

Religious Studies

Advanced GCE **2793**

Connections in Religious Studies

Mark Scheme for June 2010

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by Examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the Report on the Examination.

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A2 Synoptic Units Preamble and Instructions to Examiners

The purpose of a marking scheme is to ‘... enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner’ [CoP 1999 25.xiv]. It must ‘allow credit to be allocated for what candidates know, understand and can do’ [xv] and be ‘clear and designed to be easily and consistently applied’ [x].

The Religious Studies Subject Criteria [1999] define ‘what candidates know, understand and can do’ in terms of two Assessment Objectives, weighted for the OCR Religious Studies specification as indicated:

All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives.

At A level, candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and their ability to sustain a critical line of argument in greater depth and over a wider range of content than at AS level.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked. Specifications should require that candidates demonstrate the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed.

AO1: Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study. *Weighting: 65% [A2]*

AO2: Sustain a critical line of argument and justify a point of view. *Weighting: 35% [A2]*

The requirement to assess candidates’ quality of written communication will be met through both assessment objectives.

In order to ensure the marking scheme can be ‘easily and consistently applied’, and to ‘enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner’, it defines Levels of Response by which candidates’ answers are assessed. This ensures that comparable standards are applied across the various units as well as within the team of examiners marking a particular unit. Levels of Response are defined according to the two Assessment Objectives. In A2, candidates answer a single question but are reminded by a rubric of the need to address both Objectives in their answers. Progression from Advanced Subsidiary to A2 is provided, in part, by assessing their ability to construct a coherent essay, and this is an important part of the Key Skill of Communication which ‘must contribute to the assessment of Religious Studies at AS and A level’.

Positive awarding: it is a fundamental principle of OCR’s assessment in Religious Studies at Advanced Subsidiary / Advanced GCE that candidates are rewarded for what they ‘know, understand and can do’ and to this end examiners are required to assess every answer by the Levels according to the extent to which it addresses a reasonable interpretation of the question. In the marking scheme each question is provided with a brief outline of the likely content and/or lines of argument of a ‘standard’ answer, but this is by no means prescriptive or exhaustive. Examiners are required to have subject knowledge to a high level and the outlines do not attempt to duplicate this.

Examiners must not attempt to reward answers according to the extent to which they match the structure of the outline, or mention the points it contains. The specification is designed to allow teachers to approach the content of modules in a variety of ways from any of a number of perspectives, and candidates’ answers must be assessed in the light of this flexibility of approach. It is quite possible for an excellent and valid answer to contain knowledge and arguments which do not appear in the outline; each answer must be assessed on its own merits according to the Levels of Response.

Practical application of the Marking Scheme

General administrative information and instructions are issued separately by OCR.

Apart from preliminary marking for standardisation purposes, which must be carried out in pencil, the first marking of a script should be in red ink. There should be a clear indication on every page that it has been read by the examiner, and the total mark for the question must be ringed and written in the margin at the end of the script; at A2 the two sub-marks for the AOs must be written here as well. Half-marks may not be used.

To avoid giving the impression of point-marking, ticks should not be used within an answer.

Examiners should follow the separate instructions about annotation of scripts; remember that the marks awarded make the assigned Levels of Response completely explicit.

Key Skill of Communication: this is assessed at both Advanced Subsidiary and A2 as an integral part of the marking scheme. The principle of positive awarding applies here as well: candidates should be rewarded for good written communication, but marks may not be deducted for inadequate written communication; the quality of communication is integral to the quality of the answer in making its meaning clear. The Key Skill requirements in Communication at Level 3 include the following evidence requirements for documents about complex subjects, which can act as a basis for assessing the Communications skills in an examination answer:

- Select and use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to your purpose and complex subject matter.
- Organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.
- Ensure your text is legible and your spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so your meaning is clear.

*

Synoptic Assessment

Synoptic skills and the ability to make connections: this unit is explicitly focused on the assessment of these skills, but clearly they cannot be exercised without the deployment of comparable knowledge and understanding of the subject matter concerned. The Assessment Objectives still have the same relative weightings, but the assignment of the work to bands should pay particular attention to the skills under consideration. These questions are designed to be open-ended, and credit will be given for any reasonable interpretation of the question which makes connections between the different units studied. The Subject Criteria give the following definition of the synoptic assessment requirements in Religious Studies:

Synoptic assessment assesses the candidates' knowledge and understanding of the connections between elements of the area(s) of study selected. It involves the explicit drawing together of knowledge, understanding and skills learned in different elements of the A level course. It should also contribute to the assessment of the skill of relating such connections to specified aspects of human experience.

Levels of Response: the descriptions are cumulative, i.e. a description at one level builds on or improves the descriptions at lower levels. Not all the qualities listed in a level must be demonstrated in an answer for it to fall in that level (some of the qualities are alternatives and therefore mutually exclusive). There is no expectation that an answer will receive marks in the same level for the two AOs.

Levels of Response descriptors for Connections Units 2791 – 2795

The abbreviations marked in blue below may be used instead of writing out the full trigger line. Examiners may however choose to write out the full trigger line if they choose. Examiners should choose the comment that most reflects the reason for the awarding of the mark. This will usually be the trigger line, in some cases it may be another line from the levels of response. In these cases examiners should choose the appropriate comment and write it beside the final mark awarded.

Band	Mark / 39	AO1	Mark / 21	AO2
0	0	absent / no relevant material	0	absent / no argument
1	1-8	has a little knowledge of the topic (lk) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a little relevant material some accuracy no understanding of the connections Communication: often unclear or disorganised	1-4	states a point of view (pov) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows minimal or no analysis/justification does not address broader context Communication: often unclear or disorganised
2	9-15	has some knowledge of the topic and a little understanding of the question (sk/litu) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some relevant material some concepts accurate little understanding of the connections shows a little knowledge of technical terms Communication: often unclear or disorganised	5-8	a little argument or justification of viewpoint (lit arg) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some analysis, but not always successful very weak attempt to address broader context Communication: often unclear or disorganised
3	16-20	focuses on the general topic rather than directly on the question (gen top) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge limited and partially accurate limited understanding selection of material sometimes inappropriate limited understanding of the connections limited use of technical terms Communication: some clarity and organisation	9-11	an attempt to sustain an argument or justify a viewpoint (att sust/just) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some analysis, but not always successful views asserted but not successfully justified limited understanding of broader context Communication: some clarity and organisation
4	21-25	a satisfactory attempt to address the question itself (sat att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some accurate knowledge appropriate understanding some successful selection of relevant material appropriate understanding of the connections some accurate use of technical terms Communication: some clarity and organisation	12-14	an argument is sustained and justified (sust/just) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful analysis which may be implicit appropriate understanding of broader concept Communication: some clarity and organisation
5	26-30	a good attempt to address the question (g att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly accurate knowledge good understanding good understanding of the connections good selection of relevant material mostly accurate use of technical terms Communication: generally clear and organised	15-16	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument (g att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful and clear analysis might put more than one point of view good understanding of the broader context Communication: generally clear and organised
6	31-34	a very good attempt to address the question (vg att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurate knowledge very good understanding very good understanding of the connections substantial selection of relevant material accurate use of technical terms Communication: answer is well constructed and organised	17-18	a very good attempt at using different evidence to sustain an argument (vg att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> successful and clear analysis considers more than one point of view very good understanding of the broader context Communication: answer is well constructed and organised
7	35-39	an excellent response to the question showing understanding and engagement with the material (exc rep) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information accurate use of technical terms excellent understanding of the connections Communication: answer is well constructed and organised	19-21	an excellent response which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument (exc rep) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehends the demands of the question shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints excellent understanding of the broader context Communication: answer is well constructed and organised

Route E – Philosophy of Religion with Eastern Religions

- 1 To what extent can it be argued that philosophical arguments provide a better response to suffering than Hinduism or Buddhism? [60]

AO1

Candidates are likely to explore Buddhists answers to suffering in terms of dukkha, tanha, and the Four Noble Truths. The concept that suffering can be overcome is central to Buddhism, and is likely to be explored.

Candidates might explore Hindu responses to suffering in relation to karma and samsara and their overcoming through the achievement of moksha. The inevitability of suffering, but its ultimate defeat through the bhakti path could be explored, as could the idea that the appearance of suffering is maya.

Candidates might explore the traditional solutions to the problem of evil presented by either Augustine or Irenaeus. Alternatively the approaches of Hick, or process theodicy could be considered. Any valid response should be credited.

AO2

Candidates might argue that the solutions of Augustine or Irenaeus have many flaws and do not provide a satisfactory solution to the problems raised by suffering. The notion of free will when God is omniscient and omnipotent is likely to be discussed.

Candidates might explore the strengths and/or weaknesses of the attitudes to suffering within Hinduism or Buddhism depending on their approach to the question. For example the notion that suffering is caused by one's own actions could be regarded as a strength since it places the possibility of change back with the sufferer.

Some candidates might explore whether the cultural or religious perspective of the individual will determine which approach provides the best response.

- 2 'Buddhist and Hindu texts are only sacred if they are revealed by God.' Discuss.

[60]

AO1

Candidates might explore the nature of the term sacred, and its connection with the divine. They may question whether the term sacred implies something is God-given, or whether it is simply above the mundane level.

Candidates answering from the perspective of Hinduism might explore the nature of sruti and smriti literature and the relative status of these scriptures. Candidates could explore whether sruti texts are sacred having come to the rishis direct, whereas the smriti texts are not.

Candidates answering from the perspective of Buddhism might explore the origins of the Buddhist texts, and the status of those revelations. The fact that the Pali Canon was revealed by the historical Buddha, whereas the Heart Sutra was not could be explored.

AO2

Candidates might conclude that sacred does imply that texts come from God and therefore that those scripts which do not derive from God cannot be considered sacred. This would have serious implications for Buddhist texts, but perhaps less so for Hindu texts.

Candidates might argue that sacred implies a deep religious significance, and in so far as they meet this requirement scriptures not directly revealed by God might still be considered sacred. For example would Buddhas and bodhisattvas still be regarded as revealing sacred truths.

Some candidates might explore whether ultimate truths, however revealed, are still ultimate truths, and thus of the utmost importance.

- 3 'There is no life after death.' Discuss with reference to either Hinduism or Buddhism.

[60]

AO1

Candidates might explore Hindu beliefs about life after death, including reincarnation within samsara and moksha. The relationship between the atman and the process of samsara could be investigated.

Candidates might explore Buddhist beliefs about life after death including rebirth within samsara and nibbana. The cycle of dependent origination, and the implications of anatta could be investigated.

Candidates might explore the materialist position within philosophy with reference to life after death. Reference to the ideas of any relevant philosophers such as Dawkins, Hick or Plato should be credited.

AO2

Candidates might argue that life after death has little or no scientific support, and thus cannot be believed by educated people within either tradition. This could however be contrasted with the evidence of Near Death Experiences (NDE's) and an examination of the evidence these might provide.

Some candidates might point towards moves by Western Buddhists to see the realms of rebirth as psychological states as argument in support of the statement. However candidates should be aware that most Buddhists still regard life after death as a reality.

Candidates might argue that belief in life after death is an integral part of the belief systems, providing both an aim, and a reason for moral behaviour, and cannot easily be denied. For example the system of varnashramadharma governing Hindu ethics would lack substance if life after death in the form of rebirth did not occur.

Route L – Religious Ethics with Eastern Religions

- 4 'Buddhist or Hindu ethics are a form of absolute ethics.' Discuss. [60]

AO1

Candidates might explore the nature of Buddhist ethics, for example the five precepts or the eightfold path. An exploration of the importance of wisdom and compassion in both the bodhisattva path and the eightfold path might be relevant.

Candidates might explore the nature of Hindu ethics, for example varnashramadharma and the four purusharthas. The teaching on dharma in the Bhagavad Gita might be worth exploring, especially in connection with the Hindu concept of ahimsa

Candidates might explore the nature of an absolute ethical theory with reference to other ethical theories, or as a philosophical concept. Any relevant concept or discussion should be credited.

AO2

Candidates might argue that the system of varnashramadharma does imply absolutism, since all people in those circumstances should follow the same code. Or that the five precepts are an absolute code to be followed at all times.

Alternatively candidates could point to the fact that the system varies its codes according to varna and ashrama as an indication of relativism. Or that the belief in upaya leads to the breaking of such codes for 'higher means'.

In either case candidates should have made a clear attempt to explore the relationship to absolutism before reaching a conclusion.

- 5 To what extent does a belief in kamma/karma challenge belief in freewill? Discuss with reference to Hinduism or Buddhism? [60]

AO1

Candidates might explore the notion of freewill as a philosophical concept. In this case reference to any relevant philosopher or theory should be credited. Explorations of hard and soft determinism would be appropriate.

Candidates might explore the notion of kamma/karma within Hinduism or Buddhism, as an ethical system of reward and consequence for actions carried out. The cycle of dependent origination in Buddhism could also be explored.

Candidates might make reference to other related concepts, such as the realms of rebirth within samsara, or nibbana/moksha. When doing so the material should be focused on addressing the question.

AO2

Candidates might argue that kamma/karma determines what happens to us, including our thoughts and habits, and thus limits our ability to make free choices. Since certain rewards and punishments are bound to occur they are determined.

Candidates might argue that such results are a result of previous choices, and new choices are possible, thus exercising freewill. While we may not be able to prevent events occurring to us we can change our reaction to them and future actions.

Candidates are likely to focus upon the extent to which previous kamma/karma allow or limit the current exercise of freewill. This will probably lead to a conclusion about whether Buddhism or Hinduism most closely matches a hard determinist, soft determinist or free will position.

- 6 'Hindu or Buddhist ethics are of little use when considering issues of sex and relationships.' Discuss. [60]

AO1

Candidates might explore the influence of Hindu ethical codes on issues of sex and relationships, for example Hindu views about marriage within the caste system.

Teachings about ahimsa in both Buddhism and Hinduism could be explored to the extent they affect issues of sex and relationships.

Candidates might explore the influence of Buddhist ethical codes on issues of sex and relationships, for example the third precept of the five precepts.

Candidates may choose to focus on one particular issue within sex and relationships in some depth, or cover a wider range of issues where the same level of depth cannot be expected.

AO2

Candidates might argue that Hindu or Buddhist ethics give clear guidelines, and thus are very helpful in considering such issues.

Candidates might argue that Buddhist ethics are often interpreted differently in different countries, and thus are very useful as they can adapt with the times, or conversely of little use, as they provide little more than a barometer of cultural norms.

Candidates might argue that Hindu ethics give strict guidelines which reflect the time and place they were constructed, making them very useful as they are fixed, or conversely making them less useful as times and cultural expectations change and they seem outdated.

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