



ASSESSMENT and  
QUALIFICATIONS  
ALLIANCE

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**Mark scheme  
January 2004**

**GCE**

**Religious Studies**

**Unit RS01**

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## Examination Levels of Response

### Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

Marks for 15-mark questions are shown in brackets

Level	AS Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2	AS Descriptor AO1	Marks	AS Descriptor AO2	Marks
5	Appropriate form and style of writing, clear and coherent organisation of information, with appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and high level of accuracy in spelling punctuation and grammar.	A thorough treatment of the topic within the time available. Information is accurate, and good understanding is demonstrated through use of appropriate evidence / examples.	13-15 [9-10]	A very good response to the issues raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and arguments and are critically analysed. A process of reasoning leads to an appropriate conclusion.	13-15
4	Appropriate form and style of writing; generally clear and coherent organisation of information, mainly appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and fairly high level of spelling, punctuation and grammar.	A fairly thorough treatment within the time available; information is mostly accurate and relevant. Understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate evidence / examples.	10-12 [7-8]	A good response to the issues raised. Different views are explained with some supporting evidence and arguments and some critical analysis. A conclusion is drawn which follows from some of the reasoning.	10-12
3	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing, some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary. Satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.	A satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing reasonable understanding.	7-9 [5-6]	Main issues are addressed and views are considered, with some supporting evidence. There is some attempt at analysis or comment. Evaluation may not be fully supported by reasoning or evidence.	7-9
2	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some clarity and coherence in organisation; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar adequate to convey meaning.	An outline account, including some relevant material. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding. Some coherence.	4-6 [3-4]	A simple argument, with some evidence in support.	4-6
1	There may be little clarity and coherence in organisation; little appropriate or accurate use of specialist vocabulary. The legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be very limited.	Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information. Slight signs of understanding.	1-3 [1-2]	A few basic points which are relevant, but no real argument.	1-3
0	There may be little clarity and coherence in organisation; little appropriate or accurate use of specialist vocabulary. The legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be very limited.	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	0

## RS01: *An introduction to Religion and Human Experience*

### 1 *Read the passage and answer questions (a) and (b) which follow.*

*“For believers, the scriptures are a guide to practice, but the same passage of scripture can mean different things to different people. As a result, while believers follow the scriptures, they do so in different ways.”*

#### (a) *In what ways may scriptures be used as a guide to practice?*

The emphasis of the question is the ways in which scriptures may be USED. An account of the content of the chosen scripture(s) will therefore provide only a partial answer.

Candidates may, but need not, identify a specific set of scriptures (e.g. the Bible, The Gospels, The Qur’an.) Answers could also refer to scriptures in general. Answers may assume ‘practice’ to mean way of life and / or ritual depending on context.

Points that could be made include:

Scriptures can offer a record of the teaching / commandments and the example of special people. They may be amplified through tradition or interpretation. They can be used as works of reference, for study, or for spiritual guidance through random readings. They can also act as the medium through which the divine speaks directly to the believer.

A wide variety of answers can be expected, but as a guide:

Maximum Level 4 (7 marks) if only one way is fully developed (e.g. the scriptures as the basis of Holy Law).

**(10 marks) AO1**

#### (b) *Explain why the same passage of scripture can mean different things to different people.*

This can be approached in a variety of ways, e.g. the passage may be:  
 interpreted literally or symbolically;  
 assumed to be the Word of God, or the view of some human being(s);  
 read in the original language / read in translation;  
 interpreted by a religious leader;  
 linked to personal experience;  
 symbolic / ambiguous (e.g. parable);  
 considered timeless, or related to a particular historical context.

The content of the answer will vary according to the tradition(s) studied.

Likely textual examples include: Creation narrative in Genesis 1;  
 passages describing heaven and hell; bread as the body of Christ.  
 Candidates may, but need not, limit their answer to a single passage.

Levels 1 - 3 one reason developed, or two reasons stated and illustrated.

Levels 4 - 5 two reasons developed, or three or more stated and illustrated, or explanation of literal and symbolic interpretations (or similar) fully developed.

**(10 marks) AO1**

2 (a) ***Explain what is meant by religious experience.***

Candidates are expected to show awareness of theoretical definitions of religious experience. The most common ones are:

- an experience seen as having religious significance;
- experience of the numinous (Otto);
- Swinburne's '5 types' of religious experience.

Some of the core features of a mystical experience may be offered as definitive of religious experience as a whole. Limited credit can be awarded for this – see below.

Maximum Level 3 for a summary of different types of religious experience with no attention to what makes them 'religious'.

Maximum mid Level 4 (11 marks) for an answer reflecting no diversity within understandings of religious experience, and for any answer lacking examples / illustrations.

***(15 marks) AO1***

(b) ***Explain how religious experience may be a source of faith, and assess the view that believers cannot rely on religious experience alone as a source of faith and practice.***

Candidates may explore religious experience as a source of what to believe and / or as a cause of commitment or believing attitude.

**Explain**

A variety of approaches is possible. Conversion experiences lead to faith and revelation can act as the basis of faith. Mysticism can provide insight into divine reality.

Maximum Level 4 (7 marks) if only one way in which religious experience may be a source of faith is considered, or for an answer that lacks an example / illustration.

***(10 marks) AO1***

**Assess**

The argument against religious experience could be approached from the point of view of the unreliability of personal religious experience, the need to have it verified by an external authority and the fact that it is not universal.

Candidates may also consider the view that many scriptures are the record of someone else's religious experience, and that personal faith may demand a personal relationship with the divine or Holy.

Maximum mid level 4 (11 marks) if the answer deals with only one of 'faith' or 'practice'.

***(15 marks) AO2***

- 3 (a) *Explain religious beliefs about the revelation and authority of scripture.*

**Revelation**

The answer could deal specifically with the revelation experiences of a Prophet (e.g. Islam); the experience of insight through meditation (e.g. Buddhism) or the general theories of revelation (e.g. propositional and non-propositional). Answers referring to inspiration may also be credited.

**Authority**

Beliefs about the authority of scripture are directly linked to beliefs about the source of the teaching contained within them, and the accuracy of the record of that teaching, e.g. infallible Word of God or fallible human record of human understanding and insight.

Maximum Level 4 (11 marks) for fully developed answer dealing with only **one** of revelation or authority or answer lacking example / illustration.

*(15 marks)* AO1

- (b) *Explain what other sources of authority can be found in a religion, and assess the view that scripture provides the only authority that a believer needs.*

**Explain**

The candidate should identify some other authorities (typically three in a full answer, or two fully developed). These are usually taken from the following: religious leaders (e.g. Pope, Imam, Dalai Lama, Guru); personal religious experience; conscience; reason; tradition. Explanation of these authorities involving a brief account of what they are and how they function may be offered separately or as part of the debate.

*(10 marks)* AO1

**Assess**

A typical assessment will focus on the supposed shortcomings of scripture with reference to modern issues, or its suspected unreliability as a record of the teachings. This can be countered with the view that the scripture(s) is / are seminal. The conclusion will reflect the importance of the scriptures within the religion(s) chosen.

*(15 marks)* AO2