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AS

# Religious Studies

RSS02 Religion and Ethics 2

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   | Marks        | AS Descriptor AO2  | Marks        | 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>     |  |

## RSS02: Religion and Ethics 2

### 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 Kant's theory of ethics

**0 1 Explain the differences between Kant's theory and teleological approaches to ethics.**

'Teleological approaches' need only be understood generally, since an in-depth understanding of specific teleological approaches such as utilitarianism or situation ethics is not on the specification.

Understanding of the main differences between Kantian ethics and teleological approaches will be demonstrated through the use of reasons and examples, such as:

- Kant emphasises rules derived from universalisability (the categorical imperative) whereas in teleological systems the emphasis is on the consequence of obedience to the rule rather than on the intrinsic value of the rule itself.
- Kantian ethics emphasises duty, for example the duty not to lie. In contrast, teleological approaches explain why it might be acceptable to lie: when lying would produce a better outcome. An example here might be Kant's murderer at the door.
- Kant is an absolutist, whereas teleological approaches are relativist. Kant's rules have no exceptions; teleologists tend to be situational.
- For Kant, right and wrong are determined primarily by reason, whereas teleological approaches tend to emphasise the role of experience in achieving the best outcome.
- Some students might take the view that different systems of ethics have both deontological and teleological features, although perhaps one aspect is favoured above the other. In particular, some might say that Kant's system does have teleological features, for example in its focus on the kingdom of moral ends or the summum bonum.

Maximum Level 4 if no explanation is offered of the differences between Kant's theory and teleological approaches.

**[30 marks] AO1**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | 2 |
|---|---|

**'Reason alone is a sufficient basis for making ethical decisions.'**

**How far do you agree?**

**In support**

- The value of reason is that it excludes both the unknowable (consequences) and the variable (emotions). Ethical decisions based on reason are thus universally correct.
- Reason compels us to act morally. The value of an emphasis on duty is the value of universal obligation. People have no excuse for immoral behaviour: reason shows us that duty must be done for duty's sake.
- Aspects of Kantian ethics such as the kingdom of ends still have their basis in reason.

**Other views**

- Common criticisms of Kant are that a focus on reason and duty makes the theory cold and impersonal or that it unjustifiably ignores consequences, a thing that no common-sense theory should do. The murderer at the door example seems to offend reason, demonstrating perhaps that a strict emphasis on reason can sometimes end up being unreasonable.
- Some students might want to focus on some other aspect of Kantian ethics as the basis for making ethical decisions, e.g. the kingdom of ends. This would suggest that 'reason alone' may not be 'good enough'.

Some might argue that no theory of ethics can be completely successful, otherwise everyone would follow it.

**[15 marks] AO2**

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**Question 2 Natural Law and ethics****0 3 Explain how Finnis developed Aquinas' Natural Law Ethics.**

Understanding of Finnis' development of Aquinas will be demonstrated through the use of reasons and examples, such as:

- Aquinas believed that practical reason leads to an understanding of human nature and the purpose in God's design that it reveals: fellowship with God.
- Drawing on the idea of basic ends of human nature proposed by Aristotle and Aquinas, Finnis proposed that there are seven real goods by which the good life can be lived: life, knowledge, play, aesthetics, sociability, practical reasonableness and religion. Finnis sees these goods as being self-evident.
- Like Aquinas, Finnis believes that these goods should be valued for their own sake.
- Finnis proposes nine 'principles of practical reasonableness' akin to Aquinas' secondary precepts which guide us in fulfilling the basic goods. These include: having a coherent life-plan, not showing arbitrary preferences among people, being detached yet committed when working out the good life, fostering the common good of one's community, and so on.
- Unlike Aquinas, he claims to not presuppose God's existence.

Students can achieve a maximum of Level 4 if they only explain Aquinas' natural law ethics.

**[30 marks] AO1**

**0 4 'Finnis' theory works only if one believes in God.'**

**How far do you agree?**

**In support**

- As the ground of all being and the creator of nature's ends, God seems to be the basic foundation of all iterations of natural law.
- Objective ideas of goods are better supported if there is believed to be an objective source of these goods – God.
- To therefore remove God from natural law would be to remove the source of the goods, weakening the theory's normative strength.

**Other views**

- Finnis claims not to presuppose God's existence. A reasoned view of human nature, whatever its origins, identifies the seven basic goods. The goods are self-evident.
- This basic human nature can be the result of evolution by natural selection, but as we are all part of the same species that has undergone this same evolution, these basic goods still hold.

**[15 marks] AO2****Question 3 Religious views of the created world**

**0 5** With reference to one or more religion(s), explain the status of humankind in the created world.

Understanding of the status of humankind according to religions will be demonstrated through the selection and organisation of points such as the following:

**Theistic religions**

- Judaism and Christianity describe human status as being the pinnacle of God's creation, since human powers exceed those of other creatures: eg Adam names the animals, Psalm 8 states that humans have been made only 'a little lower than the angels'.
- Humans have the status of being created in God's image, and this is usually taken to mean that they have souls.
- The status of humans is shown by God's becoming incarnate as a human (Jesus) and dying to save humans from sin.
- Human status is defined further by the concept of 'stewardship', often given the contrasting interpretation of 'dominion/power over' the non-human world.
- In Islamic teaching humanity becomes the Khalifah / vice-regent of the earth.

**Eastern religions**

- In certain eastern religions such as Hinduism, the cycle of all life, human and animal, is affected equally by the law of karma. However, human life is often seen as having a higher status in the cycle of samsara.
- In Buddhism, only humans can become enlightened, for example.
- The status of women and men as having equal value is sometimes contested. Most Buddhist traditions believe that women must be reincarnated as men in order to achieve full Buddhahood.

Maximum Level 4 if no reference to religion is made.

**[30 marks] AO1**

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| 0 | 6 |
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**‘The best ethical view of humankind in the created world is a religious one.’**

**Assess this claim.**

**In support**

- As religions typically offer ethical views relevant to the created world, the religious approach gives clear guidance as to the status of humans, for example in the Islamic idea of humanity as Khalifah.
- This in turn offers guidance as to the duty of humans as having dominion / stewardship over the created world.
- It might also form the foundation of a human view of self and thus provide meaning for human life. For example, in the Buddhist view, humans are uniquely positioned among other animals to achieve enlightenment and thus escape the suffering of the created world.

**Other views**

- Anthropocentrism deriving from religious approaches has been a major reason for human degradation of the environment, to the detriment of all (human and non-human).
- Ethical approaches deriving from Humanism tend to place humans in a less dominant place, which can offer a more positive outcome for the created world.
- The loss of religious faith in the west coupled with the multitude of conflicting religious voices mean that secular / scientific approaches are more appealing.
- Religious views are often based on archaic texts whose ethical views are sometimes outmoded today.

Some consideration of ‘best’ is necessary to achieve the higher levels. For example, the religious approach is only the ‘best’ if it is ‘better’ than other approaches.

**[15 marks] AO2**



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**Question 4 Environment, both local and worldwide****0 7 Examine religious teachings regarding the preservation of the environment.**

Knowledge and understanding of religious teachings about human responsibility for preserving the environment might be demonstrated as follows (no differentiation between protecting and preserving need be made):

- For Hinduism, for example, human responsibility to preserve the environment might be rooted in seeing nature as a manifestation of Brahman. Brahman sustains all living creatures, so humans must live in harmony with the environment: abuse of the environment is irreligious, and humans must practise ahimsa.
- For Christianity, humans have dominion over the environment, which can be interpreted instrumentally or intrinsically. Thus Thomist teaching has an instrumentalist / anthropocentric view of human responsibility in which humans for example have only duties to the environment inasmuch as it contributes to a human good.
- Intrinsicist interpretations see dominion as 'stewardship', whereby humans have a duty to care for the environment.
- There is a biblical emphasis on the aesthetic value / perfection of God's creation: God calls his creation 'good' in Genesis 1.
- Some might show how teachings often vary greatly within each religion. In other words, religious teachings do not take a clear line.

**[30 marks] AO1**

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**0 8** 'The most important reason for preserving the environment is to benefit humankind.'

**Assess this claim.**

**In support**

- Religious anthropocentrism and ideas about dominion (eg in Genesis 1:26) downplay the status of non-human creatures as part of the moral community.
- Animals do not have free will, rational thought, and moral deliberation and so have no intrinsic value.
- Deep ecological concerns about concern for all living creatures can become absurd. For example, should we be concerned about the welfare of mosquitoes rather than try to counter the spread of malaria?

**Other views**

- Religious views such as stewardship or the environment as a manifestation of Brahman or of God's benevolent creation make this a religious imperative. For example, a Jewish midrash of Genesis 1:26 has God warn Adam not to spoil the earth.
- Holistic deep ecology theories such as the Gaia hypothesis suggest that all life is intrinsically connected.
- Even anthropocentric approaches – either religious or secular – recognise that what is good for one is generally good for all.
- All sentient creatures have moral value (Singer).

Students can answer this question with reference to one or more religions or to a religious approach more generally.

**[15 marks] AO2**