



A-LEVEL

Religious Studies

RST4C Religious Authority OR

Ways of Moral Decision-Making OR

Ways of Reading and Understanding Scripture

Mark scheme

2060

June 2015

Version 1: Final

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) 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	

Section A Religious Authority

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

0

1

Examine the authority of both scripture and tradition in one or more religion(s) and explain how this authority is used.

Students should be aware of the specific nature and use of the authority of scripture and tradition in one or more religions. For example, in the Christian tradition scripture is given varying degrees of authority in the different denominations and in accordance with the various theories of scriptural inspiration.

In Buddhism, the authority of tradition might be said to rest with a number of different sources, such as the yogin / yogini in the mahasiddha tradition / spiritual authority in the monastic tradition. Students might look at the Theravada ('doctrine of the elders') tradition, which bases doctrines and practices on the Pali Canon and its commentaries.

There is considerable overlap in the categories of scripture, tradition, and use, so separate categorisation is not required beyond adequate treatment of the focus points in the question.

[45 marks]

AO1

0

2

'Religion has no real authority.'

How far do you agree?

This is a very broad-based question, so a broad range of treatment is likely. Agreement might come from a rejection of the existence of God, from a rejection of sources of religious authority that might be seen as secondary, eg that of tradition, leaders, scripture, etc, or from secular rejection of all things religious. Some might refer to disputes between scholars and other authorities concerning the status of scripture.

Some might argue that the statement is clearly wrong, since the authority of religion is still powerful politically as well as religiously; or else that authority depends on the context, for example.

For the key word 'real', candidates might argue that the authority of any religion is confined to those who follow it / believe in it; so it does not extend to authority over other religions or over secular powers, for example. Some might suggest that religion does in fact have authority over secular powers, for example where religious ideas and values are written into the constitution, or have historical and social influence, etc.

[30 marks]

AO2

Question 2**0****3****Examine scientific and political types of secular authority and explain how they challenge religious authority.**

Scientific secular authority derives from the scientific method of observation, hypothesis, testing and confirmation. Science uncovers the physical laws that govern the universe, and its results are clearly observable through technological advancement. This challenges religious authority on a number of fronts, for example in a comparison between the scientific method and the religious reliance on what can be seen as blind faith. Scientific arguments concerning the nature and origin of the cosmos and the origin of species challenge those types of religious authority which claim that scripture takes priority over science and should even be seen as a scientific authority in itself, eg 'Intelligent Design'. They also challenge religious morality derived from God, since morality can more easily be seen as a human construct from psychology, biology, and physiology.

Political secular authority derives either from legitimately elected governments which have developed a secular stance (eg France) or from atheistic and often militaristic regimes where religion is challenged as a competing form of authority. Students might mention political challenges to religious dress, religious education, and established religious institutions, for example.

Max. Level 5 if all parts of the question are not addressed.

[45 marks]**AO1****0****4****'Secular authorities should never challenge religious authority.'****How far do you agree?**

Students are likely to argue that this depends on personal standpoint, since those with a strong religious faith are unlikely to accept challenges from secular authorities which by definition are a rejection of faith.

Equally, secularists are unlikely to refrain from challenging religious authority when they perceive that the authority in question makes claims that cannot be substantiated or which go against common sense. Some might refer to the historical dimension to this question, eg Galileo's heliocentric model of the solar system was challenged by the Roman Inquisition. Despite the fact that Galileo himself was not a secularist, his scientific researches became the focus for secularist objections to Church teaching; moreover Cardinal Ratzinger in 1990 still argued that the Church was right to reject Galileo's challenge because of the ethical and social consequences of his teaching.

Students might refer to disputes about religious dress, religious education, religious politics, etc, in considering the claim in the question.

[30 marks]**AO2**

Section B Ways of Moral Decision-Making

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 3

0

5

Examine the role of the religious conscience in moral decision-making. Illustrate your answer with reference to either medical research and medical developments or business practice and economics.

The question refers specifically to the role of the religious conscience, and students might illustrate this through one or more religious traditions, eg nafs / taqwa in Islam, the approaches of Augustine and Aquinas in Christianity, personal revelation of truths about scripture in Judaism; perhaps illustrating different approaches within religions.

In practice, students are likely to spend some time illustrating the nature of conscience in one or more traditions and then to apply this to medical research and developments or to business practice and economics. There is no required balance between these two approaches.

Maximum Level 4 if no reference to medical research and development or business practice and economics.

[45 marks]

AO1

0

6

‘The conscience can solve all moral problems.’

How far do you agree?

Students might or might not refer to the issues raised in answer to Question 05, and are at liberty to discuss moral issues in general, or with specific reference to medical developments or business practice and economics.

Some might argue that within a religious tradition it might be true that conscience can solve all moral problems, but that the solutions given might not be acceptable to all believers. For example where some believers justify their moral actions by appealing to the authority of conscience, others might reject those actions on the basis that they go against established religious laws and customs.

The question invites students to broaden their reference to ‘conscience’ to include secular definitions, for example from psychology and sociology.

Max. Level 5 if the word ‘all’ is not addressed in some way.

[30 marks]

AO2

Question 4

0

7

Examine the use of deontological ethical systems in moral decision-making. Illustrate your answer with reference to either medical research and medical developments or business practice and economics.

Students might explain the nature of deontological ethical systems by contrasting them with teleological systems, which is acceptable as an explanation of their nature.

As examples of deontological ethical systems, students are likely to refer to religious systems, eg Natural Law Ethics / Divine Command Theory, and to secular theories such as Kant and perhaps some version of Rule Utilitarianism, where the latter is held to be deontological in part. Similarly some might argue that Fletcher's Situation Ethics, although it functions teleologically, is governed by a deontological principle which is always applied.

Students should illustrate the use of deontological systems with regard either to medical research and developments or to business practice and economics.

Maximum Level 4 if no reference to medical research and development or business practice and economics.

[45 marks]**AO1**

0

8

‘Deontological ethical systems do not work.’

How far do you agree?

Students might argue that the main problems with deontological systems are about the status and nature of the rules. There is no agreement about moral rules, since teleological systems by and large reject them as a basis for moral decision-making. Moreover there are disputes about rules among deontologists over issues such as capital punishment, homosexual behaviour, the punishment for rape, and so on, and these disagreements are present with both secular and religious deontological systems. Given these problems, it is hard to see how deontological systems can be said to work, since different systems expect different outcomes.

On the other hand, some might argue that there is broad agreement about rules, and that where there are disagreements, these are due to variable human behaviour and to different cultural and religious viewpoints. Most deontological systems rule against murder, theft, adultery, rape and lying, so there is workability to that degree.

Some might take the line that deontological ethical systems do not work, not because of the lack of agreement about moral rules, but because morality is not about rules, but is about something else, such as: the consequences / effects of our actions (teleological approaches); or emotion (Ayer).

Some might argue that teleological and hybrid systems do make use of moral rules or moral principles, so deontology must work to some extent. Alternatively, it might be argued that one particular deontological system works whereas others do not.

Students might discuss a number of related issues: eg deontological systems which are also religious (eg Natural Law / Divine Command Theory); the difficulties of assessing the intentions of someone acting deontologically; the superiority (or otherwise) of other ethical systems.

[30 marks]

AO2

Section C Ways of Reading and Understanding Scripture

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 5

0

9

Examine the status of scriptures as the Word of God or as a realisation of Ultimate Reality in one or more religion(s).

Students are likely to discuss the status of various scriptures as being literally the Word of God (considering the various concepts of inspiration) or as containing the Word of God, citing different schools of thought in one or more religions. For example with Islam, students might refer to the Muslim understanding of the Qur'an as direct revelation from God, compared to the Hadith as a compilation of tradition.

Students might refer to the impersonal Absolute of Hindu Vedanta, for example, or to the concept of tathatā ('suchness') in the Buddhist Mahayana tradition / the Buddha in the Pali Canon as tathagata – the one who by the path of knowledge has come at the real essentials of things / reality 'as it is'. Some Christians believe that they have a personal encounter with God through the pages of the Old and New Testaments.

The question is very broad, and students are at liberty to discuss any relevant material.

[45 marks]

AO1

1

0

'Translated scriptures have lost their authority.'**How far do you agree?**

Students might argue in favour of this claim on the grounds that translating any language inevitably leads to some distortion of meaning, since there are many words, phrases and idioms that do not translate from one language to another: hence the ability to recite from the Hebrew Torah is valued highly in Judaism, as is the ability to recite from the Qur'an in Arabic. In Islam, for example, Muslims generally believe that God has protected the Arabic of the Qur'an from distortion or corruption, so by learning Arabic, Muslims can access the true meaning and authority of the Qur'an.

On the other hand, it is a pragmatic fact that a high proportion of believers in the world's religions read their scriptures only in translated form, although here too, it might be claimed that a translation retains its authority because God inspired the translation, as with the Greek Septuagint. Some might argue that being in their original language is no guarantee of accuracy or authority, since all scriptures show clear evidence of textual corruption and of errors in transmission.

Depending on context and interpretation, scriptures might be authoritative for some but not for others, whether they are in their original language or not. Some might argue further that translated scriptures are part of a legitimate, ongoing, God-inspired process of interpretation from generation to generation, so they maintain their authority in any form.

[30 marks]**AO2****Question 6**

1

1

Examine different approaches to the study of the scriptures of one religion.

Most students will probably refer to the different approaches to scriptural study shown by Christian and Muslim scholars.

For Christian approaches, scholars have a range of disciplines, such as: text criticism (with the aim of reconstructing the best possible text); literary criticism (establishing the audience for whom the author wrote, and the history of the text); source criticism (establishing the sources behind the Pentateuch or the Gospels, for example); form criticism (analysis of the formal types underlying the literary structures); redaction criticism (larger-scale editing of texts and sources). Beyond that, mention might be made of canonical criticism, rhetorical criticism, narrative criticism, feminist and post-modern analysis, and so on.

For Muslim approaches, there are different purposes of study, eg to memorise the Arabic text for recitation (Hafiz), to understand the formation of the Shari'a, to uncover the inner (esoteric) meaning of the text. Some Muslims take 56:79 to mean that there is an inner meaning which only the spiritual can understand. Studying the Qur'an can involve, for example, studying the occasion and the chronology of revelation, applying Qiyas (analogy) or Ijmah (consensus) or Ijtihad (independent reasoning).

Max. Level 4 if no variety of approaches addressed.

[45 marks]

AO1

1	2
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'Scriptural study destroys religious belief.'

How far do you agree?

Students might begin by saying what scholars do: looking at the various types of text / literary / form and redaction criticism which cast doubt on the authenticity of the text. Some will support this claim on the basis that a deeper knowledge of the origin and status of scripture shows that it can have no authority outside its own claims and the claims of those who accept it: a process that inevitably leads to the destruction of faith. In Christian study, for example, 2 Timothy 3¹⁶⁻¹⁷ is often quoted as a proof of the inerrancy of scripture, but the logic is clearly circular, since a text can hardly validate itself. The same objection disposes of the claims to authority of scriptures of nearly all kinds; moreover the fact that they have to be interpreted by study, and that study gives widely different interpretations of the same texts, shows that eventually, religious belief will fail as people realise that scriptures are the product of humans, and not of gods. This process has already begun in Western Europe, where scriptural study has been extremely thorough. Students might give examples from various religious texts to illustrate such claims, particularly where it can be shown that religious claims go against the claims of science, eg with regard to creation and evolution.

Students are likely to argue that on the other hand scriptural study can be formative and life-changing: most religions include schools of study that encourage the use of reason and conscience in interpreting scripture, and where this happens, religious belief is adapted, and not destroyed. Some might make a distinction here between scholastic study, which can be particularly destructive in the Christian tradition, and personal study aided by religious leaders, which by contrast can be constructive. Similarly, traditional study groups with Judaism and Islam are intended to support faith, and in this context the work of scholars is used with that aim in mind. In Buddhism, for example, there is a variety of internet sources offering informative and constructive scriptural study at different levels, ranging from material on history and culture to both general and specific textual analysis.

[30 marks]

AO2