



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2025**

Religious Studies

Assessment Unit AS 2

assessing

An Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles

[SRE21]

TUESDAY 20 MAY, 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) Give an account of the evidence for **two** of the possible dates for when Acts was written.

Answers may include, e.g.:

- Consideration of two of the three suggested dates – early (before AD 64); intermediate (AD 70–85); late (end of first/early second century).
- Early date evidence, e.g.
 - No mention of martyrdom of James, Peter or Paul.
 - No mention of Fall of Jerusalem 70AD.
 - Apologia for Paul and Christians needed before 70AD.
 - Positive attitude to the Romans, e.g. Sergius Paulus; Gallio; “religio licita” (permitted religion) status; right of appeal to Caesar disappears after 70AD.
 - No hint that Nero’s anti-Christian policy had begun.
 - No reference made to Paul’s Letters.
 - No mention of Paul’s death.
 - Written for Paul on trial as a defence document.
 - Focus on Jewish-Gentile relations.
 - We passages.
- Intermediate Date evidence, e.g.
 - Dating of Mark’s Gospel 70AD – Fall of Jerusalem to Rome.
 - Luke uses Mark’s Gospel for his own Gospel, e.g. Fall of Jerusalem Lk 21; description by Luke as historic event.
 - Date of Luke’s Gospel; Acts follows the Gospel, e.g. “In my previous work..” Acts 1:1.
 - Paul’s Letters not used – not extensively circulated; sent to churches in Asia Minor or Greece; Luke in Rome.
 - Argument against intermediate date, e.g. favourable attitude to Romans following Nero’s persecution in 64AD not likely.
- Late Date evidence, e.g.
 - Acts not mere chronicle – perspective of time.
 - Evidence of Luke’s use of historian Josephus 96AD.
 - Difficulty in reconciling positive attitude to Romans with Church/ State relations in the late first/early second century, e.g. persecution by Domitian; Pliny’s letters to Trajan.
 - Does not reflect interest and outlook of the Church at the end of first century.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) "The contribution of Stephen and Philip was the primary concern of the author of Acts." Assess this view. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include, e.g.:

- Stephen and Philip – deacons chosen for administration of the common fund.
- Acts as the story of the spread of Christianity; the Church reaching out as a possible purpose of Luke; fulfillment of Acts 1:8.
- Luke sees them as a pair in the spread of the Church to the Gentiles.
- Both were preaching evangelists.
- Both were able to perform signs and wonders.
- Ministry of both men as helping to pave the way for the Gentile mission.
- Brought Good News to their hearers.
- Contribution of Stephen – speech to Sanhedrin; the Temple, the Law and Christ; martyrdom; persecution of Hellenists.
- Persecution scattered the Church.
- Contribution of Philip – evangelization of Samaritans and Ethiopian Eunuch.
- Overall impact of Stephen and Philip on the Church – community living; spread of Christianity; break with Judaism; reaction to persecution; Gentile missionary outreach.
- Contribution of Peter – leadership and preaching at Pentecost; disciplinarian; miracle worker.
- Contribution of Paul – missionary journeys; apostle to the Gentiles; relationship with the Jews.
- Author more concerned with balance in work of Peter and Paul.
- Other concerns, e.g.
 - Positive attitude towards the Romans throughout the book, e.g. Sergius Paulus.
 - The equality of Jews and Gentiles in a number of ways throughout his book, e.g. Pisidian Antioch.
 - The universal offer of the gospel; detailed sermons to different audiences in different places, e.g. Pisidian Antioch, Athens.
 - Luke's portrait of Paul; heroic figure; flexible in evangelisation to different audiences.
 - Importance of Jewish mission, e.g. synagogue formula.
- A work of theology.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

2 (a) In what ways was Peter’s speech at Pentecost important?

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include, e.g.:

- Context of Peter’s speech; impact of the Holy Spirit; speaking in tongues; fear changed to courage.
- Peter’s role as evangelist fulfilling Acts 1:8.
- Spokesperson for the apostolic community: “the rock”.
- **Summary of Peter’s Speech**
 - charge of drunkenness denied; Jesus was killed by the Jews; Jesus was raised from the dead as one of David’s descendants as foretold in Ps 16:8–11 and Ps 89:4; Jesus is ascended into heaven and has given the promise of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit has been poured out; Jesus is the promised Messiah; repent and be baptised to receive the Holy Spirit.
- **Importance of Peter’s Speech**
- First proclamation of the Gospel in the new age.
- Role of the Holy Spirit; inspiration; driving force of the Church.
- Christ-centered witness.
- Conversion and expansion of the Church.
- Role of repentance and baptism.
- Possibility of a pattern to preaching the kerygma.
- **Impact on believers’ fellowship (Acts 2:42–47)**
 - Spirit-inspired togetherness
 - community lived out commitments to the apostles;
 - gathering each day in the Temple courts to hear instruction
 - corporate worship
 - community broke bread together in homes sharing a meal, beginning it with the bread and ending it with the cup of the Lord’s Supper
 - common life; sharing everything in common; breaking of bread.
 - spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “Developments in the organisation of the early Church were vital to furthering the gospel.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? Justify your answer.

Answers may include, e.g.:

- Church Organisation – initially a group of believers led by the apostles in teaching and way of life e.g. Acts 2:42ff.
- No church government structure in early Acts.
- Special ministry of care to widows.
- **Role of the Apostle**
 - Appointed by Jesus.
 - “One who is sent”.
 - Ministry of Peter and John as healers, evangelists and leaders.
 - Criteria could be applied to more than the 12, e.g. Paul and Barnabas.
- **Role of the Deacon – The Choosing of the Seven**
 - Nature of the problem with the daily distribution to the widows; Greek – speaking Christians felt unfairly treated; relationship between Hebrews and Hellenists.
 - Administration of aid originally by apostles; overworked; interfering with evangelization.
 - Appointment by apostles of 7 men by apostles to practical responsibility for distribution of charity.
 - Chosen after prayer; confirmed by laying on of hands.
 - Importance of 7 being Greek–speaking.
 - Men full of wisdom and the Holy Spirit; competent in administration.
 - Stephen and Philip also had preaching ministry; Stephen performed miraculous signs.
 - Similar role to later office of deacon; Greek word “to serve.”
 - Stephen’s speech; universalism.
 - Martyrdom of Stephen; ultimate sacrifice.
 - Philip preached to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian official; universalism in practice.
- **Role of the Elder**
 - Paul appointed elders in every church (Acts 14:23).
 - Paul speaks to Ephesian Elders about their role to oversee activities (Acts 20:28); watch out for those who would teach error (20:31).
 - To continue Paul’s work after he left as shepherd, teacher and preacher.
- The extent to which developments in the organisation of the early Church were crucial to the furthering of the gospel; possible consideration of other key developments, e.g. the Gentile Pentecost.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

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AVAILABLE
MARKS

Section B

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section B

- 3 (a) Explain how the story of Peter's miraculous escape from prison (Acts 12:1–19) reflects the key characteristics of Acts.

Answers may include, e.g.:

- Consideration of Peter's escape: Acts 12:1–19.
 - Peter's arrest and imprisonment.
 - handcuffed, guarded.
 - appearance of the angel.
 - escape from prison and guards.
 - Peter visits the church; praying.
- Peter as main focus of the narrative in early chapters.
- Peter as a strong leader; spreading of the Gospel to the Jews.
- Peter's previous conflict with the Sanhedrin Ch 5.
- Importance of Peter to the early Church.

- **Miraculous escape reflects key characteristics.**
- Role of the Holy Spirit in divine control and guidance.
- The events in the church brought about by the will and power of God.
- God active through the Holy Spirit.
- Herod's plan to execute Peter stopped by direct intervention of God.
- Spread of the gospel not hindered by imprisonment or death of apostles.
- Threat of persecution is met with care from God for the messengers.
- Prayer central to life and worship of the Church; communal lifestyle; unity.
- Focus on Peter and Paul; Paul's miraculous escape from prison in Phillipi.
- Consideration of the role of miracles in Acts.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “Miracles have more impact in evangelism than preaching in any age.”
With reference to other aspects of human experience, evaluate this view.
Justify your answer.

Answers may include, e.g.:

- An open-ended response citing relevant contemporary and/or historical examples.
- Consideration of other aspects of human experience.
- How miracles are understood by theologians, philosophers, scientists, and possible impact.
- Miracles belong exclusively to the period of the early Church.
- Faith Healers, e.g. Benny Hinn, Sr Brieger McKenna.
- False claim of healing and the impact on the Church.
- Preaching is used instead to spread the Church’s mission, e.g. work of missionaries, street preachers, parish missions.
- ‘Megachurches’ using both healing ministry and preaching, e.g. Crossroads Church.
- Examples and effects of miracles throughout history.
- Expectation of miraculous draws crowds.
- Claims of modern miracles.
- Places of healing, e.g. Lourdes; 70th “official miracle”.
- The role of faith in miracles.
- Continuing healing ministry of Jesus today.
- Enduring role of the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Secular influence – rise in non-belief; census 2021.
- The place of Reason.
- The impact of the Enlightenment and modern science – greater tendency to not believe in miracles.
- Nature always obeying the laws of physics, thus the impossibility of miracles.
- Miracles as confusion, wishful thinking or happy coincidences.
- Miracles solely as expressions of belief.
- Possible reference to scholarly debate, e.g. Richard Swinburne.

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) “In Athens, Paul found ways to link Christian theology to Greek philosophy.”
Give an account of the evidence from Acts to support this statement.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include, e.g.:

- Paul’s speeches in Acts to different audiences, e.g. Jews (Pisidian Antioch), Greeks/Pagans (Athens), Christians (Elders at Miletus).
- Paul attempts to assimilate and articulate the gospel message in different theological and cultural environments.
- Context of speech in Athens – delivered during the second missionary journey.
- Paul speaks to the Jews first; synagogue formula.
- Importance of Athens in ancient world.
- Paul speaks in the market place, the “Agora”.
- Comments on Stoics and Epicureans.
- Relevance for Epicureans; striving for pleasures of the mind; belief in disinterested gods; gods did not punish; everything happens by chance; death is final.
- Relevance of the speech to Stoics; living in harmony with nature; emphasis on logic and reason; self-sufficiency; pantheists; fatalists.
- Paul accused of being a “babbling”.
- Paul invited to speak at the Areopagus; board of censors; philosophical leaders; educated pagans; local authority on religion, education and morality.
- Content of the speech in Acts 17:16–34.
- Paul’s adaptability; grafting Christian theology onto Greek philosophy.
- Paul’s use of natural theology.
- Paul’s comments on idols; ‘unknown god’; God is Lord of heaven; temples cannot contain him; God sustains all life; all people descended from one man, Adam; man’s need for God; no need for ignorance; repentance call; judgment; resurrection of Jesus.
- Use of Greek poets Epimenides and Cleanthes 17:28–29.
- Response: rejection and mocking; acceptance, Dionysius.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “Strong leadership is necessary when facing the challenge of religious witness in any age.”
With reference to other aspects of human experience, assess this claim.
Justify your answer.

Answers may include, e.g.:

- An open-ended response citing relevant contemporary and/or historical examples.
- Reputation of some religious leaders; sex scandal; financial scandal; Terrorism.
- Attacks on religious faith – atheism, modernism; Dawkins, Hitchens, Maher.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of models of leadership, e.g. dictatorial, hierarchical, collegial, decision making at a local level, e.g. Synodality.
- Influence of media on portrayal of religious faith and religious leaders, e.g. ‘Spotlight’ film.
- Evidence of strong leadership in religion, e.g.
 - Catholic Church magisterium; church commitment to education, healthcare; ‘Laudato Si’ on environmental concerns.
 - Mormon Church in US, response to Hurricane Katrina.
 - Charitable organisations, e.g. Trocaire, Christian Aid, Red Crescent.
 - Religious voice expressed on ethical issues such as abortion, euthanasia.
- The purpose of strong leadership for religion: e.g. continuity; maintaining tradition; preservation of doctrine; control over church members; silencing, excommunication; e.g. suppression of the Latin Mass; call for decriminalisation of homosexuality.
- Reasons for growth in numbers and good reputation as a consequence of strong leadership.
- The role of strong leadership – encourage, guide and teach the faithful and the young in defending religious faith, e.g. Word on Fire; the Alpha Course, Evangelical Alliance, Catholic Voices.
- Disadvantages/problems/dangers arising from strong leadership, e.g. extreme fundamentalism, e.g. Westboro Baptist Church, KKK.
- Consequences of weak leadership – division, fracture and enmity, e.g. denominational problems within Islam and Christianity.
- Consequences of different ethical stances within religions, e.g. the debate over same-sex unions.

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