



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Religious Studies (9RS0)
Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2025

Question Paper Log Number P74168

Publications Code 9RS0/02 2506_MS

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2025

Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

Mark scheme

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 notion that children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127:5) influences some believers to reject the use of contraception and to have as many children as God sends them. • Examples of biblical characters (e.g. Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth) who overcame childlessness through God's intervention may indicate that God intends his people to have children. • Voluntary childlessness is considered an unacceptable choice in some religious traditions, although social and religious attitudes are changing. • Some religious believers accept or choose to plan their families using contraception in a responsible way. • Some religious groups face criticism for condemning contraception and for putting pressure on women to have multiple children as an act of obedience to God or to the religious community. Groups may include Quiverful and conservative Protestant and Catholic denominations.

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	Indicative content
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 using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates who address only one approach cannot proceed beyond level 2. If candidates assess more than two approaches, read all the answer and credit the best two. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • The Just War Theory provides a model for declaration of war and conduct in war based on the principle that war must be justified. • Assuming that peace is the ideal, the JWT allows that war may sometimes be unavoidable. • Secular and religious approaches to war can accommodate principles of the JWT which are based on the overarching goal of protecting the innocent. 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. • Supporters of the JWT may argue that it incentivises non-violent approaches to conflict resolution such as negotiation, sanctions or peace agreements rather than going to war. • Religious and non-religious approaches to justifying war only in exceptional situations promote compassion, protection of the environment, equality and respect for others. • <i>Jus post bellum</i> provides valuable guidance for establishing peace after a conflict has ended thus ensuring the longer term wellbeing of civilians. • However, the JWT may be criticised as too idealistic and impractical and unsuited to the needs of modern warfare. 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, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question. Candidates may refer to the following. - Euthanasia must be recognised as raising the same moral issues as suicide. - Personal autonomy to make decisions over life and death cannot be confused with third-party involvement. - The question of the involvement of doctors is ultimately less important than the extent to which personal autonomy extends to people who are unable to control their physical situation. - Taking care of a physically restricted patient appears to be limited only to those actions which promote physical and mental wellbeing. - The key issue is that a third-party cannot help a patient to die even if it is their desperate wish to do so. Why would this be such a terrible thing?

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 is 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. • Assisted dying (or euthanasia) can be variously categorised, for example, as active, passive, voluntary, non-voluntary, etc, and can raise different arguments in support of, or opposed to, its legalisation. • Arguments in favour of the legalisation of assisted dying may invoke the individual's right to choose the time and circumstances of their death. • Arguments against the legalisation of assisted dying may include the so-called slippery slope, the status of palliative care and the potential for misdiagnosis and other medical errors. 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. • Autonomous beings deserve the right to determine the circumstances of their death and legal refusal to allow this is an infringement of this right because assisted dying is, wrongly, confused with murder. • Although the Hippocratic Oath aims to protect patients from harm, it is no longer universally helpful or relevant in a medically advanced society. • It is important to recognise the right of the patient to decide what constitutes a 'good death', and the law should recognise that acting in accordance with their wishes should take precedence, even if it is not what third parties may prefer. • The concept of the slippery slope is driven by fear, not reality, since the likelihood of abuse would be mitigated by secure legal frameworks put in place to protect patients. • The argument that better palliative care would reduce the assumed demand for assisted dying is flawed since patients receiving good palliative care may ultimately still choose an assisted death. • Arguments in favour of the legalisation of assisted dying may invoke the concept of dignity in dying but dignity is subjective and may still not be guaranteed by an assisted death, i.e., dignity is not determined or assured solely by the means of death. 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 the 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 ONE issue regarding equality – racial, gender or disability. There is no inherent advantage to be gained by referring to more than one, but neither is there any disadvantage in referring to only one. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • Problems which arise with defining what is 'good', such as the Naturalistic Fallacy, the is-ought gap and intuitionism, have led to the claim that ethical language is meaningless. • Emotivism advocates the view that there are no moral facts, hence all ethical claims derive from personal feelings and thus have no intrinsic meaning. • Logical positivism asserts that ethical claims have no factual content and arguably can be reduced to a primitive expression of feeling such as 'Stealing!' to express the view that 'Stealing is wrong'. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • Ethical assertions generate a high degree of moral conflict, supporting the view that there are no moral facts and thus no objective basis for resolving such conflicts. • Ethical assertions reflect high levels of emotion, particularly with regard to medical and sexual ethics, and may be expressed in simplistic ways without due justification. • Ethical assertions are often intended to influence others to adopt the same moral views, thus employing language which is persuasive rather than genuinely descriptive or factual. • Emotivism is the last resort of ethical language since it implies that all other attempts to arrive at an objective morality have failed. • Ethical claims may be used to justify moral positions which are detrimental to social cohesion, such as racism or sexism. • Emotivism is based on the philosophy of the Logical Positivists which has largely been discredited as overly dismissive of language which does not fulfil its strict criteria of meaningfulness. (Link with Philosophy of Religion) • The ethical teaching of Jesus depended on a shared understanding of moral teaching in the Jewish scriptures and although it may be challenged it is not disregarded as meaningless. (Link with New Testament Studies) • Religious moral codes are typically objective and based on forms of divine command theory or moral principles agreed by the religious community. Emotive approaches are thus rejected as undermining the perennial value of religious morality. (Link with the Study of a Religion).

	Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.
--	--

Question number	Indicative content
	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.

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 a limited range of 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 the 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).
---------	-------	---