



A-LEVEL

Religious Studies

RST3B Philosophy of Religion

Mark scheme

2060

June 2015

Version 1: Final Mark Scheme

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) A2 Level Descriptors

<i>Level</i>	A2 Descriptor AO1	Marks <i>Unit 4 italics</i>	A2 Descriptor AO2	Marks <i>Unit 4 italics</i>	A2 Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic, which may be in depth or breadth. Information is accurate and relevant. A thorough understanding is shown through good use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate good knowledge and understanding of diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is demonstrated. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated convincingly.	28-30 41-45	A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed and critically analysed perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Appropriate evaluation is fully supported by the reasoning. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related perceptively and maturely to the broader context and to human experience.	19-20 28-30	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, punctuation and grammar.
6	A generally thorough treatment of the topic which may be in depth or breadth. Information is almost all accurate and mainly relevant. Clear understanding is demonstrated through use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, alternative views and / or scholarly opinion are satisfactorily explained. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are clearly demonstrated.	24-27 36-40	A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed and critically analysed. Appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related clearly to the broader context and to human experience.	16-18 24-27	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic. Information is mostly accurate and mainly relevant. A reasonable understanding is demonstrated through use of some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, some familiarity with diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is shown. Some knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated.	20-23 29-35	A satisfactory response to the issue(s) raised. Views are explained with some supporting evidence and arguments, and some critical analysis. An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning. Some of the response is related satisfactorily to the broader context and to human experience.	13-15 20-23	Mainly 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, punctuation and grammar.
4	Key ideas and facts are included; demonstrates some understanding and coherence using some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, brief reference may be made to alternative views and / or scholarly opinion. Limited knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated.	15-19 22-28	The main issue is addressed with some supporting evidence or argument, but the reasoning is faulty, or the analysis superficial or only one view is adequately considered. Little of the response is related to the broader context and to human experience.	10-12 15-19	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; 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.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14 15-21	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	7-9 10-14	
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 8-14	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	4-6 5-9	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 1-7	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-3 1-4	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance	0	

RST3B: Philosophy of Religion

Indicative content

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Question 1 Ontological argument and the relationship between reason and faith

0

1

Explain the role of both faith and reason in the ontological argument. You should refer to the argument as presented by both Anselm and Descartes in your answer.

Faith

Anselm:

- The Proslogion is set out as a prayer – a statement of faith.
- He aims to understand the God he believes in.
- He uses the Bible, a book of faith, to support his ideas eg Psalm 14.
- Anselm seeks to take people beyond the definition of the word God to knowledge of God himself.
- Reason alone can lead to error and reason has to be supported by faith.
- Expect reference to Barth's argument that Anselm received his understanding of God through a religious experience.

Descartes:

- Starts with the faith that God does not deceive us.
- He says that humans could not come up with the idea of God themselves, but this is a faith position.
- The logic of the argument proves that God must exist and this will support faith.

Reason

Anselm:

- For God to be 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', God must exist.
- It is illogical for the fool to accept the definition and yet to reject the fact of God's existence.
- He uses the reductio ad absurdum to reinforce his argument.
- God's necessary existence means that there is no possibility of God not existing (logic).

Descartes:

- Starts from what can be known for sure.
- His own thoughts were proof of his own existence.
- God's necessary existence is contained within human understanding of God as a 'supremely perfect being'.
- Logic states that imperfect human beings cannot develop the idea of a perfect being themselves, therefore the idea of God must come from God himself.

- God must possess existence or else God cannot be ‘supremely perfect’; ‘the mind cannot conceive of perfection without also conceiving of existence’.

If the answer only covers Anselm or Descartes, maximum Level 5 - 23 marks.

If the answer only covers faith or reason, maximum Level 5 - 23 marks.

If they only give the arguments for both Anselm and Descartes with little or no explicit reference to faith and reason – max level 4 – 19 marks.

If the answer is phrased to show how the argument can be used to reinforce faith rather than how faith is an integral part of the argument, max level 5 – 23 marks.

[30 marks] AO1

0	2
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‘The ontological argument has no effect at all on a person’s faith.’

Assess this view.

In support

- Faith is a commitment beyond proof.
- For believers, the ontological argument might be an interesting idea but it will not change what they are personally committed to.
- For unbelievers, no limited human proof could be seen as definitively proving the unlimited, so they will not allow any form of the argument to convince them of the existence of God not matter how ‘convincing’ the proof might seem eg Russell.
- The argument on its own says nothing about the character of God, gives no reason to trust / love God or reason to consider God as personal – in fact in Anselm’s case at least you can argue that importing any specific characteristics of God into the argument destroys it by destroying the contradiction on which it is based.

Other views

- Believers always seek to understand more about their faith, and this proof is a way for this to happen, ‘believe in order to understand’.
- For any unbeliever who is open to the argument, the validity of the argument could challenge them to rethink their faith position.
- This ‘proof’ could damage faith for the believer, as faith necessitates a lack of proof; the proof might mean that there is no alternative but to accept God and this might create a feeling of fear or a sense that God has removed human freedom.
- The proof might affect the way a believer or an unbeliever understands the notion of God and this could change their commitment or lack of commitment to God.

[20 marks] AO2

Question 2 Religious language

0	3
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Explain both of the following terms in the context of religious language:

- **analogical**
- **symbolic.**

Analogical

- Avoids the problems connected with using religious language univocally (human words limit God; anthropomorphisms) or equivocally (human words can say nothing about God as humans have nothing to reference).
- Analogy used by Thomas Aquinas to show that human words can be used to signify that there is some relationship between the use of the word when applied to humans and when applied to God but that there is a great gulf between the two uses, accepting which is fundamental to using any limited human words about God.
- The doctrine of analogy allows for both similarity and difference between God and humans when using words.
- Analogy of proportion eg divine goodness is appropriate to the divine nature as human goodness is to the human nature – humans can see a similarity but cannot comprehend anything about the depth of the reality when applied to God.
- Analogy of attribution – characteristics can be predicated ‘formally’ of God and ‘derivatively’ of human beings eg humans have a pale reflection of God’s justice when they exercise justice.
- Analogy can be used in metaphors, parables etc as a way of making a person think about the deeper meaning without implying that God is limited or that the words apply in any literal sense about God.
- The use of models and qualifiers to increase the depth of analogical language.

Symbolic

- Tillich argues that religious language is symbolic – it opens up new levels of reality that were previously closed to humans.
- Religions and religious experiences have to be interpreted through the use of imagery as nothing about religion can be put in concrete form as everything religious is dealing with what is beyond.
- Religious symbols take the believer to ‘being itself’.
- Symbolic language captures something of what is intended or sensed without limiting the object that is intended or sensed.
- Symbols and symbolic language can be changed to adapt to new fashions and understandings, they are not fixed – this dynamic aspect reflects a dynamic element of religion.
- Symbolic language can take many forms – words, metaphors, images, myths etc but their intention is always to help a person and other people to capture something of what is symbolised, just like a national flag encapsulates something about a country without in any way being the same thing as the country.

- Symbolic stories etc can help open a person’s mind up to a deeper reality.
- Symbols, like Jung’s archetypes, flow from something that is felt deep within people, the deepest unconscious mind.

If the answer only covers analogical or symbolic, maximum Level 5 - 23 marks.

[30 marks]

AO1

0	4
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‘Religious language is best understood as symbolic.’

Assess this claim.

In support

- Like symbols, religious language is trying to reflect something about the beyond without limiting it.
- Symbols and religious language engage the emotions.
- God and the divine can never be put into specific words without running the risk of destroying the understanding of God: by accepting the words as symbolic, people can use the words freely but they must realise that they are not saying anything definitive about God.
- People can understand the general approach of symbolic language and can use it to help themselves and others to gain an appreciation of religion.
- All language is only the use of symbols; religious language is no different.
- Tillich sees ‘There is a God’ as the one cognitive statement which legitimises the meaningfulness of religious language as being symbolic as a whole.

Other views

- There is more to religious language than merely symbolic meaning.
- The use of analogy gives great insights into the divine, even though human language is limited.
- Performative language, like marriage vows and baptismal blessings, actually makes things happen, it does not simply represent things happening so this is more important than symbolic language.
- To use symbols a person has to have some idea of what the symbol represents; many people do not understand religious symbols so the language cannot be symbolic; people have to be in the correct language game first for any language to have any type of meaning.
- Religious language can be cognitive – Mitchell and Ramsey.

[20 marks]

AO2

Question 3 Body, soul and personal identity**0****5****Outline the nature of Near Death Experiences and explain how they might support the idea of survival beyond death.****Near Death Experiences**

- People have been declared clinically dead but then come back to life and give accounts of what they experienced during the time they were dead.
- Many common features of these narrations eg Greyson's list of: altered state of mind, going down a tunnel, a sense of meeting dead religious figures or family members, vivid sensations especially of light, etc.
- The dead have been able to give detailed accounts of speech and actions that took place in the room when they were dead, suggesting that there was part of them that was not dead.
- Students may make some reference to specific experiences eg Pam Reynolds.

How they might support the idea of survival beyond death

- The experience is recorded by many people, including young children who would not know what others had recorded. This suggests that the experience is genuine and indicates something continues once the body is dead.
- There is sufficient evidence to show that most of the accounts given were from people who were clinically dead, not just unconscious, notably Pam Reynolds whose body was shut down by the doctors. This evidence should not be simply dismissed as coming from people who were hallucinating.
- The regular accounts of meeting and speaking with people that were dead, including people whom the witness thought were still alive, suggests that something of the specific individual carries on beyond the grave and the 'dead' are in a different dimension yet are aware of what is happening.
- The experience of places of bliss, and occasionally places of suffering, confirm beliefs in heaven and hell, reinforced by contact with divine and angelic beings.
- The major changes in lifestyles and priorities after the event by the people who had these experiences give strong evidence that the people themselves have been affected by what they experienced. This would not be sustained if the people had simply been hallucinating.

If the answer only covers the outline of Near Death Experiences, maximum Level 4 - 19 marks.

If the answer does not cover the nature of Near Death Experiences, maximum Level 5 - 23 marks.

[30 marks]**AO1**

0

6

‘There are no reasonable grounds for belief in an afterlife.’**Assess this claim.****In support**

How valid is any claim about the afterlife? For example:

- For some people, a person cannot live without a body; when the person dies the body is left behind, so the person must end.
- For some people, all ‘evidence’ coming from Near Death Experiences can be rejected as the person cannot have been dead if they have come back to life, so this cannot be used to support life after death.
- There are reasonable explanations to account for ‘Near Death Experiences’ that mean these experiences did not actually take place eg Blackmore’s evidence, Persinger’s helmet etc.
- All claims about resurrection appearances, including Jesus’, are simply matters of faith; people cannot give any concrete evidence to support the claims.
- Some people say that accounts of previous lives and the details offered by some children are open to question, especially as a child’s mind is very susceptible.

Other views

How much weight can be given to beliefs about an afterlife? For example:

- The testimony of the Bible, the Qur’an etc as the word of God cannot be dismissed, and these hold proof and the promise of an afterlife.
- The resurrection appearances of Jesus are well-documented and so many people have accepted and died for their belief in the resurrection and the afterlife that their witness cannot be dismissed as meaningless.
- The details given by numerous people about previous life experiences are too exact to be rejected. This applies especially to the evidence of young children who have no understanding about people’s negative attitude towards the idea of a previous existence.
- The awareness of the soul, the fact that people can dream etc all suggest that the person is much more than simply the body, so the individual must continue in some way once the body has died.
- If God creates out of love, it would be contradictory to say that God’s creative act ends with death; love is eternal so the people God loves must in some way be eternal.

Credit any discussion of what might constitute ‘reasonable claims’ eg the use of reason alone.

[20 marks]**AO2**

Question 4 The problem of evil

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7

Examine the free will defence as a religious response to the problem of evil.

- Free will defence (FWD) addresses the question of why an all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing God allows evil in the world and the suffering that evil brings.
- It is based on the idea that humans are created free by God so that humans can have a meaningful relationship with God.
- Humans can only have this type of relationship in a world where things can and do go wrong.
- Humans have to be able to make choices and to live with the consequences of these choices, for themselves and for other people.
- If God interfered with any aspect of the choice or its consequences, then he is limiting freedom.
- A limited freedom is not freedom.
- God cannot contradict himself: if God gives humans freedom, he cannot then stop the exercise of that freedom.
- God has to respect human choices, no matter how many people are hurt, or how much it interferes with God's design for creation.
- Free choices can only be made in a world that has a random element in it: if everything followed a rigid pattern, things would be too predictable to allow meaningful choices to be made.
- Expect references to Irenaeus, Hick, Mackie, Plantinga, Swinburne, etc.

[30 marks]**AO1**

0

8

'The free will defence cannot justify the existence of natural evil.'**To what extent do you agree?****In support**

- FWD only explains the need for humans to do evil things.
- Human choices can be made in any situation; they do not need to be done in a world of natural evil.
- God could have created a world that was open to human choices without bringing in all the suffering that natural disasters entail eg Rowe's argument.
- Natural disasters etc existed long before humanity and these cannot be justified on the basis of the needs for humans to be free.
- A limited amount of natural evil would be enough to allow for human freedom; there is no need for the unlimited amount of natural evil that humans experience.

Other views

- FWD can also justify the existence of natural evils as well as moral evil.
- It does account for unlimited evil as God cannot contradict himself by both giving and then limiting freedom; this necessitates natural evil.
- There has to be randomness in everything to allow any form of freedom; this includes the way the physical world operates.
- In a world without freedom humans could only be robots which would destroy God's desire for a genuine relationship with humanity; this means that natural evils have to be a factor of existence.
- If there was no natural evil, people could not make free choices as their choices would be restricted in kind and extent.
- Natural evil includes death which is a limiting factor for suffering or causing to suffer eg Swinburne.

[20 marks]**AO2**