

A-LEVEL **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

RSS01 Religion and Ethics 1
Mark scheme

2060
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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' 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.

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

<i>Level</i>	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	

RSS01 Religion and Ethics 1**Question 1 Utilitarianism**

0	1	Explain how both Bentham’s Utilitarianism and Mill’s Utilitarianism may be applied to one ethical issue of your choice. (Do not choose abortion or euthanasia.)
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With reference to the chosen issue, answers may include some of the following or other relevant material:

Bentham

Decision-makers:

- Approach each case separately
- Anticipate the consequences of actions;
- Measure the pleasure / pain produced using relevant parts of the hedonic calculus
- Select the decision which maximises pleasure / minimises pain

Mill

Decision makers:

- Distinguish between the higher and lower pleasures
- Accept that it may be necessary to sacrifice lower pleasure (suffer pain) in the pursuit of higher pleasures
- Try to maximise higher pleasures
- May apply a happiness-making rule (but note that only some commentators link Mill with rule utilitarianism, so this is not required)

Better answers will focus on the decision(s) required in dealing with the chosen issue rather than simply give an overview of Bentham’s and Mill’s ideas.

Answers that do not apply utilitarianism to an issue – Max level 4

Answers that do not deal with both Bentham and Mill – Max level 5

[30 marks]

AO1

0

2

‘Ending the pain of people who are suffering is more important than increasing the pleasure of people who are not in pain.’ Assess this view.

Answers will vary depending on the scenarios chosen by the students. Students may, but need not, refer to non-utilitarian perspectives including religious perspectives and may include some of the following arguments or other relevant arguments.

In support: (e.g.)

The aim of Utilitarianism is to maximise pleasure and this may be best achieved by ending the pain of those who are suffering rather than adding to the pleasure of others – e.g. giving to charity rather than spending money on oneself; the decision may also depend (e.g.) on the numbers of people involved or the intensity of their suffering.

From a religious perspective, the duty to help the suffering may be argued to take priority, certainly above increasing your own pleasure.

Other views: (e.g)

From a utilitarian perspective, only the maximisation of happiness matters and in some scenarios this may be achieved by increasing pleasure rather than ending pain; consideration may be given to the quality of pleasure – a higher pleasure, even one achieved at the expense of pain, may be more worthwhile than a state where pain is absent; from a religious perspective, pain may be argued to be valuable in itself. Criticisms of negative utilitarianism suggest that the ending of pain is an unrealistic goal and would necessitate suicide.

[15 marks]

AO2

Question 2 Situation Ethics**0****3****Examine any four of Fletcher's six fundamental principles.**

Candidates may choose any four, and there may be some overlap between them.

Answers may include some of the following or other relevant material:

Only love is intrinsically good: Love is good in itself; God is love / love is good is the faith basis for situation ethics; in contrast, actions are good only if they promote love or bad if they do not.

The ruling norm of Christian decision-making is love, nothing else: According to Fletcher Jesus and Paul replaced the precepts of the Torah with the principle of agape: 'goodwill at work in partnership with reason'; the 'laws' of Christianity are secondary to love and may be set aside when necessary; none of the laws are absolutes – e.g. do not lie, do not steal; the Christian who does what is loving, does what is good.

Love and justice are the same, justice is love distributed: Fletcher says that Justice is 'Christian love using its head' because it has to be calculating and careful; love is what we owe to others so if we give everyone love, we give them what is due to them; a decision based on love shares the benefits of love between people and adopts the agapeic calculus aiming at 'the greatest amount of neighbour welfare for the largest number of neighbours possible'.

Love wills the neighbour's good whether we like him or not: This separates 'loving' someone from 'liking' them and is in tune with the biblical 'love your enemies'; love is an attitude not a feeling, it is goodwill to all people, universal, impartial and indiscriminate;

Only the end (love) justifies the means, nothing else: nothing justifies an action except its agapeic purpose; refusing to do something that would result in love just because it is against Christian teaching is wrong (Fletcher uses divorce as an example);

Love's decisions are made situationally not prescriptively: The decision maker must take the circumstances in which the decision is needed into account and make the loving decision in that context; pre-fabricated general rules may be used as guidelines but should be set aside when love requires.

Students may unpack each of the principles with examples and/or direct reference to Fletcher's work.

Answers that do not deal with 4 principles – Max level 5

Answers that deal with more than 4 principles – credit the best four

[30 marks]**AO1**

0

4

‘From a Christian point of view, Situation Ethics does not offer an acceptable way of making moral decisions’ Consider how far you agree.

Arguments such as the following may be included, but other relevant arguments may be credited.

In support:

Gives permission to break moral laws, such as do not steal, do not murder, do not commit adultery from the Ten Commandments; was condemned by Pope Pius XII as going against Natural Law and God’s revealed will.

Other views:

The New Testament shows that Jesus was prepared to set aside the law when necessary e.g. healing on the Sabbath; a legalistic Christian approach seems to have much in common with the approach of the Pharisees which Jesus criticised; love is stressed and commanded in the New Testament.

[15 marks]

AO2

Question 3 Religious teaching on the nature and value of human life

0

5

Examine religious views about the value of human life with particular reference to the quality of life and self-sacrifice.

Answers may include a general overview of religious teaching, or focus solely on the two named aspects, and may include some of the following, or other relevant ideas:

Quality of life

Teaching related to the value of disabled life in comparison to able bodied, or related to those whose experience of living is so poor that little or no value in continuing with it is seen by them and/or others. Students may show that disability is sometimes seen as the result of sin in a past life, by child or parent, or sin in this life, but disability (relative to other human beings) is also seen as having a specific purpose in life – an aspect of individuality and a means by which the disabled individuals and those around them can develop various virtues. Physical disability can be seen as irrelevant to moral or spiritual value which lies in a relationship with God and is intrinsic to all human beings.

Self-sacrifice

Religious teaching often stresses the sanctity of life and the duty of human beings to preserve it – for example there may be specific teaching against suicide. However, many religious teachings state or imply that there are situations in which believers should be willing to sacrifice their lives. A human life does have an instrumental value as a means to an end, and that end may be achieved by sacrificing that life. Physical existence is only a part of the whole, and it may be sacrificed in order to gain a greater life in the afterlife. This could be supported, for example, with reference to the Buddhist story of the hungry tigress, gospel text, the crucifixion of Christ, martyrdom in Islam and Sikhism and the tradition in Judaism that it is better to be killed than to commit an ‘exceptional sin’ (i.e. idolatry, sexual immorality and murder.)

No balance is required between the different aspects of the question, but answers which do not refer to both quality of life and self-sacrifice – maximum level 5.

[30 marks]**AO1**

0

6

'Religion supports gender equality' How far do you agree?

Arguments such as the following may be included, but other relevant arguments may be credited:

In support:

There are scriptures that are used to support gender equality, often alongside ones that stress difference in nature and/or role between the genders – e.g. Gen 1:27 taken to mean that both genders are created in the image of God, and Galatians 3:28 'all are one in Christ'; the view that 'worth' lies in faith or action not birth, and that judgement is based on righteousness alone e.g. Qur'an 4:12, and some Mahayana Buddhist traditions believe both men and women can achieve enlightenment

Other views:

There are scriptures taken to mean that women are not equal to men e.g. Genesis 2:22 (created as a helpmate for Adam out of his rib), Qur'an 4:34 which may be read as meaning that men are in charge of women, some Buddhist traditions state that one must be born male to achieve enlightenment; in practice, in some religions (or the cultures associated with them) there is evidence of gender inequality –e.g. preference for male children in Hindu culture, no female priests in Roman Catholicism.

Differences between religions or between denominations /sects within religions mean that the situation regarding gender equality is unclear.

[15 marks]**AO2**

Question 4 Abortion and euthanasia**0****7**

Examine the following definitions for the start of human life and explain their relevance to the abortion debate:

- **conception**
- **primitive streak**
- **viability**

Students should explain the meaning of each one, why it is considered the start of human life and its relevance to the abortion debate. In unpacking (examining) the idea they may also explain why others reject it. They may include some of the following or other relevant ideas:

Conception: (e.g.)

Life begins at the moment the sperm fertilises the ovum and from that moment the new life has the same right to life as any human being; basis of e.g. Roman Catholic teaching; given scriptural support (although many passages simply refer to a child in the womb rather than conception a such); as a person, the newly conceived child has a right to life. Critics argue that the fertilised egg is too far away from being a human being to share the rights of a human e.g. an acorn is not an oak tree.

Primitive Streak (e.g.)

This appears on the 14th day after fertilisation and is the point, it is said, at which a unique human being, or unique human beings, may be said to be present. If this definition is accepted then any measures taken to prevent a fertilised egg from developing to this stage would not be killing a living being since no living being is present before this stage. However after this stage it may be possible to talk of a ‘being with potential’ as the Roman Catholic Catechism does, rather than just a potential human being. Critics argue as above that the embryo lacks features that identify it as human and so does not share the rights of a human.

Viability (e.g.)

This is the point at which the unborn is able to live outside the womb, and it is argued that there is no reason to deny an unborn child, who is dependent on a mother’s womb, the rights of a newly born child who is also totally dependent. Medical technology means that this date is being pushed back more and more and this is leading to calls for a reduction in the legal limit for abortions. Abortion as self-defence may still be justifiable even if is agreed that human life has begun – but it is much more difficult to justify the view that the developing foetus is simply part of the mother’s body for her to treat as she wishes.

While no balance between three definitions chosen is expected, students must deal with three, and consider both the meaning and relevance of each, for marks above level 5.

[30 marks] AO1

0

8

'Abortion should be illegal.' How far can religion support this view?

Arguments such as the following may be included, but other relevant arguments may be credited .

In support

Belief in sanctity of life and the belief that human life begins at conception; society's laws should follow God's commands/ principles of religion – e.g. The Ten Commandments or the principle of ahimsa in Buddhism and Hinduism.

Other views

Some religious teaching allows abortion up to a specific stage in development e.g. some Muslim traditions allow it up to 40 or 120 days. Making it illegal would make it impossible for a woman to have an abortion even to save her life - compassion is important in religion and abortion may be allowed on compassionate grounds, including the likely consequences of back-street abortions; the right to self-defence is recognised in many religions; the principle of double effect; love may over-rule law in situation ethics;

[15 marks]**AO2**