



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**Religious Studies**

**RSS04**

**Religion, Philosophy and Science**

**AS Unit D**

**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	

## RSS04: Religion, Philosophy and Science

### Question 1 Miracles

0	1
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**Explain what it means to describe a miracle as an event of religious significance.**

Answers may cover both miracles as events which break the law of nature and approaches which describe miracles as events which arouse man's sense of wonder.

Expect students to refer to the loving nature of God as a being who responds to those in need by bringing about miraculous healings. Examples from Lourdes or scripture may be used. Students may also refer to the power of God over nature and to his ability to break the laws of nature. They may discuss the idea that God does not need to act in nature to communicate with his creation by referring to events which are seen to be religious in the lives of the believing community. They may refer to Aquinas' understanding of how God brings about acts in time.

**(30 marks) AO1**

0	2
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**'The continued existence of suffering in the world makes belief in miracles unreasonable.' Assess this claim.**

#### **Makes belief unreasonable**

It does not seem logical that a being who can intervene sometimes to alleviate suffering should not do so every time. It also does not seem logical that a being who is omnipotent should not be capable of creating a universe which has no need of miracles in the first place. It seems more logical to believe that the existence of suffering means that a miracle-working being does not exist.

#### **Does not make belief unreasonable**

Miracles which do not allow human beings to choose to believe in God undermine faith. Miracles are seen as signs of God's involvement in the world but they do not work to eliminate pain or suffering because this would come at the high cost of eliminating human freedom. Miracles which help some give believers the example they need to act like God in the world for themselves.

**(15 marks) AO2**

### Question 2 Creation

0	3
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**Examine ways in which religious believers understand creation as ongoing action by God.**

Creation is not just an event which happens at the start of time but is something which requires continued sustaining by the Creator. Expect students to refer to the idea of continuing creation perhaps by referring to Aquinas and his argument that divine causation is continuing. Students may use evidence of continuing creation such as religious experience to support the notion of God's ongoing action. They may refer to Polkinghorne who argues that God is the reason why the rationality of the universe and the rationality of humans coheres or the reason for spontaneous symmetry-breaking just after the Big Bang as further evidence for the ongoing action of God. They may also use miracles as evidence of a continuing action. They may also refer to the idea that God works through evolution.

**(30 marks) AO1**

0

4

**'God is simply a response to unanswered questions about creation.'**  
**How far do you agree?**

The point here concerns whether or not the God-of-the-gaps argument is dealt with effectively by the idea that God is a sustainer.

### **Is simply a response**

Although there are gaps in the scientific understanding of creation, time has shown that many of the gaps have been closed or are closing. There may come a time when there are no gaps so it will be difficult to argue that God has any sort of role in creation. Further, the evidence for God (religious experiences etc) is arguable at best. Other non-theistic explanations for these unanswered questions may be seen to be just as effective.

### **Is not simply a response**

Many of the unanswered questions about creation are not specifically religious. Science may have gaps but religion is not required to fill them in. Christians argue for a God who is in relationship with the universe and who is the fundamental reason for why there is a universe at all. Any gaps in human knowledge are unaffected by this belief.

**(15 marks) AO2**

## **Question 3 The design argument**

0

5

**Outline Paley's design argument and explain Hume's criticisms of the design argument.**

Expect an outline of the watch analogy. Students may also use evidence of the eye, the natural world and the movement of the planets to exemplify their answers.

Hume criticizes design arguments which use analogy, raises the problem of suffering, suggests that the universe is a product of random motion (Epicurean Hypothesis) and that arguments which follow a similar structure to that of Paley cannot and do not explain the design-producing being and so are incomplete as an explanation.

Both elements need to be addressed for marks above Level 5.

**(30 marks) AO1**

0

6

**Consider how far Hume's criticisms of the design argument are successful.**

### **Are successful**

Strengths of Hume should include discussion of the lack of evidence for the Christian God and the obvious flaws in analogies from mechanisms to the universe. Students may look forward and argue that Darwin's theory of evolution adds weight to Hume by suggesting that design is only apparent and not real.

### **Are not successful**

Although Hume effectively undermines the kind of design argument put forward by Paley, modern versions of design are not challenged as much by him. Fine tuning in the universe and the existence of the complete set of laws which govern the universe remain inexplicable except by reference to some Designer. Students may argue that belief in total randomness is as hard to accept as belief in God.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**Question 4 Quantum mechanics and a religious world view**

<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
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**Examine the parallels between quantum mechanics and mysticism.**

Students may refer to any or all of the elements outlined in the specification to explore the following parallels:

Underlying unity and connectedness of reality;

Difficulty of description and the use of models of language to point to mystical and quantum reality;

Dissolving of observer into the observed or subject into object.

**(30 marks) AO1**

<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>
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**'The parallels between quantum mechanics and mysticism are of no real significance'. Assess this view.**

**Are of no real significance**

Mysticism is not science: its language and methodology is wholly different from that of science. The parallels are entirely coincidental and could be applied to a range of phenomena. Mysticism provides no explanation of reality whereas quantum mechanics is, like all science, based on experimentation and observation of reality.

**Are of significance**

Quantum mechanics reminds scientists that absolute truths are difficult to come by; that the most valuable things can sometimes be difficult to describe and that the universe is not a separate thing from us. The importance of quantum mechanics is that it raises the possibility of fruitful dialogue between scientists and mystics.

**(15 marks) AO2**

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