

GCE

Religious Studies

Unit **G586**: Buddhism

Advanced GCE

Mark Scheme for June 2017

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Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Level 1 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 2 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 3 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 4 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 5 – 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 eg where part of an answer is at the end of the script

MARK SCHEME

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
1	<p>‘Negative interpretations of the Five Precepts are of more help than positive ones.’ Discuss.</p> <p>AO1 Candidates might begin by explaining the five precepts and show them in both their positive and negative forms. Candidates might list them as such: to abstain from killing; to abstain from taking what is not given; to avoid sexual misconduct; to abstain from false speech; to abstain from fermented drink that causes heedlessness. Candidates might then list them in their positive forms as love; generosity; contentment; truthfulness and mindfulness.</p> <p>Candidates might exemplify each of the five precepts to show that they understand them in context. For example, abstaining from false speech would include hurtful, divisive, abusive and false speech (both lying and slander), and idle chatter. Within this candidates might unpack the concept of truthfulness as either not lying or slandering, or more broadly as honesty about the Dhamma and honesty about one’s spiritual development and understanding. This could be developed further to show that truthfulness is also thinking about being truthful so that all volitional actions stem from a base of truthfulness.</p> <p>Candidates might suggest that the negative formulations are similar to what western ethics would term absolutism and the positive formulation is closer to the western idea of virtue ethics. This could be used as a line of argument throughout the response but would need to be explained first.</p> <p>AO2 Candidates might argue that the positive version of the five precepts is too subjective to be of any use, whereas the negative version, in stating clearly what is to be abstained from, gives clear and unambiguous rules. This might benefit a lay Buddhist more than a monk or nun.</p>	35	<p><u>Five precepts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid taking the life of beings. • To avoid taking things not given. • To avoid sensual misconduct. • To refrain from false speech. • To abstain from substances which cause intoxication and heedlessness. <p><u>Five ennobling Virtues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loving-kindness and compassion. • Patience in the right means of livelihood. • Contentment in married life. • Truthfulness. • Watchfulness (mindfulness).

Candidates might suggest that according to Buddhist teachings, the ethical and moral principles are governed by examining if a certain action, whether connected to body or speech, is likely to be harmful to one's self or to others. Thereby avoiding any actions that are likely to be harmful. In Buddhism, there is much talk of a skilled mind. A mind that is skilful avoids actions that are likely to cause suffering or remorse. Therefore, a list of negatives would be of more use when examining a certain action.

Candidates might support this view by suggesting that terms such as 'truthfulness' are too subjective to be of any use. For example is truthfulness just about not lying and slandering or is it truthfulness within one's mind? Is it about being true to the Dhamma or about honesty in how one deals with others? Some might use the concept of upaya to contradict this and show how some dishonesty may be necessary to help others advance. They might point to the burning house parable in the Lotus Sutra as an example.

Candidates might also suggest that the five precepts are more like training rules. If one were to break any of them, one should be aware of the breach and examine how such a breach may be avoided in the future; thus suggesting that they are not absolute rules that have to be followed. This would also suggest that cultivating virtues such as love, generosity and contentment are of equal value to having a set of training rules to follow. Candidates might suggest that a virtue based ethic has advantages over an absolutist ethic as it allows for the followers to put these virtues as the centre of all their volitional acts, which means that they are acting with what the Buddha would call 'wholesome roots'.

Candidates might conclude that while there are problems with the subjectivity of the positive formulation of the five precepts, they do provide virtues around which all volitional thought can be centred. While the negative formulation has a benefit in its clarity, it could suffer from appearing to be too absolutist.

2	<p>'It does matter which path a Buddhist takes to nibbana'. Discuss</p> <p>AO1 Candidates might begin by defining what nibbana is. They might suggest that the term is ambiguous, has numerous meanings and, for some, is beyond words. Candidates might state that the literal meaning is "blowing out" and suggest that this is commonly interpreted as the extinguishing of the three fires (three poisons) greed, hatred and ignorance. Candidates might show that when these fires are extinguished, a Buddhist is released from the cycle of rebirth.</p> <p>Candidates might make use of the third noble truth which states that nibbana is the end of dukkha. They might use this to suggest that nibbana is beyond grasping and conditional existence. They might go on to suggest that realisation of nibbana is supreme bodhi or awakening. It is waking up to the true nature of reality. It is waking up to our true nature, Buddha nature.</p> <p>Candidates might show that the Pali Canon says little about nibbana, using terms like 'the unconditioned', 'the deathless', and 'the unborn'. Candidates might then show that Mahayana teachings speak more about the qualities of nibbana and use terms like 'true nature', 'original mind', 'infinite light' and 'infinite life, beyond space and time'. Candidates might use this as a way into discussing the differences between the Theravada and Mahayana paths to nibbana and whether or not it is important which a Buddhist follows.</p> <p>Candidates might show that some Buddhists explain nibbana as overcoming attachment or craving. Whilst other Buddhists see nibbana as the fact that all things are empty of inherent existence. This difference in views may be picked up in the candidate's discussion.</p> <p>Candidates might explain the various ways in which different forms of Buddhism might attempt to achieve nibbana. For example, they might explain the Buddha's teachings on the four noble truths and</p>	35	
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	<p>noble eightfold path; particular meditation techniques such as koan meditation from Rinzai Zen or chanting the nembutsu in Pure Land Buddhism; or following the arhat or bodhisattva paths can lead to nibbana. Candidates might choose two or more to focus on by way of comparison.</p> <p>AO2: Candidates might use one or more of their definitions of nibbana to show the variety of practice in Buddhism and therefore agree with the question. They might also focus on specific Buddhist schools and compare their respective paths to see if it does matter which is followed.</p> <p>Candidates might begin by comparing the relative merits of different paths to enlightenment. They might for example, compare the anti-intellectualism of Zen Buddhism and Zen meditation techniques such as Zazen with the Vipassana meditation. They might show how Zen focuses on removing rational thought as this is the barrier to seeing the truth of nibbana and samsara, whereas the Vipassana meditation develops intellectual schemas for different personality types and makes use of rational thought to overcome an individual's fetters so that they can develop an unobstructed mind. They might then use these to show that it does not matter which you follow as long as nibbana is the goal.</p> <p>Some might include the Pure Land view that our goal is to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha. Rebirth here will allow us to learn the Dhamma in a more conducive environment and then achieve nibbana from there. Candidates might suggest that this means that not every school's goal is nibbana, so it does matter which one you follow because some may not work within the world as it is now. Or that although this is a totally different way to achieve nibbana it is still valid, or as valid as any other.</p> <p>Others might compare the arhat and bodhisattva paths. Candidates might suggest that the statement is not true because the nature of the arhat path is for personal enlightenment and therefore selfish whereas the bodhisattva path is followed for the benefit of all</p>		
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	<p>sentient beings. Candidates might support this view by showing that the arhat is the perfected one who has overcome the three poisons of desire, hatred and ignorance. At the end of the present life, they are no longer reborn; they and they alone are finally freed from the suffering of samsara. Whereas the bodhisattva path can be characterised by the ideal of selfless compassion and loving kindness as characterised by the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.</p> <p>Candidates might conclude that it does not matter how one achieves nibbana as long as one does. Or that some paths do not work as well as others or are not as appropriate as others for the individual or for a particular social or cultural setting. This might be linked to the raft analogy or the finger pointing at the moon.</p>		
3	<p>Assess the view that visualisations are of no use when meditating.</p> <p>AO1 Candidates might begin by explaining what visualisations are. They might suggest that the word visualisation is misleading and that visualisations are mental images and not always visual ones. Although visual images are used in the form of mandalas, these tend to be internalised and used as mental images.</p> <p>Some candidates might explain the practice found in Pure Land Buddhism, which is the meditative contemplation and visualisation of Amitābha Buddha, his attendant bodhisattvas, and the Pure Land. The basis of this is found in the Pure Land Sutras where the Buddha instructs Vaidehi to first call up the image of a setting sun, then to inspect it closely, and finally to perceive or ‘see’ the setting sun in the mind. This is the basis of Pure Land visualisation meditation. This is later developed by Vasubandhu in his five gates of mindfulness.</p> <p>Candidates might suggest that mandalas are another form of visualisations. Mandalas are commonly used by Tantric Buddhists as an aid to meditation. The mandala is ‘a support for the meditating</p>	35	<p>The five gates of mindfulness are: Bowing to Amida; the pronouncing of Amida’s name; desiring birth in Amida’s land; contemplating Amida and his land; merit transference.</p> <p>Some candidates might suggest Tibetan Buddhist deity yoga as a form of visualisation. In this a practitioner would visualise their chosen deity (usually a</p>

<p>person', something to be repeatedly contemplated to the point of saturation, such that the image of the mandala becomes fully internalised in even the minutest detail and can then be summoned and contemplated at will as a clear and vivid visualised image.</p> <p>Candidates might suggest that the mandala can be shown to represent in visual form the core essence of the Vajrayana teachings. The mind is "a microcosm representing various divine powers at work in the universe." The mandala represents the Pure Land. By visualising the Pure Land, a Buddhist learns to understand experience <i>itself</i> as pure, and as the abode of enlightenment.</p> <p>Some candidates might explain vipassana mediation as being one based on visualisations. Whilst this is not strictly correct, there is an element of visualisation to the rational thought processes and meditative schemas within vipassana mediation. Often these take the form of visualising a specific image (kasina), for example those who are disposed to greed would contemplate or visualise a rotting corpse full of maggots and puss. This form of visualisation is to develop an unobstructed mind to allow the development of other virtues and of mindfulness. This is different to the use of the imagination to explore and experience the Pure Land.</p> <p>AO2 Candidates might suggest that the practice of visualisation is considered to be one of the most powerful meditative practices in the Buddhist tradition. Whatever the mind can conceive can be visualised, including the vision of the Amida Buddha and the Pure Land.</p> <p>Candidates might suggest that visualisation practice produces a great deal of meditative concentration and it also serves to purify unimaginable amounts of harmful karma. For example, visualisations can be used to help Buddhists overcome negative aspects of themselves, in other words, disturbing emotions and attitudes - especially if they are very much under the control of obsessive desires. Likewise, Buddhists can use their imaginations to help them to develop positive qualities, such as compassion.</p>	<p>Bodhisattva but sometimes a Buddha from another realm such as Matreya, the Medicine Buddha or Amida Buddha) and visualise the qualities of that deity, then visualise themselves slowly integrating with and becoming that deity.</p>
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	<p>Candidates might counter this with the view from the Theravada tradition that visualisation is used in the initial stages of vipassana meditation to overcome the ten fetters and allow the mind to develop attention and 'one pointedness of thought'. This means that visualisations are not helpful for more advanced meditative practices. However, candidates might see this as a biased view from a specific Buddhist tradition and that as such visualisations have a great deal of use in specific traditions.</p> <p>Candidates could conclude that it would be difficult to say that visualisations are of no use because they are used across the three different traditions (Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana). Candidates might suggest that they are of more use in the mediation practices of one school rather than others.</p>		
4	<p>To what extent is the eightfold path the most important teaching in Buddhism?</p> <p>AO1 Candidates might begin by explaining what the eightfold path is. They might suggest that it is the fourth of the four noble truths and the way to overcome dukkha (suffering). They might point to it being part of the Buddha's first teaching after enlightenment known as the 'turning of the Dhamma wheel'. Some candidates might return to this point later when discussing the relative importance of the teaching.</p> <p>Candidates might list and/ or explain the eightfold path which comprises of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right view. The correct grasp of the law of kamma and of the true nature and cause of suffering. • Right intention. The intention of renunciation, the intention of good will and the intention of harmlessness. • Right speech. Abstaining from false speech, slanderous 	35	

	<p>speech, harsh speech and idle chatter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right action. Abstaining from unwholesome actions.. • Right livelihood. This is a livelihood based on correct action; the ethical principal of non-exploitation. • Right effort. Stopping unskillful thoughts from arising, abandoning them if they arise. • Right mindfulness. Developing awareness and mindfulness of things, oneself, feelings, thought, people and reality. • Right concentration. To be fixed or absorbed, or when the mind is fixed on a single object. <p>Candidates might also suggest and explain other teachings that are of importance to Buddhism. These might include concepts such as kamma, dependent origination, upaya, sunyata, nibbana, the three poisons (fires), the three marks of existence or the three refuges.</p> <p>AO2 Candidates might discuss the view that the eightfold path is a process to help Buddhists move beyond the conditioned responses that obscure their true nature. The Buddha called his teaching a raft. To cross a turbulent river we may need to build a raft. When built, we single-mindedly and with great energy make our way across. Once across we don't need to carry the raft around with us. The teachings are tools not dogma. Candidates might suggest that these teachings are upaya or skilful means. They might use this view to show that the eightfold path is not the most important teaching in Buddhism, rather upaya is, or that none of them are important as clinging to a teaching will not allow a Buddhist to achieve nibbana.</p> <p>Candidates might suggest that in order to understand the eightfold path a Buddhist must first understand the first three noble truths which include understanding dukkha, nibbana, dependent origination, kamma and samsara. Therefore, the teachings need to be taken as a whole not as individual parts and therefore no one</p>		<p>Candidates might suggest, as Thich Nhat Hanh does, that this is the central tenant of Buddhist teaching but that it has been adapted to suit the different social and cultural environments that Buddhism spread into from the second century BC onwards. This could be linked to the concept of upaya.</p> <p>Some might refer to the raft analogy or the finger pointing at the moon, to show that all teachings are just ways to gain enlightenment and therefore none are of especial importance.</p>
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	<p>teaching is more important than another.</p> <p>Candidates might also suggest that for Mahayana Buddhism the eightfold path is an important teaching but can be characterised in the development of compassion (karuna) and wisdom (prajna). Compassion and wisdom also form the basis of the bodhisattva path, which is the development of virtues (six paramitas), which some candidates might suggest is similar to the eightfold path. Candidates might support this by showing how the five precepts are a constant in both the eightfold path and in the development of morality in the bodhisattva path.</p> <p>Candidates might conclude by saying that the eightfold path, like all paths in Buddhism, is a tool for achieving nibbana, and that placing special importance on it defeats the point of the concepts within the path. They might also suggest that the characteristics of the eightfold path can be found in the concepts of wisdom and compassion as well as in the bodhisattva path and the six paramitas, showing that they are the fundamental basis for all paths to achieving enlightenment</p>		
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APPENDIX 1 A2 Levels of Response

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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