



**General Certificate of Education
January 2012**

Religious Studies

RSS01

Religion and Ethics 1

AS Unit A

Final

Mark Scheme

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

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

| Level | 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

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| 0 | 1 | Explain both the general principles of Utilitarianism and the distinctive features of Mill's Utilitarianism. |
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The specified general features are: the greatest happiness principle, consequential or teleological thinking in contrast to deontological thinking. These may be conflated in a candidate's answer.

Greatest happiness principle: The principle that an action is right if it results in the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Students may explain the idea that happiness is the 'sovereign good' for Bentham. A consequential / teleological form of moral decision making: the outcome of the action makes it right or wrong. A right action is the one that generates the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. In act utilitarianism, no action is intrinsically right or wrong, all actions are a means to an end – so this contrasts with deontological thinking. Bentham claims that the happiness generated can be measured using the hedonic calculus.

Mill's utilitarianism distinguishes between higher and lower pleasures and Mill is associated with Rule Utilitarianism. Lower pleasures (e.g. drinking alcohol) may have to be sacrificed in order to achieve more worthwhile higher pleasures (e.g. health) – this is summed up as better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. Rule utilitarianism advocates agreeing rules or social conventions for societies as a whole to follow in order to promote the greatest happiness. The balance between explaining the general principles and explaining Mill can vary. Max level 5 for answers which do not tackle both.

(30 marks) AO1

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| 0 | 2 | 'Ending pain should always be more important than increasing pleasure.' To what extent would a Utilitarian agree with this view? |
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Points that may be made include:

- It depends on how much pleasure/happiness (present and future) the action of ending pain/suffering would generate – this would take into account (e.g.) the number of people affected and the potential for bringing happiness to others.
- All that matters is the TOTAL pleasure/happiness generated – using the hedonic calculus could show that there is no right answer – ending the pain or suffering of one individual or group could be equal in pleasure/happiness generation to increasing the pleasure of another.
- Could be argued that increasing the pleasure/happiness of those who are already content would not result in happiness in long term. Consequences of this could include guilt, exaggerated sense of self worth, increased sense of worthlessness on part of sufferer.
- This is the perspective of negative utilitarianism which has had a number of supporters – however, some have argued that the goal of ending all suffering would actually entail the suicide of all living things since that alone would end all suffering.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 2 Situation Ethics**0****3**

Examine each of the four presumptions of Situation Ethics: pragmatism, contextual relativism, positivism and personalism.

The presumptions overlap and may be conflated in the argument. It is not necessary for students to write an equal amount on each and what follows is only an illustration of what may be covered – it is not necessary for students to cover all these points to score maximum marks.

Pragmatism

The decision maker should approach each situation asking ‘what will work in this situation’ i.e. what will produce the greatest love, not ‘what does the law say I should do’. The answer may or may not be ‘follow the ten commandments’ depending on the outcome of the action. The right thing to do is what works, not what the law says. Possible example: A group in hiding will be discovered if the baby cries – when it starts crying the mother smothers it because that is what shows and promotes the greatest love. In this situation, this was, according to Situation Ethics the pragmatic decision.

Contextual Relativism

No actions are intrinsically right or wrong – they become right or wrong simply depending on their outcome – possible examples: adultery; cannibalism or as above. Actions are right or wrong relative to love – this relativises the absolute, and avoids antinomianism.

Positivism

Situation Ethics has a foundation in faith – the faith that God is love, and that love is the highest good. This cannot be proved any more than the utilitarian belief that happiness is the greatest good can be proved. The system is a-rational (not irrational).

Personalism

Situation Ethics is based on the command to love people not rules. While the legalist asks ‘WHAT must I do?’ the situationist asks ‘WHO needs help?’ People are of value because they are in the image of God. Fletcher approves of Kant’s maxim ‘Treat people as ends.’

Max Level 5 for an answer that does not deal with all four.

(30 marks)**AO1****0****4**

How far can Situation Ethics be considered a Christian form of moral decision making?

Points that may be made include:

In support

It is based on faith in God and Christian love (agape);
Jesus’ actions in breaking the ‘law’ of the Sabbath support its methods;
Fletcher says that love is the Holy Spirit working within us;
It seems to be obvious that a Christian would want to show love i.e. the command: ‘love one another as I have loved you’.

Against

Under some circumstances it leads to people breaking the moral code of the Church;
It has been condemned by some Church leaders.

(15 marks)**AO2**

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

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Explain religious teachings about the value of human and non-human life.

The specification invites students to consider value alongside quality of life, self sacrifice and non-human life. Students may refer to one religion or more.

The following is indicative only. Students are not expected to include all these points and may choose to include others that are equally valid.

Buddhism: Buddhist teaching gives human life special status as the only birth from which enlightenment is possible. Female birth is considered less valuable in some Buddhist teachings. Ultimately human life is Dukkha – a state of being that is unsatisfactory and needs to be escaped from.

However, human life is only one of many possible realms of existence, the animal realm being another. Respect for life extends to animals as well ‘Do not harm any living thing’ is one of the 5 precepts, and many Buddhists are also vegetarian. The Jakarta tales of the Buddha’s previous lives include the tale of the hungry tigress in which he sacrifices his life in order to feed her and the cubs.

Christianity: Sanctity of life – all humans have a God-given right to life and only God can take that away. Humanity is created in God’s image and life is held in trust for God and belongs to him, not to the individual human being. Earthly life of value as an opportunity to serve God and build a relationship with him, but that service may lead to self-sacrifice since this world is of far less importance than the next. All humanity of equal value regardless of race, gender and disability.

Non-human life, largely on the basis of Genesis 1, 2 and 9, considered inferior. Like humanity they are witnesses to the glory of God, but also have a utilitarian value for food and work. Humankind has dominion over them and a duty towards them. Animals are traditionally seen as lacking souls and reason. However, some modern Christian thinking gives a greater value to animals, pointing out that God made a covenant with them as well and the Garden of Eden, as a picture of the ideal world, gives them peace and security as much as humanity.

Hinduism: The Atman is within all living things, the human body allows Atman to work towards union with Brahman. Each individual life is one of many lives on the cycle of reincarnation which links all life forms. Each human being should therefore look at the situation of any other being, human or not, with compassion since it is a situation they may themselves have shared at some point or will share.

Attitudes to the caste system vary but for many birth, which is dependent on deeds in previous existence, determines status, role and worth. Female birth is still considered inferior by many. Many Hindus are vegetarian and there are passages in the laws of Manu which say that killing an animal puts a barrier in the way to heaven. Atman is also within animals. The cow is regarded as sacred and cannot be harmed or eaten.

Islam: The purpose of humanity is to worship God and individual value lies in how far you do this. All human life is sacred and must be treated with the rights given to it in the Shari'a. No one has the right to take the life of another except according to God's command. The moral worth of a person does not depend on birth, gender, race or wealth. Male and female are regarded as equal but different, although interpretations vary. Greater responsibilities come with greater wealth, status and bodily health, not greater worth.

Animals are also parts of God's creation but unlike humanity have no intellect. They may be used for food and work, but must be treated with respect.

Judaism: Humanity created in God's image and valued as an expression of God's nature. His covenant with them, and the rational, creative and moral features which reflect the image of God, give each person the right to be treated according to the law. There should be equality of worth regardless of gender and disability. Membership of the chosen people is traditionally a matter of birth to a Jewish mother.

God has made a covenant with animals. It is forbidden to cause animals pain, but animal experimentation for human benefit is allowed. People take priority over animals; they may be used for food and work, but may not be hunted or used in animal fights.

Sikhism: Human beings are equal, differences of caste, gender and race have no impact on worth. People have worth because they can do good and achieve enlightenment. Being born in human form is special because humans have a higher level of consciousness, a moral conscience and free will. To experience life is to journey nearer to reunion with God and to further this humans should value their mind above the instincts which rule the lower life forms.

Some Sikhs believe that members of the khalsa should not eat eat or fish, others that is a matter of personal choice. Cruelty to animals, and killing animals for pleasure are forbidden

Max Level 5 for an answer that does not deal with both human and non-human life.

(30 marks) AO1

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| 0 | 6 |
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'A human being is no more than a thinking animal.'

How far can religious believers accept this view?

This may be answered with reference to one religion or more.

In support (e.g.)

Religions like Hinduism which views all life as an expression of Brahman could accept this view, as could those who view human life as a developmental process in which human beings mature towards the likeness of God having been born as thinking animals. Those who see human beings as part of a natural evolutionary process developing their spirituality during life might also accept it.

Against (e.g.)

Traditional creationists and others who see human beings as a special creation will not be able to accept this. They see humans as having a soul / spiritual element and therefore totally different than animals. Others may argue that baptism or conversion make humans different.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 4 Abortion and euthanasia

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Explain what is meant by active euthanasia and passive euthanasia, and why some people might want euthanasia.

Basic meaning of euthanasia – good death.

Active euthanasia: someone must actively do something to bring about the death of the person requesting euthanasia – e.g. give overdose, smother.

Passive euthanasia: This is ‘letting die’ – someone must not do something that would keep the person alive – withdraw treatment / food / drink, not resuscitate, turn off life support, not carry out a possibly life-saving operation or give life-saving drugs.

Students may mention / explain that some argue that the distinction between these two is false.

Students may consider why people might want euthanasia for themselves and/or for others

- Unbearable quality of life, even when not terminally ill – e.g. a 23 yr old rugby player paralysed from neck down.
- Quality of life of the terminally ill – they may want to bring death about more quickly than it would otherwise happen, but this may be only a few days / weeks / months.
- Dignity in dying – very similar to above, but here the emphasis is on asserting some control in a situation where the individual has very little.
- Wish to prevent others from suffering.

Both definition and reasons must be covered for marks above Level 5.

(30 marks) AO1

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| 0 | 8 |
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‘No one has the right to keep me alive against my will when I have made it clear that I want to die.’ How far can a religious believer accept this view?

Some students may, appropriately, relate this to a debate about carrying out wishes set out in an advanced directive / living will.

In support: (e.g.)

Concern for equality and justice could be used to argue that those who are not in a position to end their own lives should be given the opportunity that all other people have.

Compassion for the individual who is suffering can lead to the same conclusion
The argument that any religion-based beliefs of one person (against euthanasia) should not limit my freedom to do with my life as I wish – i.e. that personal religious beliefs should only affect those who hold them –they have no right to force them on others.

Against (e.g.)

The person requesting euthanasia may not be in a fit frame of mind and the desire to die could pass in time – so it is my duty to protect you from yourself.

Life belongs to God, not yours to dispose of – my duty to God overrides my duty towards you.

Desire to die is negative karma – my duty to help you value the life you have.

No right to ask someone to kill you just because you want to die.

There must be explicit reference to religion for marks above level 5

(15 marks) AO2

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion