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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2018**

**AS (NEW)  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
UNIT 1 - OPTION F  
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SIKHISM  
2120UF0-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2018 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.

# **AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

## **MARKING INSTRUCTIONS**

### **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 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.

### **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.

## AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 15 marks
	<p><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
5	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language /vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>N.B. A maximum of 1 mark should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 15 marks</b>  <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed.</li> <li>• The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed.</li> <li>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed.</li> <li>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

## Option F: An Introduction to the Study of Sikhism

### MARK SCHEME

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

#### Section A

1. (a) Examine how key events in Guru Nanak's life influenced on his teaching. [AO1 15]

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

- Much of the information about Guru Nanak comes from janam-sakhis.
- Sikh traditions teach that his birth and early years were marked with many events that demonstrated that God had chosen him out for something special. This had an influence on his teaching that God was personal.
- One famous story about Guru Nanak tells of his rebellion at the age of eleven refusing to wear the sacred thread. This influenced his most radical social teachings which denounced the caste system and taught that everyone is equal, regardless of caste or gender.
- Nanak continued to demonstrate a radical spiritual streak - arguing with local holy men and sages about the relative spiritual value of external practices.
- He worked for a while as an accountant but while still quite young decided to devote himself to spiritual matters.
- He was inspired by a powerful spiritual experience that gave him a vision of the true nature of God.
- In 1496, although married and having a family, Nanak set out on a set of spiritual journeys through India, Tibet and Arabia that lasted nearly 30 years. He studied and debated with the learned men he met along the way and as his ideas took shape he began to teach a new route to spiritual fulfilment and the good life.
- The most famous teachings attributed to Guru Nanak are that there is only one God, and that all human beings can have direct access to God.
- The last part of his life was spent at Kartarpur in the Punjab, where he was joined by many disciples attracted by his teachings.

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

(b) 'There was nothing new in the teachings of Guru Nanak.'

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Many would agree with the statement above whilst others would argue that Guru Nanak was a radical religious innovator.
- Some would argue that many of his beliefs and practices were rooted in those prevailing at the time and that they were at best merely adaptations of those beliefs and practices.
- The Sufi concepts of God were expressed in the Mool Mantra many of which are reflected in Guru Nanak's teaching.
- The use of songs, hymns and poetry to worship God was very much influenced by Sufism.
- He did little during his lifetime to change or replace these other faiths.
- His community at Kartapur attracted pilgrims but had little impact.
- His teachings brought about a new religion in the long run but not during his lifetime.
- However some would point out that he totally rejected the Hindu caste system and did not accept it at all. This was not only radical in religious terms but also socially. This teaching was a basis for social reform.
- He taught, and practised and expressed equality of social status and women which was new at this time. This again was a radical teaching which completely transformed the religious and social norms of the period.
- He criticised the extreme asceticism of Hindu sadhus and he emphasised the importance of family and community life.
- He did not encourage ritual or see the need for a priesthood but instead offered the ideal role of the guru as the inspiring teacher and friend.

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



2. (a) Examine the authority of the Guru Granth Sahib in Sikhism. [AO1 15]

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

- The Guru Granth Sahib contains the teachings of the Gurus and the Bhagat Bani; it was installed in the Harimandir by the fifth Guru, Arjan, as the orthodox expression of Sikh belief and it was made Guru by Guru Gobind Singh, thus bringing an end to the line of human gurus. This act has enormous implications for the role of the book within the community.
- It is seen as a living guide and teacher and expression of the word of God.
- A great many of the rituals and practices of Sikhism affirm this central and distinctive role.
- The Guru Granth Sahib has a central and essential role in naming ceremonies; rites of passage; worship; formation of doctrine; education
- On a daily basis, Sikhs receive a hukam or divine order in the form of a hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib, either in a Gurdwara or at home. Similarly, at the end of a service, after the ardas, the Adi Granth is opened at random and a portion is read. Many Sikhs do this daily, regarding the verses as words from God which they will find helpful during the day. This is called vak lao, taking advice.
- On special occasions, the Granth Sahib is recited non-stop from cover to cover by a string of readers. This continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib is known as an akhand path. It is regarded as the highest and the noblest ceremony in the Sikh religion, and can be performed on any important occasion.
- A saptahak path is a daily reading of Guru Granth Sahib to be completed in seven days. It is sometimes undertaken in private homes as a mark of supplication on special occasions.

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

(b) 'Sikhs worship the Guru Granth Sahib.'

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Some would argue that the way the Guru Granth Sahib is treated in Sikhism contains the main features of worship –in the gurdwara it is put to bed in its own room every evening; it is never placed on the ground; while the Guru Granth is being read a Granthi waves a Chauri as a fan above the pages.
- Treated as a 'living' book and carried with reverence to and from the Gurdwara.
- Sikhs prostrate themselves before Guru Granth Sahi.
- A great many Sikh rituals and practices affirm 'divine' role of book.
- The holy book is kept on a raised platform under a canopy in the place of worship which some believe give it a 'divine status.'
- Sikhs take off their shoes in the presence of the Guru Granth which in many religions is a sign of being in the presence of the divine.
- It is not God but an expression of the word of God. It is shown respect, as a human leader, but not worshipped. In Sikhism only God is worshipped.
- The way Sikhs treat the Guru Granth Sahib is often misunderstood as worship. Bowing to the Guru Granth Sahib is a sign of submission before the word of God. It is not worshipping the physical body, it is a submission to the Shabad – the Divine Infinite Wisdom.
- Sikhism rejects idol worship. The Guru Granth Sahib is not worshipped as an idol but rather emphasis is put on respect for the writings within. Bowing before the spoken revealed word of God is in fact bowing to God.

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

## Section B

3. (a) Examine Sikh understanding of karma and rebirth. [AO1 15]

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

### **Karma:**

- Cause and effect, action and reaction. Guru Nanak expresses this concept as 'One receives in accordance to what one does. As one sows so one eats.' (AG 662).
- Present life is result of past karma and present karma will determine future life – 'Man's life proceeds as his accumulated actions determine it. He receives joy or sorrow in accordance with what his past deeds have earned. But all is good that comes from you.' (AG 1107). However present failures, unlike those of the past, cannot be attributed to karma. They are the consequences of maya or haumai. Maya is holding a materialistic view of the world and haumai is self-reliance leading to pride which blinds people to their dependance on God.
- God is creator of first karma, the origin of the universe and the destroyer of karma. The Adi Granth states that karma is inscribed according to the divine will.
- Karma does not mean that everything is preordained and that there is no freewill. It is a person's own actions that makes them what they are.
- The individual can improve his own condition through effort. God is not responsible for destiny.
- Karma can be changed by prayer and the Grace of God. In Sikhism grace is the word which describes the way God focuses his attention upon a person. No one is ever beyond his care. 'He takes care of everything, though he remains invisible.' (AG 7)

### **Rebirth:**

- When something dies their soul is reborn. This transmigration is described by Guru Arjan – 'For many births you have become a worm or moth, an elephant, a fish or a deer.(AG 176) However Sikhism asserts that human existence is best because humans are unique. ' By virtue of the fellowship of the saints (sangat) you have achieved your present status so perform the Lord's service, repeat his name guided by the Guru.' (AG 176)
- Sikhs believe in reincarnation.
- Soul can be reborn many times.
- Guru Granth Sahib describes the body as clothing for the soul which is discarded at death.

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

- (b) 'The greatest influence on Sikh lifestyle is belief in karma.'

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Karma determines future life and therefore living a life that attains good karma is important. Although a person has to accept the consequences of past actions, the present and therefore the future as well as his ultimate destiny are to a large degree in his own control. Therefore the attainment of good karma through following a Sikh lifestyle will be very influential on his actions.
- The quality of each particular life depends on the law of Karma. Karma sets the quality of a life according to how well or badly a person behaved in their previous life. This influences how Sikhs view life and attitudes towards life in general.
- Sikhs believe that karma can be purified through effort and by living a virtuous life. They also believe that it can be purified through the grace of God. This influences Sikh lifestyle as Sikhs live in a way that brings them closer to God and ultimate communion with him.
- Good karma can break the cycle of reincarnation and lead to the unification of the soul with God. This is the ultimate aim of Sikhism and therefore fulfilling this aim has a great influence on Sikh lifestyle.
- Many Sikhs would argue that other concepts are as or more influential on Sikh lifestyle. Others would argue that a religion is not the sum of its individual parts but the whole. No one concept or belief is more or less important than the other. They are all interdependent and as such support and sustain each other.
- Sikhs focus their lives around their relationship with God, and being a part of the Sikh community.
- The only way out of the cycle, of birth, life and rebirth is to achieve a total knowledge of and union with God.

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

4. (a) Explain the concepts of Kirat Karo and Vand Chakko .

[AO1 15]

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

- Two of the main three pillars of Guru Nanak's teaching.  
**Kirat karo**
- To work and earn one's living through hard work, to live a family way of life and practise truthfulness and honesty in all dealings. It creates a more caring and strong community.
- To carry out good deeds and earn an honest and pure livelihood by exercising God-given skills, abilities and talents for the benefit and improvement of the individual, family and society at large.
- To work with determination and focus and not to be lazy and waste time.
- To do this work without personal gain but with the motivation of dedicating the work to God.
- This is earning a livelihood without deceit or cheating. Honest earning keeps the mind pure.
- It is strongly advocated to do work and earn an honest living, and as well not to be a burden on anyone or on the society.
- The Sikh faith rejects renunciation - detachment from home, family or work, and strongly advocates the house-holder's life.  
**Vand Chakko**
- It means to share what you have and to consume it together as a community.
- It can also mean to share wealth with others in the community, to give to charity, to take part in the langar and to generally help those in the community who need help.
- A Sikh is expected to contribute at least 10% of their wealth/income to the needy people of the world or to a worthy cause.
- It can also mean living as an inspiration and a support to the entire community.

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

(b) 'Vand Chakko is more important in Sikhism than Kirat Karo.'

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Many would agree with this contention as Vand Chakko is the concept that focuses entirely on the needs of the community.
- Sikhs don't think it pleases God if people pay no attention to others and simply devote themselves slavishly to religion. The concept reminds them of their religious and social obligations.
- Establishing a fair and equal community is a very important aim in Sikhism and the concept of Vand Chakko is very important in fulfilling this aim.
- It also influences Sikh attitudes towards others and influences Sikh lifestyle – the way Sikhs view wealth as something to share with others and property and the need to live a lifestyle which is an example to others.
- However others would point out that Kirat Karo is more important as it focuses on individual responsibilities and it is individuals that form a community.
- Kirat Karo focuses on the individual developing the talents given by God and using them honestly to gain wealth. Without this personal success there would be no wealth to share with the needy in society. Therefore Kirat Karo forms the basis for Vand Chakko.
- It also focuses on the individual's duty to work which creates the wealth needed for a successful community.
- Others would argue that the three pillars of Sikhism are completely linked to each other - Nam japna - Keeping God in mind at all times.; Kirat Karo - Since God is truth, a Sikh seeks to live honestly; Vand Chakko - Giving to charity and caring for others.

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

5. (a) Examine how the festival of Vaisakhi expresses Sikh identity. [AO1 15]

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

- It is a celebration of the role and contributions of Guru Gobind Singh who many believe gave Sikhism its unique identity. He founded the Khalsa at the Vaisakhi assembly at Anandpur. It can be argued that this was the most important event in the history of Sikhism, the event which safeguarded the religion for the future.
- Vaisakhi is a celebration of Sikhism – a reminder of the unique teachings of the faith and the duty of Sikhs to protect them.
- It reminds Sikhs of their history and traditions and is therefore a chance to express the pride Sikhs take in their religion.
- It also focuses on the role of the panj piaras in the events at Baisakhi – their complete commitment to their beliefs. They act as role models for Sikh identity - an unwavering commitment to faith.
- It is a celebration of the origins of the Khalsa which many would associate with Sikh identity. It is a celebration of the five outward signs of Sikh identity given at Vaisakhi by Guru Gobind Singh.
- It reminds Sikhs of the values identified with Sikhism – protecting the truth; the importance of community and a duty to oppose oppression and protect the oppressed. Expressing these values in everyday life is a way of expressing Sikh identity.
- It also focuses on the importance of self-sacrifice for the good of others. This is a very important belief in Sikhism and therefore of Sikh identity.
- Vaisakhi unites the Sikh community - as it's celebrated by Sikhs all over the world. It is therefore a worldwide expression of Sikh identity.

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

- (b) 'Sikh festivals are more social than religious occasions.'

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Sikh festivals can be regarded as more social occasion than a religious ones. They do not require any religious commitment and do not examine the holding of deep religious beliefs. The practices are fundamentally social in nature.
- Many of the customs associated with Sikh festivals are historical or social customs – the panj piare during the festival of Vaisakhi.
- Celebrating festivals does not show any commitment to Sikhism. A non-Sikh could easily take part in the festivals.
- Strong religious beliefs are not necessary to take part in festivals – people like to take part in the festivities but the words and actions are not important. People do not reflect on their religious significance or their relevance in personal religious terms.
- There are times when people are caught up in the community spirit and simply follow their neighbours. This can be seen generally across many festivals in many world religions. It is the celebration itself and the ways of celebrating that is the focus rather than the religious reason for the festival.
- However celebrating festivals can be a very moving religious experience. It can bring people together to celebrate common beliefs and shared religious values.
- The celebration of festivals can confirm and strengthen spiritual beliefs and virtues. The festival of Diwali reminds Sikhs of the struggle between good and evil and how good always overcomes evil, light overcoming darkness.
- Celebrating religious festivals can be a way of affirming religious beliefs; of showing belonging to a religious community; of expressing one's religious identity. Sikhs can publicly take pride in their religious beliefs and heritage.
- Preparing for religious festivals takes a lot of time and effort and therefore shows commitment to religious beliefs and values. The practices and rituals have deep religious significance and meaning for devotees.
- Some would express the view that the religious and social aspects are inseparable. Importance of unity within the Sikh community is celebrated during Diwali. The unity of the Sikh community has been and is essential to its survival as expressed in the khalsa.

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