



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2023**

Religious Studies

Assessment Unit AS 8

assessing

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

[SRE81]

WEDNESDAY 7 JUNE, AFTERNOON

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of a mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for **GCE Religious Studies**

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, including:
 - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching;
 - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies;
 - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice; and
 - approaches to the study of religion and belief (AO1); and
- analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study (AO2).

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication.

Levels of response

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit' bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement. The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Each of the two assessment objectives have been categorised into five levels of performance relating to the respective abilities of the candidates. Having identified, for each assessment objective, the band in which the candidate has performed, the examiner should then decide on the appropriate mark within the range for the band.

Other Aspects of Human Experience at AS Level

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, when required, to access Bands 3–5.

Synoptic Assessment at A2 Level

Candidates must support their answer with reference to at least one other unit of study to access Bands 4–5.

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience in their AO2 response to access Bands 3–5.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within levels of response as follows:

- Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.
- Level 2: Quality of written communication is limited.
- Level 3: Quality of written communication is good.
- Level 4: Quality of written communication is very good.
- Level 5: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate makes only a basic selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material lacks clarity and coherence. There is little or no use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are basic and the intended meaning is not clear.

Level 2 (Limited): The candidate makes a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is limited use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

Level 3 (Good): The candidate makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

Level 4 (Very Good): The candidate makes a very good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with clarity and coherence. There is very good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a very good standard to make meaning clear.

Level 5 (Excellent): The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

Band	AO1 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent response to the question asked • Demonstrates comprehensive understanding and knowledge • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A very high degree of relevant evidence and examples • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure • An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response to the question asked • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding and almost totally accurate knowledge • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A very good range of relevant evidence and examples • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good response to the question asked • Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding and mainly accurate knowledge • Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A good range of relevant evidence and examples • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response to the question asked • Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding • Demonstrates limited understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A limited range of evidence and/or examples • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[6]–[10]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response to the question asked • Demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding • Demonstrates minimal understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • Little, if any, use of evidence and/or examples • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[0]–[5]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis • An excellent attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • An excellent attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • An excellent attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure • An extensive range of technical language and terminology with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response demonstrating a very good attempt at critical analysis • A very good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A very good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • A very good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable response demonstrating a good attempt at critical analysis • A good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • A good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response demonstrating a modest attempt at critical analysis • A limited attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A limited attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which struggle to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience • A limited attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[6]–[10]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis • A basic attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A basic attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which fail to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience • A basic attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[0]–[5]

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, where necessary, to access Bands 3–5.

Section A

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section A

- 1 (a) For what reasons is the problem of evil difficult for both the religious believer and the atheist?

Answers may include:

- An identification of the problems of evil for theism and atheism.
- An exploration of the Inconsistent Triad and/or the Epicurean Paradox as having particular relevance for the religious believer.
- Reference to the theistic definition of God and Divine characteristics.
- An exploration of the concept of Creation, the origins and continued existence of evil.
- An exploration of the issue of innocent and/or unjust suffering.
- An exploration of the problem of evil as acute for the theist notably for monotheistic faiths.
- Reference to the writings of Dostoyevsky concerning the suffering of children.
- An exploration of God's apparent failure to intervene to stop suffering, the arbitrary nature of Divine intervention/miracle.
- Reference to the sheer scale of moral and natural evil and corresponding suffering of humanity.
- An exploration of the problem in reconciling the existence of hell and the concept of a loving and forgiving God.
- An exploration as to whether there are ways for humanity to grow develop and flourish without the existence of evil.
- Reference to the distinction between moral and natural evil and how such evil constitutes a threat to the concept of an omnibenevolent and omnipotent deity.
- Reference to the fact that suffering is a dilemma for both theism and atheism alike.
- An exploration of the dilemma of existential evil for the atheist and responses to this; possible reference to Camus, Russell.
- Reference to atheism's view of natural evil as a by-product of the Big Bang and/or evolution.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “Augustine offers the best solution to the problem of evil.”
Assess this claim. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- An exploration of the strengths and/or weaknesses of Augustine’s theodicy.
- Support for this claim, the Augustinian theodicy as rooted in scripture including the Creation, Fall and Redemption narratives.
- Reference to the strengths of the freewill argument, evil as the inevitable consequence of sinful human choices.
- An exploration of the concept of original sin and humanity’s need for a Saviour.
- Support for Augustinian theodicy from Aquinas, Swinburne and Plantinga, the importance of genuine human freedom.
- Reference to selected teachings on the origins and purposes of evil as recorded within sacred texts in support of Augustine’s theodicy.
- Islamic, Jewish and/or Christian support for the concept of Divine punishment for human disobedience.
- Counterclaims may include the challenge posed by evolutionary theory, which questions the concepts of humanity’s fall and the notion of inheritance of sin.
- Reference to F.D.E. Schleiermacher’s critique, it is a logical contradiction to claim that a perfectly created world went wrong.
- The Augustinian theodicy as failing to address issues such as that of existential suffering or animal suffering.
- Reference to Flew and/or Mackie’s argument that God could have created humans with free will who only chose good.
- Reference to liberal Christians’ interpretation of the Creation and Fall Narrative as symbolic rather than literally true.
- Reference to alternative theodices such as the Irenaean or Freewill Defence as being inferior and/or superior to the Augustinian theodicy.
- An exploration of atheistic views, that all theodices fail, evil is purposeless – the product of random chance.
- Reference to the views of relevant thinkers such as Stephen Fry, William Craig, Maurice Wiles.
- Reference to the fact that some alternative solutions have little or no scriptural support such as Process Theodicy.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

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2 (a) How is Teresa of Avila's understanding of religious experience similar and different to that of Martin Buber?

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- An exploration of shared themes within both mystic's writings such as the importance of personal religious experience, the importance of the quest for and communion with the Divine.
- An exploration of the importance of prayer: prayer as a dialogue and as an exercise in love.
- An exploration of analogies and visions cited by Teresa of Avila and Martin Buber – The Interior Castle, I-Thou relationships.
- An exploration of common themes/teachings such as union with God, obtaining spiritual knowledge through faith and contemplation and/or the importance of the act of self-surrender to the Divine.
- Reference to the importance of faith communities for both writers – the Hasidic community and the Reformed Carmelite order.
- Reference to the legacy of both scholar's teachings on religious experiences such as the continued importance of their writings and spiritual reflections.
- Reference to the opposition to their experiences faced by both thinkers: – challenges concerning Teresa's visions and Buber's exploration of Zionism.
- Reference to selected writings such as The Way of Perfection, The Interior Castle and/or I-Thou.
- Consideration of difference, e.g. Teresa of Avila (introvertive), Martin Buber (extrovertive); their different audiences; their distinctive faith traditions.
- A definition of the term mystic, an exploration of the role of a mystic.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) Assess the claim that religious experience can never be a ‘proof’ for the existence of God. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- An exploration as to what constitutes religious experience and whether such experiences can prove the existence of God.
- Atheistic support for the claim, atheism’s rejection of both God and thus any form of religious experience.
- An exploration of the validity and/or otherwise of religious experiences.
- An exploration of the nature of God as metaphysical/supernatural and thus beyond human verification.
- Religious experiences as being by their nature subjective, non-cognitive and/or non-analytical.
- An exploration as to what constitutes a ‘proof’.
- Counterchallenges to this statement from theism, religious experiences support and/or prove the existence of Deity.
- Reference to Aquinas’ assertion that God can be demonstrated using reason and ‘a posteriori’ evidence.
- Reference to the argument from religious experience for the existence of God.
- Reference to the necessity of faith since no ‘proof’ can ever be sufficient.
- Reference to specific examples of Special and/or General Revelation as supporting the existence of God.
- Reference to the views of selected schools of thought such as Empiricists, Logical Positivists.
- An exploration as to how we verify experiences by scientific or analytic means.
- An exploration as to whether religious experiences are verifiable.
- Reference to Swinburne’s Principles of Testimony and/or Credulity.
- Reference to the views of relevant scholars such as Aquinas, Hitchens, Dawkins and/or Freud.
- Reference to experiences such as miracles, answered prayers and conversions as being ‘proofs’ of God’s existence.
- Reference to specific examples of religious experience as offering strong or weak support for the existence of God.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

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Section B

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section B

- 3 (a)** “Existence can only be defined as a predicate.”
With reference to this statement, explain the Ontological argument.

Answers may include:

- An exploration of the Ontological argument with particular reference to the claim that existence can only be defined as a predicate.
- Theism’s view that necessary existence is a distinguishing characteristic which sets God apart and therefore can be used as a predicate.
- An exploration of the nature of God as having all perfections including existence.
- A discussion of the first and second strands of Anselm’s ontological argument, God as having maximal goodness.
- A discussion of Descartes’ development of the ontological argument, God as having all perfections.
- Reference to relevant analogies such as the triangle analogy, the mountain/valley analogy.
- A discussion of Anselm’s views concerning the Fool.
- Reference to Gaunilos’ challenges to Anselm’s argument, the perfect island analogy and Anselm’s response to this challenge.
- Atheism’s rejection of the existence of any deity or Kant’s denial that existence is a predicate of God.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels
(AO1)

[25]

- (b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, assess the claim that without religious belief humanity cannot be morally good.
Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Theism's support for this claim, the necessity of a good God for moral goodness.
- An exploration of the origins and nature of morality.
- An exploration of humanity's need for a Divine Commander and moral commands/duties.
- An exploration of the link between moral norms/absolutes and a Deity.
- Reference to ethical theories such as Divine Command theory, Natural Moral Law theory, Utilitarianism.
- An exploration of the nature of God and the moral argument.
- An exploration of Kant's Categorical Imperative.
- Reference to the importance of moral commands and/or principles as recorded in sacred texts.
- An exploration of the concept of Divine salvation, sinful humanity in need of redemption.
- Reference to the views of selected scholars such as Atkins, Rachels, Craig and Davies.
- Atheism's rejection of such a claim as untrue and indeed offensive.
- Reference to the distinction between God is needed and a belief in God is needed.
- Morality as socially conditioned and/or evolutionary driven.
- The recognition of humanity's role as moral agent.
- Reference to non-religious sources of moral guidance such as Humanist Manifestos, Declarations of Human Rights and State legislation.
- Religious morality as being motivated solely by self-interest or fear of Divine judgement.
- The increased call to reject Divine morality in a post-modernist era.
- Reference to the growing shift towards secular morality and moral relativism.
- Atheism's critique of religious morality as repressive and sectarian, engendering hatred.
- Alain de Botton ('Religion for Atheists') and his thoughts on the benefit of religion for those who are not religious adherents, e.g. the moral teaching of Jesus.
- Karl Rahner's remarks about the 'anonymous Christian'.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5.

(AO2)

[25]

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AVAILABLE
MARKS

- 4 (a) "The laws of nature are stable and unalterable."
With particular reference to this statement, give an account of Hume's critique of miracles.

Answers may include:

- An exploration of Hume's critique of miracles with particular reference to the statement that the laws of nature are stable and unalterable.
- A definition of the term laws of nature and the key features of such laws according to Hume.
- An exploration of Hume's definition of the term miracle.
- A discussion as to the nature of natural law, as fixed or otherwise.
- Hume's view of natural laws as fixed and inviolable and miracles as, at best, improbable.
- Hume's rejection of witness testimony concerning miracles.
- Reference to Hume's view that faith claims concerning miracles are contradictory.
- Reference to the writings of Hume such as 'An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding'.
- The influence of Hume's understanding of causality.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels
(AO1)

[25]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

(b) “Miracles are not just a problem for atheists but also for religious believers.”
 With reference to other aspects of human experience, evaluate this view.
 Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- An exploration of the distinctive problem of miracles for atheists and religious believers.
- Reference to atheistic and theistic definitions as to what constitutes a miracle.
- An exploration of theistic and atheistic rejection of the concept of miracles.
- An exploration of need for empirical proofs concerning miracles.
- Reference to atheism’s acknowledgement of breaches of natural law with no current explanation.
- Atheism’s rejection of any form of omnipotent and omnibenevolent deity.
- Reference to the rarity and arbitrary nature of Divine intervention.
- Theistic concerns regarding humanity’s reliance upon Divine intervention, Divine intervention as reducing humanity’s freedom and autonomy.
- Reference to the views of selected thinkers such as Locke, Swinburne, Hick, Wiles, Flew.
- Reference to the scale of human suffering and evil with seemingly little Divine intervention.
- Reference to Bultmann’s suggestion of demythologising the gospels.
- An exploration of alternative explanations for claimed miracles, miracles as a product of delusion or hoax, good fortune/accident.
- Counterarguments to the stated claim – theistic support for an omnipotent and benevolent deity and the existence of miracles.
- Miracles as serving to support the existence of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent deity.
- Reference to the importance of miracles within sacred texts and/or importance of resurrection within Christian teaching.
- Reference to the centrality of miracles within diverse faith traditions.
- Reference to specific examples of miracles and experiences of healing power, e.g. Fabrice Muamba (2012), Luke Burgie (2020).
- An exploration of the role of God as Creator and/or sustainer of the universe.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5.

(AO2)

[25]

50

Total

100

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**