of God.
- It can help a Hindu advance on the spiritual path, away from sensual pleasures, towards communion with the divine. The festival celebrates the higher virtues of purity and righteousness. These are the kind of virtues that a Hindu needs to cultivate to attain Moksha. During the festival people perform havan and offer the new grains that are harvested to the deities.
- Although there is a lot of amusement during the festival the most important aspect is the worship of God, which can be fulfilled in many ways. It is the underlying feature to all the rituals and practices associated with the festival.
- Holi also helps people to believe in the virtue of being truthful and honest and to fight against evil. This is a very important part of a Hindu's dharma.
- Holi also strengthens social cohesion as it is celebrated by Hindus and non-Hindus and revitalises the bonds between people as people during the festival visit friends and relatives exchanging gifts.
- Holi also means sacrifice and the festival is a chance for people to rid themselves of impurities and to focus on the virtues they need to develop - mercy, generosity, selflessness, truthfulness and purity. The development of these virtues allows a Hindu to gain good karma and to ultimately attain Moksha. This is expressed during the festival by the giving of charity to the poor.
- Holi is also a seasonal festival that celebrates the coming of spring with its renewed hope for abundance in nature and happiness in family relationships and friendships.
- Since Holi is a very joyful and happy occasion, it gives people a lift, making them feel good about themselves and the world around them.

- It is the celebration of the victory of good over evil and that truth will always prevail. This encourages Hindus not only to believe in the power of good and in the virtue of being truthful and honest but also to stand up for them.
- Holi also creates a sense of belonging by bringing the community together in celebration. This in turn is an expression of Hindu identity and values.

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

(b) 'Festivals based on mythical events are still meaningful today.'

Evaluate this view with reference to Hinduism.

[AO2 25]

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

- Some do not regard myths as being a meaningful basis for festivals. They are regarded as fabrications which have no place in today's world.
- The deities portrayed in them are not believable or relevant role models for life in contemporary society.
- They also argue that the imagery and contradictions within many myths make them unacceptable today.
- Many would disagree with the statement believing that myths give a culture continuity and stability and foster a shared set of perspectives, values and history that can be celebrated by the Hindu community.
- The activities and attitudes of the deities are indeed role models for behaviour and standards within society.
- Myths portray archetypal situations and some of the options which can be selected in those situations and the consequences of choosing those options.
- Many believe that myths give meaning to life and contain aspirations, hopes and moral ideals useful to contemporary life.
- Others would argue that myths are important because they are metaphors and teach about life in a way historical or philosophical accounts cannot do.
- Hinduism is a religion of festivals and most if not all of them are based on mythical events. However, some would question how meaningful these stories and events are in today's world.
- Some would argue that myths are metaphorical and as such are not a meaningful basis for festivals. The danger with mythical guides, teachings and examples is that they are open to different interpretations and so there is no overall, consistent meaning.
- Many would view mythology as a valid way to look at the world. Many scholars believe they are a sophisticated way of studying different aspects of psychology.
- The stories refer to all aspects of life and act as a moral guide in daily living referring to issues such as respect for elders and the importance of honesty. The epics Ramayana and Mahabharata show how good overcomes evil. It is these values that are celebrated in different festivals.

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

2. (a) Explain the role of Durga Puja in shaping Hindu religious identity.

[AO1 25]

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

- One feature of Durga Puja that is particularly significant is the worship of Durga as the mother goddess. According to many Hindus Durga Puja is the greatest Hindu festival in which God is adored as Mother. Hinduism is the only religion in the world which has emphasized to such an extent the motherhood of God. This emphasis on the female energy – shakti - is a particular feature of Hinduism and the identity of the religion. Durga represents the Divine Mother and the power of Shakti or cosmic energy. She is the energy aspect of Shiva.
- The goddess is a divine not human mother and her images reflect her supernatural power. Her care and love for her human children is so great that she will do anything to protect them. Hinduism is a religion which puts a lot of emphasis on the importance and role of the family.
- As mother of the universe she personifies tender love, wealth, power, beauty and every virtue. These are Hindu values.
- Hindus believe that worship of Durga as divine mother gives material prosperity and spiritual freedom. Everyone is blessed with her loving mercy and is protected by her. Puja is an identifying feature of Hinduism.
- Some Hindus divide Navaratri into sections of three days in order to celebrate different aspects of the divine Mother.
- The first three days celebrate her power as Durga to destroy impurities, vices and defects.
- The next three days celebrate her as Lakshmi, the giver of spiritual wealth, who can give unlimited wealth to her worshippers.
- The final three days celebrate her wisdom as Saraswati.
- In order to have all round success in life, the blessing of all three aspects of the divine mother are needed. Many of these beliefs express what it means to be a Hindu.
- The complete image of Durga represents the belief that to become divine then material desires must be kept under control. This is seen in the image of Durga standing on the demon. Hindus believe that by worshipping Durga it is possible to rid themselves of all desires and unfold divinity.
- The festival also reminds Hindus of some of the spiritual values that shape their identity, such as the duty to oppose evil, thanksgiving and the need to help others.
- The festival brings the Hindu community together and is a celebration of Hindu identity especially in non-Hindu countries.

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

(b) 'Hindu festivals are no more than community occasions.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- It can be said that celebrations and celebrating is part of the nature of Hinduism. Hindus miss no opportunity to join with family, friends, neighbours and strangers alike to celebrate and have fun, to renew the home and the heart and, most importantly, draw nearer to God. Hinduism is a festival of festivals and perhaps it is true to say that they are more impressive and varied in Hinduism than in any other religion.
- Hindu festivals are without doubt community occasions and are very important and valuable for the perpetuation of the religion. Before each celebration, vows are taken, scriptures are studied and fasts observed in preparation which are all individual acts of intimate devotion that bring the devotee closer to God. However, as each festival begins they become a collective ritual. They provide the spiritual public square where Hindus engage with one another and affirm shared values. Festivals require the participation of the entire community and create harmony among its members, even if not all contemporary participants are aware of the festival's original character.
- Hindus celebrate a number of important festivals, such as Holi and Diwali, in which all classes of society participate. Festivals allow people within society to be different but also to find common ground.
- Festivals also form a lifeline that binds the Hindu culture to the family and to the community. Diwali is symbolically a new start, a time to forgive and forget in all aspects of life including relationships with family and friends. It is the time for community and family celebration with prayers through puja, of togetherness, of sharing all resources, of food and gifts.
- Festivals connect and bring people together in unity and service. Hindu festivals also reflect and sustain the pluralistic values of Hinduism for diverse people to co-exist harmoniously.
- However, it can be strongly argued that they are more than just community occasions.
- Festivals are colourful and joyous expressions of spirituality, religion, philosophy, culture, service and social values. The spiritual aspect is founded on the human instincts of joy and happiness. The philosophical aspect is found in the struggle between the forces of good and evil with the ultimate triumph of the good.
- Festivals are also valuable as a time to donate and help those in need. It is giving resources of any kind, material or spiritual or physical. Seva during festivals means helping those less fortunate in society.
- Festivals are an expression of Hindu identity. For Hindus living in non-Hindu countries festivals are the most visible and memorable sign of their heritage. Festivals serve as a reminder of their identity and allegiance to Hindu traditions and ideals.

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

Section B

3. (a) Explain Hindu teachings about the relationship between Brahman and atman.

[AO1 25]

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

- The relationship between Brahman and atman is a constant theme in the Upanishads and is described and understood in a number of ways. It is clear that it cannot be correctly described as 'God' and 'soul' and that the relationship is much more profound and mysterious.
- Some Hindus hold a monotheistic view of the relationship and believe that the atman is only a part of Brahman and not wholly identifiable with it.
- Other Hindus have more of a monistic view believing that everything is made of the same essential essence and therefore that Brahman and atman are one.
- The main message in the Upanishads however is a monistic one - based on the principle tat tvam asi – 'That art thou.'
- Many comparisons have been used to explain the relationship between Brahman and atman.
- In the Chandogya Upanishad this relationship is explained through the dialogue between a father called Uddalaka and his son Svetaketu where the father uses a number of images to help his son understand the nature of atman and its relationship to Brahman – e.g. bees collecting juices to make honey; salt in water.
- Advaita Vedanta maintains that Brahman is identical with the inner self (the atman) of each person. There are no separate atman in living things only Brahman penetrating and supporting the entire universe. Moksha is achieved by recognising and experiencing this. Everything else is an illusion (maya).
- A different view is given by Dvaita Vedanta which is often called 'dual' Vedanta. This is the belief that two things exist, separate and distinct from one another – one is the atman (usually referred to as jiva) which exists independently within all living things and Brahman saguna the personal god underlying reality (usually referred to as Ishvara).
- Madhva believed that each atman (or jiva) is an image of Ishvara – they are distinct and separate, have similar qualities but are completely unrelated.

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

(b) 'God has to be personal to be worshipped.'

Evaluate this view with reference to Hinduism.

[AO2 25]

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

- Brahman can be understood as both personal (Saguna) and impersonal (Nirguna) within Hinduism. There are different emphases about these two forms of Brahman. The earlier Upanishads and some schools of Philosophy emphasise the personal forms while later schools of thought emphasise the impersonal form.
- Brahman Saguna is the Brahman that can be characterised. It is the underlying essence of the material world as well as the atman, the innermost self. It is manifested in the Trimurti which show the three divine energies – creative (Brahma), preserver (Vishnu) and destroyer and recreator (Shiva). Brahman is also the 'being' of all things in existence – sun, oceans, plant life and all creatures. They all have their origin in Brahman and Brahman as their essence.
- Brahman Nirguna is Brahman beyond all attributes – invisible, ungraspable, eternal and without qualities. It is unconditioned and without origin or end. Brahman is also transcendent and beyond the created universe. It is an all-pervading self-existent power.
- Many Hindus would argue that it is not possible to worship an impersonal God. This is why personal deities are much more in evidence in the popular culture of India and feature in every aspect of life in homes, offices and in street shrines and temples.
- The two major traditions of Hinduism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism are based on devotion to personal manifestations of Brahman, Vishnu and Shiva. Many people support the view that humankind needs a tangible, manifest and anthropomorphic conception of God to worship. It is difficult, if not impossible, to worship a formless 'It' which is why manifested aspects of Brahman are so important within Hinduism." This is why personal deities such as Krishna and Rama have such importance for Hindus.
- Relating to impersonal abstract forces is very difficult since all meaningful human relationships are based on the personal and as such knowing God through personal deities is more possible and meaningful to many Hindus. Many popular forms of worship such as bhakti and daily puja are based on this personal relationship with specific deities. These deities represent higher forces and energies and are the means or channels of divine grace and blessings.
- Many Hindus would argue that it is a common misconception that the Hindu concept of God is ultimately impersonal and that any personhood is anthropomorphic. Another misconception is that the various gods and goddesses and the stories about them are merely ways by which Hindus relate to an Impersonal Supreme. They would argue that there are many schools within Hinduism, mainly Vaishnavas but also within Shaivism and Shaktism who believe that God possesses personality.
- However other schools of philosophy within Hinduism such as Vedanta maintain that knowing God in personal forms is a lower level of truth than knowing God in its impersonal form. This is reflected in the belief that jnana yoga is the highest form of yoga since it enables Hindus to know God in the impersonal forms. This is the ultimate goal for Hindus, self-realisation or realisation that the innermost being atman is one with Brahman. Most Hindus believe in the impersonal abstract force of Brahman symbolised by the symbol OM which is just as much in evidence as personal deities.

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

4. (a) **Explain how the varna system defines individual duties within Hindu society.**

[AO1 25]

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

- The word 'varna' literally means 'kind', although it is sometimes translated as 'colour' and is sometimes referred to in English as 'caste'.
- The origin of the varna system can be traced to the Aryan invasion of India in the second millennium BCE. They devised a class system to organise the new society created by their arrival. Initially they created a system of three varnas, later expanded to include a fourth – the Shudra.
- Hindus would also point to the religious origin of the varna system which is its divine justification. It is not a human hierarchy but a divinely ordained system. In the Rig Veda, the Purusha Sukta hymn refers to the sacrifice of a huge primeval man or giant called Purusha from whom the four varnas came.
- Every Hindu must follow general moral codes and each has duties according to his or her varna. This will affect the lives of those who belong to different varnas in different ways.
- Those who belong to the Brahmin varna are the providers of education and spiritual leadership. Their duties include studying and teaching the Vedas; performing sacrifices and religious ceremonies and teaching others how to perform rituals; giving and accepting charity; offering guidance especially to those in the Kshatriya varna; providing medical care and advice free of charge; never accepting paid employment; developing ideal qualities – honesty, integrity, cleanliness, purity, knowledge and wisdom.
- Kshatriyas are the protectors of society who are expected to display strength of body and character. They are also twice born. Their duties include – protecting citizens from harm, especially women, children, cows, Brahmins and the elderly; ensuring that others perform their dharma and move on spiritually.
- Vaishyas are the productive class. They are twice-born which means that they accept the sacred thread as spiritual initiation and must perform certain rituals and rites of passage. Their duties include – protecting animals, especially cows and the land; creating wealth and prosperity; producing goods; trading ethically; paying taxes to the Kshatriya.
- Shudras are the workers and the only ones able to be employed by others. The other varnas must be self-employed and financially self-sufficient. Their duties include – to render service to others; to take pride in their work and be loyal; to follow general moral principles and to marry which is the only compulsory rite of passage.

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

(b) 'The varna system has been unfairly criticised.'

Evaluate this view with reference to Hinduism.

[AO2 25]

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

- Gandhi defended the varna system arguing that it had been unjustly criticised because people did not realise or understand the difference between varna and caste.
- Ambedkar saw the varna system as unjust and the cause of untouchability.
- Many outside the religion of Hinduism see the varna system as being unjust. However, many Hindus would argue that these criticisms are often based on misunderstandings or lack of knowledge. They point to social divisions and inequalities based on wealth and/or family status in other parts of the world and that in comparison to some of these the varna system is more humane and gentler.
- Some would argue that the varna system leads to exploitation of the weak by the socially and politically privileged. Others would support this by arguing that it is socially divisive leading to lack of trust, prejudice and resentment.
- Others argue that because it gave preferential treatment to some it had a detrimental effect on the growth of the nation because it was based on birth rather than on individual talent.
- It can also be argued that it restricts the ambitions of many since the path that they wish to follow does not fit in with the duties of the varna they belong to.
- Others could argue that the varna system is used by the socially privileged varnas to oppress the lower ones.
- It can also be argued that the varna system is an important reason for many Hindus to convert to other religions.
- It is also responsible according to many of creating a class of people outside society.
- Many on the other hand would refute these claims arguing that the varna system gives order and structure to society where all people have an identity and purpose in life.
- Others would point to the varna system safeguarding Hindu traditions and faith.
- The varna system also since it is associated with jobs serves as a guild or labour union giving them protection against exploitation and helping to set a fair wage.

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

5. (a) **Explain what the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna teaches Hindus about personal dharma.**

[AO1 25]

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

- Candidates may give the background to the discussion which takes place between Krishna and Arjuna at Kurukshetra in which he presents the teaching on dharma and varnadharma
- Candidates may also give a brief overview of the varna system so as to put the teaching in context.
- Arjuna the great archer was a member of the Kshatriyas - the warrior/ ruler varna and therefore his duty was to fight. Krishna sees Arjuna withdrawing and begins to persuade Arjuna that he should stick to his duty as a warrior and engage the enemy.
- This is the beginning of the conversation we know as the Bhagavad Gita which forms part of the Mahabharata.
- Arjuna was clearly worried because he was in a situation where he was going into a war where he would have to kill family and friends. He is facing a conflict of personal dharma. He therefore asks Krishna for advice.
- Krishna tells him not to worry as he will attain no bad karma from taking part in the war.
- He then discusses varnadharma and states that an action done out of a sense of duty with no attachment has no karmic effect. A clear teaching here is that evil is not to be found in actions themselves but in the intentions behind them.
- It is Arjuna's honour and duty to fight. He is a member of the Kshatriya varna – the battle is the very reason for his existence.
- Finally Arjuna decides to listen to Krishna's advice by engaging in battle and in the end the Pandavas regain control of the kingdom.

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

(b) 'Hinduism is nothing more than a religion of duty.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Many Hindus themselves refer to their religion not as Hinduism but as sanatana dharma, "eternal religion," and varnashramadharma, a word emphasizing the fulfilment of duties (dharma) appropriate to one's class (varna) and stage of life (ashrama). This in itself shows the importance of the concept of dharma within the religion.
- Dharma is seen in Hindu philosophy as representing order with laws to govern creation. Dharma with its religious and moral laws binds Hindus in harmony with that order. This is a very important principle in Hinduism and as such duty can be argued to be the most important part of Hinduism.
- Hindus see life as a duty and opportunity to fulfil the aim of creation and be part of God's eternal dharma.
- They believe that religious duty is the primary aim of human life and the way that a Hindu can fulfil the four aims of life – kama, artha, dharma and Moksha.
- According to some Hindu sources there are four types of dharma – cosmic, social, human and self.
- The Vedas and the Dharmashastras refer to the ten most important duties in Hinduism. These duties cover every aspect of Hindu life.
- However, although it seems that duty is the overriding factor in Hinduism and in a Hindu's life many believe that there is free will and choice within the religion.
- Hindus can choose a deity as their personal or family deity and followers of bhakti would argue that it is based on loving devotion which is not a duty.
- They would also point out that the essence of bhakti where caste differences are not emphasised proves that Hindus are not bound by duty.
- Others would argue that taken as a whole Hinduism is a religion of beliefs and it is those beliefs not duty which are the basis of all Hindu actions, rituals and festivals.

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