



AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES 7061/1

Paper 1 Philosophy of Religion and Ethics

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 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 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.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

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

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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 below 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 AS 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.

LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Levels of Response: 15 marks AS-level – AO1

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Level 5
13–15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding is accurate and relevant and is consistently applied to the question.• Very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.• The answer is clear and coherent and there is effective use of specialist language and terminology. |
| Level 4
10–12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding is mostly accurate and relevant and is mostly applied to the question.• Good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.• The answer is mostly clear and coherent and specialist language and terminology is used appropriately. |
| Level 3
7–9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding is generally accurate and relevant and is generally applied to the question.• Some use of appropriate evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.• The answer is generally clear and coherent with use of specialist language and terminology. |
| Level 2
4–6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding is limited and there is limited application to the question.• Limited use of appropriate evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.• Limited clarity and coherence and limited use of specialist language and terminology. |
| Level 1
1–3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding is basic.• Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information.• Basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary. |
| 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No accurate or relevant material to credit. |

Levels of Response: 15 marks AS-level – AO2

- Level 5**
13–15
- A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised.
 - Reasoned and evidenced chains of reasoning supporting different points of view with critical analysis.
 - Evaluation is based on the reasoning presented.
 - The answer is clear and coherent and there is effective use of specialist language and terminology.
- Level 4**
10–12
- A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised.
 - Reasoned and evidenced chains of reasoning, with some critical analysis, supporting different points of view.
 - Evaluation based on some of the reasoning.
 - The answer is largely clear and coherent with specialist language and terminology used appropriately.
- Level 3**
7–9
- A general response to the issue(s) raised.
 - Different points of view supported by evidence and chains of reasoning.
 - The answer is generally clear and coherent with use of specialist language and terminology.
- Level 2**
4–6
- A limited response to the issue(s) raised.
 - A point of view relevant to the issue(s) with limited supporting evidence and chains of reasoning.
 - Limited clarity and coherence and limited use of specialist language and terminology.
- Level 1**
1–3
- A basic response to the issue(s) raised.
 - A point of view is stated with some evidence or reasons in support.
 - Some clarity and coherence and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary.
- 0**
- No accurate or relevant material to credit.

Question 1

0 1 . 1

Explain the approach to proving the existence of God taken by Anselm's ontological argument.

[15 marks]

Target: AO1.4: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including approaches to the study of 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.

Anselm's ontological argument is an a priori argument, an argument prior to and independent of sense experience. The argument is based on logic. This means that the argument is derived from theoretical deduction and not by observing the world.

Anselm's argument is deductive, meaning that if the premises are true then the conclusion is true. He argues that the definition of God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived. The second premise is that it is greater to exist in reality than in the mind. Anselm's conclusion is that God, as the greatest conceivable being, must then exist in reality.

The ontological argument is an analytical argument because it is based on definition. The argument asserts that God's existence must be true based on the definition of what God is, so 'God exists' is true by definition. Anselm argued that even 'the fool' would agree with the definition of God as a being than which nothing greater can be conceived.

[15 marks] AO1.4

0	1	2
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‘The problem of evil successfully challenges belief in God’.

Assess this view.

[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: The problem of evil: The logical and evidential problem of evil, responses to the problem of evil and suffering.

The logical problem of evil challenges belief in God because it questions God’s omnibenevolence. The concept that God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent does not make sense alongside evil. This is known as the inconsistent triad. An all loving God would not allow people to suffer. However, Process Theology suggests that God may not be omnipotent, but rather, can only persuade matter. This allows God to remain omnibenevolent because God still cares for human beings while, at the same time, it also explains why evil exists.

The logical problem of evil also challenges belief in God because it questions God’s omnipotence. An all powerful God would be able to stop evil from happening. However, Hick’s soul making theodicy argues that all human beings will reach God’s kingdom, and that God uses evil as a necessary part of the process whereby human beings develop into the likeness of God. This allows belief in God as omnipotent to remain.

The evidential problem of evil challenges belief in God due to pointless evil and the overwhelming quantity and quality of evil. This challenges God’s omniscience because an all knowing God would not knowingly allow this evil to take place. However, the free will defence argues that pointless evil is a result of human actions. It argues that humans are ultimately to blame for evil in the world through their free will, allowing belief in God to remain.

[15 marks] AO2

Question 2

0 2 . 1

Explain the nature of numinous experiences with reference to Otto.

[15 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.

Numinous experiences are religious experiences in which the experiencer encounters and is aware of the holiness of the divine. For example, this can be seen in the Bible account of Isaiah's vision, where God is enthroned in the Jerusalem Temple. Otto refers to this as an apprehension of the wholly other.

Otto claimed that experiences of the numinous are of their own kind, and are inherently different from anything and everything else, *sui generis*. This is because they recognise the divine as holy and wholly other. There is a special faculty in human minds which recognises the holy and responds to it with feelings of awe.

Numinous experiences are non-rational in the sense that the mind cannot understand and explain them. Otto claims that the experience is beyond human understanding, causes terror, and is utterly captivating (*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*). Its power evokes feelings of awe, majesty and dread. Such feelings can induce a sense of rapture and love, and feelings of nothingness in the face of transcendent power.

[15 marks] AO1.1

0	2	.	2
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‘Challenges to religious experience from science undermine religious belief.’**Assess this view.****[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: The challenges to religious experience from science.

One challenge from science results from studies in brain activity. For example, research into epilepsy suggests that religious experiences may be generated through the temporal lobe in the brain. This suggests that religious experiences are nothing more than an abnormal state of the brain. However, this does not undermine religious belief because logically there must be a part of the brain that is responsible for generating religious experiences. God could have designed the human brain in this way for this purpose.

Another challenge arises from experiments designed to simulate religious experiences. For example, Persinger’s helmet, which generated electrical pulses through the temporal lobe, appeared to cause the subject to feel something which resembled a religious experience. This means that religious experiences may be caused by physical phenomena and not God. However, this does not undermine religious belief because God, the creator of the world, uses physical phenomena to allow people to have religious experiences.

Science has identified drugs which induce the effect of religious experiences. These may undermine religious belief because they imply that religious experiences can be generated by chemically altering a person’s senses. However, this does not necessarily undermine religious belief. Some may argue that God allows religious experiences to occur through drugs in order for people to experience them. In this way, some drugs could be viewed as a gateway to religious experiences.

[15 marks] AO2

Question 3

0	3	.	1
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Explain how Situation Ethics influences moral decision making.**[15 marks]**

Target: AO1.1: Knowledge and understanding of religious, philosophical and/or 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.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Situation Ethics with reference to Fletcher.

One influence of Situation Ethics (SE) is that all moral decisions must be made situationally. The only rule is the law of agape. For any situation, the correct moral action is that which offers the most loving action for the greatest number of people. Fletcher prescribes the agapeic calculus for this purpose. According to Fletcher, conscience is a verb rather than a noun, which means to apply the law of love in any situation.

Another way SE influences moral decision making is through the four presuppositions. According to Fletcher, all moral decisions must be pragmatic, relative to the situation, positivist (based in God's love) and personalist, since people come before laws. For example, when deciding whether or not to steal, the individual situation and person should be considered, along with the practicality of the decision. This makes the decision subjective.

A third way SE influences moral decision making is through Fletcher's six propositions. The only absolute, intrinsically good thing is agape love. Love is the only norm. Love and justice are the same. Love wills the neighbour's good, and only the most loving result matters. Love's decisions are therefore made situationally, not prescriptively. These propositions can be applied in every situation to reach a conclusion.

[15 marks] AO1.1

0	3	.	2
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‘Situation Ethics does not allow the use of animals as a source of organs for transplants.’

Assess this view.

[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: Issues of non-human life and death: animals as a source of organ and transplants.

Situation Ethics (SE) does not allow the use of animals as a source of organs for transplants because it may be unsafe. This means that it is not pragmatic. Using animal organs could lead to dangerous outcomes for human beings. However, it is acceptable if human life might be saved. Personalism supports this because it puts people at the centre of decisions.

SE does not allow the use of animals as a source of organs for transplants because it is untested and has a high risk of failure. This means that it is not wholly loving. However, it is acceptable if other methods have been attempted and failed. The proposition that love justifies its means supports this, because it focuses on the outcome rather than the action itself.

SE does not allow the use of animals as a source of organs for transplants if agapeic principles apply to animals as well as humans. From this perspective, sacrificing animals to provide organs to transplant into humans is unacceptable. However, most followers of SE direct agapeic love towards humans and not animals, so using animal organs is acceptable.

[15 marks] AO2

Question 4

0	4	.	1
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Explain why Natural Moral Law and Virtue Ethics might reach different conclusions about abortion.

[15 marks]

Target: AO1.4: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including approaches to the study of 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.

One reason Natural Moral Law (NML) and Virtue Ethics (VE) might reach different conclusions depends on the nature of each moral theory. NML is deontological and the primary and secondary precepts determine that abortion is always wrong. VE is seen as a character based ethical theory meaning there are no absolute rules, so followers of VE may act differently depending on which virtues they prioritise. For example, abortion may be viewed as correct or incorrect in different situations.

Another reason they reach different conclusions is because NML is based on Christian teaching, and VE is secular. NML has primary precepts informed by divine law. The precept of preserving life suggests that abortion is forbidden. The doctrine of double effect may, in exceptional circumstances, permit life saving treatment for the mother resulting in the unintended, but foreseen, loss of the pregnancy. VE focuses on the intention of the agent. This means that a virtuous intention leads to a virtuous act. If abortion is done from a position of compassion or bravery, then it is acceptable.

A third reason they reach different conclusions is because they have different mechanisms for making decisions. NML uses primary precepts, then secondary precepts, then the doctrine of double effect and proportionalism. VE considers an array of virtues, each of which has a golden mean. This means that NML leads to a definite conclusion about whether or not to permit an abortion, while VE involves the judgement of a wise and experienced person to help make a decision.

Maximum of Level 3 for answers that only refer to one ethical theory.

[15 marks] AO1.4

0 4 . 2

‘Animals should not be used for food.’

Assess this view.

[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: Issues of non-human life and death: use of animals as food.

Animals should not be used for food if the primary precepts in Natural Moral Law (NML) are also applied to animals. The preservation of life may also apply to animal life. However, NML was originally applied only to humans and embraces Christian teaching. Aquinas believed that God gave humans dominion over animals and therefore humans can use animals for food in order to sustain human life.

Animals should not be used for food because Situation Ethics (SE) prescribes the most loving action for the greatest number. Some believe that not eating animals may be better for the environment which benefits everybody. However, SE allows eating animals using the propositions ‘love justifies its means’ and ‘love decides there and then’. In many situations, animals are an appropriate source of food, so eating them is allowed.

Animals should not be used for food because Virtue Ethics (VE) prioritises developing a virtuous character. The virtue of compassion promotes care for animals. This could be done through not eating meat. However, Aristotle’s hierarchy of souls places animals below humans because animals do not have the ability to reason. Humans are superior to animals and therefore can use animals for food.

[15 marks] AO2