

A-level  
**RELIGIOUS STUDIES**  
**7062/2A**

Paper 2A Study of Religion and Dialogues: Buddhism

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Mark scheme

June 2020

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Version: 0.1 Pre-Standardisation



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 Examiner.

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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## Methods of Marking

It is essential that, in fairness to students, all examiners use the same methods of marking. The advice given here may seem very obvious, but it is important that all examiners follow it as exactly as possible.

1. If you have any doubts about the mark to award, consult your Team Leader.
2. Refer constantly to the mark scheme throughout marking. It is extremely important that it is strictly adhered to.
3. Remember, you must **always** credit **accurate, relevant and appropriate** answers which are not given in the mark scheme.
4. Do **not** credit material that is irrelevant to the question or to the stated target, however impressive that material might be.
5. If a one-word answer is required and a list is given, take the first answer (unless this has been crossed out).
6. If you are wavering as to whether or not to award a mark, the criterion should be, 'Is the student nearer those who have given a correct answer or those who have little idea?'
7. Read the information on the following page about using Levels of Response mark schemes.
8. Be prepared to award the full range of marks. Do not hesitate to give full marks when the answer merits full marks or to give no marks where there is nothing creditable in an answer.
9. No half marks or bonus marks are to be used under any circumstances.
10. Remember, the key to good and fair marking is **consistency**. Do **not** change the standard of your marking once you have started.

## Levels of Response Marking

In A-level Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, levels of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Levels of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Levels are tied to specific skills. Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Levels of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully, responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. This should only be necessary occasionally and where this occurs examiners must indicate, by a brief written explanation, why their assessment does not conform to the levels of response laid down in the mark scheme. Such scripts should be referred to the Lead Examiner.

## Assessment of Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication will be assessed in all components and in relation to all assessment objectives. Where students are required to produce extended written material in English, they will be assessed on the quality of written communication. The quality of written communication skills of the student will be one of the factors influencing the actual mark awarded within the level of response. In reading an extended response, the examiner will therefore consider if it is cogently and coherently written, ie decide whether the answer:

- presents relevant information in a form that suits its purposes
- is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear
- is suitably structured and that the style of writing is appropriate.

<b>Levels of Response: 10 marks A-Level – AO1</b>	
<b>Level 5 9–10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated</li> <li>• Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 7–8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained</li> <li>• Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 5–6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 3–4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 1–2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development</li> <li>• There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No accurate or relevant material to credit</li> </ul>

<b>Levels of Response: 15 marks A-Level – AO2</b>	
<b>Level 5 13–15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• Perceptive discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis</li> <li>• There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning</li> <li>• Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 10–12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis</li> <li>• There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning</li> <li>• Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 7–9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A general response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought</li> <li>• An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning</li> <li>• Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 4–6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument</li> <li>• Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 1–3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic response to the issue(s) raised</li> <li>• A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support</li> <li>• Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No accurate or relevant material to credit</li> </ul>

0 1 . 1

**Examine the importance of making and sharing merit in Buddhism.**

**[10 marks]**

**Target: AO1.1:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including religious, philosophical and ethical thought and teaching.

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.

Merit in Buddhism is understood as good karma which is generated, for example, through all compassion driven actions and specific actions such as chanting, making offerings to a Buddha image and feeding monks. In order to generate karmic merit the intention behind the action must be positive. This means that doing it for the purpose of social reward, or with the intention of benefiting oneself, reduces or removes its merit.

Merit making benefits the generator by bringing positive karmic fruits. These may be benefits in this life or in rebirth. For example, women who want to become pregnant may make an offering at a shrine in order to increase their chances of success. Merit making also benefits society as a whole, and may also be carried out on behalf of the dead before the body is cremated, with the hope of bringing them a better rebirth.

Merit making also benefits the receivers, for example, the monks who receive food from lay Buddhists, or a temple that receives funds from a donor. It is therefore an important part of the relationship between the religious elite and the ordinary Buddhist community. Mahayana Buddhism teaches that Bodhisattvas can transfer merit to others, sharing the benefits of their own inexhaustible store with those who call on them.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not deal with both aspects.

0 1 . 2

**‘Wealth and possessions are of little value for Buddhists.’**

**Evaluate this claim.**

**[15 marks]**

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

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.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Buddhist response to materialist secular values: the value of wealth and possessions.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Theravada monks and nuns renounce wealth and possessions and, traditionally, are not allowed to handle money. This follows the example of the Buddha. However, some modern monastics are not supported by a lay community that provides everything for them, so they are allowed limited wealth and possessions to make their lives possible. The value of such wealth and possessions lies solely in how far they facilitate the Buddhist path.

The pursuit of wealth and possessions is not valued because they are seen as bringing only temporary rewards, and as bringing Dukkha when they decay or are lost. Attachment to them is an obstacle to enlightenment. However, many Buddhist temples are very wealthy as a result of repeated merit making donations. There are, for example, Buddha images smothered in donations of gold leaf. This wealth is valued as a sign of the importance of the Buddha, but its monetary value is not considered.

The Buddha warned that wealth has a tendency to make people proud and complacent, especially if it has been acquired suddenly or with little effort. However, lay people are allowed to earn money to support their family, as long as this is done within strict ethical guidelines. As societies become richer, it is difficult for Buddhists to deny their children the benefits of wealth that others enjoy. The Buddha’s principle that everybody has to find the balance that is right for them can be applied.



0 2 . 1

**Examine how religious pluralism in modern secular states has influenced Buddhist thinking.**

**[10 marks]**

**Target: AO1.2:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including analysis and evaluation of aspects and approaches to religion and belief.

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.

The wide diversity in Buddhism in part reflects encounters with other faiths, and in modern secular societies this has influenced the development of movements such as Triratna and Secular Buddhism. With so many forms of religious expression available, people are exploring a range of them before finding one that suits, and so some Buddhist centres are proactively reaching out to non-Buddhists with meditation courses and lectures, and also by opening their centres up to visitors.

Many Buddhists emphasise the importance of freedom of religious expression, and welcome the freedoms expressed in European Law. However, this is not universal because some forms of religious expression are regarded as harmful, and may therefore be actively opposed. Some Buddhists advocate living within, but taking no part in, secular society. They separate themselves from such values and practices, to preserve what they regard as pure Buddhism.

Tolerance of other faiths has long been a characteristic of Buddhism, as seen in Edict 12 of Ashoka, and many Buddhist groups advocate such tolerance today. However, this is not universal. Some forms of Nichiren Buddhism see Nichiren as the only true form of Buddhism and reject other faiths. For example, there is conflict between Buddhism and other faiths in places such as Myanmar. The influence of encounters with other faiths is therefore very mixed.

0 2 . 2

**‘Science undermines Buddhist beliefs about karma.’**

**Evaluate this claim.**

**[15 marks]**

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

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.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: How scientific explanation has challenged belief in karma... and Buddhist responses to that challenge.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Karma may be understood as an invisible and intangible power generated by volitional actions. Texts describe karma as having a causal power. Science finds no evidence of the existence of such a power and provides alternative explanations for all events attributed to it. However, not all Buddhists take the idea of karma literally. Some see it as the recognition that unhealthy mental states lead to suffering, while healthy mental states lead to peace and happiness. This view of karma is primarily a subjective truth rather than a scientific observation, and is not challenged by science.

Karma, for some Buddhists, is what a human being is composed of. In contrast, the physical sciences see the human body as a biochemical process, which undermines the concept of karma. However, these two perspectives may be equally valid ways of looking at human existence. Buddhism offers an explanation for why people are as they are, and the physical sciences explain how. These views may be seen as complementary, so science does not undermine Buddhist beliefs about karma.

Karma is central to a Buddhist understanding of life after death. This belief is supported by scripture and religious experience. Science challenges the existence of life after death and rejects the evidence of scripture and religious experience, undermining beliefs about karma. However, Buddha taught that all beliefs should be tested through experience, suggesting that science and Buddhist beliefs about karma can be compatible.

0 3 . 1

**‘It is not reasonable to believe that religious experiences happen.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

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.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

There are varying Buddhist views about the nature of religious experience. Some beliefs are essential to some forms of Buddhism. Examples include the belief in the reality of the enlightenment. Meditation experiences can be explorations of the nature of reality and of Nirvana. The sources of authority supporting such claims include scripture, personal experience and testimony.

### **Philosophy**

Philosophy may challenge the claim that it is reasonable to believe that religious experiences happen. Some beliefs are essential to some forms of Buddhism. Examples include that it is more reasonable to believe either an alternative explanation for such experiences or that the witnesses lied about what happened. It may also be argued that a religious experience is simply an ordinary experience interpreted in an extraordinary way. Swinburne’s principles of credulity and testimony may be discussed.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and philosophy.

**AO2**

There are natural explanations for so-called religious experiences so no justification for the claim that they are genuinely religious experiences. However, Swinburne argues that reality is probably as we experience it, so if anyone reports seeing or hearing, for example, a heavenly realm, it should be assumed that they did unless there are special considerations against their claim. Many philosophers argue that there are always special considerations which make it unreasonable to believe that claim, for example, drugs, psychological factors or the absence of any independent evidence for the claim made. However, the absence of proof that the visionaries were taking drugs or psychologically disturbed may be cited in response along with the argument that the only possible direct evidence available for the realm / being in question is religious experience, so the absence of any other evidence is not surprising.

The authority of scripture which supports many claims about religious experience may be challenged. That authority may itself depend on religious experience, making a circular argument. Even if one accepts Swinburne's principle of testimony, it may be argued that there are good reasons to think that witnesses could be lying about what they have experienced. The subjectivity of most experiences mean that the only evidence is the word of one person, who may have a vested interest in having claims accepted. However, it is not reasonable to dismiss all witnesses as liars, and the character of some witnesses may be called in support of a claim.

What is apparently experienced can be dismissed as simply a matter of interpretation. For example, a dream about Buddha may be interpreted as experiencing Buddha in a dream. An event taken as a sign may have no significance for others experiencing the same event. However, different interpretations rely on different individual assumptions, therefore faced with two different interpretations it is difficult to justify choosing one over the other, for example, preferring the natural rather than religious interpretation of the event.

0 4 . 1

**‘Buddhist statements about Nirvana are meaningful only for Buddhists.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

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.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

Buddhist scripture and teaching includes statements about Nirvana, and these appear to be meaningful and informative. For example, the Questions of King Milinda include the ideas that Nirvana is a refuge, the sphere in which arhats move, the end of craving and suffering. However, the same text states that the form of Nirvana is indescribable. Understanding of Nirvana may be dependent on some form of religious experience.

### **Philosophy**

The verification and falsification principles challenge the meaningfulness of religious language, but have been extensively criticised. Eschatological verification suggests that statements about Nirvana are meaningful for all because they can be verified after death. The idea of language games could suggest that the intended meaning is limited to the community of believers. References to religious language as symbolic, analogical, cognitive or non-cognitive, and to the Via Negativa may also be made relevant.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and philosophy.

**AO2**

The verification and falsification principles could be used to argue in support of the view that religious language has meaning only for believers, or to argue that it has no meaning at all. However, the principles may be rejected because they fail their own tests. Furthermore, the idea of eschatological verification suggests that statements about Nirvana are verifiable in principle and so are meaningful.

Language game theory, as proposed by Wittgenstein, suggests that religious language is a game played between believers who understand language according to its own internal logic, and cannot communicate the sense of it to those who are outside the game. However, many reject this analysis of language. For example, the language may be evocative and designed to stimulate an experience of Nirvana, which will reveal the meaning of the term both to those within and outside of the faith.

Some Buddhists may argue that the meaningfulness of religious statements depends on religious experience which occurs only for believers. Language used by Buddhists is, at best, analogical. However, such believers do not have to be Buddhist, and analogical meaning may be understood by non-believers.

0 5 . 1

**‘Virtue ethics supports Buddhist views about eating meat.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and virtue ethics.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

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.

Note: This question may, but need not, be answered solely with reference to Aristotle’s virtue ethics.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

Buddhist beliefs about the cycle of life lead some to value animal life as highly as human life and to advocate vegetarianism and thus reject all forms of meat-eating. They believe ahimsa applies to animals. However, monastic rules allow monks to eat meat that is offered to them as long as the animal has not been killed specifically to feed them. Meat-eating is common in many lay communities. Some Buddhist schools of thought encourage, but do not require, vegetarianism.

### **Ethics**

Aristotle assumes a hierarchy of souls, which places humanity above animals, and therefore meat-eating is acceptable. The final end of humanity is complete well-being (eudaimonia). This is the fulfilment of virtue which can only be achieved by individuals who choose to act virtuously. Each individual must achieve the mean appropriate to themselves and in the situation. Meat-eating is appropriate in Aristotle’s view.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and virtue ethics.

**AO2**

Buddhism and virtue ethics share the belief that compassion is a virtue that should be cultivated, so both may oppose meat-eating on that basis. However, Buddhist beliefs about the cycle of life lead some to value animal life equally with human life and to reject meat-eating altogether. This is opposed by Aristotle's beliefs about the hierarchy of souls and his view that animals exist to serve human beings, which make it far easier to justify eating meat from his point of view.

Most Buddhists avoid eating meat because of the negative karma that would accrue through causing animal suffering. Development of character in virtue ethics may also lead people to avoid causing suffering to animals by eating meat. However, virtue ethics focuses on the development of the character in this life, and so it agrees with, rather than supports, the Buddhist view that meat eating should be avoided.

Buddhism does not forbid meat-eating, and can accept it as necessary for human survival in some situations. This is supported by Aristotle's view that animals are there to serve humanity's needs. It could also be supported by the idea that the way a virtue is expressed is, in part, dependent on the context. However, virtue ethics requires an informed choice of action. It has to take account of modern understandings of the nature of animals and their capacity to feel pain, the impact of meat-eating on the environment, and the viable alternative of vegetarianism. These factors arguably rule out meat-eating.



0 6 . 1

**‘The conscience is not a good guide to moral decision making.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and ethical studies.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

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.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

The Buddha described two mental qualities that safeguard morality. These can be identified with the conscience. They are, first, an innate sense of shame over wrong doing, and second, a dread or fear of the results of wrong doing. These include both social condemnation and karmic results. The first is both part of the origin of Buddhist understanding of right and wrong, and a monitor of subsequent actions. The second may operate both when one considers an action and after the action has been performed.

### **Ethics**

There are varying secular understandings of conscience as a social or psychological construct. It may be seen as the result of nurture, for example, as the internalised standards of society or family. As such, it is relative to its context and while socially useful, has no objective value. It may reflect the psychological need to conform to society, or a rejection of current social values. It may also be considered innate and universal, and so account for broad similarities between many moral codes.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and ethical studies.

**AO2**

The conscience may be an inadequate guide for those who merely see it as a social or psychological construct that varies from person to person, and depends on their historical and cultural context. However, conscience as a social construct, informed by the Buddhist moral code, may be a good guide for Buddhists to make moral decisions.

The conscience may not be a good guide to moral decision making because it is subjective, so an individual could confuse personal desire with conscience. However, conscience is rarely the only factor in making moral decisions. A person may have an intuitive feeling and that could be followed by self-analysis to determine whether self-interest is involved.

The conscience may not be a good guide because it requires personal responsibility and may require moral courage to accept or disregard Buddhist values. Not all people have these qualities. However, not following one's conscience may be stressful and guilt-making, and unforeseen consequences may follow. For this reason, Buddhists may consider the conscience as a good guide.