



Rewarding Learning

**General Certificate of Secondary Education
2025**

Religious Studies

Paper 7

An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

[GRE71]

WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE, AFTERNOON

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

Mark schemes are intended to ensure that the GCSE examinations are marked consistently and fairly. The mark schemes provide markers with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. They also set out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for Religious Studies.

Candidates must:

- AO1** demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority; and
- AO2** analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

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 16-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCSE 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 16-year-old GCSE 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.

Types of mark schemes

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.

Other questions which require only short answers are marked on a point for point basis with marks awarded for each valid piece of information provided.

Levels of response

Tasks and questions requiring candidates to respond in extended writing are marked in terms of 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.

AO1 (5 mark responses):

Level 1: The candidate presents something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge and understanding.

Level 2: The candidate presents a clear knowledge and understanding with some development.

Level 3: The candidate presents a detailed answer showing very good development.

AO2 (5 mark responses):

Level 1: The candidate presents opinion supported by one simple reason.

Level 2: The candidate presents opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.

Level 3: The candidate presents a well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is assessed in the extended writing questions worth 10 marks in Section B of each examination paper. These 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 which is provided on the next page:

AO2 (10 mark responses):

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate presents some information in a simple form. **Basic arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Inaccurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; inappropriate style of writing with no coherent structure. Basic use of specialist vocabulary.

Level 2 (Limited): The candidate presents one or two relevant points. **Limited arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights, some accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; style of writing just appropriate with limited coherent structure. Limited use of specialist vocabulary.

Level 3 (Good): A Level 3 response could be one-sided. One developed reason and one with slight development would reach this level. There must be relevance to religion, but this could be slight/general. **Good reasoned arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a reasonably mature style of writing and some coherent structure evident. Good use of specialist vocabulary.

Level 4 (Very good): Different points of view must be considered, but the consideration does not need to be balanced i.e. one view could be much briefer than the other. **Well-formed and reasoned arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights, accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a mature style of writing with a mainly coherent structure. Very good use of specialist vocabulary.

Level 5 (Excellent): The difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. There needs to be more than a passing reference to religion. However, the points of view may not be completely balanced, and a non-religious counter-argument is still acceptable. **Very well-formed and reasoned arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights, highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a sophisticated style of writing set within a coherent structure. Excellent use of specialist vocabulary.

Section A

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Candidates must answer **all** questions in this section.

1 The nature of God

(a) (i) What is meant by the following terms:

Omnibenevolent?

- All good
(AO1)

[1]

Omnipotent?

- All powerful
(AO1)

[1]

Transcendent?

- Above or beyond earthly things
 - The belief that God is not part of the world
- Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[1]

(ii) Give *one* example of a monotheistic religion.

- Islam
 - Christianity
 - Judaism
- Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[1]

(iii) Give *one* example of a polytheistic religion.

- Hinduism
 - Shintoism
 - Chinese folk religions
- Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[1]

(b) Explain why some religious believers describe God as being unknowable.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of why God is understood and described as being unknowable.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One relevant and accurate point.	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two relevant and accurate points.• Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed.• A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level.	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two or three relevant and accurate points with development.• Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Unknowable means God is not able to be understood as he is too powerful (omnipotent). For example, in Christianity it is believed that God the Father is unknowable and too powerful for humans to comprehend.
- Many religious believers argue that God is transcendent, that he is above the understanding of humans.
- Agnosticism is the view or belief that the existence of God, of the divine or the supernatural, is unknown or unknowable.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

(c) **“It is helpful to think of God as having human qualities.”**
Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Evaluation of whether it is helpful to think of God as having human characteristics.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Christianity believes Jesus is God incarnate, meaning that Jesus was both human and divine.
- People often use human characteristics (anthropomorphic vocabulary) to better understand God’s character.
- Theists may describe God in human terms in order to relate to him better, e.g. Father.

On the other hand:

- Assigning human characteristics to God limits how people view God as he is much greater than any human being.
- For some theists this would be disrespectful to God as he is omnibenevolent and all powerful while humans are sinful and weak.
- A Creator God would have to be outside the universe to create the universe and all humanity.
- God is beyond full human comprehension so using human terms to try to describe Him will always be inadequate.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[5]

15

2 The problem of evil and suffering

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

(a) (i) Give *two* examples of moral evil.

Answers may include:

- Murder
- Stealing
- Lying

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[2]

(ii) Give *two* examples of natural evil.

Answers may include:

- Earthquake
- Tsunami
- Disease

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[2]

(iii) What is meant by the term God's providence?

Answers may include:

God's caring provision for humans.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[1]

- (b) Do think good can ever come from human suffering?
Give reasons for your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Target: Analysis of ways in which world religions explain the existence of suffering in the world.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Good has come from human suffering due to moral evil. In many cases, humans have learnt from their mistakes, e.g. the UDHR was published after the Second World War to protect the rights of all people and to prevent future suffering.
- Good has also come from natural suffering. Suffering has allowed humans to develop into better people, e.g. people become more compassionate by helping the victims of natural disasters through fundraising.
- Christians can learn that good can come from suffering, e.g. Jesus suffered and died but rose again. Christians learn from Jesus that suffering is temporary and believe it will be rewarded with eternal life in heaven.

On the other hand:

- Sometimes human suffering is on such a large scale that the extent of the suffering outweighs any positive outcome, e.g. millions of innocent people died during the Holocaust and some philosophers argue that the suffering of innocents is never justified.
- Human suffering makes some people doubt the existence of a loving and omnipotent God. Some people may argue that human suffering means that either God doesn't exist or if he does, he doesn't care about his creation.
- Some people think God is omniscient and has a plan for everyone from before they were born. If God has created people knowing they will suffer, some people may think that God is responsible for suffering and evil and is not worthy of worship.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[5]

- (c) “All suffering in the world is God’s punishment for sin”.
Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Target: Evaluation of suffering as a punishment from God.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- In the Garden of Eden, God punished Adam and Eve for their disobedience.
- According to Augustine, suffering is a punishment for the fall of man, a consequence of human sin against God, e.g. Romans 5:12, “Sin came into the world through one man.”
- Some people view human suffering as God’s way of disciplining his followers, in the same way that parents discipline children (Heb. 12:7).
- God has pronounced that the penalty of sin is spiritual death and separation from God in hell: “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

On the other hand:

- Some suffering is not God’s punishment for sin. Some suffering is caused by natural events or humanity’s abuse of free will (moral evil) and God may not be held responsible for it, e.g. war.
- Suffering may be used by God to test a person’s faith, e.g. Abraham and Sarah suffered from infertility. God promised them a son and when Isaac was born he was very precious to them. However, God asked Abraham to kill his son to test that his faith in Him was genuine.
- Suffering may be used by God to make a person’s faith stronger, e.g. in Romans 5:3–5, Paul writes suffering produces perseverance; perseverance produces character; and character produces hope.
- Some people take comfort that suffering is part of God’s plan and some Christians believe that they are called to suffer just as Jesus suffered.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[5]

15

3 Experiencing God

(a) Describe how God is revealed through a religious leader you have studied.

Target: Knowledge of how God can be experienced by one religious leader.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two relevant and accurate points. Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Religious believers may follow the teachings of a religious leader, e.g. the teachings of the Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad.
- People may claim to have an experience of a religious leader that convinces them of the truth of religion.
- A religious leader can pass on his/her experience of getting to know God to others.
- Religious leaders are examples to others of how to experience God. Examples may include; Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931–2021)
 - Archbishop Tutu was a minister of the Anglican Church in South Africa. He fought against injustice and discrimination throughout his adult life, living the teachings of Christ.
 - As Archbishop of Cape Town, he worked to dismantle Apartheid and was directly involved in acts of civil disobedience against the government to promote Christian qualities of love, respect and tolerance. Tutu won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.
 - In post-Apartheid South Africa, Tutu worked with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to get the people responsible for human rights abuses in South Africa to admit their guilt and seek forgiveness from their victims or victim’s families reflecting Christian values.
 - Tutu fought against many other injustices throughout the world, e.g. campaigning against the war in Iraq, seeking for fair treatment for people suffering from AIDs and fighting for the rights of same sex couples replicating the work of Jesus when he supported the marginalised.

AVAILABLE MARKS

Pope Francis (Born 1936)

- Pope Francis is the leader of the Catholic Church. He has shown leadership to the 1.2 billion Catholics throughout the world on a range of issues:
- Naming himself after St Francis when he became Pope in 2013 indicated his commitment towards promoting greater care for the environment. He has written extensively about the need for all humans to 'care for our common home' demonstrating respect for Christian's God given creation.
- He has worked to promote unity among all Christian denominations and other religions. He has spoken out against the use of violence in the name of religion emulating the teachings of Jesus.
- Pope Francis is attempting to break down barriers to make the church more welcoming and inclusive. In 2020 he stated that he supported laws recognising same-sex civil unions which is a first step towards greater tolerance and respect towards homosexuality.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

(b) Explain how a religious believer might experience God through prayer.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding how a religious believer might experience God through prayer.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two relevant and accurate points. Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Prayer can take the form of adoration, thanksgiving, or prayers for intercession. It is an act of adoration and reverence towards God.
- The Bible is the Word of God and can be used as a source of reflection or a guide to prayer, e.g. the Psalms are often used when people are worshipping God in private, enhancing their relationship with Him.
- Prayer as part of public worship is a key feature of the Christian faith. This is influenced by the words of Jesus in Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I with them.”
- Some Christians claim that they directly experience the Holy Spirit through charismatic worship. Just as the Holy Spirit was sent to the apostles on Pentecost Sunday.
- Muslims experience God through prayer, e.g. they are required to recite the creed and pray five times a day.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

(c) “Visions prove that God exists.” Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.”

AVAILABLE MARKS

Target: Evaluation of whether visions can be used as evidence that God exists.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- There are many examples of people having visions throughout the Bible and throughout the history of the Christian faith. For example, the visions of St Paul and St Patrick led to them changing their lives and must have come from God.
- In Ireland in 1879, a small group of people also claimed to have seen an apparition of Mary, Joseph, St John and a lamb representing Jesus. This apparition happened at Knock and offers proof that God exists.
- People today still claim that they have experienced visions. In 2011, Floribeth Mora Diaz had a vision when Pope John Paul II appeared to her.

On the other hand:

- Many philosophers argue that visions cannot be real. They are very subjective and very difficult to prove beyond doubt.
- Key people in the Catholic Church even have their doubts. For example, Pope Francis has shown doubt and in 2017 he said “I am suspicious of ongoing Medjugorje apparitions” asking for the visions to be studied in more depth.
- Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud believed that science could explain how people experience visions. He believed that ‘visions’ were nothing more than dreams and dreams were the product of our minds.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[5]

15

4 Life after death

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

(a) Describe how claims of remembered past lives provide evidence of an afterlife.

Target: Knowledge of how remembered past lives provide evidence of an afterlife.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two relevant and accurate points. • Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. • A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. • Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Supporters of this claim, such as psychiatrist Dr Ian Stevenson, argued that there are approximately 3000 cases of children from all over the world who had past life experiences, all of them able to give intricate details from their previous life.
- Research was able to verify that the details given by the children were correct.
- It is also believed that some of the children who had remembered past lives also had physical conditions matching the causes of death from the previous life. For example, a Burmese girl born without a lower right leg spoke about her past life as a girl run over by a train.
- Many also had lasting birthmarks which are claimed to be evidence of physical injuries that were transferred from one lifetime to another or the death they suffered in a previous life.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

(b) Do you think belief in reincarnation encourages people to live moral lives?

Give reasons for your answer.

Target: Analysis of whether belief in reincarnation helps individuals live moral lives.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Belief in reincarnation encourages individuals to live good lives because doing good deeds will create a positive effect and will eventually lead to Moksha which is the ultimate goal for Hindus.
- Belief in reincarnation makes people live moral lives. Buddhists believe that humans must take responsibility for all of the evil in the world and that Karma will reward good actions with a better rebirth. Actions which bring about bad effects or human suffering will ensure that a person is reborn in a lower human station, or as an animal.
- In 2021 in the UK, the lowest percentage of any religious belief in prison was Hindus. Crime rates in Nepal are lower than the UK. Some argue that belief in reincarnation therefore makes people behave better.

On the other hand:

- Morality often depends on the individual and not their religious beliefs about the afterlife. Many religious people have committed horrific crimes.
- It is how humans have evolved that makes them live morally decent lives (e.g. the views of Dawkins), not belief in an afterlife.
- Religious teaching about Karma may lead to moral selfishness, e.g. people may only act morally for the perceived reward.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[5]

- (c) **“Belief in resurrection offers people hope.”**
Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Evaluation of the impact of having belief in resurrection.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Belief in resurrection gives people hope that death is not the end, that they will continue to exist beyond this life.
- Belief in resurrection gives hope to people suffering bereavement – they will be reunited with their loved ones in the next life.
- Belief in resurrection gives people hope that their moral choices will be rewarded.

On the other hand:

- Belief in resurrection and final judgement may make people afraid of the afterlife, e.g. they may fear eternal punishment if they haven't always made the right moral choices.
- Atheists would argue that belief in the afterlife gives false hope because there is nothing after death. Some refer to belief in life after death as 'pie in the sky', e.g. something good that people think will happen but is highly unlikely.
- Some people, e.g. Dawkins argue that rather than hoping for the resurrection, people should focus on the 'here and now' and make the most of the short existence we actually have.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[5]

15

Section B

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Candidates must answer **two** questions from this section.

5 The nature of God

(a) Describe what sacred texts reveal about the nature of God.

Target: Knowledge of what sacred texts teach about the nature of God.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two relevant and accurate points. • Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. • A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. • Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Sacred texts inform believers about God’s omnipotent nature. In Genesis God is presented as an all-powerful creator. He created the universe out of nothing.
- Sacred texts inform believers about other characteristics God possesses. In the New Testament, God is presented as forgiving. The Qur’an teaches that Allah is merciful.
- Sacred texts reveal God’s nature, e.g. the Bible informs readers that there is only one God but three persons within God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This helps believers understand God’s immanence and transcendence. God the Father is the Creator. Jesus is the Son of God who died for the sins of humanity. The Holy Spirit shows that God is at work in the world today.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

(b) Explain what believers understand by God’s immanence.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of God’s immanence.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One relevant and accurate point.	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two relevant and accurate points.• Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed.• A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level.	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two or three relevant and accurate points with development.• Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development.	4–5

Answers may include:

- God is active, present and involved in the universe he created. He is not some distant being and wants to have a special relationship with humans.
- The idea that God is immanent means that he is within or part of creation.
- The immanence of God means that he is knowable.
- Christians today believe that God is still active in the world and this explains why people today pray and claim that they have religious experiences, e.g. miracles such as Floirbeth Mora Diaz in 2011.
- Christians believe that God is both immanent and transcendent: the transcendent God the Father becomes immanent through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

- (c) “Contrasting beliefs about God make it difficult for people to have religious faith.” Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view.

Target: Analysis and evaluation of whether it is too difficult to believe in God in the 21st century.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit		0
Level 1	Opinion supported which may be by one or two simple reasons.	The candidate presents some information in a simple form. Basic arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Inaccurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; inappropriate style of writing with no coherent structure. Basic use of specialist vocabulary.	1–2
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons with one developed.	The candidate presents one or two relevant points. Limited arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Some accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; style of writing just appropriate with limited coherent structure. Limited use of specialist vocabulary.	3–4
Level 3	Opinion supported by two developed reasons with reference to religion.	A Level 3 response could be one-sided. One developed reason and one with slight development would reach this level. There must be relevance to religion, but this could be slight/general. Good reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a reasonably mature style of writing with some coherent structure evident. Good use of specialist vocabulary.	5–6

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Level 4	Evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and knowledge and understanding of religion.	Different points of view must be considered, but the consideration does not need to be balanced, i.e. one view could be much briefer than the other. Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a mature style of writing with a mainly coherent structure. Very good use of specialist vocabulary.	7–8
Level 5	A well-argued response, with evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and ability to apply knowledge and understanding of religion effectively.	The difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. There needs to be more than a passing reference to religion. However, the points of view may not be completely balanced, and a non-religious counter-argument is still acceptable. Very well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a sophisticated style of writing set within a coherent structure. Excellent use of specialist vocabulary.	9–10

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Contrasting beliefs about God from different world religions (e.g. polytheism and monotheism) undermine the credibility of God's existence. It is difficult for some people to believe any one religion as being true when there have been so many gods throughout history.
- Some beliefs about God appear contradictory. For example, some religious believers claim God has qualities such as being knowable, yet unknowable.
- Some beliefs about God create confusion and doubt. For example, in some parts of the Bible readers are informed that God is vengeful and unmerciful. However, in other parts of the Bible, God is presented as loving and merciful.
- If one true God does exist, it is difficult to accept that he would allow so many false religions to exist.

On the other hand:

- Most world religions share common beliefs about God. Religious believers consider God to be omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent, e.g. Christians, Muslims and Hindus believe that God/gods played a vital role in creation.
- Contrasting ideas about God come from humans and while some may appear contradictory, humans can never fully understand or accurately describe God. Human language can never describe the totality of God.
- Some believers may argue that different religious beliefs about God are

- all different paths leading to the true God.
- Some people may argue that while religious believers might have different beliefs about God, they still experience God in similar ways, e.g. Swinburne's analogy of the elephant. People from different religions experience God through sacred texts, worship and visions showing it is not difficult to have religious faith.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[10]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

20

6 Experiencing God

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

(a) Describe, using examples, what is meant by general revelation.

Target: Knowledge of general revelation.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two relevant and accurate points. • Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. • A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. • Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- General revelation refers to ways in which God reveals himself to humanity.
- General revelation refers to indirect experiences of the Divine available to all humanity.
- Specific examples of general revelation such as through creation and the natural world; through common human experiences; reason, conscience, moral sense; through the example of religious leaders; through the lives and work of others.
- Reference to selected religious leaders and their teachings.
- Reference to the presence of God in nature.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

(b) Explain how revelation can lead to religious faith.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of how revelation can lead to religious faith.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One relevant and accurate point.	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two relevant and accurate points.• Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed.• A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level.	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two or three relevant and accurate points with development.• Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Special and general revelation can deepen a person's religious faith. Revelation confirms that an individual can have a relationship with God. They reveal God's nature and character as a personal God and therefore bring people closer to him.
- Special revelation, such as Paul's vision on the road to Damascus can lead to religious faith and a radical change of lifestyle as a result of the experience. St Paul's vision transformed him from being someone who persecuted Christians to the greatest Christian missionary worker without whom the Christian faith may not have grown so exponentially.
- General revelation can lead to religious faith. People can appreciate the beauty of the world and feel God's presence, e.g. feeling at one with nature may lead a person to believe that only God could be responsible for creation, e.g. a numinous experience.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

- (c) **“Religious experiences are nothing more than wish fulfilment”.**
Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view.

Target: Analysis and evaluation of whether religious experiences are wish fulfilment.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit		0
Level 1	Opinion supported which may be by one or two simple reasons.	The candidate presents some information in a simple form. Basic arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Inaccurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; inappropriate style of writing with no coherent structure. Basic use of specialist vocabulary.	1–2
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons with one developed.	The candidate presents one or two relevant points. Limited arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Some accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; style of writing just appropriate with limited coherent structure. Limited use of specialist vocabulary.	3–4
Level 3	Opinion supported by two developed reasons with reference to religion.	A Level 3 response could be one-sided. One developed reason and one with slight development would reach this level. There must be relevance to religion, but this could be slight/general. Good reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a reasonably mature style of writing with some coherent structure evident. Good use of specialist vocabulary.	5–6

Level 4	Evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and knowledge and understanding of religion.	Different points of view must be considered, but the consideration does not need to be balanced, i.e. one view could be much briefer than the other. Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a mature style of writing with a mainly coherent structure. Very good use of specialist vocabulary.	7–8
Level 5	A well-argued response, with evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and ability to apply knowledge and understanding of religion effectively.	The difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. There needs to be more than a passing reference to religion. However, the points of view may not be completely balanced, and a non-religious counter-argument is still acceptable. Very well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a sophisticated style of writing set within a coherent structure. Excellent use of specialist vocabulary.	9–10

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Freud believed that ‘visions’ were nothing more than dreams and dreams were the product of our minds. Many argue that wish-fulfilment could also occur in dreams or daydreams, e.g. winning the lotto or meeting a celebrity.
- Some people believe that miracles are not God’s intervention but are psychosomatic healings – they happen as a result of victories of ‘mind over matter’.
- Religious experiences are very subjective and lack empirical evidence so are difficult to verify. Just because we can’t yet fully explain them doesn’t mean that they come from God.
- Atheists agree with this statement as they reject all forms of divine intervention. If God is not real, how can someone experience God?

On the other hand:

- Theists would disagree with this statement and argue that strong evidence for miracles and other types of religious experiences can be found in sacred texts. An immanent God has and will continue to intervene in human affairs.
- Many people have claimed to have experienced God throughout the history of the Christian faith, e.g. Christian missionary Gladys Aylward. Religious experiences often result in a completely changed life for the recipient so there must be something real behind them.
- There have been multiple witnesses to many religious experiences, e.g.

- a group of people in Knock in 1879 experienced a vision of the Virgin Mary, Joseph, John the evangelist and a lamb representing Jesus.
- There are physical signs of religious experiences today such as physical healing that cannot be explained medically, e.g. miracles at Lourdes. These experiences should be regarded as genuine and used as evidence to support God's intervention.
 - Principle of credulity
- Accept valid alternatives
Mark in levels
(AO2)

[10]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

20

7 Creationism and science

AVAILABLE
MARKS

- (a) Describe what *one* world religion teaches about the creation of the universe.

Target: Knowledge of creation stories from a world religion.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two relevant and accurate points. Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

Christian

- The universe was created out of nothing (ex nihilo).
- Genesis 1 records how God created the world and all within it in 6 days.
- In the beginning God created light and divided light from darkness.
- God then created the heavens and the earth.
- After creating the earth, God created the seas and plants.
- God made the sun, the moon and the stars on the fourth day.
- God made fish and birds on the fifth day and land animals and humans on the sixth day.

Hindu

- Vishnu was sleeping inside the coils of a large snake. The sound 'om' woke Vishnu and a lotus flower grew from his navel.
- Brahma was in the middle of the flower and separated it into three parts – the heavens, the Earth and sky. Brahma is the source of all creation. He made everything in the universe out of himself.
- Vishnu is the preserver of the world and human beings who looks after creation.
- Shiva the destroyer will destroy the universe and bring it to an end in order to recreate it.
- Another Hindu creation story describes creation as the breaking of an egg, from which the universe is born.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

(b) Explain how the First Cause argument helps religious believers understand the origins of the universe.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of the First Cause argument.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two relevant and accurate points. Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- The First Cause argument asserts that God is the creator of the universe. Everything, including the universe must have a cause therefore an all-powerful God must have caused the universe to exist.
- The domino analogy helps explain the First Cause argument – there must be an outside force to make the first domino fall over and start the process, just like God is responsible for the creation of the universe.
- The First Cause argument helps religious believers appreciate that God could have caused the Big Bang. It allows them to reconcile religious beliefs with scientific discoveries.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[5]

- (c) “The influence of science has created an agnostic and atheistic society in the 21st century.” Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view.

Target: Analysis and evaluation of whether the influence of science has created an agnostic society.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit		0
Level 1	Opinion supported which may be by one or two simple reasons.	The candidate presents some information in a simple form. Basic arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Inaccurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; inappropriate style of writing with no coherent structure. Basic use of specialist vocabulary.	1–2
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons with one developed.	The candidate presents one or two relevant points. Limited arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Some accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; style of writing just appropriate with limited coherent structure. Limited use of specialist vocabulary.	3–4
Level 3	Opinion supported by two developed reasons with reference to religion.	A Level 3 response could be one-sided. One developed reason and one with slight development would reach this level. There must be relevance to religion, but this could be slight/general. Good reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a reasonably mature style of writing with some coherent structure evident. Good use of specialist vocabulary.	5–6

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Level 4	Evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and knowledge and understanding of religion.	Different points of view must be considered, but the consideration does not need to be balanced, i.e. one view could be much briefer than the other. Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a mature style of writing with a mainly coherent structure. Very good use of specialist vocabulary.	7–8
Level 5	A well-argued response, with evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and ability to apply knowledge and understanding of religion effectively.	The difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. There needs to be more than a passing reference to religion. However, the points of view may not be completely balanced, and a non-religious counter-argument is still acceptable. Very well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a sophisticated style of writing set within a coherent structure. Excellent use of specialist vocabulary.	9–10

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Some would agree and claim scientific advances inadvertently led to the growth in scepticism about religion, leading to agnostic standpoints, sometimes up to and including atheism: the rejection of the very idea of the existence of God.
- The relationship between science and religion has typically been characterised as one of conflict, especially on the issue of origins (creationism vs. evolution).
- The influence of science on medicine means fewer people need to put trust in God when they are sick.

On the other hand:

- The historical reality is that science and religion have more often been complementary to each other, and the relationship has been dynamic.
- Most scientific and technical innovations prior to the scientific revolution were achieved by societies organised by religious traditions.
- Religion and science both offer explanations for why life and the universe exist. Science relies on testable empirical evidence and observation. Religion relies on subjective belief in a Creator God.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels
(AO2)

[10]

20