



A-LEVEL

Religious Studies

RST3F Religion and Contemporary Society
Mark scheme

2060
June 2015

| Version 1.0: Final Mark Scheme

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.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced) A2 Level Descriptors

<i>Level</i>	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 critically analysed perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Appropriate evaluation is fully supported by the reasoning. 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 and critically analysed. Appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument. 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. An evaluation is made that is consistent with 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	

RST3F: Religion and Contemporary Society

Indicative content

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Question 1 Religion responding to the challenges facing the world

0

1

Examine attitudes towards environmental issues found in one or more religion(s) you have studied.

Christianity

- Most believe in God as creator – not necessarily in literal sense, but that the world is God's.
- Ideas from Genesis and Psalms.
- Dominion / stewardship debate.
- Natural environment seen as a gift – 'The earth is the Lord's' – ideas often expressed through traditional harvest festivals etc.
- Much contemporary teaching based on these ideas of gifts and stewardship, and is closely linked to ideas on justice – for humanity and for the world itself.
- World Council of Churches teachings on climate justice.
- Belief that living responsibly is part of Christian discipleship. Ideas expressed in 'Hope in God's Future' (Baptist/Methodist/URC publication).
- Teachings on environment linked to ideas of 'family' of humanity; damage to the environment also damages others in this family; now and in the future.
- Some groups, which have a strong belief in millenarian teachings may stress the afterlife and have little concern for the present world and its environmental problems.

Judaism

- Biblical teachings – as for Christianity.
- Ideas developed in Talmud.
- Emphasis on man being placed in Eden to look after it.
- Theology of Shabbat involves respect for creation.
- Levitical laws on sharing the fruits of the earth.
- Teachings behind New Year for Trees express strong ecological concern.
- Teachings prohibiting needless waste of resources.

Islam

- Beliefs about creation.
- Importance of concept of khalifah.
- Earth belongs to Allah.
- Beliefs about accountability of humans.
- Importance of avoiding waste in all aspects of life.

Buddhism

- Teachings about greed in Four Noble Truths encourage simplicity of life.
- Right action and right livelihood within Eightfold Path encourage Buddhists to think about consequences before deciding on course of action, and this will include effects on environment.
- 5 precepts include not taking life, and not taking what has not been given. Both of these strongly influence environmental teaching.
- Simple life of monastic communities seen as ideal by many.
- Idea of living simply and in unity with God, as stressed by the Gurus.
- Importance of honest work and production of resources.

Hinduism

- Inter-relatedness of all of creation central to Hindu teaching.
- Teachings of karma and samsara mean that humans cannot detach themselves from rest of created world.
- The natural world is pervaded by divine presence, so must be treated with respect.
- Views demonstrated in ideas of sacred rivers and animals.
- Sanctity of life.
- Bhumi Sukta in Artha Veda shows essence of environmental teaching.

Sikhism

- Respect for all life, human and non-human.
- God is reflected in nature.
- Importance of sewa, which includes caring for others, and sharing resources.

[30 marks] AO1

0	2
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‘Religious teachings about the created world cannot meet today’s environmental challenges.’

Assess this view.

In support

- Religious teachings are beliefs and ideas; action is needed.
- Focus of religious teachings on created world – eg as God’s creation may be seen to take responsibility away from humans.
- Not all people have religious beliefs, so these are unlikely to be sufficient to meet the challenge.
- The differences between religious views mean that people are unlikely to agree.
- Many of the environmental challenges come from climate change and pollution, which can be traced back to the power of multi-national companies, which are not likely to be influenced by religious ideas.
- Some may argue that religious teachings (eg teachings against birth control) are the cause of population problems leading to environmental problems.

Other views

- Religious teachings convey strong teachings which can effect change.
- Attitudes of individuals and communities are a very powerful force for change.
- If teachings adhered to by sufficient number of people, would be able to make a difference.
- Religious teachings include humanitarian approaches of sharing limited resources, which provides another angle on the challenges.
- Religions challenge their members to make sacrifices in the name of their faith, and part of this is sacrificing aspects of their lifestyle, and living more simply.

[20 marks] AO2

Question 2 Challenges to religion in contemporary society

0

3

Examine the following as meanings of secularisation:

- **Institutional decline**
- **The removal of religion from the public to the private realms of life**
- **The loss of a sense of mystery about the physical world.**

Institutional decline

- Widely accepted definition of secularisation.
- Significant decline in religious identification, church membership and attendance (though the picture is not consistent).
- Decline in baptisms and religious marriages.
- Decline in those taking up vocations to priesthood.
- Visible evidence of redundant churches, either derelict or converted for other purposes.
- [Decline of the power of religious institutions](#)

The removal of religion from the public to the private realms of life

- Once religion was a matter of public concern; pre-requisite for holding certain offices, now a separation of roles.
- One's religion had to be publically stated, now seen as a private matter.
- 'Believing without belonging.'
- Religious 'labels' not important.
- Religion is seen as another 'leisure time activity'.
- Religion provided the official context for recording of births, marriages and deaths.
- Parish now seen as purely ecclesiastical structure rather than relating to all aspects of life.

The loss of a sense of mystery about the physical world

- Naturalistic and rational explanations of the universe rather than theological and mythic ones.
- Loss of a sense of the 'mysterious' about the world – everything can (and should) be explained.
- Loss of sense that nature itself is imbued with divine powers and mystery.
- This leads to sense of human control over the world.
- World is in human hands – and not in God's.
- Thus scientific and technological solutions have to be found for illness and disasters, rather than seeing humans as being at the mercy of a divine power.

There needs to be some flexibility in the balance of marking here, because of the emphases of different sources.

All three meanings need to be addressed for marks above Level 5, but there does not need to be an equal balance.

[30 marks]**AO1**

0

4

‘The loss of a sense of mystery about the physical world is the most important meaning of secularisation.’

Assess this view.

In support

- Scientific rationalism at the heart of secularisation.
- Human self confidence means that there is no need for God or religion.
- Knowledge and technology have removed the need for religion.
- Even within religion, idea of humanity ‘come of age’, therefore sense of self-sufficiency.

Other views

Candidates may argue for the priority of other meanings, eg,

Institutional decline

- It is the most visible and most frequently used meaning.
- It underpins the other meanings; if there is such drastic decline, then religion cannot survive in any form.

The removal of religion from the public to the private realms of life

- If religion becomes totally ‘privatised’ then it loses its meaning. Can lead to position where people are reluctant to admit to a religious faith.
- For religion to be dynamic, it must be public and must engage with society at all levels.

They may also argue for other meanings not mentioned in question 03, for example, the movement from a sacred to a secular society, or diversification of religion.

Some may argue that the meanings of secularisation are closely inter-related and interdependent.

[20 marks]

AO2

Question 3 New forms of spirituality both within and outside religions**0****5****Examine the nature of new forms of spirituality found within mainstream religious groups.**

Some definition of spirituality is likely – inwardness, personal experience, sense of the ‘other’, stillness etc. Such definition is not required but should be credited if given and made relevant to the answer.

Examples can come from one religion or from several but the following are likely approaches. Candidates may approach this by religion or by forms of spirituality. There is much relevant material which may be employed.

Christianity

- Rise of charismatic and Pentecostal forms of spirituality since the 1960s.
- Emphasis on ‘gifts of the spirit’.
- Outward expressions of experience, including such forms as the Toronto Blessing.
- People not afraid to display their emotional / spiritual experience.
- Increase in meditative activities and techniques, and use of stillness and silence in public worship.
- Expressions of spirituality through art, drama and music.
- Forms and activities transcending traditional denominational boundaries.
- And sometimes across religious boundaries.

Judaism

- Importance of spirituality in prayer.
- Rise of interest in Kabbalah.
- Meditation and mindfulness.
- This interest not restricted to traditional Hasidic context.

Islam

- Increasing interest in some elements of Sufi practice.
- Found in various branches of Islam.
- Seen as the ‘inner dimension’.

Many of these practices have much in common with spirituality outside mainstream religious groups.

[Focus must be on ‘new’ and ‘within mainstream religion’.](#)

[30 marks]**AO1**

0	6
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‘There is nothing ‘new’ about the new forms of spirituality found in mainstream religious groups today.’

How far do you agree?

In support

- Many of the ‘newer’ forms are simply reverting to older practices – for example, the more charismatic and spontaneous forms within Christianity can be found at many periods of history.
- The ‘gifts of the spirit’ go back to Pentecost.
- The meditative tradition and the use of silence goes back hundreds of years within the monastic tradition.
- Can be found in the ‘classics’ of spiritual writings.

Other views

- It is certainly new after the formalism of much Victorian and early 20th century religion.
- A significant change from the ‘staidness’ of that period.
- New in that it cuts across denominational boundaries.
- New in the willingness to learn from techniques and approaches outside the religion itself.
- New in the recognition of the common human quest for and experience of spirituality.

[20 marks]

AO2

Question 4 Religion and national identity

0

7

Examine various ways in which religion may be seen to be linked to national identity in the United Kingdom (UK).

The question asks for ‘various ways’ and it is important that there is some awareness of the variety of ways in which religion and national identity are linked.

Established Church

- Most likely to look at role of C of E in England.
- Role of the monarch as head.
- Role of parishes.
- Role of the C of E in national life and ceremonies.
- Chaplaincies.

Civic religion

- National and local events marked by religious services.
- Role of clergy within these and as figureheads for the community.
- Occasions when people who would not count themselves as religious join in religious rituals.
- Events like royal weddings and funerals highlight both the role of the established church and the nature of civic religion.

Symbols and images

- Despite great diversity, UK seen as a ‘Christian country’.
- Symbols of cathedrals and churches form part of national image.
- The national anthem – essentially a Christian hymn.
- Christian festivals, although highly secularised and commercialised, still seen as part of the pattern of national life.

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Some may explore the different ways in which religion and national identity are associated in the different nations of the UK:

- Chapel culture of Wales.
- The role of the Church of Scotland in Scotland.
- Sectarianism in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Maximum Level 4 if ‘various’ not addressed, although variety may be found within the aspects listed above as well as in other relevant material.

[30 marks]**AO1**

0	8
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‘Links between religion and national identity are helpful to a society.’

Assess this view.

In support

- They can help to provide social cohesion, and to cement a sense of national identity, even for those who do not belong to the faith concerned.
- They provide a structure and a language for significant moments of national life, and for the rituals of such moments.
- The links can be particularly helpful in times of crisis.
- They can help individuals and communities with their own sense of identity and belonging.
- They can help others to understand the values and expectations of the society.

Other views

- In a pluralistic, multi-cultural and multi-faith society, such links can be divisive.
- They can be divisive within the society itself as well as in the dealings of that society with others.
- They are not helpful in a largely secular society where religion is irrelevant to many.
- They are outdated, and may be seen as irrelevant even by those who belong to the faith concerned
- They may cause a religion to be seen as being too closely associated with the identity of another nation.

[20 marks]

AO2