



**General Certificate of Education
January 2013**

Religious Studies

RSS03

Philosophy of Religion

AS Unit C

Final

Mark Scheme

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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	

RSS03: Philosophy of Religion**Question 1 The cosmological argument**

0	1
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 Explain key criticisms of the cosmological argument.

Expect criticisms based on Aquinas' argument, which may include: criticisms about the rejection of infinite regression; the universe as a brute fact rather than recourse to the existence of an explanation in God; the fallacy of composition applied to the cause of an event and the cause of the universe; challenges to the source being identified as God; conclusion that goes beyond the evidence.

Other forms of the cosmological argument are to be credited and maximum marks could be achieved without reference to Aquinas' form of the argument.

Criticisms need to be explained as to how they weaken the argument.

(30 marks) AO1

0	2
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 **'The cosmological argument does not help religious faith.'
Assess this claim.**
Possible arguments in support of claim may include:

The argument is flawed. We can't draw conclusions that go beyond the evidence. It is inductive and therefore not a proof.

Religious faith is not based on intellectual arguments. Persuasive argument would leave no room for faith.

Possible arguments to challenge the claim may include:

Intellectual support for belief in God. Reveals God as temporal first cause, sustainer of motion, causation and existence. God as necessary being. God is the only explanation.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 2 Religious experience

0	3
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 Explain the challenges of both philosophy and science to religious experience.
Challenges from philosophy may include:

Can finite experience be infinite; is a direct experience of God possible; problems of verifying e.g. subjectivity; the lack of uniformity of the religious experiences

Challenges from science may include:

Natural explanations, e.g. drugs, temporal lobe epilepsy; ability to simulate experiences e.g. Persinger's helmet; psychological explanations e.g. Jung/Freud

Maximum level 5(23) if only one area answered

(30 marks) AO1

0	4
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To what extent have these challenges been successful?

Possible arguments to support statement may include:

Philosophical problems suggest uncertainty and inability to be certain
Natural explanations sufficient especially as religious experiences can be recreated under certain conditions. Natural explanations more persuasive answer than supernatural. Occam's razor – no need to introduce God as entity.

Possible arguments to challenge statement may include:

Reasonable that God may seek to interact with his creatures. Uncertainty is not evidence that religious experiences are false. God could use natural means. Some religious experiences appear to be shared by many people. Stimulating temporal lobes may facilitate rather than induce the experience. Psychological interpretations flawed.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 3 Psychology and religion

0	5
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Explain how Freud's understanding of religion challenges religious belief.

Expect discussion of Freud's theory in terms of why it challenges religious belief. Seen as response to Oedipus complex and repressed guilt.
Seen as wish fulfilment and reaction against helplessness.
Form of neurotic illness and repressed traumas. Religion is an illusion.

Answers need to focus on the challenge to religious belief that results from Freud's theory.

Maximum level 5(23) if only discussed Freud's understanding of religion.

(30 marks) AO1

0	6
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'Psychology has successfully explained away God.'
How far do you agree?

Possible arguments to support statement may include:

Support for Freud's theories.
Support for Jung's theories including archetypes, God as an inner psychological experience. Images of God are part of collective unconscious.

Possible arguments to challenge statement may include:

Criticisms of Freud's theories. Criticisms of Jung's theories. View that Jung is not a challenge since he regarded religious experiences as genuine. Did not disprove or deny God.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 4 Atheism and postmodernism

0	7
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Explain the main features of a postmodernist view of religion.

Expect discussion of the key terms/ideas of postmodernism, e.g. a cultural construct, no right or wrong, personal search, pick and mix approach, living rather than intellectual faith.

The ideas need relating to religion to reflect the main characteristics/features of postmodernist view of religion.

(30 marks) AO1

0	8
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**‘Postmodernism is a denial of religion.’
Assess this claim.**

Possible arguments in support may include:

The rejection of meta-narratives and absolute truth. Emphasis on the individual choice and pick and mix approach. The role of cultural constructs in understanding religion.

Possible arguments to challenge claim may include:

Emphasis on living rather than intellectual belief as an approach more reflective of true religion. Emphasis on traditional religion needing to be reinterpreted for the postmodern era. Spirituality rather than traditional formal religion

(15 marks) AO2

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