



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

Religious Studies

RST4C

**Religious Authority OR Ways of Moral
Decision-Making OR Ways of Reading and
Understanding Scripture**

A2 Unit 4C

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) A2 Level Descriptors

Level	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 evaluated perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Systematic analysis and reasoning leads to appropriate conclusions. 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. A process of reasoning leads to an appropriate evaluation. 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. A conclusion is drawn that follows from 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	

Section A Religious Authority

Question 1

0

1

Examine the relationship between dependent religious authorities (e.g. scripture, religious leaders, religious institutions, tradition) and their source(s).

The authority of scriptures, for example, is established by a gradual process of canonization, from oral tradition through to editing, redaction, and canonization by religious leaders and councils. In most religious traditions, dependent authorities derive their authority from God, as the one who inspires scripture, inspires and motivates religious leaders, etc. For scripture, for example, God can be seen as the author of scripture, transmitted through the writers of scripture. For the Christian Church, it is said to reflect God's wisdom, and God designs it to accomplish the divine purposes, such as worship, benevolence, education and evangelism. Students are likely to show that the various dependent religious authorities are inter-related: e.g. the authority of religious leaders in the theistic religions derives generally from scripture and ultimately from God; moreover it forms part of religious tradition and practice, for example the various roles and responsibilities of the *imam* in the Shi'a and Sunni traditions. In Hinduism, the Brahmin priestly class has spiritual authority by birth. The subject matter available to students is large, but the focus of responses should be on *the relationship between the different authorities and their sources*.

(45 marks)**AO1**

0

2

**'All religious authority depends solely upon God.'
How far do you agree?**

In the theistic religions, the authority of scripture, for example, is often held to depend on how close it is to the absolute / delivered word of God. Nevertheless with scripture, for example, scripture might be held not to be the word of God, but still be judged to have an intrinsic authority based on the quality of its advice. The authority of religious institutions derives ultimately from God, but it can be argued that all human institutions serve the purposes of their human founder. There are many avenues that students might take here. Nietzsche, for example, examined the authority of religious institutions as an example of will to power, in so far as the threat of eternal punishment and the promise of eternal reward act as a means of social control for the religious hierarchy. Religious authority in non-theistic Buddhism might be said to rest primarily on the *sangha* and the texts. High Level answers will deal appropriately with the word "solely".

(30 marks)**AO2**

Question 2

0

3

Examine how different types of secular authority challenge religious authority.

Students should show here that it is religious authority that is being challenged, and not simply religion as a whole. Whereas the growth of secularism itself may not challenge religious authority, the secularisation of a particular state might well challenge religious authority. Examples in the UK could include issues such as Sunday trading and abortion. Students are likely to refer to challenges from secular scientific authorities (although there can be no assumption that science as a whole challenges religious authority). Likely examples will include the challenge to religious literature concerning the origins of the universe, and the ensuing debate about the nature of the human condition, where challenges can be political as well as philosophical. With philosophy itself (as with science), philosophical authority can challenge the existence of God, and thereby challenge most aspects of religious authority.

(45 marks)**AO1**

0

4

'Religious authority cannot overcome the challenges from secular authorities.'
Evaluate this claim.

Students might argue that religious authority can stand up for itself in a number of ways. In the debate about the origins of the universe and the nature of the human condition, for example, one reaction is for religious authorities to endorse a literalist / fundamentalist approach to scripture, and to insist that in any debate between religion and science, religion is correct. There are any number of ramifications of this debate – for example so-called 'creation science' attempts to preserve the authority of both religion and science. Some physicists accept all the findings of science but accept the religious accounts of creation as being authoritative in terms of meaning. Others might argue that increasing secularisation is an indicator of the gradual loss of religious authority, particularly in the rejection of absolute moral values. Some might argue that religious authority is granted to individual believers through the power of faith and of religious experience, and that secular challenges have little or no power to affect personal conviction. There is no requirement for students to discuss the same secular challenges as in 03.

(30 marks)**AO2**

Section B Ways of Moral Decision- Making

Question 3

0

5

Examine how religious people might apply religious ethical teachings to either medical research and medical developments or business practice and economics.

Religious people make decisions which they judge to be moral on the basis that they are in line with the teachings and ideas put forward by their particular religious tradition. By following these teachings, they consider themselves to be acting in a moral way. They will therefore apply them to all life's situations. Their application in developmental areas such as medical research and developments, or in the fast-changing world of business practice and economics, will thus adjust to the different situations that arise from research and enterprise. Most religious traditions accordingly develop situational ethical responses, or else interpret absolute principles to decide on an appropriate moral response. Students should be able to illustrate some of these responses.

(45 marks)

AO1

0

6

'Religious ethical teaching is not helpful when deciding about these issues.'
Assess this claim with reference to the medical or business issues you have examined.

Some might argue that most religious ethical teaching is absolutist and deontological, and that it was developed during an era when the need for ethical systems to respond to developmental issues such as those under discussion was minimal or non-existent. They might argue, accordingly, that religious ethical teaching cannot form appropriate responses, since absolute principles cannot by definition be modified. By contrast, some traditions have situational responses which might or might not be judged to be appropriate. Some might argue that secular ethical theories are better equipped to deal with developmental issues. Students who make this point should keep the focus on the contrast with religious ethical teaching, and not just on the nature of secular ethical responses.

(30 marks)

AO2

Question 4

0

7

Examine how hybrid ethical systems can be used to help people make moral decisions.

Students might spend some time establishing what is and what is not a hybrid ethical system. Within reason, any ethical system can be described as hybrid, since there are elements of both deontological and teleological thinking in just about all systems; nevertheless students would need to demonstrate through their answers why it is that the systems they are examining can be described as hybrid. Most are likely to refer to Rule Utilitarianism and to Christian Situation Ethics, or perhaps to Natural Law, where the principle of double effect might be taken as a nod towards teleological considerations. Whatever hybrid system is selected, students should be able to illustrate, using examples, how the system helps people to make moral decisions. Examples do not have to come from the fields of medical research and developments or business practice and economics.

(45 marks)

AO1

0

8

‘Only deontological ethical systems are sufficiently clear to help people make moral decisions.’ Evaluate this view.

‘Deontological ethical systems’ can be either religious or secular, and in practice, most are likely to refer to Kant and Natural Law. When discussing deontological systems, the emphasis should be on their clarity, and not on describing their content. Students are likely to refer to their absolute nature, and the simplicity (for example) of obeying a divine command, together with the consistency engendered by obeying a rule. Students might compare these facets with the clarity (or otherwise) of teleological or hybrid systems. For example some might argue that clarity is better seen in the ability of an ethical system to adjust to different situations or to take account of human emotions.

(30 marks)

AO2

Section C Ways of Reading and Understanding Scripture

Question 5

0	9	Examine the use of religious scriptures in worship and their role in people's personal lives.
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The use of religious scriptures can be both formal and informal. Formal usage relates generally to the status of particular scriptures. Approaches vary from treating scripture as a living prophet, having Guru status in Sikhism, to being seen as an historical record of God at work within a certain group of people, as in some of Judaism and Christianity. The role of scripture within personal life can of course overlap with its role within worship. There are any number of areas that students might discuss, such as: the use of scripture in forming a connection with God; understanding spiritual truths; promoting mystical experience; guiding individual practice; providing philosophical insight; being used as a guide to the future, and so on. Some might refer to scriptural commentary and exegesis, which can inform religious practice both in formal worship and in personal life.

Max Level 5 if only one aspect dealt with.

(45 marks) AO1

1	0	'Scripture can never be irrelevant.' How far do you agree?
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Students might argue that in the theistic religions, for example, this must be the case, since scripture is the word of God. Alternatively, it might be argued that scripture can become irrelevant if the status of a religion declines, since the status of the source of its authority declines also, and there is no doubt that in some cultures, belief in God is less prevalent. It could be argued, however, that this might not affect the significance of scripture in other ways. Within all religious traditions, there are variations in their approach to the authority and significance of different scriptures. Some is taken as poetic, mystical, emotive, moral, and so on, and there is no reason why this kind of literature should not retain its significance in these respects. Moreover it is not clear what the future status of religion will be, so it is difficult to second-guess the significance of scripture in the future. There are many spiritually profound elements in ancient scriptures from all cultures, and these retain their original power. With Buddhism, the absence, in much of Buddhist literature, of belief in a personal deity, means that as a philosophy of life, Buddhism for example has world-wide appeal on a deeply personal level.

(30 marks) AO2

Question 6

1	1	Examine the reaction of one religion to criticism of its scriptures, both from within that religion and from outside it.
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Most are likely to exemplify this from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, with its long history of reacting to scriptural analysis and criticism from both within and without. ‘Criticism’ need not imply a negative approach, although inevitably a critical approach from biblical scholars, some of whom are Christians but many of whom are not, often leads to negativity in terms of the so-called truths of the Christian religion. Christianity has had to react to a variety of different approaches, including text, literary, form and redaction criticism, with the result that there is a diversity of approaches to scripture – the Protestant tradition, for example, ranges from maintaining Christian fundamentals to seeing scripture as being in need of demythologizing. Criticism from outside is also prevalent from scientific, philosophical and political sources, for example, to which Christians react with equal diversity.

Max Level 5 if only one aspect dealt with.

(45 marks) AO1

1	2	Evaluate the view that religion should not tolerate any criticism of its scriptures.
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Students might take a variety of approaches to this question. For some traditions, neither criticism from within nor from without is tolerated, at least without being scrutinized by those in authority: in some religious traditions, there is an ongoing process of censorship of criticism from within, and a policy of guarded dialogue with those who criticize from without, perhaps maintaining some form of dialogue with science and secular philosophy, but otherwise maintaining the fundamentals of faith. Conversely, many traditions hold that excessive literalism is a bar to the realization of higher truth, and that religion must be prepared to adapt and change, the alternative being stagnation and decay. Students might argue for example that religion might not tolerate criticism from within, but has no choice but to react to criticism from without.

(30 marks) AO2

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