

GCE

Religious Studies

Unit **G581**: Philosophy of Religion

Advanced GCE

Mark Scheme for June 2015

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.








All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

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1. Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Level one – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Level two – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Level three – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Level four – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Level five – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin.
	Highlighting a section of the response that is irrelevant to the awarding of the mark.
	Point has been seen and noted, e.g. where part of an answer is at the end of the script.

NOTE: AO1 level must be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin, with the AO2 level used immediately below.

2. Subject-specific Marking Instructions

Handling of unexpected answers

If you are not sure how to apply the mark scheme to an answer, you should contact your Team Leader.

NOTE: AO2 material in AO1 answers must not be cross-credited and vice-versa.

A2 Preamble and Instructions to Examiners

The purpose of a marking scheme is to ‘... enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner’ [CoP 1999 25.xiv]. It must ‘allow credit to be allocated for what candidates know, understand and can do’ [xv] and be ‘clear and designed to be easily and consistently applied’ [x].

The **Religious Studies Subject Criteria** [1999] define ‘what candidates know, understand and can do’ in terms of two Assessment Objectives, weighted for the OCR Religious Studies specification as indicated:

All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives.

At A level, candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and their ability to sustain a critical line of argument in greater depth and over a wider range of content than at AS level.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked. Specifications should require that candidates demonstrate the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed.

- AO1:** Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.
- AO2:** Sustain a critical line of argument and justify a point of view.

The requirement to assess candidates’ quality of written communication will be met through both assessment objectives.

In order to ensure the marking scheme can be ‘easily and consistently applied’, and to ‘enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner’, it defines Levels of Response by which candidates’ answers are assessed. This ensures that comparable standards are applied across the various units as well as within the team of examiners marking a particular unit. Levels of Response are defined according to the two Assessment Objectives. In A2, candidates answer a single question but are reminded by a rubric of the need to address both Objectives in their answers. Progression from Advanced Subsidiary to A2 is provided, in part, by assessing their ability to construct a coherent essay, and this is an important part of the Key Skill of Communication which ‘must contribute to the assessment of Religious Studies at AS and A level’.

Positive awarding: it is a fundamental principle of OCR’s assessment in Religious Studies at Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced GCE that candidates are rewarded for what they ‘know, understand and can do’ and to this end examiners are required to assess every answer by the Levels according to the extent to which it addresses a reasonable interpretation of the question. In the marking scheme each question is provided with a brief outline of the likely content and/or lines of argument of a ‘standard’ answer, but this is by no means prescriptive or exhaustive. Examiners are required to have subject knowledge to a high level and the outlines do not attempt to duplicate this.

Examiners must **not** attempt to reward answers according to the extent to which they match the structure of the outline, or mention the points it contains. The specification is designed to allow teachers to approach the content of modules in a variety of ways from any of a number of perspectives, and candidates’ answers must be assessed in the light of this flexibility of approach. It is quite possible for an excellent and valid answer to contain knowledge and arguments which do not appear in the outline; each answer must be assessed on its own merits according to the Levels of Response.

Key Skill of Communication: this is assessed at both Advanced Subsidiary and A2 as an integral part of the marking scheme. The principle of positive awarding applies here as well: candidates should be rewarded for good written communication, but marks may not be deducted for inadequate written communication; the quality of communication is integral to the quality of the answer in making its meaning clear. The Key Skill requirements in Communication at Level 3 include the following evidence requirements for documents about complex subjects, which can act as a basis for assessing the Communications skills in an examination answer:

- Select and use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to your purpose and complex subject matter.
- Organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.
- Ensure your text is legible and your spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so your meaning is clear.

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Synoptic skills and the ability to make connections: these are now assessed at A2 as specification, due to the removal of the Connections papers.

Levels of Response: the descriptions are cumulative, ie a description at one level builds on or improves the descriptions at lower levels. Not all the qualities listed in a level must be demonstrated in an answer for it to fall in that level (some of the qualities are alternatives and therefore mutually exclusive). There is no expectation that an answer will receive marks in the same level for the two AOs.

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
1	<p>AO1</p> <p>Candidates may begin by exploring the notion of human beings believing that they are capable of having direct knowledge of God; part of the problem with this idea is that since God is so different from human beings, what would count as a direct experience of God? It is therefore natural for others to believe that the person having the experience is delusional. They may use Hobbes' view that a man who says God spoke to him in a dream is really just saying that he dreamed God spoke to him.</p> <p>Better responses are likely to focus on some rather than all types of religious experiences lest they fall into the danger of simply writing a list. They could, for example, simply analyse the statement in terms of conversion and corporate experiences.</p> <p>Some candidates are likely to use William James as part of their AO1 material but they should avoid simply explaining 'passive', 'ineffable', 'noetic' and 'transient' and not applying them to the question as many have done in the past.</p> <p>Those who are arguing that these experiences are not illusion may describe the writings of thinkers such as St. Paul, Teresa of Avila or Julian of Norwich. Others taking an opposing view may look at scholars such as Christopher Hitchens or Richard Dawkins.</p>	21	<p>To what extent can it be believed that religious experiences are no more than illusions?</p> <p>If candidates begin their answers by naming a few specific experiences which they will go on to evaluate, then examiners should assess their responses in the light of those chosen.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>AO2 Those who wish to assess the idea that there is more to a religious experience than illusion may explore the notion that evidence can be found in the changes often found in the way those who have experienced God in some form or other live their lives. The obvious one to choose would be St Paul, but there are many others whom candidates may have studied.</p> <p>Alternatively, some may argue that no matter how big the change in a person's views, an alleged experience could still be an illusion which just happily made someone a better person from some other person's perspective.</p> <p>Others may argue that people only have experiences which fit into the religion in which they have been brought up. So, for example, Christians do not 'see' or 'hear' Ganesh or Kali but rather 'see' the Virgin Mary or weeping statues.</p> <p>The best responses are likely to integrate their evaluation into their explanation of the issues.</p>	14	
2	<p>AO1 Some candidates are likely to approach this question through an exploration of propositional and non-propositional approaches to revelation and scripture. .</p> <p>In the propositional tradition, candidates may say that there is a tendency to make a distinction between natural and revealed theology. Natural theology deals with those truths which are knowable through the unaided human intellect, such as God exists, that God is creator and so on.</p>	21	'Sacred writings are the most effective way for God to reveal himself.' Discuss.

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>Revealed theology concerns those truths about God which are only knowable through God's special revelation, such as the divinity of Jesus or the concept of Trinity. Those who hold a non-propositional view reject this distinction.</p> <p>To the non-propositional believer, God reveals himself to mankind, with faith being seen as the human response to God. Candidates may, in expressing this view point to the writings of Martin Buber who distinguishes between 'I-it' relations which we may have with inanimate objects such as an examiner's relationship with his/her computer and 'I/Thou' relationships such as those within a family.</p> <p>They may then explain that many of the traditional ways of dealing with questions of God are of the 'Does God exist?', 'What is God like?' form. However, if the question is 'Who art Thou?' rather than 'What is He?' then philosophers are posing a very different question.</p> <p>Others may approach this question through biblical criticism and explore the authority of the different types of language found throughout the Bible. Some may approach the question through consideration of conservative, literal and liberal traditions of biblical scholarship.</p> <p>AO2 Whichever approach candidates take to their AO1 material, it is important that they assess the <i>effectiveness</i> of sacred writings in terms of God's self-revelation.</p> <p>Given that this is the case, they are free to compare scripture with other kinds of revelation and look, for example, at the idea of a miracle being a more effective revelation of God than sacred writings.</p>	14	

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>However, they should not be given much credit if they simply say that sacred writings are not any good and then go on to write a religious experience or miracles answer instead of an analysis of the effectiveness of this form of revelation.</p>		
3	<p>AO1 Some candidates may begin their responses by stating a firm belief of many Christian churches that everyone will rise from the dead in their own, in their entire, and in immortal bodies. However, those who had lived good lives could expect to rise to a resurrection of a life in heaven, whereas those who had lived evil lives to a resurrection of Judgment. They might believe that it would destroy the very idea of resurrection, if the dead were to rise in bodies not their own. A very complex Christian philosophy is in place to support this view but it is based on a number of assumptions which candidates may challenge in their evaluations.</p> <p>Rather than religious beliefs, others may explore notions of mind / body identity and how these would influence attitudes to belief in life after death. Some are likely to explore dualism through Plato or Descartes and the limits of the ghost in the machine philosophy.</p> <p>Some may validly choose to write simply from the perspective of other world faiths.</p> <p>Others may take a strictly materialist / reductionist view of humanity which would argue for the impossibility of any form of life after death. Those exploring this position are likely to use some of the writings of Richard Dawkins to support their views.</p>	21	<p>'Philosophical beliefs about life after death are incoherent.' Discuss.</p> <p>Various life after death beliefs, may be validly examined, including those beyond the specification (disembodied existence, resurrection and reincarnation). There is to cover all or even more than one.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>AO2</p> <p>Whichever views the candidates choose to explore, it is important that they keep in mind that they are assessing the coherence or otherwise of the teachings and not just comparing them with each other.</p> <p>They may, for example, assess what would count as evidence of the existence of life after death. Some may, for example, examine whether or not near death experiences or out of body experiences can be used to support any of the philosophical beliefs about life after death.</p> <p>Others may examine the views of the more reductionist empiricists who would argue that, without actual evidence of life after death, the beliefs are no more than wish fulfilment.</p>	14	
4	<p>AO1</p> <p>Many candidates will recognise this question as an opportunity to use some or all of their knowledge and understanding about the attributes of God. The best responses will not only explain what these beliefs about God mean but will go on to explore some of the many philosophical problems they raise for believers.</p> <p>Candidates will have to decide early in their responses which of the many issues they could explore/ they will focus their answers on.</p> <p>Some may see this as an opportunity to rehearse an AS response on the problem of evil. This may be part of a response to this question but candidates should be aware that at A2 a more detailed understanding of the attributes attached to the God of classical theism needs to be</p>	21	<p>Critically assess the philosophical problems raised by believing in a God who is omniscient, omnipotent and eternal.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>demonstrated and focused on the question set. They may choose to say that one or two of the attributes raise larger issues and therefore choose to focus on this which would be perfectly legitimate.</p> <p>They could, for example, say that in their view, the ideas that God is eternal and omniscient raise the most important issues depending on whether God's nature is timeless or everlasting.</p> <p>AO2 Evaluation and analysis in this question will be dependent on which combination of attributes the candidate has chosen to develop. For example, a candidate who focuses on omnipotence and eternity may assess the way people have to suffer, giving the impression that God is impotent rather than omnipotent.</p> <p>Others may question the idea that a God with these attributes should also be seen as a God who judges human beings despite his potential either to create a more perfect humanity or to prevent human evil from being so extensive.</p> <p>Alternatively some candidates may focus on the writing of specific philosophers in these areas, such as Boethius or Swinburne.</p>	14	

APPENDIX 1 A2 LEVELS OF RESPONSE

Level	Mark /21	AO1	Mark /14	AO2
0	0	absent/no relevant material	0	absent/no argument
1	1-5	almost completely ignores the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> little relevant material some concepts inaccurate shows little knowledge of technical terms <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L1</i></p>	1-3	very little argument or justification of viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no successful analysis views asserted with no justification <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L1</i></p>
Communication: often unclear or disorganised; can be difficult to understand; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate				
2	6-9	A basic attempt to address the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge limited and partially accurate limited understanding might address the general topic rather than the question directly selection often inappropriate limited use of technical terms <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L2</i></p>	4-6	a basic attempt to sustain an argument and justify a viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some analysis, but not successful views asserted but little justification <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L2</i></p>
Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate				
3	10-13	satisfactory attempt to address the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some accurate knowledge appropriate understanding some successful selection of material some accurate use of technical terms <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L3</i></p>	7-8	the argument is sustained and justified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful analysis which may be implicit views asserted but not fully justified <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L3</i></p>
Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate				
4	14-17	a good attempt to address the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurate knowledge good understanding good selection of material technical terms mostly accurate <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L4</i></p>	9-11	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument holistically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful and clear analysis some effective use of evidence views analysed and developed <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L4</i></p>
Communication: generally clear and organised; can be understood as a whole; spelling, punctuation and grammar good				
5	18-21	A very good / excellent attempt to address the question showing understanding and engagement with the material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information accurate use of technical terms <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L5</i></p>	12-14	A very good / excellent attempt which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument holistically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehends the demands of the question uses a range of evidence shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L5</i></p>
Communication: answer is well constructed and organised; easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good				

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