

# A-LEVEL **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

RSS08 Religion and Contemporary Society  
Mark scheme

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2060  
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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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## Examination Levels of Response

### Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

<i>Level</i>	AS Descriptor AO1	<i>Marks</i>	AS Descriptor AO2	<i>Marks</i>	AS Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
<b>7</b>	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	<b>28-30</b>	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.	<b>14-15</b>	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.
<b>6</b>	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)	<b>24-27</b>	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.	<b>12-13</b>	
<b>5</b>	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).	<b>20-23</b>	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.	<b>10-11</b>	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.
<b>4</b>	A generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing some understanding and coherence.	<b>15-19</b>	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.	<b>7-9</b>	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.
<b>3</b>	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	<b>10-14</b>	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	<b>5-6</b>	
<b>2</b>	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.	<b>5-9</b>	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	<b>3-4</b>	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.
<b>1</b>	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	<b>1-4</b>	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	<b>1-2</b>	
<b>0</b>	Nothing of relevance.	<b>0</b>	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	<b>0</b>	

**RSS08: Religion and Contemporary Society**

**Question 1** Changing patterns of religious practice in the United Kingdom (UK) during the 20<sup>th</sup> century

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Examine the relative numerical strengths and distributions of different religious groups in the United Kingdom (UK).</b>
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**Relative strengths**

Strengths

Christianity – 59.3% (33.2 million)

Islam – 4.8% (2.7 million)

Hinduism – 1.5%

Sikhism- 0.8%

Judaism – 0.5%

Buddhism – 0.4%

No religion – 25% (14.1 million)

Better answers should be able to go beyond simple identification figures to consider something of levels of practice – e.g. less than 10% Church attendance etc. There may also be attention to relative strengths of different groups within a religion, e.g. decline of traditional Christian denominations, but rise in Pentecostal Churches and in Catholicism in some areas.

**Distribution**

This may be approached geographically or in terms of types of areas. E.g.

Christianity – widespread, but generally stronger in rural areas than in urban. London is the exception

Islam – widespread. Early communities (e.g. of Pakistani origin) often settled around northern industrial towns. Still large concentrations in e.g. Lancashire, West Yorkshire. Expect some recognition of diversity of origins of Muslim population today.

Judaism. Orthodox communities traditionally North Manchester, Glasgow, Newcastle, Leeds.

Hasidic – Stamford Hill and Gateshead.

Hinduism – widespread, but very large population in Leicester area

Sikhism – large concentration Southall, but also in East and West Midlands.

There may be comment on particular areas highlighted in the 2011 census, especially if they are of local relevance to the students, but this level of detail is not required.

Better answers are likely to show awareness of spread from ‘traditional’ distribution.

Max L5 if both strengths and distribution are not addressed.

**[30 marks]****AO1**

<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>To what extent can the United Kingdom (UK) still be described as a Christian country?</b>
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**Can be described**

Majority of population call themselves Christian

Role of established Church

Christian festivals widely celebrated

Role of Christian leaders

‘Default position’

**Cannot be described**

Much of Christianity only nominal

Significant decline which some would see as terminal

Christian values largely over-ridden by secular

Other religions and other forms of spirituality appear to have just as much standing

Some may question the extent to which the UK was ever a Christian country, or may distinguish between the various nations of the UK in this debate.

**[15 marks]**

**AO2**

**Question 2 Expressions of religion within society****0****3**

**Examine the role taken by religious leaders in the wider society beyond their faith communities. You should refer to one or more religion(s) in your answer.**

‘Faith community’ may be taken as ‘tradition’ or as local ‘congregation’ or group. Particular roles will obviously depend on the religions chosen, but the following areas are likely

- Spokesperson for the religion on social and religious matters: e.g. to give the teachings of the religion,
- To contribute to wider debate within society on the issue concerned.
- To be the ‘public face’ of that religious group
- Sometimes to be part of legislature – e.g. religious leaders in House of Lords
- To maintain traditions and values of the wider community concerned
- To engage with members of other faith communities, certainly within the local community.
- To work with other religious leaders within the locality
- To meet pastoral needs, whether or not people concerned are part of the particular faith community concerned.
- Hospital, prison chaplaincies etc

These roles should be appropriately exemplified from the religions chosen.

**[30 marks]****AO1****0****4**

**‘Views expressed by religious leaders are only ever relevant to people of their own faith community.’ Assess this claim.**

**Agree:**

Self evidently, these leaders only relate to their own faith communities  
 Their statements based on the framework of teaching and beliefs of that religion, so not relevant to those outside  
 Sometimes based on an authority structure which has no meaning outside the community  
 Sometimes also linked to cultural framework which has no relevance for others.

**Disagree:**

People often want to know what religious leaders think, even if they do not share their faith or attitudes  
 Gives some sort of moral or religious ‘markers’ for living  
 Collective views of different leaders may be more powerful than the views of individual leaders  
 Helps people to understand the perspectives of different faith communities  
 In the case of many communities, the views of e.g. the Christian priest or minister maybe something that people turn to in times of crisis or need, even though they do not go to Church.

Some may argue that even for those within the faith community, the views of religious leaders have little relevance for the ordinary members of the community.

**[15 marks]****AO2**

**Question 3 Issues of identity and belonging**

<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Examine the meaning of the following terms:-</b>
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- **religious identity**
- **cultural identity**
- **assimilation.**

NB- There is likely to need to be some definition of 'identity'. This is not asked for separately, but look for ways in which students show understanding to the concept in the course of their answers to the three parts. This should show some awareness of ideas such as 'who am I?', 'who do I associate with/ separate myself from?', and ways in which these senses of belonging may be expressed through values and self expression.

**Religious identity**

The people that one identifies with as a religious group,

The ' labels' one uses,

Religious values adopted

May involve items of dress which immediately show others the group to which one belongs

Effects on lifestyles and values

**Cultural identity**

Often to do with the society from which one, or parents or grandparents come;

May be closely related to, or separate from, religious identity

Often involves language and customs,

Dress may also be involved

May provide a subset of religious identity

**Assimilation**

Process by which a group becomes merged into a larger culture or group;

Often under some pressure, or the need to 'get on' in the wider society;

Usually involving some loss of distinctive identity

All 3 concepts need to be addressed for marks above level 5, although some may be dealt with more fully than others.

Exemplification is needed, but beware of examples which are not clearly linked to the concept under consideration.

**[30 marks]****AO1**

0	6
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**‘Religious identity is more important to people today than cultural identity’.**

**Assess this view.**

**Agree:**

Religious identity is about defining someone by beliefs and spirituality, and so is essential to who that person is

Cultural identity can vary in an increasingly mobile, global society, whereas religious identity may be more constant.

People may want to assimilate culturally, but still retain their religious identity (e.g. by being seen as a British Muslim or Sikh)

For many people of dual heritage, cultural identity may be more difficult to maintain.

**Disagree**

Cultural identity is still important to people, especially as they want to know their ‘roots’

People wish to retain culture through language and food, even though they may assimilate in many other ways

In a period of religious decline, cultural identity may be more important.

A strong case can be made on either side of this argument, and much will depend on the particular perspectives and examples taken

**[15 marks]**

**AO2**



**Question 4 An introduction to New Religious Movements (NRMs)**

0

7

**Outline what is meant by the phrase ‘new religious movement’ and examine the theological explanations for the rise of such movements.**

**Outline:**

Generally arising within the last 200 years  
Usually offshoot of established religious group  
Some element of protest  
Or disagreement with mainstream religion

This is only an outline, but some ‘unpacking’/exemplification is expected.

**Examine**

Decline in traditional certainties in mainstream religions  
Thus not offering the answers which they once did  
NRMs often fundamentalist, thus taking very unambiguous views  
Decline in the authority of religion  
Millenarianism offering belief in afterlife, whereas eschatological emphasis lost from much of mainstream religion  
Resonances with ‘signs of the times’ in terms of events such as wars, environmental crises, famines etc  
In some cases offering sense of being the ‘elect’ or chosen  
Beliefs may have an ‘exotic’ appeal when contrasted with mainstream religion.  
Spiritual emphasis of new age NRMs.

Max level 4 for definition only

Max Level 5 if no definition given, though this may be given, *passim*, in the rest of the discussion

**[30 marks]****AO1**

0

8

**‘The beliefs of New Religious Movements have little meaning for people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.’ Assess this view**

**Agree**

Religion in general has little meaning for people in 21<sup>st</sup> century  
Beliefs of NRMs are often ‘extreme’, and involve, for instance, apocalyptic and eschatological teachings which have little meaning even to those who are otherwise religious.  
Little place in fast-paced technological society

**Disagree**

Clearly there are some for whom they have meaning  
Some of the apocalyptic ideas have particular resonance in times of war, famine and global warming  
The ‘certainties’ of NRMs are what some people crave

**[15 marks]****AO2**