

GCE

Religious Studies

Unit **G581**: Philosophy of Religion

Advanced GCE

Mark Scheme for June 2017

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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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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.

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.

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	Mark	Guidance
1	<p>‘Religious Language only makes sense when understood in terms of analogy.’ Discuss.</p> <p>AO1</p> <p>At some point in their responses candidates should describe how analogy is claimed to be important to the understanding of religious language. They are likely to describe the work of Aquinas to do this and explore what he meant by univocal, equivocal and analogical language. Many argue that it is through analogy that the language of scripture and religious rites get their meaning. Candidates might explore Aquinas’ distinction between analogies of proportion and attribution to show how he saw his approach being relevant in a number of different contexts. Candidates are free to use more modern approaches to language as analogy and credit should be awarded appropriately.</p> <p>However, a full response is likely to also include a comparison with other attempts to make religious language understood. They may want to explain, for example, that all forms of religious language are considered meaningless by some, which would lead to a description of the verification principle. Others may describe the <i>via negativa</i> as another alternative to religious language, either as ‘the other side of the coin’ to analogy or as a separate approach to the topic.</p> <p>Some may want to compare analogy with the theory put forward by Flew, using the work of Popper to argue that for statements to be scientific they must be falsifiable. Finally, candidates may look at the work of the Neo-Wittgensteinians and whether or not the sense found in religious language can only be understood when used within a religious language game.</p>	35	

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
	<p>AO2</p> <p>The evaluation used by candidates is going to depend on whether they spend most of their time being directly critical of analogy or whether they are building their analysis around a critical comparison with one or more attempts to make sense of using religious language. If, for example, they use the work of the Vienna Circle they are likely to explore why some philosophers argue that religious language makes no sense because it is meaningless and cannot therefore tell us anything sensible about a divine being. They may argue that analogy is not meant to be descriptive but is an attempt to explore the ineffable.</p> <p>Others may assess whether or not analogy overcomes the challenge from those philosophers who argue that we can only talk about what God is not. They may choose to agree with Aquinas that the apophatic way is a tool for the believer who has exhausted the possibilities of cataphatic language.</p> <p>Whichever route candidates take it is important that candidates assess the strengths and weakness of their arguments in relation to the question and not the particular route they have chosen.</p>		<p>These are just possible approaches; others may, for example, compare analogy with metaphor, myth or symbol but it is important to maintain focus on the question.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
2	<p>To what extent can God be both omnipotent and benevolent?</p> <p>AO1</p> <p>Candidates are likely to begin by explaining the meaning of omnipotence and benevolence. In the time available they will have to select from a range of the implications of these beliefs to assess whether or not it is possible to hold that God can be believed to be both all-powerful and willing good for everyone.</p> <p>Some, for example, may discuss the implications for omnipotence of the Boethian view that God is outside time and that while he may want good for everyone he is incapable of affecting the universe which he experiences as a simultaneous moment.</p> <p>Some are likely to explore the different possible meanings of the terms. For example, does omnipotence suggest that God is able to do the logically impossible or is omnipotence simply a statement of the power that God has?</p> <p>Some may use ideas they might have learned for AS and explore the beliefs that what we might experience as a lack of goodness is God's way of helping us become like him. Do we, as Leibniz might argue, live in the best of all possible worlds, supporting his omnipotence?</p> <p>Others may use their knowledge of other attributes we believe to belong to God to deepen their exploration of these two concepts.</p> <p>AO2</p> <p>Evaluative responses will again depend on which issues candidates have chosen to explain surrounding these particular</p>	35	<p>The word 'both' requires candidates to consider the model of God that contains these attributes in combination.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
	<p>concepts – answers that are broad or deep are equally as valid. Some may for example simple want to argue that the two attributes are incompatible given our experience of the world and support those philosophers and scientists who suggest that the sheer quantity of evil in the world makes it impossible to believe that God is both omnipotent and benevolent.</p> <p>Others may assess arguments about whether or not we are in fact living in the best of all possible worlds, assessing whether or not this is actually proof of God’s omnipotence and evidence of our limited understanding of the universe and our place in it.</p> <p>Others may assess the meaning of benevolence in terms of the free will God has chosen to give to his creatures. Is God sacrificing some of his omnipotence by giving us choices and how does that fit in with suffering brought about by nature, also his creation?</p>		
3	<p>Assess the philosophical problems raised by belief in reincarnation.</p> <p>AO1</p> <p>Candidates may begin by explaining that throughout history mankind has tried a variety of ways to explain how they might survive death knowing that the bodies they have will certainly come to an end. In terms of this question they may begin by explaining the Hindu belief that the essential self, which they call ‘atman’, is believed to be eternal and seeking unity with the divine. Some may also explain that a complication in understanding this concept is that Hinduism is best understood as a unity of ‘village’ religions and not a one formal religion, which can make it harder to grasp.</p>		<p>Candidates might successfully use Plato’s dualism and his views on the immortal soul to answer this question. They might refer to Plato’s analogies, such as the Myth of Er or the Cave.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
	<p>Hindus believe in continuous creation which means the conservation and dissolution of the universe in cyclic form. This leads to their belief in the 'transmigration of souls', according to the law of eternal consequences known as the <i>karma-samsara</i>. This they hope leads finally to a break in the chain of transmigration known as <i>moksha</i>.</p> <p>In order for this to happen the 'self' must be born again, or reincarnated, into a number of different bodies though a number of different life times. These bodies need not always be human and the next life is believed to be affected by how well or badly they have lived their previous life.</p> <p>Others may describe Buddhist or Sikh beliefs about reincarnation or rebirth.</p> <p>AO2</p> <p>In their evaluation, candidates may begin by saying that belief in reincarnation will suffer from the same criticisms as other forms of dualism. For example, they may assess the view of Peter Geach, who argued that even the experience of continued memories between different bodies would not be sufficient to claim the same identity, for such 'memories' could be accounted for in other ways, and memories can be mistaken.</p> <p>Alternatively, some may assess the fact that the theory of reincarnation does not necessarily claim continuity of body nor memory which makes it difficult to make sense of the idea that it truly represents continued existence.</p> <p>Others may evaluate the success or otherwise of research into claims of past lives which has taken place in different parts of the world. They may assess to what extent this kind of research counts as evidence of reincarnation or whether it is a culturally-</p>		<p>The concept of resurrection might be validly used if applied as a response to a philosophical problem arising from reincarnation.</p> <p>Any rejection of the existence of the soul might also be used in the context of the necessity of belief in the soul for most forms of reincarnation.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Mark	Guidance
	dependent sign of human wish-fulfilment.		
4	<p>‘God’s revelation is better seen in sacred writings than in religious experience.’ Discuss.</p> <p>AO1</p> <p>Candidates may begin by explaining what is understood by God’s revelation and the different ways in which this might be experienced. As candidates come from different traditions they may use different forms of sacred scripture to put forward their explanations. They may describe how scriptures are used by different groups for liturgy and teaching and explain what kind of evidence these groups consider them to be.</p> <p>Others may begin with religious experience in general and explore what it does or does not legitimately reveal about God. Some may focus on private or corporate religious experience while others may usefully explain both. They might focus on experiences of groups who go to places of pilgrimage or hermits who find God in solitude.</p> <p>Some may, alternatively, explain how religious experience may depend on the existence of sacred scriptures. Those who are moved by the scriptures during a religious rite, for example, may argue for the equal importance of the two for our understanding of God.</p> <p>AO2</p> <p>Some candidates may begin by assessing the subjective nature of the varieties of religious experience as opposed to sacred scriptures often written over hundreds of years and passed down in concrete written form.</p>		<p>While there is no expectation that there will be an equal amount of coverage on sacred writings and religious experience, candidates must provide enough material to keep the argument on the question.</p> <p>When exploring religious experience, candidates may validly approach from the perspective of breadth or depth.</p>

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	<p>Others may argue that many of the scriptures themselves are the result of subjective religious experience. The Angel Jibril speaking to Muhammad, Moses talking to a burning bush on Mount Sinai and the belief that the Holy Spirit guided the writing of Christian scriptures.</p> <p>Others may argue that there is no real dichotomy here, as the scriptures are needed to make sense of religious experience and that one could not exist without the other. Much like Kant's famous dictum, the experience without concepts is empty and concepts without experience are meaningless.</p>		

APPENDIX 1 - A2 LEVELS OF RESPONSE – G581–G589

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	<p>a good attempt to address the question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate knowledge • good understanding • good selection of material • technical terms mostly accurate. <p style="text-align: right;">L4</p>	9–11	<p>a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument holistically</p> <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;">L4</p>
Communication: generally clear and organised; can be understood as a whole - spelling, punctuation and grammar good				
5	18–21	<p>A very good/excellent attempt to address the question showing understanding and engagement with the material</p> <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;">L5</p>	12–14	<p>A very good/excellent attempt which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument holistically</p> <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;">L5</p>
Communication: answer is well constructed and organised - easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good				

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