



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Religious Studies (9RS0)
Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

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Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion – June 2025

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Question number	Answer
1	8 marks AO1 AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question. Candidates may refer to the following. • The traditional view that God is perfect is challenged by Process theodicy. • Process theodicy negates the problem of the inconsistent triad. • Process theodicy is based on the foundational premise that everything that is in the world is in a state of flux. • Process theodicy claims that God is also the sufferer who understands; that God is not considered omnipotent and does not know the future. • Classical theism argues that God is, to some degree, transcendent to the world, whereas, in Process theodicy God is immanent and not separate to the world's processes.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–2	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Provides a superficial understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1).
Level 2	3–5	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1). • Develops key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1).
Level 3	6–8	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a broad range of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1). • Comprehensively develops key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1).

Question number	Answer
2	4 marks AO1, 8 marks AO2 AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • Everything that begins to exist has a cause. • The universe began to exist. • The universe has a cause; the personal being God is the best explanation for this. AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • The Kalam argument is strong because it is supported by <i>a posteriori</i> evidence of cause and effect in the world. • The Kalam argument refutes the idea of infinite time as this would mean an infinite number of days had been traversed already which is impossible, thus making the argument strong. • The big bang theory supports the Kalam argument's premise that the universe began to exist and therefore makes it a strong argument as it has the support of modern science. • Its strength is undermined because the oscillating universe theory can suggest the universe is in fact part of an infinite series of universes; therefore, suggesting there is no single cause. Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Information/issues are identified (AO2). • Judgements are supported by generalised arguments (AO2).
Level 2	5–8	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues which lead to a simplistic chain of reasoning (AO2). • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2).
Level 3	9–12	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2).

Question number	Indicative content
3(a)	10 marks AO1 AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question. Candidates may refer to the following. • Bliks are beliefs that are strongly held, despite evidence to the contrary; these bliks (beliefs) become the basis for other beliefs. • R M Hare argued that religious assertions are non-factual bliks because they do not answer to any empirical evidence. • Religious believers simply have a religious blik or outlook on the world (including the super-natural world), which is not held at the level of factual claims and therefore not subject to empirical falsification. • Bliks are very much meaningful and thus considered as significant for the person holding them: even though that blik is held at the non-factual level, this outlook is still meaningful for the person holding it. • Hare claims that there is a distinction between 'sane' and 'insane' bliks. However, he also claims that bliks are unverifiable and unfalsifiable and if we cannot either prove or disprove religious bliks, we cannot call them 'right' or 'wrong', 'sane' or 'insane' either.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is superficial (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs with some inaccuracies that are not directly linked to the extract (AO1).
Level 2	4–6	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is detailed, however it is not fully developed (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs and are linked in most cases to reference from the extract (AO1).
Level 3	7–10	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is detailed and fully developed (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a broad range of key religious ideas and beliefs and are fully linked to references from the extract (AO1).

Question number	Indicative content
3(b)	5 marks AO1, 15 marks AO2 AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • Religious language can be seen to be meaningful as analogical or symbolic. • Wittgenstein's Language Games theory suggested the meaning of a word can be best understood by examining its use. • Debates about verification and falsification asserted religious language as meaningless. AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • The verification principle argues religious language is meaningless because it fails its own criteria; therefore, it can be dismissed and the notion that religious language is meaningful can be understood correctly. • There are legitimate problems raised by issues of falsification and these can undermine the case for religious language being meaningful because it 'dies the death of a thousand qualifications.' • This is to misunderstand religious language as it does allow things to count against it but should be understood as a commitment of faith and therefore it operates in a different way. • Religious language is analogical, serving to talk of the unknown in terms of the known, therefore it can only be correctly understood and thus meaningful if seen in these terms. • Language Games, despite its weaknesses, is the best explanation of how religious language functions and therefore once this is understood the challenges to religious language being meaningless dissipates and therefore it can be seen as meaningful within this context. • Hick argues that, in principle, God's existence could be verified eschatologically; however, this is not a falsifiable belief therefore religious language remains meaningless. Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Information/issues are selected (AO2). • Makes basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements are supported by generic arguments (AO2).

Level 2	5–8	• A limited range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, some of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues (AO2). • Makes connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made with little or no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2).
Level 3	9–12	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simple chain of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made, which are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence (AO2).
Level 4	13–16	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of elements in the question, which are supported by the appraisal of some evidence (AO2).
Level 5	17–20	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question, which are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence (AO2).

Question number	Indicative content
4	5 marks AO1, 25 marks AO2 AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • The Ontological Argument is <i>a priori</i> so it is based on logic alone and focuses on the definition of God. • God is 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' and so exists as it is better to exist than simply be an idea. • Necessary existence is greater than contingent existence so God, as the greatest conceivable being, must exist necessarily in order to be God. AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • As a deductive argument, the Ontological Argument is strong because if you accept the definition of God the conclusion naturally follows. • Descartes' idea that God has all perfections is compatible with the classical definition of God and as such it makes sense that God would have existence as part of God's perfect nature. • Anything you can think of existing you can also think of not-existing and therefore the very idea of necessary existence that is crucial to this argument is nonsensical; as a result the argument is unsuccessful. • Existence is not a predicate, it tells us nothing more about the thing and you need evidence to show if there is a thing or not; therefore, because this argument is only based on words, and not evidence, it cannot succeed as a proof for existence. • This type of argument does not add to the probability of God existing since it is a proof that works or fails given its deductive nature; however, on balance the leap from words to reality is too big for this to offer a successful proof for the existence of God. • The Ontological Argument assumes the definition of God by classical theism: that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect; therefore, if God is 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' then God who is the highest level of reality is the source of absolute moral standards. (This links to Religion and Ethics) • The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel describes the Logos as a pre-existent agent in creation therefore, implying that it is logical to look for an ultimate cause as an explanation for the existence of the world. (This links with New Testament Studies) • The Ontological Argument may be convincing as a logical exercise; however, it is fundamentally flawed, even Aquinas argued not everyone accepts the same definition of God, for example in Mahayana Buddhism, nothing has objective or independent existence. (This links to Study of a Religion) Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

	Candidates who do not show links with another area of their course of study will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 4.
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Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–6	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Information/issues are identified (AO2). • Makes basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements are supported by generic arguments (AO2). • Judgements made with no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). • Conclusions are provided but are simplistic and/or generic (AO2).
Level 2	7–12	• A limited range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, some of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues (AO2). • Makes connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2). • Judgements made with little or no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). • Conclusions are provided, which loosely draw together ideas but with little or no attempt to justify (AO2).
Level 3	13–18	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simplistic chain of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements of some of the elements in the question are made (AO2). • Judgements are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). • Conclusions are provided, which logically draw together ideas and are partially justified (AO2).
Level 4	19–24	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of elements in the question (AO2). • Reasoned judgements are supported by the appraisal of some evidence (AO2). • Convincing conclusions are provided which fully and logically draw together ideas and are partially justified (AO2).
Level 5	25–30	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2).

		Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2).
		- Reasoned judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence (AO2). - Convincing conclusions are provided which fully and logically draw together ideas and are fully justified (AO2).