



GCSE MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES (ROUTE A) COMPONENT 3
OPTION 2 - HINDUISM
C120U40-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

EDUQAS GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES (ROUTE A) COMPONENT 3
OPTION 2 – CORE BELIEFS TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES – HINDUISM
SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

General Marking Instructions for Examiners

The mark scheme defines what can be reasonably expected of a candidate in response to questions asked. Please note: the mark scheme is not a checklist. Other valid points must also be credited.

1. Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes that is accurate and relevant, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme. Errors should be ignored, not penalised.

2. Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor for the band provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains a range of marks.

3. Two-mark questions

Banded mark schemes are not suitable for low tariff questions. Instructions for the awarding of marks are given with the indicative content.

Using the banded mark scheme

Stage 1 – Deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content.

Stage 2 – Deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. It is extremely important to note that **indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a candidate need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.** Where a response is not creditworthy, i.e. that is contains nothing of any significance to the mark scheme, or is entirely irrelevant to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

Assessment Objectives

The questions test the candidate's ability to:

- AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief*, including:
 - belief, practices and sources of authority
 - influence on individuals, communities and societies
 - similarities and differences within and/or between religions and belief
- AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief*, including their significance and influence

* The term 'belief' includes religious and non-religious belief as appropriate to the subject content requirements.

Question (a)

See instructions provided with indicative content.

Question (b)

Band	Band Descriptor	Mark total
3	An excellent, coherent answer showing knowledge and understanding of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. An excellent understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses a range of religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority extensively, accurately and appropriately.	4–5
2	A good, generally accurate answer showing knowledge and understanding of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses religious/specialist language and terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority generally accurately.	2–3
1	A limited statement of information about the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A limited understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses religious/specialist language and terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority in a limited way.	1
0	No relevant information provided.	0

Question (c)

Band	Band Descriptor	Mark total
4	An excellent, highly detailed explanation showing knowledge and understanding of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. An excellent understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses a range of religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority extensively, accurately and appropriately.	7–8
3	A very good, detailed explanation showing knowledge and understanding of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A very good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses a range of religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority accurately and appropriately.	5–6
2	A good, generally accurate explanation showing some knowledge and understanding of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority generally accurately.	3–4
1	A limited and/or poorly organised explanation showing limited knowledge and understanding of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A limited understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority in a limited way.	1–2
0	No relevant information provided.	0

Question (d)

Band	Band Descriptor	Mark total
5	An excellent, highly detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on detailed knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements and present alternative or different viewpoints. An excellent understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses and interprets religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority extensively, accurately and appropriately.	13–15
4	A very good, detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on accurate knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements and present alternative or different viewpoints. A very good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses and interprets religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority appropriately and in detail.	10–12
3	A good, generally detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on a generally accurate knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate reasonable judgements and recognise alternative or different viewpoints. A good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses and interprets some religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority.	7–9
2	Limited statement(s) of more than one viewpoint based on limited knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements. A limited understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses limited religious/specialist language and terms and/or few sources of wisdom and authority.	4–6
1	A poor, basic statement of a point of view and a very limited attempt or no attempt to formulate judgements or offer alternative or different viewpoints. Little or no attempt made to demonstrate how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Poor use, or no use, of religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority.	1–3
0	No relevant point of view stated.	0

Please note: the mark scheme is not a checklist. Other valid points must also be credited.

1. Beliefs and Teachings

For all (a) questions, credit 1 mark for a very simple definition or example and 2 marks for a developed definition with or without an example.

(a) What do Hindus mean by 'moksha'? [AO1 2]

- Release from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth; liberation; ultimate union with God.

Refer to the marking bands for question (b).

(b) Describe what Hindus believe about Brahman. [AO1 5]

- Brahman created everything that exists and will exist.
- God is everything and in everything.
- Hindus may see God in 3 different ways: Brahman – the ultimate reality and absolute truth; Antaryami – being everywhere and within the heart, the Cosmic Reality; Bhagavan – a personal loving God e.g. the avatar.
- God can be saguna – with qualities and nirguna- without qualities.
- Some Hindus may see Brahman via monotheism (Dvaita Vedanta) – where there is one God who created the universe and acts as a personal God with qualities (saguna).
- Some Hindus may see Brahman via monism (Advaita Vedanta)- where Brahman is wholly spirit, without form or qualities (nirguna).
- In the universe there are manifestations of God, the principle ones are the Trimuriti – Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver) and Shiva (destroyer).
- The feminine side of Brahman provides the cosmic energy – Shakti e.g. Lakshmi and Parvati.
- Brahman, as Vishnu, has come down to earth as an avatar when there lacked order (dharma) in society.

Where appropriate, relevant references are likely to include:

- *Chandogya Upanishad 3v14: All is Brahman.*
- *Katha Upanishads 5v2: He is the True and the Great.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 14v27: I am the basis of the formless Brahman, the immortal and imperishable, of eternal dharma, and the unending divine bliss.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 11v8: But you cannot see Me with your present eyes. Therefore, I give you divine eyes. Behold my mystic opulence.*

Refer to the marking bands for question (c).

(c) Explain Hindu teachings about The Three Qualities (Tri-guna). [AO1 8]

- The Three Qualities comprise prakriti, the physical world.
- Sattva (purity, goodness) – creative, balance, happiness, intelligence. Food connecting to this is pure: fruit, vegetables and dairy, which aids focus and meditation.
- Raja (passion, activity) – action, energy, restlessness. Food connecting to this is spicy which arouses passion.
- Tamas (ignorance) - laziness, attachment. Food connecting to this is meat which leads to dullness.
- The Tri-guna is Saguna Brahman – Brahma is Raja – creative energy, Vishnu is Sattva – purity and goodness, Shiva is Tamas – ignorance, destruction.
- Tri-guna one of the three sides of Brahman in Samkya Philosophy and the aim is to detach yourself from prakriti to connect to Ishvara.
- These are The Three Qualities named by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

Where appropriate, relevance references are likely to include:

- *Bhagavad Gita 14v5 O mighty-armed Arjun, the material energy consists of three gunas (modes) sattva (goodness), raja (passion), and tamas (ignorance). These modes bind the eternal soul to the perishable body.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 14v10 sometimes goodness (sattva) prevails over passion (rajas) and ignorance (tamas).*

Refer to the marking bands for question (d).

- (d) 'Karma (action and reaction) is the main religious belief for Hindus.'
[AO2 15]

Discuss this statement, showing that you have considered more than one point of view.

(You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

- It is important to believe that every action has a consequence.
- Karma is important as it encourages Hindus to do good actions e.g. dharma or yogas.
- Karma is important because it discourages Hindus to do bad actions that could cause papa (bad karma).
- Karma could be seen as the main religious belief because it is fair and provides justice.
- Karma is important as it affects where we go in the next life i.e. continue in samsara or reach moksha.
- Karma is important to believe in Brahman as He is in charge of the Karmic consequences.
- The main beliefs are the four ages (yugas), so that Hindus can understand where they are in the cosmic journey.
- The four main aims are the most important beliefs as it aids a Hindu in attaining moksha.
- The understanding that the atman (eternal self) is Brahman is an important belief in Advaita Vedanta (monism).
- The understanding that the atman (eternal self) has a spark of Brahman is an important belief according to Dvaita Vedanta (monotheism).
- The understanding of the role and nature of the Trimurti that maintain Rta (cosmic order) and the cycle of samsara is also an important belief.
- Ahimsa is an important belief as it recognises that through the atman, Brahman is present in every living being. It explains Hindu vegetarianism.
- All Hindu beliefs are equally important.

Where appropriate, relevant reference are likely to include:

- *Bhagavad Gita 8.6: Whatever one remembers upon giving up the body at the time of death, O son of Kunti, one attains that state, being always absorbed in such contemplation.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 2:22: As a person sheds worn-out garments and wears new ones, likewise, at the time of death, the soul casts off its worn-out body and enters a new one.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 2.15: O Arjun, noblest amongst men, that person who is not affected by happiness and distress, and remains steady in both, becomes eligible for liberation.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 4.5: The Supreme Lord said: Both you and I have had many births, O Arjun. You have forgotten them, while I remember them all, O Parantapa.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 12.5 For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest, the path of realization is full of tribulations. Worship of the unmanifest is exceedingly difficult for embodied beings.*

Please note: the mark scheme is not a checklist. Other valid points must also be credited.

2. Practices

For all (a) questions, credit 1 mark for a very simple definition or example and 2 marks for a developed definition with or without an example.

(a) What do Hindus mean by ‘puja’? [AO1 2]

- Prayer/worship of the gods; offerings. Offerings are given to the murti.

Refer to the marking bands for question (b).

(b) Describe how cows are protected in Hinduism. [AO1 5]

- Protect cows from slaughter.
- Goshallas – cow sanctuary.
- Cows are cared for in old age.
- Cows are fed and given shelter.
- In Goshallas, Vedic hymns are played to soothe them.
- Cows are rescued.
- Donations are given to Goshallas to protect the cows.
- Cow Protection Act in India prohibiting the slaughter of cows and their progeny.
- Punishment for eating beef.
- Respected with reverence in the street, people will drive around them.
- Cows are milked in a more humane way by ISKCON.
- Cows are allowed to wander freely; they are not restricted.
- Vegetarian Hindu restaurants give cows leftovers.

Refer to the marking bands for question (c).

(c) Explain the importance of different forms of worship in the mandir.

[AO1 8]

- Worship (puja) is an important way to show bhakti yoga, whether it is Shaiva Bhakti or Vaishnava Bhakti.
- Worship is important as it is an expression of respect and devotion.
- Worship is important as it is where God is represented as Bhagavan – Lord, a personal way to connect to God.
- Worship is important as it is a way to gain purification and knowledge (jnana yoga).
- Worship is important as it is a way to gain good karma and ultimately attain moksha.
- Worship is important as it is a way to connect to Brahman via the elements e.g. havan and arti.
- Worship is important as it is a way to seek God, dharshan. Devotion flows from the worshipper to the deity, and the divine blessings are received in return.
- Worship is important to collectively express beliefs via kirtan or bhajan, singing to God.
- Worship is important as devotion can aid a Hindu to connect to Bhagavan and attain moksha according to Dvaita Vedanta.
- Worship is important as it is a form of dharma, it is a duty to do daily devotion to Brahman.
- Worship is important as specific actions in the mandir recognise the presence of God e.g. circumambulation.
- Community worship through festival celebrations in the mandir is particularly important for Hindus in the UK.

Where appropriate, relevant reference are likely to include:

- *Bhagavad Gita 9.26: If one offers to me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or even water, I delightfully partake of that article offered with love by my devotee in pure consciousness.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 3.19: Therefore, giving up attachment, perform actions as a matter of duty, for by working without being attached to the fruits, one attains the Supreme.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 4.38: In this world, there is nothing as purifying as divine knowledge. One who has attained purity of mind through prolonged practice of Yog, receives such knowledge within the heart, in due course of time.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 16.24: Therefore, let the scriptures be your authority in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Understand the scriptural injunctions and teachings, and then perform your actions in this world accordingly.*

Refer to the marking bands for question (d).

(d) 'For Hindus, Raksha Bandhan is the most important festival.' [AO2 15]

Discuss this statement, showing that you have considered more than one point of view.

(You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

- Raksha Bandhan is important as it shows the important bond between brother and sister.
- Raksha Bandhan is important as it is a reminder for the brother to perform their duty to care for and protect their sister.
- Raksha Bandhan is important as it is when people pay respect to members of the armed forces and pray for their protection.
- Raksha Bandhan is important as it is symbolic of love, care and protection which are important Yamas (moral codes).
- Raksha Bandhan is important as it remembers the story about Vishnu and King Bali.
- Raksha Bandhan is important as it remembers the story of Vishnu, Sacha and Indra.
- Holi is more important as it focuses on bhakti yoga.
- Holi is important as it is to remember the regenerative nature of spring.
- Holi is more important as it is a reminder of Prahlad's devotion for Vishnu.
- Holi is important as it has made non-Hindus more aware of Hindu culture with their bonfire parties and practices involving coloured paint powder.
- Holi is important as it is a reminder of Shiva destroying and restoring Kama's life.
- Holi is important as it is a reminder of Krishna's tricks and joy of life.
- Holi is important as it is when the varna system is void in the morning.
- Diwali is more important as it symbolises good over evil, knowledge over ignorance and light over darkness.
- Diwali is more important as it remembers to story of Rama the perfect man.
- Diwali is more important as it remembers when Krishna rescued 16,000 girls from a demon king.
- Diwali is more important as it remembers the story of Kali defeating the demon King, Raktabija.
- Diwali is more important as it is the new financial new year, when Ganesha and Lakshmi are worshipped to aid their business in the new year.
- All festivals are important as they unite the Hindu community.
- All festivals are important as they teach children key teachings about the Hindu faith.

Where appropriate, relevant reference are likely to include:

- *Bhagavad Gita 13.17: as the Light of all lights, beyond darkness.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 4.38: In this world, there is nothing as purifying as divine knowledge. One who has attained purity of mind through prolonged practice of Yog, receives such knowledge within the heart, in due course of time.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 9.26: If one offers to me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or even water, I delightfully partake of that article offered with love by my devotee in pure consciousness.*
- *Bhagavad Gita 16.24: Therefore, let the scriptures be your authority in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Understand the scriptural injunctions and teachings, and then perform your actions in this world accordingly.*