

CONFERENCE VERSION



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

AUTUMN 2020

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
OPTION C: A STUDY OF JUDAISM**

A120UC0-1

INTRODUCTION

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. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

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.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 20 marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><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</i> - <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">17-20 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 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. • Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">13-16 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 demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. • Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">9-12 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 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. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied. • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">5-8 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. • 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. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied. • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-4 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. • 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. • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. <p>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks 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 30 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;">25-30 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. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. • Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">19-24 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 views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. • Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">13-18 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. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. • Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">7-12 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. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context. • Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-6 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • 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. • Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. • Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

A Level Component 1
Option C: A Study of Judaism

Mark Scheme

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

Section A

1. (a) Examine Jewish beliefs about the resurrection of the dead. [AO1 20]

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

- The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead appears in Jewish eschatology and is associated with events that will happen in the Messianic Age when the dead will rise to life again. It has been a subject for debate throughout the history of Judaism.
- There are only two biblical references to the resurrection of the dead in the Hebrew Bible: Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2. Both come from a later date within the scriptures and, as a result of this, scholars have suggested that the concepts within them have been influenced by Persian thought.
- In order to understand Jewish beliefs about the resurrection of the dead, the concept of 'Son of Man' as found in the book of Daniel needs consideration. It has been claimed that the term has the same connotation as 'Messiah' and refers to a future figure whose coming will signal the end of history and bring about the time of God's judgement. On the Day of Judgement there will be a resurrection of the dead, when God will judge each soul and determine where each will spend eternity (Daniel 12:2).
- In his 'Thirteen Principles of the Jewish Faith', Maimonides appears to have believed in the resurrection of the immortal soul and not the resurrection of the body. This is in contrast to statements found in rabbinic literature that the dead will be resurrected wearing their clothes (Babylonian Talmud).
- Hasdai Crescas proposed that since our lifetime body and soul co-exist, it is fitting that there be an ultimate reward and punishment for both as well; hence the need for a bodily resurrection.
- A timeline for events is also evident with the Midrash claiming that the humble will be raised first. Some also believe that those who are buried in Israel will be the first to rise.
- Orthodox Jews maintain a belief in the resurrection and refer to it in daily prayers and at funerals, especially the Kaddish. Furthermore, many Jews object to cremation as the resurrection of the body is accepted.
- Reform Jews, in contrast, favour the immortality of the soul (Pittsburgh Platform paragraph 7). They believe that the immortality of the soul is rooted in the scriptures (Genesis 1:27). It is the divine element within each of us which makes us unique, and which is, like God, immortal.
- Modern-day scholars tend not to discuss the matter of the resurrection in detail, perhaps for the same reason as Joseph Albo who quoted the Talmudic saying: 'We will consider the matter when they come to life again.'

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

- (b) **Evaluate the view that the concept of the Messiah is not relevant for Jews today.** [AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that Orthodox Jews would disagree with this view as the concept of a personal Messiah who will come at the time of God's choosing, and who will lead all humanity back to God, is a fundamental part of their tradition and belief.
- Reform Judaism, however, denies that there will be an individual Messiah who will appear and create a perfect world. Instead, Jews from this denomination believe that they have been chosen to spread the monotheistic truth and morality over the earth, and to be an example to others. It is, therefore, through human effort, and living according to God's rules that the Kingdom of God will come about. The concept of Messiah is therefore not relevant in this context.
- Some would contend that the idea of the Messiah is not relevant as it is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah and appears to have been introduced at a later period. As the Torah alone contains God-given instructions to the Jewish people then it could be claimed that the content and beliefs which have evolved from it have a higher value and should be taken more seriously than the traditions of the Messiah, which come later in Jewish history.
- Furthermore, this could suggest that the focus should be upon living in accordance with the mitzvot given at Sinai, rather than waiting for Messianic deliverance at an undefined future event.
- Another important point for consideration is that there is no single, unified notion of what the future Messianic Age will be like. The concept of the Messiah has been an issue for debate throughout Jewish history. In the Middle Ages there was agreement amongst some that there would be a personal Messiah, and yet disagreement about whether the Messianic Age would be a natural or supernatural event. Maimonides warned against the expectation that the course of nature would be changed with the arrival of the Messiah. Nevertheless, he predicted that the Messiah would restore the kingdom of David to its former glory; restore the Temple and gather the Jews together as a nation once more.
- The debate continued with the Babylonian Talmud denying that the Messianic Age will be a supernatural disturbance in history. Furthermore, one rabbi stated that it is vain to hope for a future Messiah, because the Messiah mentioned in the Hebrew Bible has already come during the time of Hezekiah at the beginning of the seventh century BCE.
- However, it could be argued that despite the fact that there is uncertainty about the concept of the Messiah, this does not mean that it is irrelevant as a religious belief as the debate could be seen to be about clarity in relation to the definition of the what the Messiah represents.

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

2. (a) Examine the views of Orthodox and Reform Jews with regards to mitzvot (commandments). [AO1 20]

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

- Orthodox Jews accept literally that the Torah is the direct revelation of God, and, as such consider it their duty to continue to obey the mitzvot which are contained within it. They hold that the mitzvot set the Jewish people apart and, through their observance, Jews demonstrate their belief in God and the acceptance of the demands of the covenant.
- They believe that they will be judged eventually on the way in which they have, or have not, kept the covenant: being true to the Torah links them to the past with the Patriarchs such as Abraham. Keeping the mitzvot is a religious duty and accepting them is humanity's means of communicating with God.
- In order to discover the mitzvot, Orthodox Jews refer to the Halakhah which is a means of regulating the mitzvot, having its sources in the Torah, rabbinic thought and long-standing tradition. The Halakhah has enabled Orthodox Jews to practise their religion according to the mitzvot right up to the present day as the religion has adapted to survive new challenges.
- One of the defining characteristics of Reform Judaism is its attitude to the revelation of the Law on Mount Sinai as set out in clauses 3 and 4 of the Pittsburgh Platform. Reform Jews believe that God did reveal the Law to Moses, but that this revelation was not dictated word for word to him. Rather that the revelation from God inspired others to write. Furthermore, if the Torah is the word of God as interpreted by humans, then humans can make mistakes, and it is therefore important to re-evaluate the mitzvot in the light of each new situation in which Jews find themselves.
- The original mitzvot gave instructions for a particular period in history but are now no longer applicable in modern society. Therefore, Reform Jews consider it acceptable to discard practices that no longer serve any useful purpose. This does not mean that Reform Jews disregard the mitzvot entirely; they still believe that they are required to live ethical and moral lives. Neither do they abandon some of the requirements for the sake of convenience.
- Relevant examples from both Orthodox and Reform Judaism should also be included in order to illustrate their views on keeping mitzvot. For example, keeping kashrut: Orthodox Jews follow the rules governing kashrut as found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Many Reform Jews do not keep kashrut at all, whilst others have chosen to keep a degree of kashrut by avoiding prohibited foods or only observing the kosher food laws at home.
- Orthodox Jews practise strict Shabbat obedience by refraining from carrying out any of the 39 melachot; finishing work before sunset; not driving on the Sabbath. Within Reform Judaism Shabbat may begin at the same time every Friday regardless of the time at which the sun sets. Many Reform Jews regard the prohibition regarding work as relating to the job they do throughout the week only.

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

- (b) **Evaluate the view that spiritual development in Judaism is only possible through obedience to mitzvot.** [AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that Hasidic Jews might agree with this statement as they gain great spiritual joy from living according to the mitzvot. They believe that obedience allows them to fulfil their duty to God through the practice of devekut, with the mitzvot acting as a means of focusing the mind on God through daily human activity.
- Nevertheless, within Hasidism, there are also other sources of spiritual inspiration; examples of which can be used to suggest that obedience to the mitzvot is not the only way to achieve spiritual development. For example, the rebbe, unique to Hasidic Judaism, is also a source of spiritual inspiration. He is considered to have attained the highest level of devekut and is considered to be spiritually superior to ordinary members of the Jewish community. Such is his influence that his followers will observe his actions very carefully, and, through imitation, seek to attain lives which are even more spiritual.
- Within the mystic Jewish tradition of Kabbalah, the mitzvot are also a focus for meditation as they represent the contact between a person and God, and thus act as a means by which spiritual development can be achieved. However, there exist within Kabbalah other means by which to become more spiritually aware: letters of the Hebrew alphabet and/or the names of God are sometimes the focus for meditation.
- It could be suggested that having to keep so many mitzvot on a daily basis can be seen as a restriction, which, in turn, can become a burden. This could result in the stifling of spirituality: for example, the requirement to keep kashrut for those Jews who live in areas which do not cater for their needs. Furthermore, questioning the relevance of some of the mitzvot in 21st-century secular society can lead to dissatisfaction, which has a negative impact upon spiritual development.
- However, counter to this it could be argued that even though Reform Jews have discarded many of the mitzvot as outdated for a 21st century secular society, this does not mean that they lack spirituality as a religious group. They can focus on the mitzvot that they believe remain relevant within modern society, living as examples of the way in which God wants others to live. This too can contribute effectively to an individual's spiritual development.
- Another important point for consideration is that there are other aspects of the Jewish faith which could be said to contribute effectively to spirituality: for example, an important aspect of the Jewish faith is prayer (tefillah), and regular opportunities are provided for this on a daily basis at the synagogue. Prayer and meditation can also take place whenever or wherever a person wishes. Regular devotion helps to keep a person conscious of the bigger context in which they live.
- It could be said that it is the way in which the mitzvot are understood and applied in conjunction with other pertinent Jewish beliefs and practices that is key to effective spiritual development.

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

Section B

3. (a) Explain the purpose and role of Aggadah in midrash. [AO1 20]

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

- Aggadah is anything found in rabbinic writings that isn't about legal discussions and decisions, and comprises a wide-ranging collection of legends, parables, folklore and stories that add depth of understanding and meaning to the Jewish experience.
- It has been suggested that there are three broad categories of Aggadah (although neither the names nor boundaries of these categories are firmly fixed): Aggadot that are inextricably linked to the biblical narrative; historical Aggadot which tell of post-biblical personalities and events; ethical/didactic Aggadot which offer guidance and outline principles in the area of religious and ethical thought. However, it should be noted that Aggadot of all types are generally intended to teach some kind of lesson.
- An explanation of how Aggadah works should be offered. It is not representative of a conventional method of literary interpretation. For example, it often takes its reading of the Tanakh not from the actual text but from interpretations that have already been made. It sometimes also interprets individual words that have been removed from their original context. For example, Robinson cites Lamentations 1:1 as being 'diametrically opposed to the meaning of the original passage.' The opening verse: 'She (Jerusalem) is become like a widow' is read as an optimistic statement. Jerusalem has become '*like* a widow', not *actually* a widow. The midrash says, 'rather as a woman whose husband has gone abroad but who intends to return to her.'
- In other cases, Aggadah was used to explain inconsistencies found in the biblical narrative. E.g. in the Book of Genesis both man and woman are created in the first chapter, but then man is suddenly alone in the second chapter. A midrash tells about the first woman, Lilith, who was banished as Adam could not get on with her. She was replaced by Eve.
- On a deeper, theological level, Aggadic midrashim can also be used to reconcile issues that appear to be irreconcilable, e.g. how can God be both a ruthless judge and a loving parent? Reference to an extract from Genesis Rabbah 12:15 can be included in order to illustrate the solution.
- Aggadic midrashim also serve to supplement the biblical texts in order to make them easier to understand, whilst also making the characters more human. The stories also offer moral lessons. An example of this can be illustrated by the famous midrashic tale concerning Abraham and the destruction of the idols in his father's shop.
- Aggadic midrashim also provide great quantities of material for sermons, with De Lange suggesting that it is a way of drawing meaning from the simple, concise text.

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

(b) 'Halakhah is more important than Aggadah for Judaism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that there is such a strong relationship between Halakhah and Aggadah that it makes it difficult to argue for the importance of one over the other; with some scholars placing equal value on both aspects of Midrash based upon the relationship between the two, in that the ethical content of Aggadah informs the legal decisions of Halakhah.
- A further example of the importance that is attached to both Halakhah and Aggadah in the same measure can be discussed with reference to Genesis 27:28 for example. When Isaac blessed Jacob he said: 'May God give you the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, and plenty of new grain and wine.' The Midrash interprets this in the following way: 'Dew of heaven is Scripture, the fat of the earth is Mishnah, new grain is Halakhah, wine is Aggadah.' It could be argued that there appears to be no suggestion here that one is of greater importance than the other.
- Some might claim however, that it is Midrash Halakhah that should be held in a position of greater importance due to the role it has played throughout the history of Judaism. For example, the inclusion of prohibitions which were added in an attempt to ensure that the mitzvot were not broken unknowingly.
- However, it might be argued that even within Halakhah some aspects are more important than others, and reference could be made to the three categories of Halakhah as identified by the rabbis: that which derives logically and clearly from a scriptural verse; that which has been obtained by interpretation; that which is derived from Moses at Sinai which consist of strongly held traditions believed to be part of the original Oral Torah. Perhaps it is the latter which holds greater authority.
- In the same way, some might suggest that it is also important to analyse the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Aggadah in order to be able to judge its importance in relation to Halakhah.
- One also needs to take into account the diversity within Judaism regarding the notion that Halakhah is the revealed will of God. Reform Jews, for instance, whilst believing that God did reveal the Law to Moses, consider the Torah to be the product of human minds. Halakhah therefore functions differently for Jews from this particular denomination as decisions are based upon responsa. Even though responsa are themselves Halakhic documents that give considered answers to the questions asked, they are regarded as advisory by Reform Jews rather than being binding or obligatory. Does the Reform view of Halakhah dilute its importance in any way?

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

4. (a) **Examine the diversity of views in Reform and Orthodox Judaism towards interfaith dialogue.** [AO1 20]

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

- Reform Judaism's attitude to interfaith dialogue stems from its pluralistic outlook in that it accepts the validity of other religions. Reference can be made to clause 1 of the first Pittsburgh Platform to illustrate this stance.
- Moreover, the Pittsburgh Platform of 1999 goes further in advocating that Reform Jews 'seek dialogue and joint action with people of other faiths in the hope that together we can bring peace, freedom and justice to our world.' This indicates a clear openness towards the promotion of interfaith dialogue. Reform Jews believe that such dialogue is important because so many communities are now diverse and multicultural.
- Reference can be made to Leviticus 19:18 which has been used to support interfaith partnerships by teaching that it is important to accept others without prejudice.
- For Reform Jews, the importance of interfaith dialogue is also encouraged in order to achieve social justice. The Talmud says: 'In a city where there are both Jews and Gentiles, the collectors of alms collect from both Jews and Gentiles; they feed the poor of both ...' To this end, the Reform Jewish community has become involved with those of the Christian faith, for example, in the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ).
- The traditional view within Orthodox Judaism differs, based upon the belief that God has entered into an exclusive covenant with the Jews (Exodus 19:5) which suggests a belief that Judaism is the one true faith.
- However, consideration should be made of the fact that the Torah begins with God creating covenants first with Adam and then with Noah. These had both been universal in nature. Reference to this universal perspective can also be found within classical rabbinic literature. For example, 'The Holy One ... exiled Israel among the nations only in order that they should add converts to their number.' (Eleazer ben Pedat) This can also be interpreted as suggesting that Judaism is the one true faith to which all should aspire.
- Reference could be made to Orthodox Rabbis Soloveitchik and Feinstein, who recorded their responses on interfaith dialogue in response to Pope John XXIII who had extended the hand of friendship to the Jews in an attempt to mend relations with them. Soloveitchik argued against legitimising the relationship between Christianity and Judaism for fear that it would lead to the affirmation of the Church that Judaism's sole purpose was to pave the way for Christianity.
- Feinstein's deliberations led him to conclude that interfaith dialogue is Halakhically prohibited, based upon the concern that Jews might be enticed by the faith and values of other religions.
- However, not all Orthodox Jews disparage interfaith dialogue as demonstrated by a public statement entitled 'To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians' published on the website of the Centre for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation (CJCUC). It was signed by 30 Orthodox rabbis and recognized the need for a common mission between Jews and Christians to perfect the world under the sovereignty of God.

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

- (b) **‘The Pittsburgh Platform has been effective in relation to the plight of the poor.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Reform Judaism’s emphasis upon the need to fight for social justice and the plight of the poor is clearly stated in the clause of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 which asserts ‘... we deem it our duty to participate in ... (and) to solve ... the problems presented by the ... present organisation of society.’ However, was this merely a statement of intent; or has its principles been applied effectively in relation to the plight of the poor?
- One line of argument could be that concern for the plight of the poor has always been an inherent part of the Jewish faith, and that the Pittsburgh Platform has brought nothing new to this issue. Reference could be made to the concept of Tikkun Olam which has its roots in rabbinical literature. Other references from Hebrew scriptures can also be used to support this argument.
- Furthermore, examples of such actions are evident within the Jewish concepts of tzedakah and gemilut hasadim.
- However, it might be claimed that the Pittsburgh Platform brought a new impetus to the need to address the plight of the poor, and that it gave the Reform movement its own particular identity. To be a Reform Jew is to be engaged in the ongoing work of Tikkun Olam in order to endeavour to improve the world.
- Reference could also be made to the particular connection between Reform Judaism and the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures who expressed their concerns for the poor: e.g. Amos 5:21-24 which expresses the viewpoint that the passion for social justice in relation to the plight of the poor is to be exemplified by action rather than ritual. The Pittsburgh Platform might therefore be seen to have been effective in underlining the importance of working individually and effectively towards a better and redeemed world.
- Further evidence in support of the contention can be seen in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1999 which advocates joint action against poverty and social injustice through interfaith alliance. This, it has been argued, has enabled Reform Jews to forge relationships that have enabled them to make even greater progress in relation to the plight of the poor. For example, Reform Judaism’s involvement with Christians through the work of the International Council of Christians and Jews in relation to issues of human rights.
- In conclusion, it is impossible to quantify the effectiveness of the Pittsburgh Platform in relation to the poor; nevertheless, it is surely possible to illustrate how it has spurred Reform Jews into action with the result that commitment to social justice is a major characteristic of the movement.

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

5. (a) **Examine the responses of Rabbi J. David Bleich and Rabbi Moshe David Tendler to embryo research.** [AO1 20]

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

Bleich

- Bleich is generally opposed to the destruction of pre-embryos and their use in stem-cell research due to his belief that such a course of action is equivalent to killing the embryo.
- He is also opposed to the use of stem cells which have been sourced from aborted fetuses on the basis that some women who might be wavering over whether to have an abortion or not might feel under pressure to go ahead with the procedure. If this kind of research was backed by government funding then he feels that the thought that 'her baby could help humanity (might) become a motivating force (in causing her to have an abortion).'
- Nevertheless, he considers the use of embryos created by parthenogenesis to be acceptable as such embryos are not able to survive, even if returned to the womb, and because they are not viable from the moment of inception, their destruction does not constitute the destruction of a foetus or of a potential human.
- For the same reason, Bleich is also not opposed to the use of embryos fertilised in vitro that are non-viable due to abnormalities which have become apparent. Such embryos are routinely discarded as it is highly unlikely that they would survive if transferred to a woman's uterus.

Tendler

- Tendler argues strongly in favour of the use of pre-embryos for stem-cell research calling such research 'the hope of mankind'.
- He believes that the soul doesn't enter the embryo at conception, but only after forty days have passed, and for this reason he doesn't consider the destruction of an embryo as homicide.
- He makes a strong case for stem-cell research and therapy based upon the Jewish obligation to save life wherever possible and states that it is 'the paramount ethical principle in biblical law.' Furthermore, although accepting that an important part of Jewish law consists of what is known as 'building a fence around the law' in order to keep people as far away from sinning as possible, he believes that '... a fence that prevents the cure of fatal diseases must not be erected, for then the loss is greater than the benefit ...'
- In response to the concern about human cloning he holds that no reputable research facility is interested in doing so, and that greater benefit will come from replacing damaged cells and organs by fresh stem cell products, rather than by cloning.

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

- (b) **‘Jewish ethical teachings are not relevant as a guide for living for Jews today.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that this is not the case as Jewish ethical teachings can be accepted as a guide for living for contemporary Judaism as long as they remain true to halakhic principles. The practice of seeking a suitable ethical standpoint involves a process of identifying precedents from classical Jewish literature and rabbinic teaching; adducing principles from these texts; applying the principles to new sets of facts. Such a process represents a direct line of transmission between the revelation at Mount Sinai to the present day.
- However, not all Jewish ethical teachings are accepted amongst all Jews, leading to the conclusion that not all Jewish ethical teachings can be considered to be relevant for contemporary living. For example, not all are convinced that the halakhic process is sound; although whether this is based upon genuine halakhic argument rather than an underlying disapproval of the issue under discussion is itself open to question.
- Examples in support of the relevance of Jewish ethical teachings for Jews today can be cited by reference to the Torah. For example, the Torah contains sources that have been used when considering the concept of heredity: in Genesis, we read that Jacob is aware of the transmission of characteristics from animal parents to offspring; and the Talmud presents a ruling that a man may not marry a woman whose family members suffer from epilepsy or leprosy on the grounds that these diseases may be passed on to their children. Consideration of such teachings has brought about the acceptance of pre-implantation genetic screening amongst many Jewish groups, especially in the case of screening for Tay-Sachs disease which is prevalent within Ashkenazi Jewry.
- Further evidence can be given in the form of a statement from the Office of the Chief Rabbi which was made in response to the UK government giving permission for the regulated cloning of embryos. It stated that ‘... the spirit of Jewish law welcomes any technological advances which have the potential of enhancing human life.’
- A consideration of the principles of pikuach nefesh and Tikkun Olam in relation to this issue can be used to provide ethical justification for medical experimentation and treatments which have the potential to bring about successful medical outcomes.
- However, it should be noted that not all Jewish ethicists are in agreement, and it could be argued that such diversity of opinion might lead some to agree with the viewpoint that Jewish ethical teachings are not relevant as a guide for *all* Jews in contemporary society. However, in relation to this, it is not unusual for there to be differences of opinion in what characterises rabbinic tradition.

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