

A-LEVEL **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

RSS02 Religion and Ethics 2
Mark scheme

2060
June 2014

Version: 1.0 Final

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	

RSS02: Religion and Ethics 2**Question 1 Kant's theory of ethics**

0	1	Explain the main features of a deontological ethical system illustrating your answer with reference to Kant.
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Students might refer to some of the following:

- 'Deontological' comes from the Greek *deon*, meaning *duty*, or *obligation*, so normative deontological theories of ethics are those which judge the rightness of an action to be in the adherence to moral rules / laws; moreover the rightness or wrongness of actions do not depend upon the consequences of those actions.
- The moral rules associated with deontology take the form of commands, or imperatives, by which certain actions are forbidden (e.g. *Do not murder*), made obligatory (e.g. *Help others wherever possible*) or permitted (such as supererogatory actions *beyond* the call of duty, e.g. putting yourself in great danger in order to save someone else's life).
- Deontological theories are agent-relative, so that for example making the rule *Do not murder* implies that *you* have a duty not to murder; parents have duties to their children, but this does not necessarily entail that parents have the same duties to other people's children. Deontological theories often stress the autonomy of the moral agent, by which the agent can assess which duties are his or her responsibility and which are not.
- Some deontologists are absolutists, arguing that certain actions are right or wrong regardless of the intentions or consequences behind them; others are non-absolutist, such as W.D. Ross's modification of Kantian theory with the concept of *prima facie* duties.
- Some deontological theories are secular, others religious (e.g. Divine Command Theory, where the force of the laws/rules derive from the nature and commands of God as opposed to the autonomy of moral law and the moral agent).
- Kant's theory of ethics is autonomous, secular, absolutist and deontological.
- He argues that morally good acts are those which are done from duty. This argument follows from his insistence that the highest good has to be good without qualification. Those things that are habitually regarded as good, of which the commonest is pleasure, are not the highest good, because, for example, they are usually desired as means to an end, whereas the highest good should be desired as an end in itself, and the only such thing is a *good will*.
- It is the motive or intention of the agent that makes an action morally good, and not the consequences of the action. A moral agent has good will when she acts out of respect for the moral law.
- Kant's deontological commands are defined by the categorical imperatives.

Max. Level 4 if no reference to Kant.

[30 marks]

AO1

0

2

‘Kant’s theory of ethics is not compatible with religious ethical approaches.’

How far do you agree?

Agree

- Kant excludes all consideration of God or of divine command in his theory: the moral law is autonomous, and must be in order for the agent to have a good will.
- Equally, Kantian ethics makes no appeal to any text or scripture as an ethical authority, since all such authority is invested in the moral agent.
- The good will is, self-evidently, a matter of volition. Obedience to rules that are formulated outside the domain of reason cannot be a matter of will.
- Religious ethical approaches are basically accompanied by metaphysical doctrines of reward and punishment / heaven and hell. Although Kant’s moral argument for the existence of God reverts to a version of these themes, this reversion is intended as a probabilistic argument, and his ethical theory does not stand or fall by it.

Other Views

- Most students are likely to suggest that Kant’s views on the autonomy of reason, morality and the moral agent are compromised by his moral argument about the *summum bonum*, so students might argue that Kantian ethics opens the door for religious compatibility.
- Kant’s was aware that the demand of practical reason, that we aim for the highest good, is incapable of fulfilment, so human moral effort seems futile. Kant in response postulates the existence of God and the immortality of the soul as an over-arching justification for moral endeavour.
- Kant’s views on radical evil and conversion are a revision of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. Whereas mainline Christian teaching emphasizes the importance of ‘grace’ in closing the gap between required Christian ethical standards and those lesser standards that might be achievable without grace, Kant reverts to a Pelagian-type position where individuals are responsible for their own salvation. This might seem heretical to Christian purists, but it does have a degree of religious compatibility.

Students are likely to make a number of general statements concerning the compatibility or otherwise of Kant’s ideas with religious ideas. These might include: deontology in religious ethics; ideas of justice, fairness, focus on the sanctity of life, the value of the individual, etc.; the importance of reason, and so on.

[15 marks]

AO2

Question 2 Natural Law and ethics

0	3
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Explain how Natural Law Ethics might be applied to an ethical issue of your choice. (Do not choose an environmental issue).

- Students are likely to begin with an overview of Natural Law Ethics, probably from Aquinas, but possibly or additionally from Finnis. Any such focus is legitimate.
- The choice of ethical issue is entirely at the discretion of students. In practice, students are likely to refer to issues such as war and peace, genetics, abortion and euthanasia.
- Essays will be judged solely on how students apply NL principles. With abortion, for example, this could include reference to the sanctity of life principle, the application of Aquinas' primary and secondary principles (e.g. reproduction / killing the innocent), the application of double effect to ectopic pregnancy, and so on. For euthanasia, this could involve reference to much the same material, including Aquinas' primary and secondary principles (e.g. the preservation of life), to textual material concerning God's plan for humans, and so on.

[30 marks]

AO1

0

4

‘The strengths of Natural Law Ethics outweigh the weaknesses.’**How far do you agree?**

Answers to this clearly do not have to refer to the particular application of NL selected in 03. However, where students do answer 04 with exclusive reference to the issue chosen in 03, the whole range of marks is available up to and including Level 7. Also, the form of NL Ethics chosen can again be specific or general.

Agree

- Some might argue that one great strength of Aquinas’ system is that its absolutist/deontological style gives certainty, so those who follow it can have moral certainty, which outweighs whatever weaknesses are identified.
- Students might judge that the general deontological status of NL absolves those who follow it from the notorious difficulty of consequentialist theories in predicting the consequences of our moral choices.
- Students might refer to a number of potential strengths, e.g. tradition, flexibility through double effect, the self-evident status of natural good, etc., contrasted with weaknesses perceived to be of less account.

Other Views

- Weaknesses might include: the assumption of only one final cause as opposed to several; the allegedly mechanistic application of NL theories; the religious nature of NL theories; the dependence of the Thomist version upon Aristotelian concepts, etc.
- The question asks students to assess whether the strengths of NL Ethics outweigh the weaknesses. Students might address this quantitatively or they might select one or more features of the system as being definitive strengths or weaknesses.

[15 marks]**AO2**

Question 3 Religious views of the created world

0	5
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Explain what is meant by the belief that the world was created according to God's intentions.

Students might approach this in a number of ways, e.g.

- 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.
- God is assumed to have an *ultimate* purpose, intending that humans should reach 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. Many religions assume that morality both comes from, and is defined by, God, e.g. 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.
- Reference to scriptural statements about God's creation e.g. Genesis Chapter 1

[30 marks]

AO1

0

6

'Since the world was created according to God's intentions, it must be perfect.'

How far do you agree with this claim?

Agree

- Genesis affirms the perfection of God's creation in the repeated statement in the first creation story that God judged that the world was 'good' / 'very good'.
- Some might direct the question towards perfection at the time of creation; others towards present perfection, or else perfection in an ongoing sense. Process theologians, for example, might argue that God's intentions for a potentially perfect universe are being realised but are not yet complete. Some might use the Augustinian tradition to argue that the world/universe was created perfect, but creation included free will, which led to a Fall.
- God's intentions in building the universe and in creating humans must presumably reflect God's perfection, so implicitly, the world should be perfect.
- Students are likely to point to the moral and natural evils that afflict the world as being contra-indications of the perfection of the world, in which case they might then respond that 'perfection' means perfect for purpose, appealing to some version of 'best possible world' theory.
- In the same way, students might use theodicies to argue that this world is perfect (e.g. the Irenaeanus/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.

Other Views

- Students might argue that the depth of evil in the world cannot be explained satisfactorily by any theodicy or by appeal to 'best possible world' philosophy. In support of this, appeal might be made to Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, where God's intentions are accepted as being potentially explicable and potentially entirely good, but the actuality of certain types of evil puts too high a price on God's methods of achieving an entirely good end.
- In connection with 'best possible world' philosophy, some might analyse the meaning of 'perfect', e.g. as 'fit for purpose', or perfect in the sense of Augustine's principle of plenitude, and so on.
- In the same way, the problem of God's omniscience will lead some to contend that God's intentions were necessarily made with full knowledge of the extent of evil in the world, and do not justify the creation of the world.
- Some might broaden the discussion of 'world' to include 'universe', since some galactic and inter-galactic events are held by cosmologists to almost certainly irradiate and eradicate life forms in mass-extinctions of all life forms, and these must come under the intentions of an omniscient creator.

[15 marks]

AO2

Question 4 Environment, both local and worldwide**0****7**

Outline the threat to the environment from global warming and explain how religious teachings might deal with this issue.

Students will probably begin with a definition of global warming, e.g. as the already-occurring and projected continuation of the rise in the average temperature of the atmosphere and oceans caused mainly by the increased generation of greenhouse gases, the latter resulting in turn from burning fossil fuels and from deforestation.

Students might refer to some of the following to illustrate the threat to the environment from global warming:

- flooding, desalinisation of the oceans, loss of human and animal habitat etc.
- exponential increase in severe weather patterns, damage to crops/houses
- increased drought, loss of cultivable land, decrease in food production, increased food shortages, etc.
- most of these effects are inter-related, e.g. the effect on food production, the effects on animals and biodiversity, increased land and marine extinctions ...
- spread of disease by insects migrating to the warming lands in the northern hemisphere, e.g. malaria.
- likelihood of an increase in war as the result of competition for diminishing land and fresh water, and from migration of destabilised populations heading away from crisis zones.

Responses to the question about how religious teachings might deal with global warming are likely to be based on general teachings, such as:

- stewardship, where responsible stewardship would entail attempts to preserve and conserve the environment by practical means and by political support , for example for the Kyoto Protocol,
- the requirement to keep the world fit for habitation for the future as well as the present, e.g. in the Church Synod 1992
- specific teachings from different religions, e.g. Buddhist perspectives that global warming goes against the first precept; Hindu perspectives that people's lifestyles should be modified, needs simplified, and desires restrained.

Maximum of Level 4 for outline only

[30 marks]

AO1

0

8

‘Religious teachings concerning human responsibility for the environment have no relevance in the 21st century.’

How far do you agree with this claim?

Students might continue with the theme of conservation, from Q.07, and/or might broaden the discussion to environmental responsibility as a whole.

The question broadens the scope of 07, and students are at liberty to focus the discussion on global warming or else to discuss environmental threats in general.

Agree

- Some might argue that Thomist teachings place humans at the moral centre, and thus devalue all other life forms, an approach which Singer condemns as speciesist and degrading. There is an assumption, based on an interpretation of Genesis, that the natural world is to be used (and thus exploited) as a resource.
- Students might indicate that some religious teachings are of little or no value in engendering human environmental responsibility in so far as most teachings are related to doctrines which may be unreasonable, unscientific, or both. Hence for Aquinas, for example (as with Descartes), humans have souls but animals do not: a doctrine which rests on a pre-scientific understanding of natural law, and which is arguably irrelevant to the current need to protect biodiversity.
- Some might agree with the statement with reference to the state of the world, which is undergoing exponential environmental degradation. Religious attempts to address the issues are either absent or ineffectual.
- During the 20th and 21st centuries, the existence of God has been much debated, and atheism and agnosticism are more prevalent than before, so the relevance of any beliefs deriving from belief in God can be questioned.

Other Views

- Some might argue that it is not the teachings that are not relevant but their interpretation. Christians sometimes argue that there are a plethora of teachings that, if implemented, would ensure accountable human responsibility for the environment; although others would point out that the converse is also true in so far as there are, equally teachings that ensure a lack of such responsibility.
- Buddhist and environmental approaches are often held to be of more use than those of Christians, Jews and Muslims, since Buddhists hold that to treat the environment as an objective *other* devalues both humans and the *other*.
- Students might develop a variety of ideas from the perspective of one religion or another, or from general religious principles.

[15 marks]

AO2