



**General Certificate of Education
June 2010**

Religious Studies

RST4C

**Religious Authority, Way of Moral
Decision-Making or Ways of Reading and
Understanding Scripture**

A2 Unit 4C

Final

Mark Scheme

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced) A2 Level Descriptors

Level	A2 Descriptor AO1	Marks <i>Unit 4 italics</i>	A2 Descriptor AO2	Marks <i>Unit 4 italics</i>	A2 Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic, which may be in depth or breadth. Information is accurate and relevant. A thorough understanding is shown through good use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate good knowledge and understanding of diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is demonstrated. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated convincingly.	28-30 41-45	A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed and evaluated perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Systematic analysis and reasoning leads to appropriate conclusions. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related perceptively and maturely to the broader context and to human experience.	19-20 28-30	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
6	A generally thorough treatment of the topic which may be in depth or breadth. Information is almost all accurate and mainly relevant. Clear understanding is demonstrated through use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, alternative views and / or scholarly opinion are satisfactorily explained. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are clearly demonstrated.	24-27 36-40	A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed. A process of reasoning leads to an appropriate evaluation. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related clearly to the broader context and to human experience.	16-18 24-27	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic. Information is mostly accurate and mainly relevant. A reasonable understanding is demonstrated through use of some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, some familiarity with diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is shown. Some knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated.	20-23 29-35	A satisfactory response to the issue(s) raised. Views are explained with some supporting evidence and arguments, and some critical analysis. A conclusion is drawn that follows from some of the reasoning. Some of the response is related satisfactorily to the broader context and to human experience.	13-15 20-23	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; generally clear and coherent organisation of information; mainly appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and fairly high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	Key ideas and facts are included; demonstrates some understanding and coherence using some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, brief reference may be made to alternative views and / or scholarly opinion. Limited knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated.	15-19 22-28	The main issue is addressed with some supporting evidence or argument, but the reasoning is faulty, or the analysis superficial or only one view is adequately considered. Little of the response is related to the broader context and to human experience.	10-12 15-19	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14 15-21	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	7-9 10-14	
2	A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and slight signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.	5-9 8-14	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	4-6 5-9	Little clarity and organisation; little appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar barely adequate to make meaning clear.
1	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	1-4 1-7	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-3 1-4	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance	0	

Section A Religious Authority

Question 1

0	1	Examine various types of secular challenges to religious authority
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Expect reference, for example, to challenges from secular science, although these will need to be related to the particular religion to which they are addressed. Challenges are generally to creation mythology, where the latter, if taken literally, contradicts empirical science, particularly physics and evolutionary biology. Challenges from Humanist associations insist that the human condition is explicable purely through human investigation, and not through appeal to any supernatural being or beings. Challenge also from secular philosophers who question the authenticity of religious texts in general, either by appeal to historical analysis, or textual analysis, or some such criterion. Challenge on the basis of the evil in the world, where secularism insists that evil cannot rationally be explained in terms of the will of God. Challenges to religious authority within educational institutions, also within political systems, e.g. reduced authority of the Pope.

(45 marks) AO1

0	2	'Religious authority is entirely dependent upon religious belief and unquestioning obedience.' Evaluate this assertion.
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Traditional religious authority is derived from the scriptural and traditional basis of the religion in question; also from other forms of revelation, direct and indirect; also from the authority invested in religious functionaries and institutions. Might argue that the different types of authority form a unified whole, so are too diverse to be described as dependent simply upon belief and obedience. Candidates might show that religious authority can be defeated, for example where followers of a religion ignore the commands of the leadership on moral issues, or where secular powers successfully challenge the authority of religious-political leaders. If religious authority can be defeated, it might be argued that its basis in belief in God, for example, is belief-dependent rather than factual. Those who claim the authority of scripture, for example, are sometimes held to be following a circular logic, since it is scripture that authenticates itself. Might investigate the difference between voluntary and unquestioning obedience: the former based (for example) on rational assent, the latter based (for example) on fear.

(30 marks) AO2

Question 2

0	3
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Explain how the study of scripture can challenge religious authority.

Scriptural study in some traditions acknowledges the fact that the transmission of scripture generally displays a gap between the original occasion for writing the scripture and the form in which it now presents itself. Might be argued that there are no original forms of scripture, since it rests on oral tradition: hence scriptural study amounts to scriptural interpretation. The interpretation might proceed by analysing the speech forms from which the written forms descend. Any such process challenges the authority of scripture, since it acknowledges that the true meaning of scripture cannot be known. Some argue that scripture is inspired, or that those who expound it on are inspired, but those are circular arguments deriving authority from that which gives authority. Also, many scriptures exist in translated form, and the originals from which they were translated in some cases contradict the 'received' text in the mainstream religious tradition. Interpretation of scripture can reveal historical inaccuracy, errors of text transmission, dubious moral teaching, and so on.

(45 marks) AO1

0	4
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Assess the claim that religion should adapt to meet any challenge to its authority.

Candidates have a number of options open to them in answering this question. Some might answer with regard to challenges from the study of scripture within the religion; others might answer (for example) with regard to challenges to the epistemological claims of a religion. In terms of scripture, religious authority can be challenged from within by those who reject literalist / fundamentalist stances, for example. Some react to that by insisting that scriptural understanding comes from revelation, not logic (e.g. Karl Barth). Where the scripture is challenged by scientific evidence, as in the debate about creation and evolution, religious adaptation either reverts to fundamental assertions that resist scientific challenge, or else form a brand of so-called creation science, although neither approach can be said to be particularly attractive either to deep-thinking believers or to mainline science. The authority of religious institutions is sometimes challenged successfully, as can be seen in the reduced authority of some religious leaders, such as the Pope. Roman Catholicism has adapted to 21st-century perspectives on a number of issues, ranging from environmental ethics to the use of Latin, although there are some who claim that doing so has cost Catholicism its distinctive identity. Might conclude that adaptation is always possible but at increasing cost (e.g. the 'God of the gaps' problem); alternatively that some religious authorities are always able to adapt religious arguments, as with challenges from linguistic philosophy.

(30 marks) AO2

Section B Ways of Moral Decision- Making

Question 3

0	5	Examine how religion can help people to determine their behaviour. Refer to either medical research and medical developments or business practice and economics.
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The question expects the focus of the answer to be around how; there are different ways, the most likely would be divine command, or codes of behaviour which are established by the religion. Some might consider religious conscience, or some of the broad ethics established by a religion such as the Christian idea of the two great commandments. Or it might be the expectation of a final judgement. Expect exemplifying from particular religions.

The **examination** should be considering how these help people determine their behaviour and here there will be a need for some precise examples which again will need to be related to particular religions. Examples must be focused upon the issues of behaviour in their chosen topic.

Note the question is broad and thus the 'people' do not have to be religious.

(45 marks)

AO1

0	6	With reference to your chosen topic, consider how successful religion can be in helping religious people deal with the ethical issues involved.
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There is a restriction to 'ethical issues' involved in the chosen topic, either the medical or the business. Consideration of the success will require that there is a clear outline of the ethical issues and what religion says about the issue. The focus of the answer needs to be upon an evaluation of the success religion has in helping people deal with the ethical issues. **Success** needs to be around the resolution of the problems raised by the ethical issues for a religious person. Again, the 'for whom' is not left open, the focus is religious people. Thus, points about religion no longer being widely accepted etc would not be valid.

The ethical issues must be restricted to the topic, any which are not should be treated as rubric infringement.

(30 marks)

AO2

Question 4

0	7
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Examine how both deontological and teleological ethical systems can be used to help people make moral decisions.

Deontological systems assist moral decision making by providing those who follow them with a set of absolute rules, offering supposed certainty in distinguishing right from wrong action and motivation. Deontological systems generally emphasise correct motive as the basis for the rule, and not any supposedly superior set of consequences. The correct motive can be interpreted variously as following one's duty, which is accessed through reason, or following God's commands, accessed by scripture and other religious authorities. Teleological systems take the line that all human action moves towards an end or purpose, and that the correct line of action is that which has the most desirable consequence. The emphasis, then, is on helping the moral agent to understand what that consequence might be. Hence utilitarianism argues that the best consequence is that which maximises happiness and pleasure and minimises pain. Teleological systems do not ignore rules; the rules are subordinated to the principle.

(45 marks) AO1

0	8
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Assess the view that hybrid ethical systems are most suitable for moral decision-making.

Hybrid ethical systems generally refer to an accommodation made between deontological and teleological systems, so that, for example, there can be exceptions to rules in the former, and primary rules in the latter. Situation Ethics can be seen as a hybrid, for example, since it rests on one absolute principle that is interpreted relatively. Candidates might refer to systems like Strong Rule Utilitarianism, where the value of the rule has been proven historically, thus it always maximises happiness to keep the rule. Other versions of utilitarian theory make similar concessions, e.g. 'Multi-Level Utility' can utilise any deontological or teleological feature in order to arrive at the best solution, which might take into account both the preferences and the interests of those concerned. Whether or not such systems are the most suitable for moral decision-making depends on the agent's reasoning process, but the general defence of the hybrid system is that it is able to select any features it likes in order to achieve its ends. The problem is still that the selection of any one feature can still be seen as arbitrary by those who prefer to emphasise another.

(30 marks) AO2

Section C Ways of Reading and Understanding Scripture

Question 5

0	9
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Examine the status of the scriptures of one religion.

Questions of status are likely to be dealt with in terms of specific religious traditions. For example in Hindu tradition, the Vedic literature is divided into *sruti* (that which is heard – revelation) and *smriti* (that which is remembered - tradition). Candidates might discuss the status of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Puranas, and so on. In Christian literature, issues of status might be discussed in term of fundamentalist, liberal and moderate interpretations of scriptural meaning; or for example in terms of the relationships between the canonical books and the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature.

(45 marks) AO1

1	0
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'Translated scriptures can never have the status of the original.'
Assess the claim.

It might be argued on one level that this is clearly untrue, since large numbers of believers read their sacred texts in translation, and do not question their belief that the translation is as valid as the supposed original. Issues of status depend on taking one of three basic approaches: (1) accepting that scripture is literally God's absolute word, *dictated* by God directly through human agents, or (2) accepting that scripture is God-*inspired*, but the words that express it are created by humans who have a special relationship with God, or who were in some way informed by God, or (3) believing that scripture is the work of humans trying to understand God and to interpret God's requirements. Approaches (2) and (3) are appropriate ways of understanding the status of translated scriptures, since one could claim that the translation was inspired by God (something like this happened with the Greek Septuagint), or else one could argue that scripture has the authority to adapt itself to ongoing situations, in which case translated scriptures have equal validity with original versions, since they represent a legitimate process of interpretation.

(30 marks) AO2

Question 6

1	1
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Examine what the scriptures of one religion teach about the relationship between humankind and God / Ultimate Reality.

Teachings about the relationship between humankind and God / Ultimate Reality might focus on a number of things, for example the role of God as creator, sustainer, father, divine warrior, judge, redeemer, etc., in terms of what scripture says about God's relationship with humans. Might also look at moral teachings, for example in the Jewish scriptures, the 10 commandments as the heart of the Torah, extracts from prophetic oracles (e.g. those in Hosea and Amos about social immorality); in the Christian New Testament, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and specific parables, extracts from Paul's moral teaching. Also in those traditions, might look at teachings about God's control of, or intervention in, history, e.g. the election of Israel, the covenant, Exodus from Egypt, occupation of Canaan, destruction of the Northern then the Southern Kingdoms, domination by Persia / Greece / Rome, John the Baptist, the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the spread of early Christianity through Peter, Paul et al. Also, might consider how individuals and humanity might respond to these teachings, e.g. by their perception of what part they play in Salvation History, how they respond to moral teachings, and how they view the future: God as personal / one who answers prayer / one who intervenes with miracles in order to encourage faith.

(45 marks) AO1

1	2
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Assess the view that scripture is a reliable guide to people's future.

If God has a personal relationship with humans, as in the theistic religions, and acts as creator, sustainer, judge, etc., then it can be argued that scripture contains a reliable guide to the future, since it is part of God's revelation to humans, and carries God's authority. Scripture is often seen as having two or more applications: to the original situation, and to future occasions when it can sometimes apply more fully, in which case its reliability for the future is inbuilt. Might look at apocalyptic literature as indicative of what is said about the 'last times', since this glimpse of the future is often viewed with caution in so far as it discourages involvement with this world in favour of an early entry into the next. Scripture can also be seen as a personal guide to the future, in so far as God's personal message is extracted from the text, either through personal study and prayer, or else through guided interpretation, although there is the obvious problem that such guidance is wishful thinking. There have been many occasions when sectarian predictions about future events have been utterly misguided.

(30 marks) AO2