GCE

Religious Studies

Advanced GCE **G586**

Buddhism

Mark Scheme for June 2010

A2 Preamble and Instructions to Examiners

The purpose of a marking scheme is to '… enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner' [CoP 1999 25.xiv]. It must 'allow credit to be allocated for what candidates know, understand and can do' [xv] and be 'clear and designed to be easily and consistently applied' [x].

The **Religious Studies Subject Criteria** [1999] define 'what candidates know, understand and can do' in terms of two Assessment Objectives, weighted for the OCR Religious Studies specification as indicated:

All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives.

At A level, candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and their ability to sustain a critical line of argument in greater depth and over a wider range of content than at AS level.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked. Specifications should require that candidates demonstrate the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed.

AO1:   Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.
AO2:   Sustain a critical line of argument and justify a point of view.

The requirement to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through both assessment objectives.

In order to ensure the marking scheme can be 'easily and consistently applied', and to 'enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner', it defines Levels of Response by which candidates' answers are assessed. This ensures that comparable standards are applied across the various units as well as within the team of examiners marking a particular unit. Levels of Response are defined according to the two Assessment Objectives. In A2, candidates answer a single question but are reminded by a rubric of the need to address both Objectives in their answers. Progression from Advanced Subsidiary to A2 is provided, in part, by assessing their ability to construct a coherent essay, and this is an important part of the Key Skill of Communication which 'must contribute to the assessment of Religious Studies at AS and A level'.

Positive awarding: it is a fundamental principle of OCR's assessment in Religious Studies at Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced GCE that candidates are rewarded for what they 'know, understand and can do' and to this end examiners are required to assess every answer by the Levels according to the extent to which it addresses a reasonable interpretation of the question. In the marking scheme each question is provided with a brief outline of the likely content and/or lines of argument of a 'standard' answer, but this is by no means prescriptive or exhaustive. Examiners are required to have subject knowledge to a high level and the outlines do not attempt to duplicate this.

Examiners must **not** attempt to reward answers according to the extent to which they match the structure of the outline, or mention the points it contains. The specification is designed to allow teachers to approach the content of modules in a variety of ways from any of a number of perspectives, and candidates' answers must be assessed in the light of this flexibility of approach. It is quite possible for an excellent and valid answer to contain knowledge and arguments which do not appear in the outline; each answer must be assessed on its own merits according to the Levels of Response.

Practical application of the Marking Scheme

General administrative information and instructions are issued separately by OCR.
Apart from preliminary marking for standardisation purposes, which must be carried out in pencil, the first marking of a script should be in red ink. There should be a clear indication on every page that it has been read by the examiner, and the total mark for the question must be ringed and written in the margin at the end of the script; at A2 the two sub-marks for the AOs must be written here as well. Half-marks may not be used.

To avoid giving the impression of point-marking, ticks should not be used within an answer. Examiners should follow the separate instructions about annotation of scripts; remember that the marks awarded make the assigned Levels of Response completely explicit.

Key Skill of Communication: this is assessed at both Advanced Subsidiary and A2 as an integral part of the marking scheme. The principle of positive awarding applies here as well: candidates should be rewarded for good written communication, but marks may not be deducted for inadequate written communication; the quality of communication is integral to the quality of the answer in making its meaning clear. The Key Skill requirements in Communication at Level 3 include the following evidence requirements for documents about complex subjects, which can act as a basis for assessing the Communications skills in an examination answer:

- Select and use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to your purpose and complex subject matter.
- Organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.
- Ensure your text is legible and your spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so your meaning is clear.

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Synoptic skills and the ability to make connections: these are now assessed at A2 as specification, due to the removal of the Connections papers.

Levels of Response: the descriptions are cumulative, ie a description at one level builds on or improves the descriptions at lower levels. Not all the qualities listed in a level must be demonstrated in an answer for it to fall in that level (some of the qualities are alternatives and therefore mutually exclusive). There is no expectation that an answer will receive marks in the same level for the two AOs.

AS LEVELS OF RESPONSE – G581–G589

Band	Mark /21	AO1	Mark /14	AO2
0	0	absent/no relevant material	0	absent/no argument
1	1–5	almost completely ignores the question • little relevant material • some concepts inaccurate • shows little knowledge of technical terms *a.c.i.q*	1–3	very little argument or justification of viewpoint • little or no successful analysis • views asserted with no justification *v lit arg*
		Communication: often unclear or disorganised; can be difficult to understand; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate		
2	6–9	A basic attempt to address the question • knowledge limited and partially accurate • limited understanding • might address the general topic rather than the question directly • selection often inappropriate • limited use of technical terms *b att*	4–6	a basic attempt to sustain an argument and justify a viewpoint • some analysis, but not successful • views asserted but little justification *b att*
		Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate		
3	10–13	satisfactory attempt to address the question • some accurate knowledge • appropriate understanding • some successful selection of material • some accurate use of technical terms *sat att*	7–8	the argument is sustained and justified • some successful analysis which may be implicit • views asserted but not fully justified *sust/just*
		Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate		
4	14–17	a good attempt to address the question • accurate knowledge • good understanding • good selection of material • technical terms mostly accurate *g att*	9–11	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument holistically • some successful and clear analysis • some effective use of evidence • views analysed and developed *g att*
		Communication: generally clear and organised; can be understood as a whole; spelling, punctuation and grammar good		

Band	Mark /21	AO1	Mark /14	AO2
5	18–21	A very good/excellent attempt to address the question showing understanding and engagement with the material • very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information • accurate use of technical terms *vg/e att*	12–14	A very good/excellent attempt which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument holistically • comprehends the demands of the question • uses a range of evidence • shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints *vg/e att*
Communication: answer is well constructed and organised; easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good				

1 **To what extent can it be argued that all Buddhists are aiming for nibbana?** **[35]**

AO1
Candidates might explore the nature of nibbana through any of the Buddhist traditions they have studied.

For example some candidates might consider the aim of Pure Land Buddhists to reach Sukhavati, where nibbana will be easier to achieve. They might also consider the aim of lay Buddhists within the Theravada tradition for a better rebirth.

Candidates might explore the nature of samsara and the different realms of rebirth within samsara in order to consider alternatives to nibbana.

Some candidates might explore how Buddhists reach nibbana, for example ethical or meditational practices.

AO2
Candidates might argue that nibbana is the ultimate aim of all Buddhists, since it is the entire motivation for Buddhist practice.

Candidates might argue the Pure Land Buddhists appear to aim for rebirth in the Pure Lands, rather than nibbana. Consideration of whether this is an interim or final aim might be important in reaching a conclusion about the question.

Candidate might argue that lay Buddhists might see nibbana as too distant an aim, and instead aim for a better rebirth. Consideration of nibbana as an ultimate aim, with interim aims beforehand might aid candidates in assessing the 'To what extent' aspect of the question.

2   **Assess the importance of the five precepts for Buddhist ethics.**   **[35]**

AO1

Candidates might describe the five precepts, but will need to explain why they are important to achieve the higher levels.

Candidates might give specific examples to illustrate the importance of the precepts, for example the importance of avoiding getting drunk in order to maintain their ability to see the world clearly.

Candidates might explore alternative ethical codes, such as the eightfold path, and how the five precepts relate to this, for example are the five precepts an elucidation of the Right Action section of the eightfold path.

A consideration of the nature of upaya, or the nature of Mahayana ethics might be a useful extension to the material but is not necessary.

AO2

Candidates might argue that as the primary source of lay ethics within Buddhism the five precepts have an important role in guiding the behaviour of lay people. They might explore whether this is more the case within Theravada Buddhism than Mahayana Buddhism.

Candidates might argue that the open nature of the five precepts, being open to interpretation, makes them hard to use as guidance and therefore less important to Buddhists.

Candidates might offer comparison with other ethical codes, exploring whether the five precepts are more or less important for Buddhists. For example does the concepts of upaya invalidate the guidance provided by the five precepts, or merely make them useful guidelines to be broken only in rare cases.

3   'Buddhism in the West is a betrayal of Buddhist origins.' Discuss.   [35]

AO1
Candidates might explore the origins of Buddhism, for example the life of the Buddha and the formation of the early sangha. The nature of the middle way being established at this time might be considered.

Candidates might explore Buddhist beliefs and practices in traditionally Buddhist countries, such as Sri Lanka, or Japan, and how far this reflect the Buddhism practised at the time of the Buddha.

Candidates might explore specific issues with Buddhist beliefs and practices found in the USA and European countries, for example the difficulty in carrying out the alms round, or the tendency to see the realms of rebirth as psychological states.

AO2
Candidates might argue that in some ways monastic lifestyles adopted in the western world might be closer to those undertaken in the early days of Buddhism than those in some traditional Buddhist countries, especially when contrasted with some Pure Land practices which for example have married priests.

Candidates might argue that Western practices cannot be consistent with early Buddhism, due to differences in culture and time. They could also consider whether other traditionally Buddhist countries face these issues in the modern world.

Candidates might consider whether Buddhism has always adapted, and therefore whether Western changes are merely part of this ongoing change, as individuals challenge and adapt the Buddha's teachings to suit their own circumstances.

4 **'The Pali Canon is the most important Buddhist scripture.' Discuss.** **[35]**

AO1
Candidates might explore the origins, structure and contents of the Tipitaka, but must address its importance to access the higher levels.

Following a consideration of the vinaya, sutta and abhidhamma pitakas candidates might consider how the Tipitaka is used, for example being studied by laity or the monastic community, providing stories for the laity, providing the rules for the monastic communities and sections being chanted.

Candidates might consider the use and importance of other Buddhist scriptures, such as the Lotus Sutra and the Heart Sutra, particularly for Mahayana Buddhist traditions.

AO2
Candidates might argue that the Tipitaka represents the closest account of the historical Buddha's teachings, and therefore is of prime importance in understanding his thought and practice for all Buddhists.

Candidates might argue that for Theravada Buddhists the Tipitaka is the most important Buddhist scripture since it is their primary text, and provides the ethical codes for the laity and the monastic community.

Candidates might explore whether other Buddhist scriptures might be of more importance within Mahayana traditions, for example the Sukhavati sutras within the Pure Land schools.

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