



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Religious Studies

RST4A

**Life, Death and Beyond OR
Perceptions of Ultimate Reality OR
Religious Experience**

A2 Unit 4A

Final

Mark Scheme

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.

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced) A2 Level Descriptors

Level	A2 Descriptor AO1	Marks	A2 Descriptor AO2	Marks	A2 Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic, which may be in depth or breadth. Information is accurate and relevant. A thorough understanding is shown through good use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate good knowledge and understanding of diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is demonstrated. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated convincingly.	41-45	A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed and critically analysed perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Appropriate evaluation is fully supported by the reasoning. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related perceptively and maturely to the broader context and to human experience.	28-30	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
6	A generally thorough treatment of the topic which may be in depth or breadth. Information is almost all accurate and mainly relevant. Clear understanding is demonstrated through use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, alternative views and / or scholarly opinion are satisfactorily explained. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are clearly demonstrated.	36-40	A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed and critically analysed. Appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related clearly to the broader context and to human experience.	24-27	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic. Information is mostly accurate and mainly relevant. A reasonable understanding is demonstrated through use of some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, some familiarity with diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is shown. Some knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated.	29-35	A satisfactory response to the issue(s) raised. Views are explained with some supporting evidence and arguments, and some critical analysis. An evaluation is made which is consistent with some of the reasoning. Some of the response is related satisfactorily to the broader context and to human experience.	20-23	Mainly 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 accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	Key ideas and facts are included; demonstrates some understanding and coherence using some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, brief reference may be made to alternative views and / or scholarly opinion. Limited knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated.	22-28	The main issue is addressed with some supporting evidence or argument, but the reasoning is faulty, or the analysis superficial or only one view is adequately considered. Little of the response is related to the broader context and to human experience.	15-19	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	15-21	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	10-14	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.
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.	8-14	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	5-9	
1	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	1-7	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-4	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance	0	

RST4A

Section A *Life, Death and Beyond*

Question 1

- 01 Examine the main religious and secular eschatological and apocalyptic teachings.**

Religious

May deal with one specific religion or choose to refer to a number

Should give clear examples of teaching which may be based upon scripture and thus expect scripture reference or from broader religious teaching

If giving examples from different religions then must show which religion is being referred to with each example; e.g. Book of Revelation from Christianity.

Little credit can be given for too much generalisation as there is little generic teaching therefore top level answers will have a lot of detailed examples.

Allow for either separation of eschatological and apocalyptic or linking the two into ideas about the future of humankind and the world in a religious context.

Secular

Not required that there is a balance between the two but there must be inclusion of the secular.

As with the religious allow for either separate dealing or joint with focus upon the future of mankind and the world.

Again there should specific examples, like global warming or genetic engineering.

Max top of level 5 if only one aspect tackled.

(45 marks) AO1

- 02 'Eschatological and apocalyptic teaching has no value for people today.' Assess this view.**

Expect discussion on the purpose of eschatological and apocalyptic teaching in the religious and the secular world and debate whether it has any value for people today.

The best answers will differentiate between religious and non-religious people.

There might be some debate about predicting the future in both a religious and a secular context which can be seen as a characteristic of these styles of teaching.

The focus of the assessment is on the value and there should be examples to demonstrate whether there is value or not.

(30 marks) AO2

Question 2**03 Examine the ideas of one or more religion(s) on the importance of the present life.**

There must be a clear indication of which religion(s) is being referred to

Expect reference to both scripture and broader religious teaching.

There should also be some examples to demonstrate how the ideas operate; for example, in Christianity, might take the scripture reference to life being a gift from God as shown in Genesis Chapter 1 and then later in ten commandments about not committing murder. This leads to Christian teaching that human life is to be treated with utmost care and thus when some Christians believe that human life begins at conception they are not able to accept the idea of abortion.

Whilst the question is not about life after death it would be acceptable to argue that often a religion places some value upon the present life as this is a time when a person can seek to begin to prepare for life after death by following guidance set down by their religion. Thus there should be some presentation of what a religious person should be doing with their present life. Buddhism offers a clear example of this style of thinking. They may also consider the view that this life is not important.

(45 marks) AO1

04 'Religious and secular ideas about this present life are essentially the same.' How far do you agree?

May choose to make some reference to the secular by way of contrast with the religious. Credit can be given as this will be providing detailed examples. Thus might show that present life for the religious is about being religious, but clearly not for the secular, and then discuss what human life is about for the secular person.

Should show that there will be a variety of ideas about the purpose of human life from the utilitarian type approach through to the specific humanistic.

Might want to show that a lot of behaviour could be similar, e.g. treatment of fellow human beings, concern for the future of the world and the human race, and that many secular approaches are the same as the religious, like the value of human life, do not murder.

Should show that the real contrast is the teaching and the purpose behind certain actions and beliefs.

How far... requires that the candidate is able to give some measure of agreement or disagreement.

(30 marks) AO2

Section B Perceptions of Ultimate Reality

Question 3

- 05 Examine the views of both Marx and Freud on the role of the concept of God and on the influence of the concept of God on society.**

There are two sections to the question: the role of the concept and the influence on society. In the case of the former expect separate answers to Marx and Freud. Role of the concept will need examination of the concept as determined by each thinker. Whilst there does not need to be a balance between the two, both must be referred to.

With influence on society there could be some combining, but generally expect separate reference to Marx and then Freud. There needs to be specific examples; e.g. reference to Marx is likely to be focused upon the relation of the concept of God to organised religion and the part this plays on society.

Both Marx and Freud and concept and influence of concept need to be addressed for marks over Level 5.

(45 marks) AO1

- 06 'Religion has no satisfactory answer to the challenges of secular thinkers about God/Ultimate Reality'. Assess this claim.**

Whilst there is no requirement that candidates limit their answer to Marx and Freud, they may so do and thus a discussion may focus upon religious response to their specific ideas. But accept other examples if given provided they are well supported. Neither Freud nor Marx has anything to say about Ultimate Reality.

Some candidates may choose to look at philosophy and focus upon arguments against the existence of God/Ultimate Reality.

Those who focus upon Ultimate Reality must be able to show that they have a clear view of what this is, as, for example, demonstrated in Buddhist teaching.

There should not be a general discussion about the rejection of religion in general: the question requires secular thinkers.

Assessment will expect that there is discussion about how satisfactory/successful religion is in its response to the secular thinkers. Statements are not assessments. There must be clear examples of the religious responses and an assessment of the examples.

(30 marks) AO2

Question 4**07 Examine how religious experience can be a source for knowledge about God/Ultimate Reality.**

Expect consideration of different religious experiences: mysticism, revelation, conversion for example. NDE if used must be shown to be specifically religious. There should be clear examples of a religious experience and then a demonstration of what has been learnt. Sura 112, a Meccan sura, could then be used to show what this particular revelation from God shows about God. Buddhism could clearly be used to demonstrate what a revelation might show about Ultimate Reality. Equally there might be an individual experience, like Theresa of Avila, where an individual learns something about the nature of God.

The examination seeks some consideration as a source, thus there could be some consideration how a particular revelation has acted as a source of knowledge. Thus Muhammad receives a revelation and this provides the Qur'an which in turn is a source of most Muslim teachings about God.

(45 marks) AO1

08 The personal nature of any religious experience means that it has no value beyond the individual.' How far do you agree?

There may be two areas for discussion: firstly whether all religious experiences are of a personal nature. The second area for consideration would be, even if experiences are personal does that mean that others cannot benefit from them. There should be examples to demonstrate the point, as with Buddha's enlightenment of Ultimate Reality.

Expect some consideration of ideas like those of William James that a religious experience might be ineffable, or scientific experiments which seem to show there are other forces which can cause a religious experience.

How far... requires that the candidate makes a judgement about the value especially beyond the individual.

(30 marks) AO2

Section C Religious Experience

Question 5

- 09 Examine the influence and value of religious experience in one or more religion(s).**

Influence requires that candidates consider examples of religious experience and what effect these have on a particular religion. This could be historic, the foundation of the religion or ongoing as in Sufism or Christian Pentecostal churches.

Value should be looking at what the religion does with regard to religious experience: does it actively promote it, is it part of worship? Again examples can be given from both historic and present day religious experiences.

Examination should mean that there is some consideration, not mere statements.

There should be a clear statement about the religion or religions being considered. Influence and value are different and thus both must be tackled. Maximum Level 5 top if only influence or value.

(45 marks) AO1

- 10 'It is only through religious experience that any real understanding of God/Ultimate Reality can be achieved.' Assess this claim**

The discussion must be focused upon a real understanding of God/Ultimate Reality and not about the value of religious experiences in general. Examples therefore need to be about an understanding showing what has indeed been understood to support the view.

But there should also be consideration that there may well be other ways to gain an understanding of God which are not associated with religious experience; philosophy might be a good example.

There can be some consideration of 'only' and also 'real'. Thus for example it might be possible to argue that most religious experiences are so unreliable that any understanding gained from them cannot be real.

(30 marks) AO2

Question 6

- 11 Examine how claims made about having a religious experience can be verified.**

There should be a focus upon the scholarly approach to this, for example Theresa of Avila and Swinburne. But there can also be an examination of how certain scholarly definitions of particular religious experiences will help by seeing whether a particular claim fits. The fit would be either characteristics, as in James and mysticism, or process, as in Rambo and Farhadian with conversion.

There might also be some reference to the more generic aspects of a religious experience, for example style: gradual or sudden, intellectual, personal or group.

Examination requires that there is more than mere statement but a clear demonstration with specific examples of how this might help verification.

(45 marks) AO1

12 'Religious experience, whether verified or not, has little significance for people today.' Assess this claim.

This question is focused upon the value of religious experience in general. 'For people today' allows for discussion of both religious and non religious people. Watch simplification, for example to say that it has no value for any non religious person would thus eliminate conversion which clearly is not the case.

There could be some discussion about 'whether verified or not'. It is likely that this will deal with individuals who may well argue that their personal experience needs no verification since they value it. It might also be possible to argue that for a revelation like that of St Paul it is now irrelevant whether it could be verified or not because its historical influence has been enormous.

Assessment requires that candidates consider to what extent this claim can be agreed to, or whether it can be totally dismissed or even accepted without question.

(30 marks) AO2

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion