



ASSESSMENT and  
QUALIFICATIONS  
ALLIANCE

# Mark scheme January 2003

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## GCE

### Religious Studies

### Unit RS01

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## Unit 1: An Introduction to Religion and Human Experience

### Examination Levels of Response: AS Level descriptors

[Marks for 10-mark questions are shown in brackets]

Level	Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2	Descriptor AO1	Marks	Descriptor AO2	Marks
5	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, grammar and punctuation.	A thorough treatment of the topic. Information is highly accurate and relevant. Good understanding is demonstrated through appropriate evidence/examples.	20-17 [10-9]	A very good response to issue(s) raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and arguments, and critically analysed. A process of reasoning leads to an appropriate evaluation.	10-9
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 accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation.	A fairly thorough treatment of the topic. Information is mostly accurate and relevant. Good understanding is demonstrated through use of some appropriate evidence/ examples.	16-13 [8-7]	A good response to issue(s) raised. Different views are explained with some supporting evidence and arguments, and some critical analysis. A conclusion is drawn that follows from some of the reasoning.	8-7
3	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; 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.	A satisfactory treatment of the topic. Key facts and ideas are included, showing reasonable understanding, using appropriate evidence/ examples.	12-9 [6-5]	Main issue(s) is/are addressed and different views are considered with some supporting evidence or argument, and some attempt at analysis or comment. Evaluation may not be fully supported by reasoning and evidence.	6-5
2	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some clarity and coherence in organisation; some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar adequate to make meaning clear.	An outline account, including some relevant material. Limited in breadth or depth. Limited understanding but some use of some evidence/ examples. Some coherence.	8-5 [4-3]	Aspects of the issue(s) are understood and different views are mentioned. Some simple reasons or evidence are given in support of a conclusion, or an adequate but one-sided argument is presented.	4-3
1	Little clarity and coherence in 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.	Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information. Some signs of understanding.	4-1 [2-1]	Basic reasons or evidence presented to support a view that is relevant to the question.	2-1

1 *Read the passage and answer questions (a) to (d) which follow.*

*“At the heart of many religions are religious scriptures or sacred writings. The nature of these writings is varied, as is the purpose for which they were written, but in every case they act as a guide to faith, bringing understanding to whoever reads them.”*

*With reference to the scriptures or sacred writings of one religion:*

(a) *Explain the nature of these scriptures or sacred writings.*

This tests the candidates' understanding of the nature of the scripture or sacred writing of their chosen religion. Relevant material could include the different types of writing in the scripture, different strands / sources of material, the material as the Word of God / Buddha / Guru or the record of human ideas.

The following notes indicate the likely choice of content for each tradition.

### **Buddhism**

Candidates may explicitly limit themselves to one tradition. If they deal with Buddhism in general there must be recognition of the variety of texts classed as scripture.

e.g. The tripitaka - Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma Pitaka.

**The Mahayana Sutras.**

### **Christianity**

Candidates may deal generally with 'The Bible' or the Old / New Testament.

### **Hinduism**

**Two types of scripture: shruti and smriti**

Shruti 'What has been heard from the gods' cannot be changed - The Vedas including the Upanishads.

Smriti (what is remembered) also orally preserved and open to improvisation and challenge. Includes the Ramayana and Mahabharata and codes of law.

### **Islam**

**Qur'an and Hadith** (may be Qur'an only)

Qur'an revealed word of God / Recitation of word of God – memorised then recorded. Seen as perfect record.

Hadith – Sayings of Muhammad – Oral tradition later recorded in writing.

### **Judaism**

Answer could be limited to **Torah** with a clear explanation of the Books of Moses, but this should acknowledge that it is not the only scripture. Alternatively, the answer could reflect the range of scriptures - Torah, Neviim and Ketubim and / or include the Talmud. There should be recognition that the way the scriptures are seen varies within Judaism.

### **Sikhism**

**Guru Granth Sahib** – its nature as Guru.

For answers lacking illustration / examples award maximum Level 3.

N.B. In addition to being accurate, answers at Level 5 must reflect relevant diversity of view / scripture within the religion or tradition selected. E.g. answers relating to Christianity as a whole must show awareness that the nature of the Bible or New Testament is perceived in a variety of ways.

(10 marks) AO1

- (b) *Explain the purpose for which these scriptures or sacred writings were written.*

The word “guide” is supplied both in the stem and in question (d) and could be developed here. Obviously, the content of the answer would reflect the varying traditions.

e.g.

Recording of the exact words of the central figure(s) / God / Guru.

Recording of the example of the central figure.

Providing / preserving basic teachings.

**Inspiration for future generations.**

**For answers lacking illustrations or not putting scriptures in context award maximum Level 3.**

*(10 marks)* AO1

- (c) *Explain what it means to say that scriptures may be interpreted literally or symbolically.*

Explanation requiring examples / illustrations to make the point. E.g. to take literally means to take at face value (i.e. means exactly what it says). (Six days of creation / descriptions of life after death.) Symbolically - to take the words as standing for something else / representing a different truth. The candidate could use same examples as before and explain the symbolic meaning that they have, or offer descriptions of Nirvana / God / Ultimate Reality which are said to be beyond understanding in human terms.

For full answer dealing with only one of literally and symbolically award maximum Level 4.

For answer lacking examples award maximum Level 3.

Relevant examples must be drawn from the one religion chosen for the question as a whole. Otherwise maximum Level 3.

*(10 marks)* AO1

- (d) *Assess the view that scriptures have little value as a guide to faith in religion today.*

Guide to faith allows both belief and practice – but could also be just belief. The precise answer will vary according to the religion being referred to.

Candidates could agree with the claim by showing that contradictory opinions can be based on ‘what the scripture says’ as if they give no clear guidance at all. Also doubts about the historical accuracy of some of the material can undermine its value, plus the perceived lack of modern relevance.

Against the claim, it can be argued that the scriptures act as a very important guide through the spiritual encounter with the divine that comes from reading them. Also, they are a perfect guide for those with a particular belief about the revelation of scripture.

*(10 marks)* AO2

- 2 (a) *Explain the main features of the following types of religious experience:*  
 (i) *conversion; and*  
 (ii) *mystical experience.*

**Conversion**

**Likely characteristics**

Revulsion with existing state / passivity / crisis experience / suddenness of change / emergence into new life. Must also allow outline of more gradual / voluntary change, and of experiences which appear to have nothing leading up to them.

**Mystical experiences**

**Likely characteristics**

Passivity of recipient; ineffable, noetic and transient (James); Loss of self / Union with what is being experienced; ecstasy.

**A variety of examples could be used, e.g. for conversion:**

Not all may be decisive religious experiences, e.g. startling visions / revelations bringing about instant change, but perhaps changes of view brought about by reflection on life experiences.

Obvious mainstream examples include: St Paul (Christianity); Umar (Islam); Ashoka (Buddhism); Guru Nanak (Sikhism).

Maximum mid Level 4 (14 marks) if only ONE of conversion OR mystical experience is dealt with.

Maximum Level 3 if no example(s) is / are offered

Examples without any highlighting of characteristics maximum Level 2.

*(20 marks)* AO1

- (b) *Explain why those who have religious experiences may find them hard to describe, and assess the view that religious experiences have significance only for those who have them.*

**Explain**

Look for - experience of a reality or dimension beyond ordinary experience; words describing the experience get their meaning from it (possible example is numinous, but not required) therefore those who have not had the experience cannot understand the words; something with an overpowering effect on the recipient – leaves them unable to express themselves.

Maximum Level 3 if no illustrations / examples used.

*(10 marks)* AO1

**Assessment**

Arguments ‘for’ may include that others see no relevance in an experience they cannot share or understand, and perhaps do not entirely trust. Arguments ‘against’ include the immense significance the experience of others has had for religious believers.

*(10 marks)* AO2

- 3 (a) *Choose one person whose religious experience has had a major impact on religion. Summarise the religious experience(s) of that person, and explain the significance of their experience(s) for followers of their religion.*

The selection of any figure that the candidate sees as important in the tradition(s) studied is relevant. They may deal with that individual's religious experience as a whole, or with one major experience.

The following are offered as examples:

Moses – burning Bush / receiving 'ten commandments', Muhammad's revelation experience(s), Guru Nanak, Peter (perhaps) or any disciple present at Pentecost or transfiguration of Jesus, Paul's conversion, enlightenment of Buddha, experience of a Guru.

Authority / status of the teaching following from, or given through, that experience and the significance for the individual authority / role of the recipient. The candidate may focus on the content of the experience and / or its historical consequences.

For narrative of experience(s) only award maximum mid Level 3.

*(20 marks)* AO1

- (b) *Explain why religious experience has no authority for some people, and assess the view that it is not important for believers to have religious experiences.*

Explain, e.g. Doubts about authenticity of experience; unable to share it; challenges orthodox thinking.

**Explain** *(10 marks)* AO1

For answers without illustration or example award maximum Level 3.

**Assess** *(10 marks)* AO2

Religious experiences may be argued to be essential for a 'living' faith – but many people have no special experiences and it makes them no less 'religious'. Could argue that individuals do not have to have them but, are important in religion as a whole.