



A-level RELIGIOUS STUDIES 7062/1

Paper 1 Philosophy of Religion and Ethics

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Methods of Marking

It is essential that, in fairness to students, all examiners use the same methods of marking. The advice given here may seem very obvious, but it is important that all examiners follow it as exactly as possible.

1. If you have any doubts about the mark to award, consult your Team Leader.
2. Refer constantly to the mark scheme throughout marking. It is extremely important that it is strictly adhered to.
3. Remember, you must **always** credit **accurate, relevant and appropriate** answers which are not given in the mark scheme.
4. Do **not** credit material that is irrelevant to the question or to the stated target, however impressive that material might be.
5. If a one-word answer is required and a list is given, take the first answer (unless this has been crossed out).
6. If you are wavering as to whether or not to award a mark, the criterion should be, 'Is the student nearer those who have given a correct answer or those who have little idea?'
7. Read the information below about using Levels of Response mark schemes.
8. Be prepared to award the full range of marks. Do not hesitate to give full marks when the answer merits full marks or to give no marks where there is nothing creditable in an answer.
9. No half marks or bonus marks are to be used under any circumstances.
10. Remember, the key to good and fair marking is **consistency**. Do **not** change the standard of your marking once you have started.

Levels of Response Marking

In A-level Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, levels of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Levels of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Levels are tied to specific skills. Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Levels of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully, responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. This should only be necessary occasionally and where this occurs examiners must indicate, by a brief written explanation, why their assessment does not conform to the levels of response laid down in the mark scheme. Such scripts should be referred to the Lead Examiner.

Assessment of Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication will be assessed in all components and in relation to all assessment objectives. Where students are required to produce extended written material in English, they will be assessed on the quality of written communication. The quality of written communication skills of the student will be one of the factors influencing the actual mark awarded within the level of response. In reading an extended response, the examiner will therefore consider if it is cogently and coherently written, ie decide whether the answer:

- presents relevant information in a form that suits its purposes
- is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear
- is suitably structured and that the style of writing is appropriate.

LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Levels of Response: 10 marks A-level – AO1

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|-------------------------------|--|
| Level 5
9–10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. • Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated. • Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary. |
| Level 4
7–8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. • Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained. • Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary. |
| Level 3
5–6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. • Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion. • Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary. |
| Level 2
3–4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. • Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion. • Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary. |
| Level 1
1–2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development. • There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion. • Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary. |
| 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit. |

Levels of Response: 15 marks A-level – AO2

- Level 5**
13–15
- A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised.
 - Perceptive discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis.
 - There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning.
 - Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 4**
10–12
- A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised.
 - Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis.
 - There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning.
 - Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 3**
7–9
- A general response to the issue(s) raised.
 - Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought.
 - An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning.
 - Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 2**
4–6
- A limited response to the issue(s) raised.
 - Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument.
 - Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary.
- Level 1**
1–3
- A basic response to the issue(s) raised.
 - A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support.
 - Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary.
- 0**
- No accurate or relevant material to credit.

Question 1

0 1 . 1

Examine the approach of the cosmological argument to proving the existence of God.

[10 marks]

Target: AO1.4: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including approaches to the study of religion and belief.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

The cosmological argument attempts to prove the existence of God using a posteriori knowledge as a starting point. Aquinas begins by observing that everything in the natural world is contingent, so this argument has its basis in observation. Aquinas infers, from the observation of the nature of contingent things, the need for an uncaused being which exists of its own necessity, which he believes to be God.

The cosmological argument uses inductive reasoning to show that the existence of God is a reasonable hypothesis. Aquinas demonstrates that something must exist necessarily to explain why things exist now, because if there was a time when nothing existed, it is logical that out of nothing, nothing can come. Therefore, Aquinas concludes that it is overwhelmingly probable that something must exist necessarily, which he believes to be God.

The cosmological argument uses the principle of sufficient reason to prove the existence of God. Aquinas posits that there must be an uncaused necessary being to explain the existence of contingent things because an infinite chain of necessary beings would not be sufficient reason for their existence. An infinite chain of necessary beings would itself require explanation, such as an uncaused necessary being, which he believes to be God.

Maximum Level 3 if the cosmological argument is merely described.

0	1	2
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‘Miracles have little significance for religion.’

Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Miracles: Differing understandings of ‘miracle’ and the significance of these views for religion.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Hume’s critique of miracles is based on the assumption that all true knowledge comes from sense experience and empirical facts. Miracles are therefore based on false factual claims, and can have no significance for religion. However, many believers clearly do assume that when talking about miracles they are making significant, factual claims. For religion, the factual improbability of miracles is a necessary condition for them to happen, otherwise they could not be miracles.

Wiles takes an anti-real approach to the biblical accounts of miracles, arguing that they are not literal or scientific, but symbolic and mythological. This approach implies that miracles have little or no significance for religion, since many Christians do understand them as factual. However, some argue that religion has no need to label miracles as real or anti-real, factual or non-factual. The biblical text is open to different interpretations, as is the perspective of each individual.

The most significant stumbling block for religious belief is the problem of evil. A God who heals or helps some miraculously but ignores the misery of the majority cannot be good. Miracles selected by God therefore have little or no significance for religion. However, some claim that miracles have universal, but not selective, significance for humans. Ward argues, for example, that miracles disclose important aspects of God’s plan for the universe, such as the resurrection of Jesus and the overcoming of evil.

Question 2

0 2 . 1

Examine the possibility of continuing personal existence after death.

[10 marks]

Target: AO1.1: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

One possibility that there is a continuing personal existence after death is physical resurrection. For example, Augustine accepted that Jesus rose from the dead and then ascended to heaven in a physical form. For this to happen to Jesus, it must be possible for God to perform the same miracle for any being created with a soul. At death, then, the human soul separates from the body; the body decays and corrupts, and the soul goes on to meet God. God then gives incorruptible life to the body by reuniting it with its soul through the power of Jesus' resurrection.

An alternative possibility is that of the reincarnation of the soul, the view that when the body dies, the non-physical soul lives on and unites with another body. Those who support the views of Descartes, for example, take the view that the soul is identical with the mind, and that minds are non-physical and non-spatial, so minds cannot die. When a person dies, then, their mental contents can and do survive in an incorporeal state. Support for reincarnation is given, for example, by claims of direct past-life recall and by the results of regression hypnosis.

Process Thought, for example, takes a radically different view of the possibility of personal existence after death in objective immortality. Both the universe and God have always existed panentheistically, so the universe is in God and God is in the universe. God is the totality of the universe's mental and physical experience. When any human being dies, therefore, that person remains objectively immortal, as a real and permanent object held eternally in God's mind. Some argue that at some point God might be able to grant subjective immortality to humans, so that persons can become immortal in their own right.

0	2	.	2
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‘Mystical experiences cannot be verified.’

Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Mystical experiences: William James; non sensuous and non-intellectual union with the divine as presented by Walter Stace. The challenges of verifying religious experiences. Religious responses to those challenges.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Mystical experiences cannot be verified because those who have experienced and studied them, such as James, report that they are ineffable experiences and so cannot be fully understood or sufficiently explained. This makes empirical testing and analysis impossible, meaning verification is not possible. However, throughout history there are many attempts to describe and understand mystical experiences, for example, the account of the enlightenment of Buddha in the Pali Canon or the writing of the nun, Julian of Norwich. These testimonies have many similarities which could be seen to corroborate each other as a form of verification.

Mystical experiences cannot be verified because they are unique, subjective and first person private experiences. Witness testimonies report that even people who are with someone having a mystical experience may not realise that anything has occurred, as the experience may be entirely internal. However, James observed that many of those who had mystical experiences underwent measurable lifestyle changes and long lasting psychological benefits, which is good evidence that what they experienced was true.

Mystical experiences cannot be verified because according to Stace they are non-sensuous and non-intellectual. As experiences which occur entirely in the consciousness they remain outside the limits of external investigation, apart from analysis of the personal testimonies of mystics. However, mystical experiences are experienced via brain states and so can be measured in the sense of brain state changes observed during experiments or in after effects of an experience.

Maximum level 2 for answers that refer only to religious experiences.

Question 3

0 3 . 1

Examine why Virtue Ethics and Situation Ethics may make different moral decisions.

[10 marks]

Target: AO1.3: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

One reason why Virtue Ethics and Situation Ethics may make different moral decisions is because they take differing ethical approaches when making moral decisions. Virtue Ethics focuses on character development: in moral decisions an individual must consider the virtuous mean between two vices habitually. Contrastingly, Situation Ethicists focus on how loving the outcomes are. Therefore, Situation Ethicists calculate which action achieves the most effective outcome to achieve their goal of love in moral decisions.

Another reason why Virtue Ethics and Situation Ethics may make different moral decisions is because they are motivated by different ideals. A Situation Ethicist is motivated by agape love and always achieving the most loving outcome as the only absolute rule. All four presuppositions and six working principles of Situation Ethics revolve around the concept of agape. Conversely, a Virtue Ethicist is motivated by achieving the goal of Eudaimonia, for example, which Aristotle claimed is done by fulfilling human purpose in living a virtuous life.

Virtue Ethics and Situation Ethics make different moral decisions because they have different moral presuppositions. For example, one of the four presuppositions of Situation Ethics is positivism, so all moral decisions are acts of faith and not motivated by reason. Contrastingly, in Virtue Ethics Aristotle claims that moral excellence is to reason well and is the goal of the virtuous person. Therefore, according to Aristotle moral decisions are rational.

0	3	.	2
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‘Moral values are self-evident.’**Evaluate this claim.****[15 marks]**

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Non-naturalism: Intuitionism – moral values are self-evident. The strengths and weaknesses of these ideas.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Moral realists argue that moral values are self-evident because moral values can be discovered, understood and described. For ethical naturalists, moral values are natural properties and so are facts about the nature of the universe or about human nature. However, it is argued that moral values cannot be derived from natural properties or facts. For example, Moore’s naturalistic fallacy claims that moral values are non-natural and unanalysable. So the naturalist claim that moral values are self-evident as they can be discovered in nature is flawed logically.

Intuitionists, for example Moore, argue that moral values are self-evident because moral values are known through fundamental intuition, not reason or inference. Moral values are stand-alone beliefs; for those who hold them, they are truths that exist mind-independently and can be intuited. However, others for example Foot, argue that moral values have a factual content, that virtue and human flourishing are the measure of moral value. Foot points to biology and sociology where if something contributes to human flourishing, it is valuable and if it does not, then it lacks moral worth. Therefore, moral values are not self-evident; instead are discovered through reasoning and the goal of human flourishing.

Some people argue that there are moral duties which are felt instinctively and universally. For example, Ross argues that there are prima facie duties such as telling the truth or protecting life. As these moral values are felt instinctively, they are self-evident. However, it is argued that many of the historic moral duties that were instinctive were simply unconscious bias or societal norms, for example the view that slavery was morally correct may have been a result of the societal norms of the period when slavery was universally practised.

Question 4

0 4 . 1

Examine how Natural Moral Law can be applied to cloning.

[10 marks]

Target: AO1.1: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Natural Moral Law could consider animal cloning as morally permissible for the purposes of curing human disease or ending human hunger because biblically, animals have an inferior status and were created for use by humans. If animal cloning led to curing human disease or ending hunger, the primary precept of preserving human life would be fulfilled.

Natural Moral Law would take a very different approach to human cloning because of the special status of humans in creation. Owing to the artificial method of procreation, human cloning is not seen as fulfilling any of the primary precepts, leading to the breakdown of marriage, the harming and wasting of embryos and inevitably a disordered society that does not view God as the creator.

In animal cloning, Aquinas would condemn any unnecessary cruelty, suffering or actions that lead to humans becoming habitually cruel. Aquinas believed that such actions are immoral as they risk humans treating other humans with brutality. This would be contrary to the primary precept of preserving human life and living in an ordered society.

0	4	.	2
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‘Teleological approaches to moral decision making are effective.’

Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Normative ethical theories: Teleological: situation ethics with reference to Fletcher. The strengths and weaknesses of these ways of making moral decisions.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Teleological approaches to moral decision making are effective because they can deal with complex moral decisions. Because they take a relative approach to moral decisions this means the most unique and complex issues can be considered. A more absolutist approach may not be able to apply effectively to any complexity or a situation without precedent. However, some teleological approaches may not be effective because the very nature of relativism means that determining the right action could be too unclear. Without clarity, teleological approaches are ineffective as they can lead to confusion and poor decision making.

Teleological approaches to moral decision making are effective because they enable decision makers to develop moral autonomy. For example, both Situation Ethics and Bentham’s Utilitarianism recommend that a decision maker uses a calculus to compare outcomes to determine the correct moral decision. Deontological approaches may only require rule following, leaving decision makers morally immature and less likely to make good decisions. However, teleological approaches are criticised for putting too much responsibility on moral decision makers meaning teleological approaches are ineffective.

Teleological approaches to moral decision making are effective because they are consequentialist. By focusing on outcome, a moral decision maker is more likely to achieve the desired outcome in any situation. One of the four presuppositions of Situation Ethics is for example, pragmatism which acknowledges that any effective method of achieving the desired outcome is permissible. However, teleological approaches can be criticised for allowing morally abhorrent actions in pursuit of the desired outcome. This makes it an ineffective approach to moral decision making.