



GCSE MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES (ROUTE A) COMPONENT 3
OPTION 5 - SIKHISM
C120U70-1**

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 5 – SIKHISM

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 be credited.

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.

1. Beliefs and Teachings

(a) What do Sikhs mean by 'sangat'? AO1 [2]

- The holy congregation gathered in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Refer to the marking bands for question (b).

(b) Describe Sikh teachings about the nature of God. AO1 [5]

- The teachings about the nature of God are found within the Mool Mantra.
- There is only one God.
- Eternal Truth is his name.
- God is the creator.
- God is without fear.
- God is without hate.
- God is immortal and without form.
- God is beyond birth and death.
- God is self-existent.
- God is understood by the Guru's grace.
- God is believed to be Nirgun (transcendent/separate from the universe).
- God is believed to be Sagun (immanent/part of the universe).
- God loves His creation.
- God is outside of and in control of the cycle of Samsara.

Where appropriate, relevant references are likely to include:

- *"He [Waheguru] possesses all qualities; He transcends all qualities."* GGS 290.
- *"He [Waheguru] established the earth, the sky and the air, the water of the oceans, fire and food. He created the moon, the stars and the sun, night and day and mountains; He blessed the tree with flowers and fruits."* GGS 1399.

Refer to the marking bands for question (c).

(c) Explain Sikh beliefs about karma.

AO1 [8]

- Karma refers to the concept of cause and effect; the consequences of a person's actions and words.
- Karma can be both positive and negative depending on the actions/words of the individual.
- Positive or moral actions (such as following the five virtues) can lead to gaining good karma.
- Negative and immoral actions (such as the five evils) can lead to gaining negative karma.
- Intention can also lead to the accumulation of good and bad karma.
- Negative karma is responsible for a human being remaining trapped in samsara (the cycle of birth, death and rebirth).
- The build up of good karma may lead to mukti (liberation of the soul).
- Good karma can be built up through good deeds such as Naam Japna, Kirat Karna and Vand Chakna.
- What happens in this life directly impacts what happens to the atma in the next life because of karma accumulated.
- Good karma is not enough for mukti, God's grace is also needed.

Where appropriate, relevant references are likely to include:

- *"The body is the field of karma in this age; whatever shall you plant, you shall harvest."* **GGS 78**
- *"By the karma of past actions, the robe of this physical body is obtained."*
Guru Nanak: GGS 2
- *"The self-willed manmukhs create karma, and in the court of the Lord, they receive their punishment."* **Guru Amar Das: GGS 33**
- *"The body takes births because of karma, but salvation is attained through grace."* **Guru Nanak.**

Refer to the marking bands for question (d).

- (d) 'It is not possible for Sikhs to follow their teachings about equality.'
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.)

- Sikhs can treat others as they wish to be treated, and apply the golden rule found in most world religions.
- It is possible because Sikhs can follow the examples of equality in the lives of the Gurus.
- Guru Nanak is said to have shared food with everyone; establishing the langar. It is possible for Sikhs to follow this example.
- Guru Amar Das treated everyone who visited him the same, giving them the same meals whether they were emperors or servants.
- Guru Amar Das chose 52 females to become missionaries and spread the message of the faith, promoting the faith as accessible to all, regardless of gender.
- Guru Hargobind freed 52 Hindu princes, demonstrating the freedom of religious expression which Sikhism enables.
- Gurus appointed women to lead prayers and so women are allowed to be granthi and lead prayers at the gurdwara. This is not difficult for Sikhs to follow.
- Gurus instructed men to cook in the langar and so this is not only the role of females.
- It is difficult to demonstrate true equality when there is a diversity of views towards the Khalsa and/or Five Ks.
- It is difficult to follow teachings about equality when societal or cultural traditions won't allow for equality e.g. attitudes towards homosexuals, females etc.
- It is difficult to demonstrate true equality when people are so different from one another and have different needs.

Where appropriate, relevant references are likely to include:

- *"Accept all humans as equals, and let them be your only sect."* **GGS 28**
- *"The God-conscious being looks upon all alike, like the wind, which blows equally upon the king and the poor beggar."* **GGS 272**
- *"They look upon all with equality, and recognise the Supreme Soul, the Lord, pervading among all."* **GGS: 446**
- *"There is only one breath; all are made of the same clay; the light within all is the same."* **GGS 96**

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

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.

2. Practices

(a) What do Sikhs mean by 'sewa'? AO1 [2]

- Selfless service to fellow human beings.
- Acts of kindness or generosity.

Refer to the marking bands for question (b).

(b) Describe what Sikhs might do to remember the martyrdom of a Guru. AO1 [5]

- A Sikh may take part in a gurburb commemoration/celebration with members of the sangat.
- Sikhs may attend a service at the gurdwara.
- Sikhs may take part in the Nagar Kirtan, a procession through the streets.
- An Amritdhari Sikh may be one of the five members of the khalsa chosen to lead the Nagar Kirtan procession.
- Sikhs may sing kirtan, hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib.
- A Sikh may help organise or take part in langar.
- Sikhs may join in a mela, a gathering of people celebrating a particular event.
- A Sikh might celebrate the gurburb on a Sunday in the UK.
- A Sikh might celebrate the gurburb on the actual anniversary in India.

Refer to the marking bands for question (c).

(c) Explain why a Sikh might worship in a gurdwara. AO1 [8]

- Gurdwaras provide sight of the Guru Granth Sahib and is known as the 'Gateway to the Guru' as a result.
- The gurdwara is conducive to worship.
- Gurdwaras house the Guru Granth Sahib.
- Gurdwaras are places where one can take part in congregational worship as part of the sangat.
- A gurdwara is a place to learn spiritual wisdom through listening to prayers and discussing matters with granthis.
- Key life events are marked through attending the gurdwara, e.g. Naam Karan.
- Gurdwaras provide meals, through their langar, for anyone who attends.
- The gurdwara provides a community 'hub' where members of the community join together during key festivals and celebrations.
- The gurdwara may be considered a reminder of the Gurus' teachings on equality; where the prayer hall, langar and doors (in four compass directions) promote access to all.
- Congregational worship might be considered the best form of worship as it is an essential part of Sikh practice as there is no individual path of asceticism.
- Donating to, or taking part in, providing meals through the langar may be considered a greater act of worship.
- Visiting a specific gurdwara for a specific purpose (e.g. Harmandir Sahib to bathe in Amrit Sarovar).

Refer to the marking bands for question (d).

(d) 'Every Sikh should wear the Five Ks to prove their faith.' 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.)

- Amritdhari Sikhs may agree as they are following the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh, the final human Guru.
- Amritdhari Sikhs may agree as it is following in the footsteps of the panj piaries, the beloved five, initiated at Vaisakhi 1699.
- Amritdhari Sikhs may agree as one is required to adopt a greater number of rules to follow (as detailed in the Rehit Maryada) e.g. avoid eating meat, drinking alcohol or gambling.
- Sahajdhari Sikhs may disagree as all Sikhs are on the same spiritual path, but at different stages.
- Sahajdhari Sikhs may disagree as they can choose to wear the Five Ks as signs of devotion to the faith.
- Wearing of the Five Ks is not mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib, but other demonstrations of faith are, e.g. Naam Japna.
- Sewa (selfless service to others) or daswandh (donating a tenth) might be considered a greater act of devotion to show their faith.
- Taking part in environmental or animal protection may be considered a better way to show faith.
- Actively supporting and working for relief organisations, e.g. Khalsa Aid, might be considered the best act of devotion.
- Demonstrating or promoting the teachings of equality, and thus emulating the lives of the Gurus, might be considered a better way to show their faith.
- Reciting the set daily prayers as instructed by the Rehit Maryada might be considered a greater act of devotion.
- Reciting the Mool Mantra might be considered a greater act of devotion.
- Calling God to mind, and meditating on his name, might be considered the best as it brings one closer to being God-centred (Gurmukh).
- All gurus before Guru Gobind Singh, and the instruction of the 5Ks, proved their faith without wearing them.

Where appropriate, relevant references are likely to include:

- *"A Sikh should wake up in the ambrosial hours, take a bath and, concentrating his/her thoughts on One Immortal Being, repeat the name Waheguru."* Reht Maryada Chapter 3.
- *"The praising of His Name is the highest of all practices. It has uplifted many a soul."* Guru Arjan.
- *"Alone let him constantly meditate in solitude on that which is salutary for his soul, for he who meditates in solitude attains supreme bliss."* Guru Nanak.
- *"Sing the songs of joy to the Lord, serve the Name of the Lord, and become the servant of His servants."* Guru Nanak