

General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 5061

RS01 An introduction to Religion and Human Experience

Mark Scheme

2007 examination – January series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Examination Levels of Response**Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors****[Marks for 10-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 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 this passage and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

‘Ask people who practise a particular religion why they are Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jew, Muslim or Sikh, and you will get many different answers. Some believers will say “because of a religious experience”. When they try to describe the religious experience that has changed their lives, however, many find it very difficult to find the right words, as if whatever has inspired their faith is beyond ordinary description.’

(a) Explain how religious experience can inspire faith.

Most answers are likely to focus on ‘conversion’ experiences only – but they can go beyond this. Look for emphasis on an experience of the transforming power of the divine. This may be a passive experience where the person feels that they have been changed by an outside force – Saul’s conversion to Paul a typical example. Or a process of self-surrender after a period of self-hate or -doubt. Can also be a gradual process of realisation – a growing out of one belief and into another, apparently guided by God. Also allow, for example, answer to a prayer / miracle / experience of the presence of God in a Holy Place / Scripture. Candidates may also write about how religious experiences strengthen existing faith – but this is not necessary.

For answers lacking explanatory examples, maximum Level 3.

For answers lacking breadth, e.g. presenting only one type of Conversion experience, maximum Level 4 (7 marks).

(10 marks) AO1

(b) Explain why a religious experience may be “beyond ordinary description”.

This invites candidates to explore one aspect of many religious experiences – ineffability – and the challenges of describing an experience of the ‘wholly other’ in words that take their meaning from earthly experience. Also relevant to consider that the experience may be emotionally overwhelming, and hence unclear to the person having the experience, also the view that only those who have had such an experience are in a position to understand the account.

Basic answers are likely to simply state that such experiences are ineffable and illustrate that idea. Maximum Level 2.

(10 marks) AO1

2 (a) *Select one religion you have studied and explain the nature of its scriptures.*

‘Nature’ can be broadly interpreted but generally refers to:

- the type of literature found in the scriptures
- and / or its status as revelation, e.g. Word of God / human record inspired by personal experience.

Candidates should refer clearly to the scripture of the religion they have chosen, typically:

Buddhism	The Tripitaka – Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidamma. Possibly Mahayana Scriptures.
Christianity	The Bible. Fundamentalist, Conservative and Liberal views and / or different types of literature within.
Hinduism	The Vedas and Smrti, Shruti material.
Islam	Qur’an (Hadith), Meccan and Medinan revelations, and / or Akham Mutashabihat, and / or different types of material, created / uncreated.
Judaism	Torah, Neviim, Ketubin, Mishnah, Talmud.
Sikhism	Guru Granth Sahib. Different types of material / authors.

For answers lacking explanatory examples, maximum Level 3.

For answers lacking breadth / recognition of diversity, maximum Level 4.

(15 marks) AO1

(b) *Explain how a believer’s life can be guided by scriptures, and assess the view that scriptures provide the only guide a believer needs.*

Explain

N.B. There may be incidental overlap with Question 1(a) if candidates write about how reading scripture inspires some people and causes them to become a follower, or reminds them of the presence of God. Credit where relevant. Typically, candidates will show that the scriptures contain the moral code / guidelines for worship and / or way of life. There is no requirement to limit the answer to one religion, but candidates may do so.

For answers lacking explanatory examples, maximum Level 3.

(10 marks) AO1

Assess

Wide-ranging answer is possible depending on the religion(s) chosen. There is no requirement to limit the answer to one religion, but candidates may do so. In Islam, for example, some modernists reject the authority of the Hadith and argue that the Qur’an contains everything a Muslim needs. The majority, however, argue that the laws in the Qur’an need to be interpreted in the light of the Hadith. In Christianity, the guidance supplied in the Bible is often supplemented by that offered by religious authorities, e.g. the Pope, and in Buddhism, individual religious experience may take precedence. High quality answers will be specific to the religion the candidate is referring to.

(15 marks) AO2

- 3 (a) *Explain the meaning of the term religious experience, illustrating your answer with reference to mystical experiences.*

N.B. There will be some minor overlap with Question 1(b). Credit where relevant. Definitions of religious experience have been offered by a number of scholars, e.g. ‘An experience of the Numinous’ or of the ‘Wholly Other’ (Otto); an experience in which an impersonal relationship between God and the believer is transformed into a personal I-Thou relationship (Buber); any experience interpreted as an experience of the divine.

Mystical experiences are one type of religious experience, and some would argue the most direct or purest. In this answer candidates could simply use examples of mystical experience to illustrate their chosen definition(s); however, they may also choose to use the characteristics of mystical experiences.

For answers which explain religious experience without reference to mystical experience, maximum Level 4 (11 marks).

For answers which explain mystical experience without using it to illustrate ‘religious experience’ in general, maximum Level 4 (11 marks).

(15 marks) AO1

- (b) *Explain why some religious experiences have no authority for believers, and assess the view that religious experience is irrelevant in religion today.*

Explain

e.g. lack of evidence for the occurrence or content of such experiences beyond the word of the individuals claiming to have them. Some experiences appear to have natural explanations. Conflict with other authorities (e.g. with orthodox teaching).

For answers lacking explanatory examples, maximum Level 3.

(10 marks) AO1

Assess

Candidates may, but need not, restrict their answers to one religion. Could be argued that the time of revelation is past (e.g. in Islam) and that following the teaching that has already been given is what is required. In contrast may be argued that this means that religious experiences **are** relevant, but it is the experiences of the past, not the present, that matter. Could be argued that a living faith needs religious experience (e.g. meditation / prayer / encountering the presence of God or of the divine in scripture or nature). Where personal spirituality is stressed, experience obviously relevant, examples may be drawn from charismatic movements and mystical branches of religion (e.g. Sufism) and where prayer is used for moral decision making / guidance.

(15 marks) AO2