



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2023

**AS
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - UNIT 1
OPTION D: AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM**

2120UD0-1

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2023 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

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 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.

AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 15 marks
	<p><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <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 approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">13-15 marks</p> <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. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language /vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">10-12 marks</p> <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. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">7-9 marks</p> <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. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">4-6 marks</p> <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. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-3 marks</p> <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. • 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 1 mark 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- Part (b) questions 15 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">13-15 marks</p> <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. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">10-12 marks</p> <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 response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">7-9 marks</p> <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. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">4-6 marks</p> <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. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-3 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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 grasp 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.

GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES – UNIT 1

OPTION D: AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

SUMMER 2023 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

Either,

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 (a) Examine the Buddhist chanting practice of going for refuge three times. [15]

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

- Three Refuges or Three Jewels (Triratna). 'Refuge' conveys the concept of a place of trust and safety. Buddhists express this goal by 'going for refuge' to the Buddha, the Dharma (teaching) and the Sangha (spiritual community). Support and strength are sought. Buddhists see the world as full of ignorance, attachment, and suffering. Buddhists take refuge to seek peace and spiritual transformation and to ultimately realise the goal of Enlightenment for the sake of all beings.
- A Buddhist performs the 'act' of taking refuge as the first step on the path to enlightenment. This is often thought to identify who is a Buddhist. The act is common practice within different schools of Buddhism. Examples, of the act of going to refuge takes place in different traditions may be given.
- Buddhists express their intention of taking the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha as their refuge by saying, or chanting, the Threefold Refuge. Theravada Buddhists recite in Pali. The words can be recited by the person alone before the image of a Buddha or repeated line by line following a monk or nun within traditions such as Theravada or Tibetan.
- The Threefold Refuge may be repeated daily as a reminder of the commitment to attain enlightenment through the guidance and inspiration of the Three Jewels. This leads to good conduct and mental development, cultivating equanimity, self-control, a calm and clear mind, and wisdom.
- Theravadins go for refuge to the historical Buddha and his Dhamma found in the Pali Canon. He is a role model and not a vehicle for salvation.
- Mahayanists emphasise the transcendent nature of the Buddha. Refuge in a variety of different Mahayanist teachings is sought such as the concepts of Trikaya and Buddha nature within Mahayanist schools.
- Going for refuge in the Sangha means different things for Buddhists within different schools. Monks or nuns might see it as an expression of their attitude and relationship to their fellow monastics. For laity, it may signify a commitment to practising the five precepts and Eightfold Path with guidance of the monastic sangha. It may signify a commitment to helping other lay people, and to supporting the fourfold sangha.

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

(b) 'Going for refuge is more relevant to Buddhists than other possible refuges in the modern world.'

Evaluate this view.

[15]

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

- Going for refuge has been practised for millennia helping Buddhists of all traditions to find peace in a world of dukkha. The refuges provide the Sangha with a daily focus and devotion. The refuges are an expression of commitment and are seen by many as what makes someone a Buddhist.
- Only engagement with politics, society and relationships can truly change things and dispel suffering. Chanting the refuges would not be able to change things in a practical way.
- Both heritage and convert Buddhists are likely to see the sangha as offering a valuable refuge in the modern world which is orientated to capitalist values and individualism. An example are the regular Going for Refuge retreats for women, offered by the Tiratanaloka Buddhist Retreat Centre in Brecon. These have continued virtually throughout the pandemic providing help to many people within the global community.
- Going for refuge can offer today's Buddhists practical and trustworthy responses to the dukkha faced in life and can help Buddhist to become free of attachment to 'false refuges' such as materialism, politics, relationships and other secular answers to the problem of suffering. These things are unlikely to lead to lasting peace or nirvana.
- In a convert context, the surrounding community itself may not be Buddhist so it would be more beneficial to seek refuge within a local community that may not be Buddhist but would be able to help in a real way through social action.
- There is varying emphasis on each of the Three Jewels in various forms of Buddhism, so some may be more relevant than others in the modern world. For example, in Jodo Shin Shu the Buddha is the most important refuge. All that is needed for enlightenment is to chant the nembutsu, whereas in Zen, the teacher may be seen as more important than the Buddha in enabling a practitioner to realise satori and the teaching of Lin Chi is that 'If you see a Buddha in your path kill him.' This is reference to the concept of Buddha nature that you already have.
- Some convert Buddhists practice Buddhism alone, without a sangha and still find refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. It is possible in a modern world to seek help from, and connect with, to the Sangha virtually. This has proved to be the case during the Covid-19 lockdown where Buddhist communities are live streaming puja and teachings.
- There does not have to be a choice between taking refuge and other aspects of modern life. The commitment to Buddhism through taking refuge does not mean that Buddhists must shut themselves away from society. The act can lead to greater engagement with society, politics and to better relationships as well as enabling them to develop their own spiritual life.

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

Or,

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 (a) Explain how different meditation practices are used for cultivating qualities which lead to awakening. [15]

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

- Meditation - 'bhavana' (mental development); jhana (Pali); dhyana (Sanskrit).
- Samatha – (calmness meditation) practised in Theravada. Focus on right mindfulness and right concentration. Meditation for peace of mind; focusing on mindfulness of breathing (anapanasati); to become aware of the five skandhas in flux; includes the metta bhavana to cultivate loving feelings; requires a comfortable position, g., lotus position, half-lotus or in a chair. Hand mudras and use of objects for focus during meditation. Chanting may be used as a preparation to meditation. Practitioners hope to develop qualities of the Buddha through practice.
- Metta bhavana is cultivation of loving-kindness. Metta (love) – loving-kindness even for enemies; Karuna – compassion for the suffering experienced by others. Basic framework outlined in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga 5thC CE, which offers a commentary on the Metta Sutta. Mudita sympathetic joy – celebration of goodness of others; Uppekka – equanimity – loving all beings equally. Reference to the five stages of practice – love for oneself, focus on a dear friend, to neutralise feelings of dislike, to resolve feelings of conflict and hate and finally to extend this to all beings. Aim to cultivate a wholesome state of mind. The Metta Sutta states, 'in gladness and in safety, may all beings be at ease.' 'All beings' includes the self. The cultivation here is the wish 'May I be happy and free from suffering.' The goal is to embrace all sentient beings within the radiant metta cultivated through practice, including human beings whom we have not met, potential life in the universe, and non-human life on Earth. 'May all beings be happy and free from suffering.'
- Vipassana (insight/clear meditation) deep meditation from the Theravada tradition. More complicated form of meditation with samatha as its base. Vipassana must be taught by a master to be beneficial. A more advanced level of mindfulness; focuses on understanding the three lakshanas. Goal is to see things as they really are and to gain insight. Vipassana It requires high levels of skill and develops wisdom. It is usually practised in a sitting position with legs crossed but is sometimes used in walking meditation.
- Zazen - sitting meditation in Zen. 'Za' 'sitting' (Japanese). Sanskrit 'dyana' refers to a deep sense of absorption in meditation. Sit on a zafu (cushion), rhythmically and easily breathing, legs fully or half crossed, spine and head upright, hands folded one palm above the other, and eyes open. Logical thinking, desires, attachments, and judgments should be suspended, the mind in a state of relaxed attention -the meditator is able to realise innate Buddha-nature, that nirvana and samsara are two sides of the same coin; and nirvana is here and now. Meditation can take place anywhere; work can be a form of meditation. Reference to satori, the awakening of Buddha-nature instantaneously or spontaneously. Zazen is often performed in a sesshin (retreat) and/or in a rendo (meditation hall) supervised by a monk. Reference the use of koans.

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

(b) 'Meditation is an essential practice for Buddhists today.'

Evaluate this view.

[15]

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

- Meditation is widely practised by Buddhists today as a tool to train the mind to be able to penetrate reality as it really is and to cut through delusion to find the truth, just as the Buddha is said to have done. It is a recommended practice – described by Edward Conze as 'the heartbeat of Buddhism.' It is one of the threefold trainings and a crucial part of the Eightfold Path, helping to develop wisdom and compassion. Practicing metta bhavana meditation has the beneficial effect of enabling people to develop love and tolerance and to reduce feelings of hatred and fear. It is, therefore, essential. The Dalai Lama said that the inner work of meditation had the potential to bring about world peace and that is essential. Individual Buddhists may also feel that meditation is essential for them as it shows commitment to the Buddhist path. Meditation is essential as it is to develop Right View and hence the principles of compassion, loving kindness, non-violence, and non-harm become part of the practice. Through meditation a Buddhist overcomes dukkha. Nirvana can only be reached through meditation.
- The world needs social action rather than meditation to make the world a better place for people. Passively sitting on a meditation cushion is not helpful to anyone. Pure Land Buddhists see it as 'naval gazing' and a waste of time because it is subject to spiritual pride (e.g., Pure Land Buddhism). It is not possible to properly practice meditation in this age of mappo because the unenlightened mind discriminates, it inevitably associates more meditation with more spiritual development. It leads to reinforcing the ego self rather than undermining it.
- There are health and lifestyle benefits of meditation which are particularly helpful given the stresses and strains of modern life, particularly when we find ourselves in the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a need to see the benefits of meditation now more than ever. Also, the practice of mindfulness has a strong evidence base for helping people with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, etc.
- Others may argue that meditation at least does not harm, so it might be a better pastime than other possible activities. This is especially the case when it leads the practitioner to feel more peace of mind. Meditation helps Buddhists cope with the demands of modern life.
- Some Buddhists might think that other practices are more essential to them, e.g., puja, which is reminder of the Buddha's teaching and quest in life. Puja gives a Buddhist a clear focus towards enlightenment. Following an ethical lifestyle can be achieved without meditation. e.g., ahimsa or when Right Action is taken it leads to good karma and a better rebirth. Therefore, meditation is not essential.

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

Section B

Either,

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 (a) Examine the three types of dukkha within Buddhism. [15]

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

- Dukkha is one of the three lakshanas, marks or characteristics of existence, and the first of the Four Noble Truths.
- There is difficulty with the translation of 'dukkha' into English. It means more than suffering. It is a diagnosis of the human condition and involves a general dissatisfaction with life. Dukkha means a spectrum of experiences from unsatisfactoriness through to suffering.
- Buddhists see all things (people, objects, states of mind, relationships, qualities, everything) as being dependent on causes and conditions, and are therefore constantly changing because of this people experience Dukkha. Candidates may relate examples of this from everyday life.
- Candidates should develop, with discussion and examples, the idea of dukkha into three types: dukkha arising from suffering, dukkha arising from mental/emotional pain and dukkha arising from impermanence.
- Dukkha-dukkha is pain and directly unpleasant experience generally. The experience of bodily pain, illness, discomfort or of mental anguish.
- Viparinama-dukkha is the frustration which arises because pleasant experiences are impermanent. When the pleasant experiences end, we continue to want more of them, and thus experience disappointment. Suffering due to change.
- Sankhara-dukkha is the unsatisfactoriness that we experience due to insubstantiality. Translated as suffering 'in the formations.' Even apart from the fact that they are impermanent, things in samsara are not quite satisfying because they do not fulfil our expectations completely. This term can also be applied to a sense of dissatisfaction about our whole lives, sometimes called 'existential dukkha', when life seems meaningless.

Some candidates may refer to the following and credit would be given, but this information is not expected:

- Some candidates may give an indication of the relationship between the three types of dukkha and other teachings, such as anatta, the Four Noble Truths and pratityasamutpada as these teachings cannot be seen in isolation.
- There may be discussion of the relationship between Awakening or Enlightenment and as the cessation of dukkha and reference to the Awakening of the historical Buddha. There may be reference to the teachings of Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta and the physical and emotional states of dukkha expressed within the First Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma.
- Candidates could make reference to the view that the Buddhist teaching on dukkha might be seen as a pessimistic outlook on life. However, the existence of dukkha does not deny that there is pleasure and happiness in life.

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

(b) 'The Four Noble Truths are accurate accounts of reality.'

Evaluate this view.

[15]

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

- The Four Noble truths are amongst the first teachings of the Buddha – truths allegedly the reality of life as perceived by the Buddha through his life experiences and his experience of Awakening whilst under the Bodhi tree. Theravadins see the Buddha as a historical figure and as such his accounts of reality must be accurate. The teaching of the Four Noble Truths is based on observation, evidence, and years of testing by the Buddhist community.
- Humans to get stressed, anxious and experience unsatisfactoriness in life. Candidates may give examples to show this. This may sound pessimistic, but it is realistic as we see dukkha all around us and the need to find a way out of it. The magga offers a practical, realistic way to alleviate suffering for individuals and for society. References may be made to the medical metaphor to evidence this.
- Reference to the medical metaphor (the Buddha as a physician, diagnosing the symptoms, identifying cause, and providing a prescription) and the notions of tanha (thirst), nirodha (cessation) and magga (the path) show the reality of the need to take the reality of dukkha seriously. The medicine and therapy offer a realistic solution to dukkha. The medical metaphor presents the Four Noble Truths as highly rational and scientific, which may help to increase Buddhism's appeal as a realistic outlook on life.
- The Four Noble Truths neatly convey an enormous amount of realistic information about the nature of the condition of sentient beings, and the challenges faced in life, as well as offering a clearly laid out solution. The whole of the Buddhist path could be said to be captured and summarised within them.
- The reality is that the Four Noble Truths have limitations and only give a realistic account of some aspects of reality. Many (Mahayana) schools of Buddhism do not focus so explicitly on the Four noble truths, rather on the bodhisattva path towards developing and perfecting absolute compassion, or on other teachings/practices, such as devotion and gratitude to enlightened beings or the development of insight through the practice of meditation. Whilst the Four Noble Truths might sound realistic, they are focused on the self in ways that the Mahayanist bodhisattva path is not. It is vital that others are helped. Many Buddhists might argue that the most realistic thing Buddhism teaches is compassion and kindness. The Dalai Lama says, 'my religion is kindness.'
- The Four Noble Truths does not present an accurate account of reality in a scientific and mathematical way. Therefore, the realistic nature of the Four Noble Truths is limited.

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

Or,

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 (a) Explain the notion of karma within Buddhism with reference to the *Dhammapada*, Chapter 1 'The Pairs' and Chapter 9 'Evil'. [15]

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

- Karma (Sk,) or kamma (P), means action, however it is the teaching is broader than this. The law of karma, or cause and effect, is a teaching used to explain that our past actions affect us, either positively or negatively, and that our present actions will affect us in the future.
- Karma is not an external force, or a system of punishment or reward dealt out by a god. The concept is more accurately understood as a natural law, like gravity. Good, or wholesome, karma creates merit (punya), which can be transferred to others. Unwholesome karma Teachings about karma are meant to enable the Buddhists to realise the wider consequences for themselves and others of acting, thinking or speaking from a position of greed, hatred, or ignorance.
- Theravada and Tibetan tradition disagree about whether everything we experience is attributable to karma. Theravada accepts some genetic and natural causes other than karma. However, it contributes to our conditioning.
- For Buddhists, karma has consequences beyond this life. Negative, unskilful actions in a previous life can follow a person into the next life and cause bad effects. Skilful actions that lead to good karmic outcomes are based upon motives of generosity, compassion, kindness and sympathy. The opposite motives of greed, aversion (hatred) and delusion, when acted upon, lead to bad karmic results. Even a Buddha is not exempt from the effects of past karma, although this will burn out during this life.
- Karma is linked to samsara in that it determines rebirth and the status in their next life. Good karma can result in being born in one of the heavenly realms. Bad karma can cause rebirth as an animal, or to a hell realm. Teachings about karma are relevant because they derive from pratityasamutpada, the notion that all phenomena are causally connected in a morally neutral way.
- Candidates should refer to the *Dhammapada* Chapter 1 'The Pairs' and Chapter 9 'Evil' to explain the notion of karma. They may illustrate the notion of karma via images e.g., a seed growing into a plant or tree and bearing fruit explains interconnectedness and its relationship between cause and effect. Candidates may refer to the Questions of King Milinda.
- Buddhists try to cultivate good karma and avoid bad and meditation aids this. However, the aim of Buddhism is to escape the cycle of rebirth altogether, not simply to acquire good karma and so to be born into a more pleasant state.

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

- (b) **‘The historical Buddha’s rejection of questions about the existence of God was legitimate.’**

Evaluate this view.

[15]

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

- The Buddha was right to dismiss questions about the origins of the universe and the existence of a creator God in favour of a personal spiritual quest as it helps individual to shoulder responsibility for their own actions and overcome dukkha.
- Questions about the existence of God are a waste of time as they do not help to overcome dukkha, which is the most important task according to the historical Buddha. The Pali Canon reinforces this idea Reference may be made to the parable of the poisoned arrow to justify this argument. If a man is wounded by a poisoned arrow and were to refuse to remove it until he understood who the culprit was this would be absurd. Likewise, it is absurd to debate the origins of the universe or the existence of God. The most important thing to do is to address dukkha.
- Only when dukkha has been eliminated can metaphysical questions be explored. The Buddha was right to take a more practical and pragmatic approach to what he witnessed around him through experiences like the Four Sights.
- To question the existence of God has been relevant to people throughout history. However, they are not presently relevant to Buddhist worldviews.
- Buddhist worldviews include the idea that you would never be able to prove the existence of a supernatural being like a Creator God, so it is quite pointless contemplating it when there are more important things to do, such as following the Eightfold Path in a practical way to realise nibbana. Buddhism is practical and not speculative.
- The historical Buddha believed that belief in the existence of an ultimate reality or God arose from fear and frustration rather than rational understanding. However, Buddhism is technically not atheistic. The Buddha did not actively reject ideas about the existence of God. He simply chose to ignore them. Buddhist worldviews include the existence of deities but not a supreme being or ultimate power put forward within other religious worldviews. Reference may be made to Lopez’s ‘Scientific Buddha’ where people make Buddhism compatible with scientific, atheist and humanist worldviews. This would go a step too far in trying to answer the questions the Buddha refused to engage with.

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

Or,

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 (a) Examine two main features of the Buddha's Awakening under the Bodhi Tree. [15]

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

- The Enlightenment of the historical Buddha under the tree of Bodhgaya where he saw the true nature of life. Reference to the historical Buddha's insight into his past lives, karma and the cessation of dukkha as they are linked to and lead to his Awakening/Enlightenment.
- The four meditative absorptions - Jhanas. The steps of enlightenment. The first watch – reaching the four stages of jhana. The second watch – the heavenly eye. The third watch – perfect wisdom. All this leading to full enlightenment, the fourth jhana, the state beyond all differentiation.
- Reference to his mythic and psychological defeat of Mara, with his demon hordes and seductive daughters.
- Siddhartha asking the earth to be his witness in his defeat of Mara (the earth touching-mudra). As the morning star rose in the sky, he attained Awakening.
- According to some accounts the Buddha continued to sit, experiencing the bliss of enlightenment, until he was persuaded to teach by the god Brahma Sahampati.
- The insight gained into the cycle of birth, death and rebirth and the role of karma in this relentless turning. The three fires, three marks of existence and the discovery of the Four Noble Truths.
- Parinirvana, the final Nirvana or complete Awakening.
- Reference may be made to the ways in which the stories of the Buddha's life are understood, e.g., hagiography and myth.
- Different views of the Enlightenment of the Buddha within Theravada and Mahayana schools. Enlightenment, the climax of the Buddha's life, is the goal which all Buddhists strive to reach. Enlightenment is significant in different schools of Buddhism to varying degrees. It is seen as an example to others, particularly within Theravada Buddhism.

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

(b) 'Awakening is impossible to explain in words.'

Evaluate this view with reference to Buddhism.

[15]

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

- Many teachers have tried to articulate Buddhist worldviews on Awakening, Enlightenment or Nirvana (Sk), Nibbana (P), including the historical Buddha who spent forty years teaching after his awakening so it cannot be unexplainable.
- Awakening or Nirvana is the ultimate goal for all Buddhists, yet it is difficult to capture in words. It is commonly described as the blowing out, or extinguishing, of the three poisons of greed, hatred, and ignorance. Even if this is an inadequate explanation then it must be worthwhile attempting to define it.
- Awakening/Nirvana is beyond all forms of articulation not just words. It is beyond all thought construction. The fourth jhana (meditative state) experienced by the Buddha before his Enlightenment is seen as a state beyond differentiation, beyond pleasure and pain, indeed, beyond all sense of joy and thought construction' (Grey). If Enlightenment is beyond thought construction, then it must be beyond words. It may, therefore, appear to be impossible to attempt to describe. However, just because you cannot describe it, it does not make it pointless to have it as a goal.
- It is better to remain silent rather than to try to define Awakening in words. Reference may be made to the Vimiladiriti Nirdesa who remained silent when asked to describe the ultimate truth (the 'thunderous silence of Vimilakirti'). Silence is thought by some Buddhists to be the best way to convey Enlightenment.
- Reference may be made to concept of Sunyata in Mahayana, which is a principle that supports this idea. All reference to Nirvana/Awakening exists in the world of samsara and Awakening is the direct opposite of this. How, therefore can it be described? Awakening is incomprehensible.
- Awakening/ Enlightenment is to be realised rather than explained. To attempt to capture it in words is to make it more elusive and less within reach. It really does not matter whether we can articulate it, what does matter is that the three poisons are extinguished, and the cessation of dukkha is achieved. To attempt to articulate Awakening is a form of skilful
- Only Enlightened beings know what enlightenment. If you are not Enlightened, you would not fully understand the concept even if it were explained.
- It is easier to explain what Awakening or Nirvana is not rather than what it is. It is no suffering, no ignorance, no hatred. It is no existence in samsara. All of which are worth explaining in words.

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