



**General Certificate of Education
June 2010**

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

0	1	Explain how Kant's idea of the <i>summum bonum</i> fits into his theory of ethics.
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- Candidates are likely to outline Kant's theory of ethics, e.g. its deontological and absolutist basis; the emphasis on the rightness of the act; categorical as opposed to hypothetical imperatives; universal / universalizable laws; duty, motive, intention and reason.
- According to Kant, 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. For the latter, 'ought implies can' – if I feel I ought to do my duty, that implies that I am able to do so. If that is so, then there must be a *summum bonum* – a highest good, which I am capable of achieving through perfect obedience to universal laws. 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 the third postulate is the existence of God, who provides 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.

(30 marks) AO1

0	2	'Kant's theory of ethics is completely compatible with a religious approach to ethics.' Assess this claim.
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In favour of the statement

- Clearly, the postulation of a *summum bonum* supports such an idea, since it is God who underpins the *summum bonum*. God's existence is not a matter of proof but of probability, and is indicated by the very nature of moral action.
- There are several other factors that candidates could select in support of the statement: for example they could point out that religious morality is in most cases also based on the concept of a God who requires morally good behaviour. There might be an analogy between the *summum bonum* and the religious notion of 'heaven', at least in the idea of moral perfection.
- Also, religious morality is often deontological and absolute, and the parallels with Natural Law are often commented upon in this respect. This includes the emphasis on reason as the tool for accessing absolute moral rules. Kant's ethics are underpinned by his Christian beliefs, hence his commitment to rationalism: humans, since they are created by God, share with God the same rational principles.

Other views

- 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.
- It might be said that as a *system*, categorical imperativism does not require the input of a God, or of any other religious figure; nevertheless Kant believed that to postulate God gives credence to the system as a whole. He appears to be saying 'Duty for duty's sake; but the concept of God is an over-arching rationale.'

(15 marks) AO2

Question 2 Natural Law and ethics

0	3	Explain Finnis' Natural Law theory.
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- Finnis' main writing on his Natural Law system is: *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (1980), although candidates may well quote from articles and internet material.
- Finnis proposes seven basic goods by which the good life can be lived: life, knowledge, play, aesthetics, sociability, practical reasonableness, and religion.
- According to Finnis, such goods are self-evidently good, and need no further rationale; they are the motivation behind, and the goal of, action.
- Finnis 'First Moral Principle' is that *"In voluntarily acting from human goods and avoiding what is opposed to them, one ought to choose and will only those possibilities whose willing is compatible with integral human fulfilment."* 'Integral human fulfilment' refers to the good of all persons and of the community, so it therefore opposes abortion, euthanasia, nuclear weapons, and so on.
- Finnis also proposes nine 'principles of practical reasonableness', which guide us in fulfilling the basic goods. These include: having a coherent life-plan, not showing arbitrary preferences among people, being detached yet committed when working out the good life, fostering the common good of one's community, and so on.

(30 marks) AO1

0	4	Assess the view that Finnis' Natural Law theory has more strengths than weaknesses.
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In favour of this view

- Any system of Natural Law has an undeniable strength in appealing to our common human nature – that regulations and punishments are the same for all
- Finnis' system would, if followed, lead undeniably to a safe and secure community based on absolute rules
- Most of the rules do have an appeal to common sense: for example the emphasis on aesthetics and sociability is an important focus in modern educational debate, since there is a common perception that life has been downgraded by the loss of a common appeal to shared human values
- Finnis' system does not rely on God for its authority. The appeal is primarily to common sense and reason. It can therefore appeal to those who prefer a system with strong values but who prefer not to ground that system in a belief system.
- Finnis' system is sometimes seen as a good substitute for Proportionalism, which is frequently viewed as a kind of 'fudge'.

Other views

- As with Aquinas' system, it is possible to reject the assumption that humans share a common human nature. A focus on 'life' as a basic good can be seen to ignore the fact that humans all die, so there perhaps should be a focus on the right to die with dignity, as in the euthanasia debate
- Other systems are more often than not preferred to that of Finnis. The preference comes from two directions: (1) from those who prefer a religious system of ethics based (for example) on the will of an omnibenevolent deity, and (2) those who prefer a system of ethics based on other principles, such as the principle of utility, or the idea of a social contract
- Finnis' system is generally seen as inflexible in what it will and what it will not allow
- His lists of goods, and principles of practical reasonableness, can be seen as a combination of common sense and absolutist nonsense: for example it seems common sense that sociability and aesthetic considerations should be encouraged in any society, but the view that nuclear weapons should be banned as the result of an insistence on 'life' can be seen as less than sensible in the real world.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 3 Religious views of the created world

0

5

Explain what is meant by saying that the world was created according to God's intentions.

Candidates could explore this question in a number of ways, for example:

- The concept has teleological implications, namely that God creates with a *purpose*, and that the purpose includes a requirement for humans to exercise morality and reason.
- Also, in the theistic religions, God is assumed to have an *ultimate* purpose, i.e. leading humans to a post-mortem state of perfection in heaven.
- It is often assumed that God creates *ex nihilo* – 'from nothing' by words of creative power, so on this view, the universe and its contents must reflect the Creator's will/intention: hence Kant and Natural Law assume that God's intention is for humans to be moral beings.
- Religions for the most part assume that morality both comes from, and is defined by, God: the Jewish scriptures state, "*You are to be holy, because I your God am holy*".
- God's intentions might also be seen in the nature of persons, often seen as a mixture of body, soul and spirit, i.e. humans have a link to the Creator through soul and spirit, which helps them to understand their purpose.
- The human conscience is often said to reflect God's intentions, e.g. in Augustine's view of the conscience as the voice of God.

(30 marks)**AO1**

0

6

'Any world created by God must be perfect.' Discuss how far this is true.**In support of the statement**

- The perfection of the universe is stated in Judaeo-Christian scripture, in the repeated statement in the first creation story that God judged that the world was *tam* ('perfect').
- God's intentions in building the universe and in creating humans must presumably reflect God's perfection, so implicitly, the world should be perfect.
- Candidates are likely to raise the question of whether or not this is the (or a) 'best possible world', debated in the light of the fact that the existence of evil and disorder in the universe are self-evident.
- Candidates might use theodicies to argue that this world is perfect (e.g. the Irenaean / Hick view, that the world is perfect for soul-making). Natural evils, for example, can be said to provide 'second-order' goods of sympathy with suffering, sensitivity, compassion, *agape* and the like.

Against the statement / other views

- It is difficult to deny the sheer extent of evil in the world, outlined, for example, by historical facts and by literature such as Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, which seems to show that the world can hardly be described as perfect.
- Some will discuss the theological argument that an *initial* perfect state of the world was lost through human and angelic sin.
- Some will consider the relationship between perfection as a *state*, and perfection for *purpose* (as with the theodicies).

(15 marks)**AO2**

Question 4 Environment, both local and worldwide

0	7
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Explain the ethical reasons behind attempts to restrict Third World development.

- Restriction of Third-World development is generally recommended in connection with fuel emissions, for example, since emerging technologies are heavily dependent on fossil fuels, and are generally not able to manufacture electricity by nuclear reactors
- In countries with large supplies of oil, there is no incentive to develop other sources of fuel. Where this is not true, the issue is clouded by the suspicion that some countries seek uranium enrichment technology for military rather than economic purposes.
- The obvious by-products of any expansion of an industrial-base is the proliferation of pollution sources, with damage to the air through inhalation of carbon particles, to rivers and lakes through industrial effluent, to wetlands and other open spaces by the need for factory development, and so on. In particular, the effects on global warming are an ever-increasing threat to the survival of all species.
- Technological development often leads to increased population pressure, which can also lead to the purchase of military hardware to annexe land.
- Thus the drive to restrict TW development is often linked to fear of global military expansion, e.g. with the nuclear arsenals of India, Pakistan and China.
- The problem is compounded by a lack of ethical investment by First-World countries in TW businesses. A low level of technology in a Third World country guarantees the perpetuation of low labour costs, hence some companies out-source parts of their businesses to TW countries.

(30 marks) AO1

0	8
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'Protection of the environment should be an issue only for the rich.'
Assess this claim.

In favour of the statement

- The question can of course be looked at from the point of view of rich individuals and rich nations. There are some aspects of environmental concern that can be addressed only by the rich nations, such as those aspects of First World involvement in Third World countries which are causing many of the problems.
- From a pragmatic point of view, the poor do not have the financial ability to effect change unilaterally, since they lack investment capital, educational opportunities, and a host of other factors that are needed before there is time and effort available to be used for looking after the environment.

Against the statement / other views

- Many of the environmental problems facing Third World countries need to be addressed in *partnership* with the First World nations, such as: as fair trade to minimise environmental impact; *planned* economic change and development; development of educational infrastructure; political cooperation to minimise the damaging effects of unstable governments in the Third World, and so on
- For individuals, wealthy donors do make environmental issues their concern (although in many cases those individuals have become wealthy through developing technologies that are damaging to the environment), and many of the environmental agencies are funded by donations from the wealthy middle classes; nevertheless there are many agencies within Third World countries that operate effectively, albeit on a smaller scale. They call on rich and poor alike to join forces to protect the environment and to provide opportunities at all levels.

(15 marks) AO2