



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2022

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
OPTION E: A STUDY OF HINDUISM**

A120UE0-1

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2022 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

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.

GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES – COMPONENT 1 OPTION E

A STUDY OF HINDUISM

SUMMER 2022 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1. (a) Examine features of the Indus Valley civilisation.

[AO1 20]

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

- The Indus Valley civilisation was a Bronze Age culture dating from 2500 – 1500 BCE. It was larger than the ancient Egyptian civilization and at one point 10% of the world's total population lived in the ancient civilisation of the Indus Valley. This can be estimated at about five million people at its peak.
- Archaeological evidence shows a highly advanced urban culture with a society that had a wealthy middle class and a centralized government. The inhabitants of this sophisticated culture were a mixture of peoples who appear to have amalgamated into the Indus Valley civilisation, the name given because the first sites excavated were along the River Indus. It is also called the Harappan culture after the town of Harappa which was the first to be excavated.
- Indus Valley civilisation was centred around towns and cities with large populations. The towns and cities were planned, designed on a grid system. They were built on brick platforms constructed to protect them from floods. There were many public wells and many houses had their own water source. There was a highly efficient sewage disposal system. The cities also appear to have granaries and industrial areas.
- They had very precise measuring devices which included rulers and weights and created sculptures out of metal such as the Bronze 'Dancing Girl of Mohenjo-Daro' statue.
- Very little is known about the way people actually lived within the Indus Valley civilisation. The reason being that although they had a detailed system of writing and there are thousands of inscriptions, the Indus Valley script cannot be understood and translated. Therefore, based only on archaeological evidence there is a lot of conjecture.
- However, since they were traders the Indus Valley people used small, square seals and the images on them give a picture of aspects of life within the culture including religious practices. These usually include an image of an animal – buffalo, cattle, rhinoceros – with people prostrated before them which suggests some kind of worship.
- Very little is known about Indus religious beliefs although there is some evidence to suggest a belief in life after death. Also, on three seals there is a divine being which resembles the Hindu God Shiva, which has been named Proto-Shiva. There is also some evidence that the female figurines suggest worship of the Mother Goddess.

- Archaeologists have been unable to find any evidence of palaces or temples in the Indus Valley which could suggest that there was no monarchy and no formal prescribed religion.
- There is also no archaeological evidence that the people of the Indus Valley had an army or access to weapons.

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

(b) 'The origins of modern Hinduism can never be known.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Hinduism is the oldest of the six major world religions, many believing that it dates back 5,000 years and the search for its origins is both interesting and controversial. Its traditions are rooted in antiquity and contain so much diversity that many scholars argue that it is not Hinduism but Hinduisms that need to be considered.
- Another problem is that Hinduism as a concept is not originally an Indian one and much of the literature written about Hinduism comes from outside the tradition. Many also believe that it is not a religion at all but a culture, a way of life.
- The word 'Hindu' is not an Indian word but Persian, and was used by the Mughals when they conquered Northern India in the sixteenth century, to describe the people living around the Sindhu or Indus river. Interestingly the word was used to describe a people, a way of life and not a religion.
- The British when they conquered India adopted the term 'Hinduism' and applied it to all the different native religious ideas and practices.
- Many within the Hindu tradition would argue that Hinduism as we know it has no beginning, that it is timeless.
- Many scholars would argue that the Indus Valley period can be understood as a pre-Hindu period although many have argued that some features still remain in modern Hinduism – e.g. possible evidence of the worship of a goddess of fertility, ritual bathing and a prototype of Shiva. The problem is that the Indus valley script has not been deciphered.
- Others argue that Hinduism was brought by the Aryans from Central Asia. However, this invasion or incursion is seen by many as a flawed theory and has become a source of dispute and invasion theorists are often accused of imperialist motives in arguing that Hinduism really came from the West. Proponents of this theory argue that the Vedic culture was that of primitive nomads who came from Central Asia with their horse-drawn chariots and iron weapons. They conquered the cities of the more advanced Hindu culture because of their superior battle tactics. As evidence it was argued that no horses, chariots or iron have been discovered in Indus valley sites.
- In response opponents argue that very little has been discovered to support the theory and that archaeological evidence discredits it. Excavations have discovered horses not only in Indus Valley sites but also in pre-Indus sites proving that the use of horses was common in ancient India. There has also been evidence of the use of the wheel, and an Indus seal showing a spoked wheel as used in chariots, has also been found, suggesting the use of chariots.
- Another part of the Aryan invasion theory that has been challenged is the idea of nomads using chariots. Chariots are not the vehicles of nomads and are only suitable on flat land and would have been totally unsuitable for crossing mountains and deserts as would have been required for an Aryan invasion.

- Many see the origins of Hinduism in Aryan religion that was centred on the purifying qualities of fire and influencing the gods through ritual sacrifice. They also used Sanskrit and brought the Vedas.
- Although features of both Indus Valley and Aryan civilisation persist in contemporary Hinduism it is impossible to speak of origins with any certainty.

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

2. (a) Examine the contribution of Ramakrishna to the development of Hinduism.

[AO1 20]

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

- He promoted Hinduism as a world religion of equal status through his belief in the harmony of all religions. To Ramakrishna all religions were the revelation of God. This was a radical departure from the ideologies of the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj. Ramakrishna sincerely expressed his desire to bring a synthesis of all religions. He considered the religions like Islam and Christianity as different paths or means to achieve the same goal. He had studied the Qur'an and the Bible and had clearly understood the essence and inner values of Islam and Christianity. According to him all creeds and faiths are based on the universal idea of the oneness of God and religions are important factors to foster the sense of unity among the people. He did not say that all the religions are the same. He recognized differences among religions but showed that, in spite of these differences, all religions lead to the same ultimate goal, and hence they are all valid and true. Therefore, the spiritual cosmopolitanism of Ramakrishna put Hinduism on the world stage as a major religion.
- He had a mystical influence on the development of Hinduism with his emphasis on the possibility of having direct experience of transcendent Reality. He enabled people to gain or regain faith in God in the face of challenges by atheism, materialism and scientific thinking. As Mahatma Gandhi has stated: "His (Ramakrishna's) life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion."
- He made an important contribution in bridging the gap between ancient and modern. He showed that traditional ideals could be followed and realized in modern life.
- He contributed to modern morality through his emphasis on truthfulness and renunciation of lust and greed.
- Another of his contributions was his elevation of love from the level of emotions to the level of the unity of all Selves in God. Although the principle of oneness of the Supreme Self and its immanence in all beings is a central point in the Upanishads, it was seldom applied in practical life. Sri Ramakrishna saw the Divine in his wife, in his disciples, in others, and treated them all with respect.
- He developed Advaita and neo-Vedanta thought. Ramakrishna highlighted that Advaita was not just a 'spiritual' or metaphysical teaching, but encompassed the material world. He would tell the ancient Puranic story of Ganesh playfully hitting a cat and finding his mother, Parvati (the universal Mother Deity) with a bruised cheek. She explained to him that if you hurt any living creature, you hurt her, as her divine presence is 'in' every living being.
- He influenced attitudes to caste. Ramakrishna said, if one loves God, one can see Him in all people and can love them all irrespective of their nationality, religion or social status. He challenged everyone to seek out and serve people of all castes, to challenge casteism and cultivate universal brotherhood.

- He also influenced 'idol-worship'. Ramakrishna through his direct encounter with deities, was able to state that not only were all deities across all religions emanations of the same divine intelligence, but that intelligence whilst having no inherent form was responsive to loving worship in whichever form was sincerely worshipped. This was expressed and argued with such skill and authority by Ramakrishna, that the status of bhakti-yoga as a valid Dvaita path was re-established.
- He also contributed to the development of Hinduism through his influence on Vivekananda.

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

(b) 'Western ideas greatly influenced Ramakrishna,'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- His belief in all religions being a revelation of God was a radical departure from traditional ideology. He was influenced by Christianity and had mystical experiences of Jesus.
- It could be argued that he was influenced by the cosmopolitanism of Western ideas. Allowing him to accept the validity of other traditions.
- His answers to the challenges of Western society – atheism, materialism and scientific thinking – was the basis of his contribution to Hinduism and Hindu thought.
- Many Hindus would argue that he was not influenced at all by Western ideas and that his philosophy arose from Hindu mysticism. He was influenced by his own divine experiences and belief in a Universalist Advaita combined with social action. This was not just a philosophy or idealist principle to share but to bring into action, as a force for uplifting and doing good in the world for and by people of all religions as colleagues on different paths with the same divine aspiration and destination, seeing each other as being of equal value and importance.
- His opposition to the caste system was not influenced by the Western idea of justice but based in the Bhakti tradition.
- He made a radical departure from the nationalist and political ideologies of the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj both of which were influenced by Western ideas. The Brahmo Samaj was influenced by the West in a positive light - the Western ideas of equality and the Christian teaching of agape.
- The Arya Samaj was influenced by the West in a negative way – emphasised the Vedas as the ultimate source of religious knowledge and attempted to remove Western influences from Hinduism.
- Ramakrishna was not politically motivated and was not driven by political issues. He was dedicated to his mystical quest which was not influenced by the West.
- It can be argued conversely that Ramakrishna influenced the West far greater than the West influenced him. His influence on the West, through Vivekananda was great. He established the universalist discourse of Hinduism and buttressed the idea of the 'mystic East'.
- It could also be argued that Western influence affected most thinkers of the Hindu renaissance such as Saraswati and Radakrishnan but that Ramakrishna was not amongst them.

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

Section B

3. (a) Explain the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar on varna and untouchability.

[AO1 20]

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

Gandhi:

- Gandhi was a proponent of the varna system.
- He believed that varnashramadharma was the most important characteristic of Hindu society. It was purely functional and had nothing to do with people being better or worse than each other.
- Gandhi did not consider varna to be an institution made by man but the 'law of life universally governing the human family'. He believed that this provided the basis for an equal society. Gandhi believed that varna had nothing to do with caste.
- Gandhi was completely opposed to the concept of untouchability and regarded it with contempt as it led to inequality and exploitation. He did not accept that catuvarnashramadharma was linked to the problem of untouchability and that it arose from the decline of the valued traditions of Hindu society. Gandhi believed that the separation of a group of people from the rest of society was wrong and campaigned to have the concept eradicated from Hinduism. In an interview in 1937, Gandhi said 'I am a 'touchable' by birth but an 'untouchable' by choice.....what I want, what I am looking for and what I should delight in dying for is the eradication of untouchability, root and branch.'
- Gandhi called the untouchables 'Harijans' – the children of God and campaigned to have them placed within the fourth varna. In his writings Gandhi refers to the distressing conditions that the untouchables were forced to live in – unable to find employment and having to pick out undigested grain from cattle dung to grind to make chappatis. It is no wonder that he believed this was a blot on the name of Hinduism. He wrote about their status – "socially they were lepers, economically they were worse than slaves, religiously they were denied entrance to places that were misnamed 'houses of God'." He wanted them placed into the fourth varna.

Ambedkar:

- Although both wanted to stop the use of the term 'untouchable' Ambedkar rejected Gandhi's suggestion of Harijan as patronising and preferred the term 'Dalit'.
- He was also determined to wipe out the varna system which Gandhi supported. He believed that the way to achieve this was through politics as it was easier to change laws than people's hearts. Gandhi on the other hand believed that change would come through influencing Hindus to abandon untouchability.
- Ambedkar wanted separate electoral colleges for Dalits so as to ensure in the new independent India they had sufficient political power to ensure the destruction of the varna system. Gandhi believed that this was the wrong choice as it would continue to place the Dalits outside the mainstream of Hindu society.
- In 1935, after campaigning unsuccessfully for five years to gain the right to enter Hindu temples, Ambedkar declared 'I was born a Hindu, but I will not die a Hindu.' He urged untouchables to change their religion to one that didn't recognize caste or untouchability. He himself and more than four million Dalits converted to Buddhism in October 1956.

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

(b) 'Varna creates a just society.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Many believe that it gives order and structure to society where all people have an identity and purpose in life. People know and feel that they have a place in society and therefore a valuable contribution to make to how society functions. This, rather than leading to low self-esteem, raises it for many.
- People know their duty and Indian society has functioned successfully on this basis for centuries. This sense of duty leads to responsibility and people fulfilling their roles within society. This in turn leads to society functioning smoothly and effectively. It can therefore be argued on this premise that the system justifies itself.
- The varna system since it was associated with jobs united people from the same professions together as a guild or labour union. This in turn gave them some protection against exploitation and in receiving fair wages. It can be argued therefore that varna creates an environment where people care for and support each other. This is the basis of a just society.
- The system leads to exploitation of the weak by the socially and politically privileged groups in the name of religion and tradition. It can only be justified by those that profit from it. This is true not only of the varna system but social systems throughout the world including the class system in Britain.
- Others would argue that the system is socially divisive and leads to lack of trust, prejudice and resentment between different groups within society.
- According to others the varna system because it gave preferential treatment to some, had a detrimental effect on the growth of the nation. This was because the system was based on birth rather than on individual talent.
- Others would argue that the varna system was used by the socially privileged varnas to oppress the lower ones.
- The varna system is also responsible, according to some, for creating a class of people outside society, the untouchables, who were treated as less than human beings.
- It also, according to some, promotes low self-esteem among a substantial number of Hindus who belong to the lower varnas.

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

4. (a) Explain Hindu attitudes towards other faiths.

[AO1 20]

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

- Hinduism accepts that there is a range of ways for people to engage and develop their spirituality in order to live successful and fulfilling lives such as the four Yoga paths. There are also variations in the cultural traditions through which Hinduism is practised in the community. According to the Rig Veda, the challenge before humanity is to live well together in a world where even the wisest see the truth differently to each other.
- This attitude can be seen in the Sarvodaya movement started by Mahatma Gandhi. Sarvodaya intended to elevate the most deprived and re-unite all sections of society in mutual compassion and care by focussing on principles which enshrine care and respect for all whilst also honouring differences.
- Hindus believe that whichever deity people pray to, they engage with the same spiritual consciousness. There is also an openness with which Hindu knowledge and spiritual tools are shared with people of all faiths.
- Hinduism supports the concept of ishtadeva. That is the freedom of the individual to engage with the one divine reality (Brahman), by worshipping or praying to whichever deity is most inspirational or engaging for them.
- Hindus believe that the level and quality of spiritual development will depend on the individual's own choices and actions on the journey of their own life.
- Most Hindus are respectful of deities, not only as being part of a unified consciousness (Brahman), but because they are sacred to others, even if they do not worship that deity themselves.
- Hinduism not only teaches tolerance for other religions but respect as well. Everyone is entitled to their own path, and none should be mocked or persecuted. The often quoted proverb that conveys this attitude is, "Ekam sat anekah panthah," which means, "Truth is one, paths are many."
- Hinduism is naturally tolerant of other religions, respecting the fact that each has unique beliefs, practices, goals and paths of attainment, and not objecting when the doctrines of one conflict with those of another. Hindus readily accept the idea that it is not necessary, desirable or even possible for everyone to hold the same beliefs. Certainly such differences should never be cause for tension, criticism, intolerance or violence.
- Hindus do not proselytize, meaning they do not try to convert members of other faiths to their own. Proselytizing is based upon the belief that one's religion is the only true religion and everyone else should join it. Hindus hold the view that all faiths are beneficial.
- "If we are to respect others' religions, as we would have them to respect our own, a friendly study of the world's religions is a sacred duty" - Mahatma Gandhi, from Rao, K.L. S, 'Mahatma Gandhi and Comparative Religion', Motilal, (1990).

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

(b) 'Hinduism is clearly a pluralist tradition.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Pluralism could be defined as the existence of different groups of people with distinguishing beliefs or practices co-existing within the same society with the collectively agreed view that this is a good thing.
- Many would argue that Hinduism is naturally pluralistic in nature. The Rig Veda states: 'Truth is one, though the Wise Ones know it variously'. This gives Hinduism a distinctively pluralistic worldview. In Hinduism, encountering and engaging with those who are different is not just tolerated or respectfully accepted, but welcomed and even recommended as enriching for all rather than seeking to impose a singular view.
- It is clear that Hinduism accepts that there is a range of ways for people to engage and develop their spirituality in order to live successful and fulfilling lives. This can be seen in the four Yoga paths – Bhakti, Jnana, Raj and Karma. Hindus can practise combinations of these depending on their own disposition, family customs and lifestyle.
- Hinduism can be practised with or without belief in a deity (bhakti), may include worship of a deity with or without form (Nirguna or Saguna), and may be with or without performing a range of religious practices.
- In addition to the variety of spiritual path choices within Hinduism, there are also extensive variations in the cultural traditions through which Hinduism is practised in community, including variations in cultural rites of passage such as wedding ceremonies.
- In the Purush Sukta, there is a Hindu conception of 'inherent' pluralism embedded into the process of creation itself, differentiating types of humanity's spiritual consciousness as interdependently functional parts of a cohesive whole where, like metaphorical body parts, the thriving of every type of personality is crucial to the thriving of the whole human society. Social reformers such as Vivekananda, Gandhi and others, worked to remind people of this ancient interdependent social cohesion that lies at the foundation of Hinduism. This clearly shows that pluralism is at the core of Hinduism.
- It can be argued that pluralism is not only embedded into Hindu culture on many levels, it is also part of ancient teachings, with Krishna stating in the Bhagavad Gita: "As people approach me, so I receive them. All paths lead to me".
- However, some may argue that there are some aspects within Hinduism that could be seen as not being pluralistic in nature – complete devotion to Vishnu in Vaishnavism or Shiva in Shaivism as the Supreme Deity to the exclusion of the recognition of any other deities or paths.
- Also, during the last century there has been the emergence of a Hindu perspective that is itself more narrowly defined, that is more exclusive than pluralist. This is sometimes referred to as "Hindu nationalism," – 'Hindutva' defining Hindu India in political and ideological terms to exclude those they deem to be outsiders, largely Muslims. The political parties and paramilitary groups that press this view rally around issues such as rebuilding a Hindu temple at the site said to be the birthplace of Lord Rama or banning cow slaughter and beef eating. The rise of this perspective into state and national elective politics has begun to reshape the meaning of "Hindu" for many in India.

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

5. (a) Explain the origin and background of the Bhakti movement.

[AO1 20]

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

- The Bhakti movement was a devotional transformation of medieval Hindu society where Vedic rituals gave way to the idea of an individual loving relationship with a personal god. Liberation which was previously considered only attainable by men of the three top castes became available to everyone.
- Most scholars state that the Bhakti movement provided women and members of the Shudra and untouchable communities an inclusive path to spiritual salvation.
- Hindus had suffered materially, morally and spiritually under Muslim rule. There was a good deal of bitterness between the two communities. The saints of the Bhakti movement and Sufi Muslim saints brought the two sides closer together.
- Real development of Bhakti movement took place in South India between 7th and 12th centuries through the teachings of poet saints.
- The main features of the Bhakti movement had a profound influence on Hindu identity socially, religiously and morally.
- One of the most important influences of the Bhakti movement socially was the rejection of caste distinction. Followers were allowed to mix together on the basis of equality. They took their meals together from the common kitchen. They promoted harmony between different sections of society and religion. The Bhakti movement introduced new forms of social giving such as sewa, dana and community kitchens. Also, the status of women received more importance.
- Religiously the movement aroused awakening among Hindus regarding the futility of ritualism and superstitions. The movement encouraged religious tolerance. Each of the major divinities of Hinduism have distinct devotional traditions.
- One of the main features of the Bhakti movement was belief in the unity of God or one God though known by different names. They also believed that the bhakti path was the only way to liberation. Distinctive practices included reciting the name of the god or goddess; singing hymns in praise of the deity; wearing or carrying identifying emblems and going on pilgrimages to sacred places associated with the deity. They also offered daily sacrifices in the home or temple. Darshan is given particular importance.
- The Bhakti movement also saw two ways of imaging the nature of the divine – Nirguna and Saguna.
- Morally it is emphasised that a true religious man is one who is pure in thought and action. The movement tries to infuse a spirit of piety in the daily life of people emphasising the earning of wealth through hard work and honest means.
- It encourages the value of social service to the poor and needy. It developed a humanitarian identity.

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

(b) 'The Bhakti movement has had very little influence within Hinduism.

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Some would agree with the statement arguing that the Bhakti movement had little lasting impact on the development of Hinduism and that aspects such as caste and the status and role of women remained largely unchanged.
- Others would argue that the Bhakti movement was ideological in nature and had very little practical impact.
- It can be argued that the Bhakti movement's influence was confined to the marginalized classes and had very little impact on Hindu hierarchy.
- Others could argue that there are greater influences on the development of Hinduism than the Bhakti Movement – Gandhi, Ramakrishna, ISKCON, Patanjali and Shankara.
- However, it can be argued that the most important social impact of the Bhakti movement was that the followers of the Bhakti movement rejected the caste distinction. They began to mix together on the basis of equality. They took their meals together from the common kitchen.
- A spirit of harmony among different sections of society and religion received impetus bringing about a unity among the Hindu and Muslim communities. The movement tried to reduce the growing bitterness between the two and bridge the gap. The saints of Bhakti movement and the Sufi saints spread message of friendship, amity, tolerance, peace and equality among all.
- The Bhakti movement raised its powerful voice against infanticide and sati
- With everyone equal in the eyes of God, the movement brought religion and spirituality to the marginalized classes – specifically women, whose religious expression was restricted in many ways. It was a movement that not only aimed at individual salvation and a mystical union with God but also towards socio-religious egalitarianism. It liberated both God and man (inclusive of woman) from the shackles of Brahminical monopoly. The movement created a space where one could have a personal relationship with God and removed all intermediaries, rendering all Brahminical traditions, and the role of Brahmin priests futile.
- The movement aroused awakening among the Hindus and Muslims regarding the futility of ritualism and superstitions. The feeling of appreciation of the difference between the thought and practices of the two religions emerged.
- The movement encouraged religious tolerance. The Guru Granth Sahib included the messages of saints belonging to different sects. This was on account of the spirit of toleration preached by the Bhakti saints.
- In place of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, the Bhakti saints preached through the medium of local languages which could be understood very easily.
- In political terms it can be argued that some of the rulers adopted liberal religious policies under the impact of the Bhakti movement.

- The movement attempted to infuse a spirit of piety in the daily life of the people. It emphasized earning of wealth through hard work and honest means. It encouraged the value of social service to the poor and the needy. It developed a humanitarian attitude. It pointed out the virtues of contentment and self-control. It drew attention to the evils of anger, greed and vanity.

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