



*Rewarding Learning*

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

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## **Religious Studies**

**Assessment Unit AS 7**

*assessing*

Foundations of Ethics with Special Reference to  
Issues in Medical Ethics

**[SRE71]**

**MONDAY 2 JUNE, MORNING**

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

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

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis</li> <li>• A basic attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• A basic attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought</li> <li>• A basic answer with basic structure and coherence</li> <li>• A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[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) With reference to four of the Commandments, explain how the Decalogue shows there is a link between religious faith and moral living.

Answers may include:

- The Commandments as a set of moral imperatives revealed by God in the Exodus story.
- Specific focus on how four of the Commandments show there is a close relationship between belief in God and moral behaviour.
- How the initial Commandments deal with the individual's relationship with God.
- How the remaining Commandments deal with relationships with others.
- How the Commandments then reinforce the interdependence of love of God and love of neighbour – an inextricable link.
- How the Commandments show that God is both the source and anchor for moral living.
- The Commandments as a fundamental charter of rights – the rights of God and/or the person.
- The morally binding character of the Decalogue, its covenantal character.
- How the Commandments reveal an eternal dimension to living the moral life.
- The Commandments as reinforcing the community dimension of morality.
- The Commandments as revealing core principles for the Christian which should be observed, e.g. love God, honour parents, respect life, respect marriage, the importance of truthfulness and honesty.
- Possible reference to the first Commandment as the most important as it will inform all moral choices – living a moral life that honours God.
- The Commandments as typical of a deontological approach to morality.
- Exemplification throughout through reference to four of the Commandments.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) “The Decalogue is no longer the best starting point for issues in medical ethics.”

To what extent do you agree with this view? Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- The view that there are many in the modern setting who are non-religious and therefore, are not drawn to scripture for guidance, see the Decalogue as an ethic of a bygone age and look elsewhere, with utilitarianism as the ethic of choice; how utilitarianism is a most fitting ethic for addressing issues in medical ethics as it is suitable for a secular age, is practical and democratic; how utilitarianism now appears to be guiding medical policy and driving ethical decision making.
- Problems with utilitarianism as some see it as allowing the end to justify the means and affording an instrumentalist view of life with the Quality of Life principle having precedence over the Sanctity of Life principle as cherished by those from a religious background.
- The Decalogue as revealing the core principles for Christians in the arena of medical ethics and thus, providing them with the clearest and best starting point for addressing issues.
- The clear moral imperatives which are seen by many Christians as eternal and absolute when formulating moral positions on issues, e.g. “Thou shall not kill” in relation to abortion, euthanasia; “Honour your father and mother” in relation to issues in the care of the elderly; “Thou shall not steal” in relation to matters in reproductive technologies and organ transplantation.
- The character of these moral imperatives – clear and emphatic, no ambiguity.
- The view that there are many issues in modern medical ethics (e.g. embryo experimentation, PGD, mitochondrial donation, bioengineering, cloning) not dealt with in Sacred Scripture and therefore, other guidance has to be sought, e.g. Church teaching, other ethical perspectives including those from other faith traditions and none.
- The view that the tradition of Natural Moral Law can help to formulate moral guidance through the application of the precepts though this approach is largely associated with Roman Catholicism, the view that NML is also very clear as it is a duty-based ethic.
- The argument that Situation Ethics can also provide a sound starting point as it seeks to be faithful to the ethics of Jesus, the application of the love principle, its unsophisticated approach in dealing with matters of moral complexity though for a number of Christians it is too liberal, is relativistic and could compromise justice.
- The general view that while the Decalogue may provide clear imperatives, other ethical approaches have to be employed alongside scripture in addressing issues.
- The continued relevance of the Decalogue and sacred texts in providing principles that can help to inform moral decision making, e.g. the sanctity of human life, the importance of human dignity, the command to love, the duty to care for the marginalised and innocent – principles that are clear and represent a good starting point, no matter the issue.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

50

2 (a) Explain why religious views differ on the morality of abortion.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Specific focus on why religious views differ on the morality of abortion.
- Awareness of different religious views, conservative as against more liberal, on the permissibility of abortion itself and aspects of the debate, e.g. on when personhood and ensoulment are conferred, the rights issue, the issue of therapeutic abortion.
- How for many religious believers, direct abortion is impermissible yet for others, abortion maybe permissible in certain circumstances.
- How religious believers who will not countenance abortion defend their position on the authority of Sacred Scripture, e.g. in the Christian tradition the teaching on the sanctity of human life as God is the author of life, the unborn is seen as imago Dei, the prohibition on killing in the Commandments (and relevant biblical teaching that informs this teaching, e.g. Genesis 1:27; Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:21–25; Job 1:21) and/or relevant religious/church teaching, e.g. defending the voiceless and defenceless and so emulating the example of Jesus, the upholding of the primary precept from Natural Moral Law stating that innocent human life should always be protected, the unborn as having an inherent right to life.
- How other religious believers may countenance abortion in certain circumstances, e.g. eugenic (discovery of disability), ethical (on the basis of rape), therapeutic (if the mother's life is at risk), and possible reasons why these views are held, e.g. how the moral status of the unborn is viewed, differing views on when ensoulment and personhood are conferred (e.g. the unborn as a potential person), how in certain situations the life of the mother could be seen as more valuable, the importance of empathy and compassion; how these religious believers may take different approaches to the interpretation of religious texts, how their thinking may be informed by ethical perspectives such as Situation Ethics and utilitarianism.
- Reference to various Christian denominational views, e.g. Roman Catholic (abortion as intrinsically evil regardless of circumstance, ensoulment at the moment of conception), Anglican (a more situational approach, abortion as possibly the lesser of two evils), Methodism (similar to Anglicanism, may be permissible due to circumstance).
- Reference to the particular issue of therapeutic abortion where the life of the mother may be at risk (e.g. uterine cancer) with consideration of the Doctrine of Double Effect and the distinction taken by Roman Catholicism of the difference between direct therapeutic abortion and indirect therapeutic abortion, the former of which is expressly forbidden by Catholic teaching.
- Possible reference to how other religious traditions view the morality of abortion, e.g. Islam and how the various law schools have their own views though they agree that abortion is permissible if the mother's life is threatened; differences between Shia and Sunni Islam.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) "The sanctity of life and quality of life principles are both equally important in modern medical ethics."

Evaluate this view. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Consideration of arguments pertaining to both principles and their relevance in modern medical ethics, appraising whether both are of equal importance or not.
- The sanctity of life principle as being traditionally associated with the religious view of the value of human life, how this principle maintains that human life has inherent value as human life is sacred as it has Divine origins, the human person as 'imago Dei'.
- How because of this fundamental principle, the view is that there is a responsibility, particularly for religious persons (important for both Christians and Muslims) and those working in the medical field, to respect and protect human life.
- How then for religious persons aspects of medical practice such as abortion, euthanasia, certain aspects of developments in bioethics can contravene the sanctity of life principle in that the sovereignty of God is undermined, how the prohibition on killing in the Decalogue is ignored, how human life is not considered intrinsically valuable.
- How in the contemporary age religious influence appears to be waning and thus the sanctity of life teaching has lesser relevance; how in the medical arena, utilitarianism appears to be the ethic of choice with a number of modern moral philosophers impugning the relevance of religious teaching and influence, e.g. Peter Singer.
- How in light of this, the quality of life principle appears to be assuming greater prominence in modern medical ethics, a principle which appears to take a more instrumentalist view of human life and thus appearing to compete with the sanctity of life principle.
- How such thinking appears to align with the utilitarian ethic and how then, utilitarianism appears to offer a rational means by which to judge the quality of a person's life.
- The advocacy of the quality of life principle by Peter Singer and his five rational quality of life arguments: (i) recognise that the worth of human life varies (ii) take responsibility for the consequences of our decisions (in end of life care) (iii) respect a person's desire to live or die (iv) bring children into the world only if they are wanted (v) do not discriminate on the basis of species.
- How this advocacy would appear to impugn the intrinsic value of human life; permit abortion and euthanasia, even infanticide; accord animal life the same status as human life.
- How for religious persons, this thinking challenges the sanctity of human life principle which for them protects the inviolability of human life that should be accorded the utmost dignity; how the quality of life principle is too subjective raising questions as to what constitutes a worthwhile life.
- How there can be a range of views amongst both religious and non-religious persons, e.g. conservative as against liberal Christian views (e.g. those who subscribe to a weak sanctity of life view and stress the importance of agape, that life is not to be preserved at all costs but treated with dignity); different perspectives amongst secular ethicists (e.g. how some have issues with euthanasia based on a secularised view of the sanctity of life principle).
- The generally accepted view shared by religious and non-religious

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

- persons that the quality of life of the individual has to be respected.
- Reference to life and death issues in medical ethics, e.g. abortion, euthanasia.
  - Consideration of the controversy surrounding the Liverpool Care Pathway for the dying patient.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels  
(AO2)

[25]

**AVAILABLE  
MARKS**

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## Section B

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MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section B

3 (a) Describe the appeal of Situation Ethics for Christians.

Answers may include:

- Specific focus on what makes Situation Ethics appealing for Christians.
- Situation Ethics as a contextual approach to moral decision making that is flexible and uncomplicated.
- Situation Ethics as an alternative approach to moral decision making that avoids legalism and is person centred.
- How for a number of Christians, Situation Ethics is faithful to the teaching and example of Jesus in the way he challenged legalism, put the needs of people first and asserted the primacy of love.
- How the situationist approach enables the person to emulate the example of Jesus in meeting the person where they are at, being empathic and non-judgemental, exhibiting unconditional selfless love.
- The particular appeal of this type of love envisaged here – agapeistic love – the type of love commanded by Jesus and reinforced by Paul the Apostle, love should be the ruling norm of moral decision making.
- The appeal of Situation Ethics for Christians on providing an approach to moral issues not dealt within the Bible.
- The contribution of Joseph Fletcher to the development of Situation Ethics, his rejection of legalistic and antinomian approaches, his development of a middle way in which the only absolute is the command to love your neighbour as yourself, his view that human need takes precedence over rules, his view that his theory was grounded in Sacred Scripture.
- Fletcher’s formulation of the four working principles for his theory – Pragmatism, Relativism, Positivism, Personalism.
- His six fundamental principles which form the basis of his theory, e.g. “only one thing is intrinsically good; namely love: nothing else at all”; “love’s decisions are made situationally, not prescriptively”.
- Reference to case studies used by Fletcher to illustrate the application of the love principle, e.g. that of Mrs Bergmeier.
- Reference to examples from medical ethics to illustrate the appeal of Situation Ethics for Christians, e.g. abortion, assisted conception.
- Awareness that Situation Ethics only appeals to liberal Christians as other Christians have issues with its subjective and relativist character.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “The main weakness of Narrative Ethics for medical ethics is that it ignores the place of principles in moral decision making.”  
With reference to other aspects of human experience, assess this claim.  
Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Consideration of the claim in relation to other aspects of human experience.
- Possible historical and/or contemporary exemplification.
- Narrative Ethics as an alternative approach to moral decision making which is interested in the human story, a holistic approach which puts the person at the centre of the situation.
- How each and every situation is unique to the individual at the centre of it especially within the context of medical scenarios as these can be very diverse.
- How because of this highly individualistic and contextual character, the narrative approach can be prone to subjectivism as no two situations are necessarily the same.
- The view that, because of the highly individualistic character of the approach, Narrative Criticism is then an essentially relativistic approach devoid of fixed principles.
- The view that in moral decision making fixed moral principles are needed in order to avoid subjectivism and possible moral nihilism.
- The continued relevance of religiously based ethical teaching which asserts the importance of adherence to long standing moral imperatives and cherished religious values; the importance of justice and compassion within particular religious traditions.
- The appeal of Narrative Ethics in the medical field as it places the patient at the heart of the scenario, how it can help develop the emphatic skills of the medical personal involved, how other traditional ethical approaches are unsuitable as they rely on fixed principles.
- The view that contemporary medical ethics has to be divorced from any religious underpinning due to the increasingly secularisation of society where religion is seen to have a diminishing influence with some of the view that such influence can possibly be harmful.
- The widely recognised view of the need for specific guidelines in medical ethics to point individuals in the right direction when confronted with difficult decisions, narrative as not enough; how, if there are no definitive principles, medical professionals could do what they want.
- The importance of oversight in medical practice, e.g. medical councils/ committees in order to monitor and regulate practice; the importance of respecting participant’s rights, values, concerns and interests.
- The continued value of the long-standing principles widely recognised in traditional medical ethics – autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice.
- The views of Joan McCarthy on principlism vs. narrative ethics (2003).
- Possible reference to case studies such as the “forgetful mourner” and that of Dax Cowart.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

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

(AO2)

[25]

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

50

- 4 (a) With particular reference to the utilitarian approach, discuss how new reproductive technologies can benefit society.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Specific focus on how new reproductive technologies (NRTs) can benefit society as supported by the utilitarian ethic.
- How human infertility is seen as a serious blight and how science and technology can be used to alleviate such suffering and assist human progress, benefitting individuals and families and thus, society as a whole.
- Reference to NRTs such as pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), mitochondrial donation (MD), in vitro fertilisation (IVF) or other relevant examples (reference need not be exhaustive), e.g. PGD – how PGD can assist prospective parents to avoid transmitting a serious hereditary disease through only implanting embryos free from the genetic defects; MD – how a child can be created free from mitochondrial disease using a donor egg containing healthy mitochondria; IVF – a form of assisted conception which helps individuals with infertility problems have a child; Embryo Research – its use to eliminate causes of infertility, to enable the detection of genetic defects, the elimination of diseases such as Parkinsons.
- How the utilitarian ethic can be used to advance the use of NRTs as they can contribute to the betterment of all thus benefitting society as a whole, achieving the ‘greatest happiness of the greatest number’, e.g. how in maximising happiness for all, same sex couples can avail of IVF to have a child; how their use can help to create a future society free from genetic imperfections.
- How the utilitarian advocacy of NRTs can enhance the happiness/ benefits for all involved in the process, e.g. the commissioning parents, the donors, the medical team, the child – thus, many can benefit as well as benefitting the lot of future generations.
- How in an increasingly secular age with religion seemingly having a diminishing influence, utilitarianism appears to be the ethic of choice for many people and so is the ethic that can facilitate human progress and betterment.
- How in utilitarianism, the principle of utility, its instrumentalist view of human life and the view that the end can justify the means can facilitate the development of NRTs.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “Moral absolutes are important for both religious and non-religious people.”  
With reference to other aspects of human experience, assess this claim.  
Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Consideration of the claim in relation to other aspects of human experience.
- Possible historical and/or contemporary exemplification.
- The value of moral absolutes for everyone, including those who are non-religious, as offering certainty and yardsticks in moral decision making especially in an increasingly secular and pluralistic age in order to maintain moral standards and social cohesion.
- The view that moral nihilism cannot be countenanced, e.g. how Peter Singer is of the view that people cannot simply to what they want; the Humanist view of the problems presented by the abandonment of moral codes, how all moral codes can assist social utility, the humanist embracing of utilitarianism as a practical ethic for contemporary society; how religion has problems with subjectivism in ethics and in particular, the promotion of the individualistic ethic.
- The religious view of moral absolutes as offering certainty, of countering the challenges presented by ethical relativism, the beneficial role of moral absolutes in the current age which seems morally confused, the importance of morality being rooted in God and religion and in providing a clear basis for moral behaviour, the continued importance of Divine Commands in providing clear standards, how moral absolutes need not necessarily be inflexible, the continued importance of love and compassion in moral decision making.
- The broad non-religious view which takes issue with the role played by moral absolutes especially in an age which promotes the individual as the supreme moral agent, an age which sees religious based morality and its associated moral injunctions as irrelevant, the attractiveness of alternative moral codes free from the baneful influence of religion, the merits of approaches to morality that are secular, relativist, contextual and practical.
- The views of atheistic thinkers who would disparage religious based morality and the role it gives to moral absolutes, e.g. Friedrich Nietzsche (how it promotes servility and is associated with pity); Richard Dawkins (religious morality as providing succour for extremism); Stephen Fry (religion as justifying vile acts); Sam Harris (science as providing a better answer for moral conundrums than religion).
- Other atheistic views that would see merits in aspects of religious based morality, e.g. Alain de Botton (the ethical teaching of Jesus, e.g. love your neighbour); the acceptance of the Golden Rule – seen as good, reciprocal, utilitarian morality.
- The attractiveness of Kantian Ethics (a deontological ethic and system rooted in pure reason) for both religious and non-religious people especially in the advocacy of the Categorical and Practical Imperatives.
- The view that any ethical system without absolutes is not ethics at all, how for religious people in particular, there are certain actions which are either intrinsically right or wrong and how the end cannot justify the means.
- Possible acknowledgement that there is an absolutist character to all moral codes religious or not, e.g. the insistence in utilitarianism on the application of the principle of utility (the greatest happiness of the

greatest number); the application of the Doctrine of the Mean in Virtue Ethics.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

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

(AO2)

[25]

**Total**

**AVAILABLE  
MARKS**

50

**100**