



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2024

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
UNIT 3 - OPTION D
A STUDY OF BUDDHISM
1120UD0-1**

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.

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 or all 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.

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.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band (marks)	Assessment Objective AO1 – Section A questions [30 marks] <i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice - approaches to the study of religion and belief.
5 (25-30 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4 (19-24 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3 (13-18 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2 (7-12 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable) • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1 (1-6 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable) • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication. <p>N.B. A maximum of 3 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'.</p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Section B questions [30 marks] <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5 (25-30 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. • Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4 (19-24 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. • Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3 (13-18 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. • Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2 (7-12 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought, appropriately and in context. • Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Some mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1 (1-6 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. • Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary. • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

WJEC GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

UNIT 3 OPTION D - A STUDY OF BUDDHISM

SUMMER 2024 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1.	Examine the Tibetan Buddhist practices of mudra, mantra and mandala.
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[AO1 30]

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

- There are several schools of Tibetan Buddhism which emphasise different teachings, practices and lineages. However, these practices, which engage the body, mind and emotions, are found throughout. The emphasis on ritual is strong in Tibetan Buddhism and rituals are used to reflect and manifest spiritual realities.
- Mudra are symbolic hand-gestures designed to convey and to manifest the qualities of enlightened beings such as the “do-not-be-afraid” mudra with a palm facing forward and the dhyana mudra, which manifests Samadhi, or deep concentration. Ritual practitioners perform mudras in highly choreographed series in order to emulate or manifest the qualities for which the mudras stand.
- Mantras are syllables, words or verses recited with regular patterns of sound to tune in to a buddha, bodhisattva or yidam. A mantra could be a simple syllable like Om or phrase like Om Mani Padme Hum, associated with the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Its translation is disputed but some scholars argue it means “hail to the jewel in the lotus”. The six syllables are linked to the six paramitas, which in turn are linked to colours, deities and realms of rebirth. The practitioner repeats the mantra many times and links the impure mind of samsara to the mind of awakening.
- Mandalas are visual representations of the universe, often employed as guide maps for the practitioners in their path to seek enlightenment. In Tibetan Buddhism, monks construct mandalas with coloured sands only to erase them later to remind them of the impermanence of all things in the universe. Most mandalas are, however, painted on hanging scrolls and used in the training of monks or in the teaching of the Dharma to lay practitioners at temples. In this age of high technology, some temples display the projected images of mandalas on the wall, or at the entrance gate.
- As practices in Vajrayana are esoteric in nature, i.e., they are only taught to adepts who have been initiated, their meaning may be hidden or obscure. However, underlying their practice are the principles of Mahayana Philosophy, such as connectedness and emptiness, and the tight link between wisdom and compassion.

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

2.	Examine Buddhist responses to the challenges from science.
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[AO1 30]

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

- Were science to be taken as oppositional to belief, candidates may argue that Buddhism is not a creedal religion, and the Buddha enjoined his followers to 'test the teachings' in the crucible of personal experience, as found for example, in the Kalama Sutta.
- 'Beliefs' are very often presented in Buddhism as hindrances to enlightenment, and associated with 'false views'.
- Buddhism emphasises practices rather than beliefs which different schools and groups emphasise for different reasons. In Soto Zen Buddhism, practice is seen as the same as attainment. Thus, it is practice, far more than belief, that is efficacious in this form of Buddhism.
- However, the practices of Buddhism are built on certain Buddhist philosophies. Practices such as the renunciation of possessions in monastic initiation have to be understood in terms of the 'belief' in no-self and the value of the avoidance of attachment. The practice of dana (giving alms) must be understood in terms of the belief in no-self, pratītyasamutpāda and merit-making.
- Most Buddhists do believe that dukkha is caused by tanha, and that the Buddha uncovered a route out of suffering. Many Buddhists believe in rebirth and previous and future lives. Many believe in spirits, and the efficacy of rituals, and in the power of celestial Buddhas and bodhisattvas. As such beliefs are important in Buddhism.
- The Buddha also taught about sraaddha, which is sometimes translated as 'faith', but means confidence and trust in the teachings. This does not equate to 'belief' in the sense of the acceptance of propositional statements, but it does indicate that Buddhists value a faithful disposition.
- A 'scientific' worldview may also be figured as a belief system and therefore from a Buddhist perspective open to the charge of false views. This might especially be the case with scientism.
- The practice of meditation is scientifically known to be beneficial physiologically.
- Buddhist ideas about insubstantiality are considered to be compatible with epistemologies associated with sub-atomic physics, and there is much overlap between Buddhist philosophy and contemporary scientific discussions about the nature of consciousness.
- The Dalai Lama has collaborated with scientists in the projects of the Mind & Life Institute and considers the aims of science and the aims of Buddhism to be aligned.

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

Section B

3.	'Experience is more valuable than other sources of authority in Buddhism.'
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Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- The Buddha himself was driven by personal experience, of sickness, old age and death, to question the meaning of life. He drew on his own experience of meditation. He rejected the path of his teachers and declared his own path, the middle way, based on his own experience of failure with ascetic practices. He is the archetypal follower of his own experience.
- His teachings as recorded in the Pali Canon encourage followers to 'test the teachings' in their own experience.
- The Kalama Sutta offers a range of authorities to be rejected in favour of testing the teachings in one's own experience. For instance, the villagers are enjoined not to rely on scriptures, on the fame or reputation of a particular teacher, on claims of revelation etc; rather they are asked to explore whether the teaching leads to wholesome or skilful outcomes, or unwholesome or unskilful outcomes, and make their decision on that basis.
- Meditation is fundamentally a practice that must be experienced first-hand.
- Numerous schools throughout Buddhist history have started as the result of the personal experience of a single figure e.g. Shinran, Nichiren etc.
- Other sources of authority than experience are important in Buddhism, for example sangha – whether that is the authority structure within monasteries, the organisation within Buddhist schools across Asia, or the more abstract notion of the Sangha.
- The Buddha is a significant authority in Buddhism along with the teachings attributed to him.
- Key teachers –e.g. the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and other teachers are significant authorities.
- The Pali Canon – and the Mahayana corpus are significant authority
Candidates may explore how texts are used in some depth.
- The Vinaya is a key authority.
- Candidates may consider the idea of authority in terms of skilful means (i.e., no teaching is ultimately true, but provisional).

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

4.	'Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings are the best way of ensuring Buddhism's relevance in the modern world.'
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Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Thich Nhat Hanh (known by his follower as Thay) is a world-renowned Vietnamese Buddhist teacher, writer, poet, scholar, and peacemaker author of more than one hundred books translated into several languages, including bestsellers *Peace Is Every Step*, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, *Living Buddha*, *Living Christ* and *Anger*.
- In 1964, he established the Tiep Hien Order or the Order of Interbeing, the members of which were involved in social work and committed to the principles of Engaged Buddhism. The Order was founded on the Fourteen Precepts or, as they are now known, Mindfulness Trainings.
- He devoted much of his early life to bringing an end to the Vietnam War, and in 1982 he founded Plum Village in France.
- In 1967, Martin Luther King nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize, gaining him worldwide attention.
- While he has a political and socially engaged message, his most famous teachings are simple and accessible. For example, "There is no way to happiness - happiness is the way".
- Candidates may argue that these simple teachings are in fact simplistic and do not address the serious structural problems faced in modern life. They may argue that a return to the more complex and challenging philosophy of Pali Canon may make Buddhism more relevant to the modern world.
- They may argue that socially engaged Buddhism needs to be less about clever sayings and more about informed action. Thich Nhat Hanh would agree with this point. However, many of those who consume his writings only do so in a superficial way.
- Candidates may argue that as a political as well as a religious leader, the Dalai Lama has a much greater world platform upon which to give his teachings.
- Thich Nhat Hanh only represents Vietnamese Zen, so he cannot ensure the relevance of other types of Buddhism in the modern world.
- The secret to Thich Nhat Hanh's relevance may only be through his use of English. There may be many other more relevant teachers who do not use English and who therefore remain unknown in the West.
- Other aspects might be the best way of ensuring the relevance of Buddhism, for instance its engagement with the modern malaise of stress and anxiety through contemporary Mindfulness, through its engagement with ecology, anti-racism and other politically and socially engaged activities.
- Candidates may argue that the more established schools of Buddhism are better suited to ensuring Buddhism's relevance but staying true to the textual canon of Buddhism.

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

5.	'The Vinaya is of central importance for the sangha.'
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Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- The Vinaya is regarded as the oldest part of the Tipitaka and attributed to the Buddha himself establishing rules for the sangha.
- The belief that the Patimokkha have been recited since the time of the Buddha – that is before any of the Tipitaka was committed to writing – provides a direct link for the monastic sangha with the historical Buddha himself.
- The Patimokkha - in the Vinaya Pitaka - are recited today by the monastic sangha of Theravada every two weeks. Monks and nuns may also memorise the Patimokkha. This shows the continuing significance of the Vinaya.
- The Four Parajikas or 'defeats' are found in the Vinaya Pitaka: namely; sexual intercourse, taking that which is not given, intentionally bringing about death, or falsely claiming spiritual attainments. These are fundamental to the cohesion of the sangha.
- The Vinaya Pitaka is one third of the Tripitaka and when going for refuge to the Dhamma, it is the Vinaya Pitaka which is in the minds of the monastic sangha alongside the Sutta Pitaka and the Abhidhamma Pitaka.
- Through the course of over 2500 years, Buddhism has survived due to the continuation of the monastic sangha which in large part has been maintained due to close observance of the Vinaya Pitaka.
- The full vinaya does not apply to the lay sangha.
- Mahayana developments valued the details of the Vinaya less – in many Mahayana schools, monks and nuns marry, (and are sometimes called priests). Mahayana Buddhism draws upon a wide range of different types of text. Texts such as the perfection of wisdom literature or the Lotus Sutra may occupy positions of greater authority than the Vinaya.
- The Vinaya may be said to be less important than the Sutta Pitaka, which contains the teachings of the Buddha for all, not just monastics.
- The Vinaya could be described as patriarchal, and feminist Buddhists may consider much of it to be irrelevant or in need of reinterpretation.
- Similarly, socially engaged Buddhists may consider rules for monastic as less important than actively tackling structural suffering.
- Triratna describes 'commitment' (i.e. beliefs) as more important than 'lifestyle' (the Vinaya directs the lifestyle of monastics)

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

6.	'Japanese Buddhism is unique.'
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Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

- Different types of Buddhism have been popular at different points in the history of Japan. From the 6th Century onwards a highly scholarly and aristocratic form of Buddhism was ascendent, but in the Kamakura period (i.e. in the medieval period) three types of Buddhism (which had existed before) became particularly popular. They (Pure Land, Nichiren and Zen) remain the mainstream of Japanese Buddhism to date.
- The founders of all three denominations trained in the Tendai tradition but rejected it for various reasons, and developed their own emphases based on particular texts or teachings.
- Nichiren focused on the Lotus Sutra, the idea of buddha-hood, original enlightenment and the power of chanting the name of the Lotus sutra. This appears to be very different from the teachings of the Buddha in the Pali canon, however the focus on the idea of enlightenment for all and on skilful means may be said to be thoroughly mainstream in Mahayana thought.
- Pure Land focuses on the Buddha Amida who enlightens those who call out to him in life in his post-mortem Pure Land. This appears to contradict the teachings in the Pali canon which makes the individual responsible for their progress towards Awakening. However, the teaching that humans are beset by spiritual pride if they think they can achieve Awakening through their own efforts may be considered as a clear statement of no-self. The figure of Amida too is very logical in the context of the idea of Awakening being characterised as a state of absolute compassion.
- Zen, with its focus on the koan and on zazen is unusual in so far as it eschews texts in favour of direct experience, which it makes it unlike other forms of Buddhism. However, this fact aligns it much more closely with the alleged experience of the historical Buddha than is found in any other kind of Buddhism.
- Zen, like the other forms of Japanese Buddhism, draws on the fundamental Mahayana notion of the mutual identity of nirvana and samsara, a notion developed by the philosopher Nagarjuna in his consideration of the Buddha's teaching of dependent arising. IN this way it could be said to link back philosophically to the teachings of the Buddha.
- Candidates may argue that framing the teaching so the Pali canon as the main teachings of Buddhism is problematic since Mahayana Buddhism (which is an enormous phenomenon) does not value it in the same way. Rather it takes certain key teachings and emphasises them.
- Candidates may also argue that we don't actually know what the Buddha taught, only what he is alleged to have taught.
- They may also argue that there is no reason to attribute absolute authority to the teachings of the historical Buddha, only to the dharma, which is open to anyone, and communicated through skilful means.
- Candidates may argue that all forms of Buddhism are unique in their own way.

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