

# A-LEVEL **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

RSS03 Philosophy of Religion

Mark scheme

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2060  
June 2014

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Version/Stage: 1.0 Final

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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
<b>7</b>	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	<b>28-30</b>	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.	<b>14-15</b>	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.
<b>6</b>	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)	<b>24-27</b>	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.	<b>12-13</b>	
<b>5</b>	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).	<b>20-23</b>	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.	<b>10-11</b>	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.
<b>4</b>	A generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing some understanding and coherence.	<b>15-19</b>	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.	<b>7-9</b>	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.
<b>3</b>	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	<b>10-14</b>	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	<b>5-6</b>	
<b>2</b>	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.	<b>5-9</b>	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	<b>3-4</b>	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.
<b>1</b>	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	<b>1-4</b>	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	<b>1-2</b>	
<b>0</b>	Nothing of relevance.	<b>0</b>	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	<b>0</b>	

**RSS03: Philosophy of Religion****Question 1 The cosmological argument**

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|---|---|
| 0 | 1 |
|---|---|
- Explain the following aspects of the cosmological argument:**
- **God as the first mover**
  - **God as the necessary being.**

Answers should focus on areas listed rather than a general presentation of the cosmological argument.

Answers may include some of the following, but other relevant material may be credited.

**God as the first mover** – Based in observation that everything is changed/moved by something else and cannot change/move itself so the first mover is first in an essentially ordered series. The need for an Unmoved mover/ Prime mover to avoid infinite regress of movement/change from potentiality to actuality without beginning. Use of an example could be the fire/wood analogy. Unmoved mover what Aquinas calls God. Reference could also be made to Leibniz' principle of sufficient reason.

**God as the necessary being** – Based in observation that anything that is, need not be – therefore contingent (generated, perishable). Since that is the case there needs to be a reason why there is something rather than nothing, in order to initiate existence of contingent things. This reason would need to be a being whose existence is not dependent on any other being and is the only being that has the power to bring the universe into being. A necessary being who Aquinas understands to be God. Reference could also be made to Leibniz' principle of sufficient reason and a self-explanatory being.

Maximum level 5 if only one bullet point addressed.

**[30 marks] AO1**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | 2 |
|---|---|
- 'Proving that a first mover and a necessary being exists, would prove that God exists.'**  
**Assess this claim.**

**In agreement**

- In order to fulfil Leibniz' principle of sufficient reason God is necessary.
- It makes sense that the necessary being has to be something greater than the universe (i.e. God).
- It makes sense (and is supported by science) to appeal to a beginning rather than infinite regress.

**Other views**

- Hume's argument why God of classical theism could be a different god or gods.
- 'God of the gaps' perhaps science will in the future explain the first mover and necessary being without resorting to God.
- Why is God uncaused? Using the principle of sufficient reason some may argue that this is not an adequate explanation.

**[15 marks] AO2**

**Question 2 Religious experience**

0
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3
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**Explain the main characteristics of both visions and conversion experiences.**

Answers may include some of the following, but other relevant material may be credited.

Focus is on highlighting the characteristics rather than just narrative accounts.

**Visions** - an image/event in which there is a message, variety of images – (religious figures/places/fantastic creatures/end of world), types of visions (corporeal, group or individual, imaginative and intellectual), can convey propositional revelation, can confirm non-propositional truth.

**Conversion** experiences- a change from no religion to a religion, one denomination to another, from belief to no belief or from faith to deeper faith. Different types of conversion: gradual/instant, active/passive, transforming, self-surrendering/non-volitional.

Students may illustrate these explanations with use of examples such as St Bernadette, Theresa of Avila, Umar, Cat Stevens or St Paul.

Maximum Level 4 if a only a narrative of a vision and a conversion is given.

Maximum Level 5 if only one of visions/conversion experiences addressed.

**[30 marks]****AO1**

0
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4
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**'Only the person who has had a religious experience can really understand that experience.'****How far do you agree?**

Answers may include some of the following, but other relevant material may be credited.

**In agreement –**

- subjective nature of experience so cannot be shared with or analysed by others
- ineffable so cannot be described to others
- personal, affective in nature not intellectual
- knowledge beyond experience

**In disagreement –**

- Shared experience with objective features (e.g. vision at Knock)
- have natural explanations so misunderstood once natural explanation is discovered can be fully understood
- Some experiences can be repeated/simulated, observed and then understood,
- Students have studied them by reading testimonials and analogies to compare with ordinary experiences.

**[15 marks]****AO2**

**Question 3 Psychology and religion**

0

5

**Explain the following two aspects of Freud’s view of religion:**

- **wish fulfilment**
- **the Oedipus Complex.**

Answers may include some of the following, but other relevant material may be credited.

**Wish fulfilment** – Human desire for an almighty protector against helplessness in face of natural forces over which we have no control. God fulfils that desire as omnipotent and benevolent. Religion controls the helplessness and gives the believer a feeling of increased control (e.g. perform ritual and be forgiven).

**Oedipus complex** - Religion is a symptom of a collective neurosis we all suffer from as a result of the sexual trauma of the Oedipus complex and repressed guilt from the ambivalence felt towards our fathers, which resurfaces in totemism and animism according to Freud’s use of the primal horde analogy and religious ritualistic behaviour.

Students need to explain how these link to religion.

Maximum level 5 without a discussion of both aspects.

**[30 marks]****AO1**

0

6

**‘Freud’s theory of the Oedipus Complex is the biggest psychological challenge to religious belief.’****Assess this claim.**

Answers may include some of the following, but other relevant material may be credited. (For example Jung)

Focus here is on an evaluation of which is the biggest challenge to religious believers rather than simply stating evaluative points of the theory.

**Biggest challenge –**

- religion is guilt/sexual based rather than anything ‘spiritual’
- religion is part of a psychological process to address psychological needs,
- religion is a universal obsession.
- Evidence in behaviour and psychological studies.

**Not biggest challenge –**

- Not all psychological conditions are sexually based,
- Claiming all religions are the same does not account for religions without a male godhead or godhead (father substitute) at all,
- not all people are religious/neurotic
- Freud’s theory on Oedipus is largely discredited today

**[15 marks]****AO2**



**Question 4 Atheism and postmodernism**

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7

**Examine the ways in which a postmodernist view of religion has responded to atheism.**

Answers may include some of the following, but other relevant material may be credited.

Focus here is on how postmodernism responds to atheism rather than a rehearsed account of post modernism.

‘Cultural construct’ accounts for differences within religious meta-narratives and need for literal/ modernist claim to one truth.

‘No right or wrong’ accounts for all approaches to life having validity including that of the atheist without any objective preference, less likely to believe absolutes as truth seen as relative.

‘Personal search’ – again showing an interest in ‘religion’ still at the forefront of the human mind but defined differently,

‘Pick and mix approach’ – rise of modern interpretations of spiritual life and varied religious practices combined accounting for retreat of religion.

‘Living religion rather than intellectual faith’ – a rejection for a need to appeal to reason to justify belief thereby atheist claims become irrelevant.

Maximum level 4 if no reference to response to atheism is made.

**[30 marks]****AO1**

0

8

**‘Postmodernism has successfully defended religion against the challenges of atheism.’**

**How far do you agree?**

The focus here is on whether postmodernist affirmation has sufficiently defended religion against atheism.

**In Agreement –**

- spirit of religion rather than letter of religion approach more in keeping with modern life
- emphasis on importance of subjective value
- personal spiritual search has shown importance of religion in new form

**In Disagreement –**

- postmodernism redefines religion too far removed from original understanding
- need for moral absolutes to make life defensible and justifiable
- science remains most important influence in modern life
- postmodernism has given rise to a tolerance of fundamentalism and cults

**[15 marks]****AO2**