



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Religious Studies

RSS02

Religion and Ethics 2

AS Unit B

Final

Mark Scheme

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

Level	AS Descriptor AO1	Marks	AS Descriptor AO2	Marks	AS Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic within the time available. Information is accurate and relevant, and good understanding is demonstrated through use of appropriate evidence / examples	28-30	A well-focused, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and argument. There is some critical analysis. An appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument.	14-15	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility; high level of accuracy in spelling punctuation and grammar.
6	A fairly thorough treatment within the time available; information is mostly accurate and relevant. Understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate evidence / example(s)	24-27	A mostly relevant, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are explained with some supporting evidence and argument. There is some analysis. An evaluation is made which is consistent with some of the reasoning.	12-13	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, with some development, showing reasonable understanding through use of relevant evidence / example(s).	20-23	A partially successful attempt to sustain a reasoned argument. Some attempt at analysis or comment and recognition of more than one point of view. Ideas adequately explained.	10-11	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.
4	A generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing some understanding and coherence.	15-19	A limited attempt to sustain an argument, which may be one-sided or show little ability to see more than one point of view. Most ideas are explained.	7-9	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.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	5-6	
2	A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and slight signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.	5-9	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	3-4	Little clarity and organisation; little appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar barely adequate to make meaning clear.
1	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	1-4	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-2	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	0	

RSS02: Religion and Ethics 2

Question 1 Kant and ethics

01 Outline Kant's concept of the *summum bonum* and explain why he includes it in his theory of ethics.

- In Kant's system, humans have a moral faculty which enables them to access morality through reason, but Kant admits that the basic components of his ethical system are based on postulates – i.e. assumptions that have to be true in order to make sense of morality.
- These include freedom: unless we are free, there is little point in talking about morality – and immortality. The two are interlinked conceptually. 'Ought implies can' – if I ought do my duty then I must be able to. If my duty can be conceived of perfectly, which it can, then I must be able to do my duty perfectly. There must therefore be a *summum bonum* – a highest good that gives the perfect reward for duty completed. Clearly I cannot achieve the *summum bonum* in this life (the world is full of immorality and misery), so there must be immortality - life after death in which I can achieve the *summum bonum*. Thus God probably exists to provide life after death, and guarantees the fairness of the universe.
- The *summum bonum* is therefore a 'postulate of practical reason' – it is a likely end-product of the ethical system, and is accessible only through the good will.
- The *summum bonum* is therefore a kind of over-arching justification of Kantian ethics – it is only a postulate.
- Kant's inclusion of the *summum bonum* in his ethical theory is a consequence of the expected connection between motivation and reward.
- Candidates might comment on Kant's religious background, suggesting that he wanted to include God as a justification of his system.

Candidates who write about Kant but not about the *summum bonum* are unlikely to achieve higher than Level 3.

Candidates who write about the *summum bonum* but do not explain why Kant includes it in his theory of ethics will not achieve higher than Level 5.

(30 marks)

AO1

02 'Kant's concept of the *summum bonum* is the weakest part of his theory of ethics.' How far do you agree?

Agree

Kant's system specifically denies the involvement of God in human moral decision-making, since he claims that the moral law is autonomous - reason shows us that the moral law has its own authority, and needs no supporting authority from God, church, or law. The addition of the *summum bonum* appears to be a direct contradiction of this, since it uses God to justify ethics. We might say that it is only an over-arching rationale, nevertheless if correct, it justifies Kant's system, which seems odd if the system needs no justification.

Other views:

Some might argue that the *summum bonum* is not meant to justify anything – it is Kant's theological speculation. He states that it is a postulate and nothing more.

Others might argue that there are weaker parts to Kantian ethics, for example:

- its alleged inflexibility
- its refusal to accommodate teleological principles in decision-making
- its absolutist assumptions, where most ethicists argue that morality is relative.

Whatever arguments are used, there should be an assessment of 'weakest'.

Where no such assessment is included, candidates should not achieve higher than Level 4, 9 marks.

'Weakness' can be addressed **either** in comparison with other weak parts of the Theory, **or** in terms of whether the *summum bonum* **itself** is weakest/strongest.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 2 Natural Law and ethics

03 Explain Aristotle's theory of the four causes.

- The question expects an explanation of Aristotle's concept of the material, formal, efficient and final causes, probably explained with reference to an example (e.g. the bronze of a statue being its material cause; its shape the formal cause; the artisan and his tools as the efficient cause; and the aesthetic fact of the statue as its final cause.
- In science, the scientific method aims at explaining natural changes in objects in terms of the four causes. An adequate explanation of a natural change may involve (but may not) all four causes.
- The causes of some objects may involve identity of causes, e.g. for a human being, the efficient formal cause is the same as the final cause, since its end or purpose is to realize its form as perfectly as possible (i.e. to be as good a man as possible). For natural objects, the efficient cause is also the same as the formal and final causes, because animals and plants are normally caused by another individual of the same species.
- We have knowledge of a thing only when we know its cause.

(30 marks) AO1

04 'Cause is not at the centre of life.'

Assess this claim.

Agree

Responses are likely to be very varied. For example candidates might discuss this with reference to Aristotle, or Aquinas, or both. Alternatively they could discuss causation in general. Many would deny, for example, that there is a final cause of anything in nature: nature is the product of mutations brought about by natural selection. Also, with rain for example, rain does not occur with a specific end in mind: it may water crops or cause floods, but the good or bad results are just a coincidence. The human brain has got larger and more intelligent, but this is the result of natural selection in response to external threats, and is not necessarily caused with a view to any purpose. Quantum mechanics works on the supposition that at the quantum level there are events without causes, and that these give rise, on the macro level, to the idea that there is a necessary connection between cause and effect that is at the centre of human life.

Other views

Aristotle's concept of a final cause in nature can be defended quite easily, because to reject all idea of a final cause fails to explain the *regularity* of nature. Evolution might be explicable in terms of random processes, but the science that underpins evolution is far from random – it follows the rigid laws of biology and genetics, and their regularity needs to be explained. The same principle can be used to argue back, as Aristotle does, to a First Efficient Cause that is non-material because it must be active and not mere potential.

Some might argue that the four causes are anthropocentric, so the problem is not so much that the causes are not at the centre of human life but that they are there in the wrong way. Because of his ideas about the final cause, for example, Aristotle endorses a teleology which ascribes goals to independent organisms, with the result that humans and other natural organisms have entirely different goods and interests, which has led to a devaluing of the rest of the world (for example in Aquinas' Natural Law system).

(15 marks) AO2

Question 3 Religious views of the created world

05 Explain religious views about the status of the non-human world.

The over-arching question is whether or not animals / the environment as a whole have moral status, and the criteria on which such status might be granted, although a range of other approaches to the question are equally valid.

The status of animals could be looked at from a number of perspectives:

- Augustine's Principle of Plenitude forming an interdependent creation
- Buddhist traditions where animals are part of the same cycle of life as humans
- Arguments about power/domination as opposed to stewardship in the Christian tradition
- Aristotle's ideas about a hierarchical structure of plants/animals/humans, and the placing of this into the setting of Natural Law Ethics by Aquinas.

For the environment as a whole:

- The difference between instrumentalist and intrinsicist theories, and the rejection of anthropomorphism by the latter
- Intrinsicist theories such as Deep Ecology / Gaia Hypothesis.

The non-human world should not be confined to a discussion of one part of it, e.g. of animals. Candidates who do this are unlikely to score higher than Level 5, 23 marks.

(30 marks) AO1

**06 'Religious views about the status of the non-human world do not make sense.'
How far do you agree?**

Agree

With the Christian account, this might be argued on the basis of rationality, since much depends on the interpretation of the Genesis creation story, and whether animals are to be accorded intrinsic or instrumental value. Those interpretations which stress the latter are often seen as incoherent (1) because they take an ancient text literally, and (2) because they anthropomorphize the world and thereby deprive non-human entities of any rights. Examples could be given from Aquinas' Natural Law approach that animals have merely instrumental value; similarly Kant, arguing ultimately from a Christian perspective.

Other views

Some will argue that the Christian interpretation of Genesis in terms of stewardship does in fact make sense, because it gives intrinsic value to the whole of creation. Some will point to the alternative approach to the non-human world in Buddhism, for example. Others will give practical answers, pointing to the current deplorable state of the non-human world as an indication that a wide variety of views (not just religious ones), has led to the current environmental crisis.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 4 Environment, both local and worldwide

07 Explain religious teachings about human responsibility for the environment.

Candidates might include some of the following:

- Creation being valued and treated in relation to the view that its Creator is perfect.
- Environmental concern as part of the believer's relationship with God.
- Principle of responsibility - Stewardship of the human and non-human world.
- Other principles and concerns arising from study of the chosen religion.
- These could include negative concerns, for example the anthropocentric basis for some religious teachings, and their apparent *lack* of concern for some aspects of environmental welfare; the complicity of religious leaders and movements in environmental destruction; the tendency of religious teachings to judge the worth of animals by anthropocentric criteria; environmentally destructive comments by religious leaders.

(30 marks) AO1

08 **'Religious teachings are inadequate in dealing with threats to the environment today.' Assess this claim.**

Agree

Some might argue that religious teachings must be inadequate in dealing with environmental threats because God does not exist, so all religious assumptions have no authority or compulsion. Environmental issues are so central that some form of persuasion and compulsion is necessary in order to make sure that the environment does remain viable. To think otherwise is to invite disaster. Candidates might discuss the inadequacy of particular religious teachings in dealing with specific or general environmental threats. For example, teachings that encourage an anthropocentric approach to environmental issues are not likely to perceive the full extent of threats, since they will be blinkered by inappropriate and unhelpful comparisons between humans and other species. Some might argue that religious teachings in fact encourage mistreatment of the environment, and so are inadequate in dealing with threats to the environment.

Other views

Other views might be based, for example, on a converse approach to the kind of points raised above. If there is a God, and if God created the universe, then it seems clear that the environment was created as God intended it to be, and equally that humans are centrally important in preserving it from threats. This kind of approach is spelled out in teachings about stewardship where humans have been given the power and the responsibility to take care of the world. Some might argue that religious teaching is just one approach to environmental issues, and that threats to the environment today should be dealt with by considering all valid approaches. With the threat from global warming, for example, the results of human mismanagement of the environment are likely to be lethal without a concerted effort.

(15 marks) AO2

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