National
Qualifications
2025

2025 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Religious and Philosophical Questions

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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General marking principles for Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

(a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.

(b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.

(c) Award marks where candidates give points of knowledge without specifying the context, unless it is clear that they do not refer to the context of the question. Award **a maximum of 8 marks** where the candidate has not attempted the skill in a **20 mark** question.

In this question paper the following skills are assessed:

i. knowledge and understanding
ii. analysis
iii. evaluation.

(i) Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding involves presenting relevant and accurate content. Award a knowledge and understanding mark where a candidate presents a relevant and accurate point which may include:

- accurate factual information
- relevant factual information
- reference to sources
- case studies
- examples
- viewpoints
- description of arguments.

(ii) Analysis

Analysis involves doing something with factual information, for example identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole; drawing out and relating implications.

Award an analysis mark where a candidate presents a relevant, accurate and developed point which may include:

- links between different components
- links between component(s) and the whole
- links between component(s) and related concepts
- similarities and contradictions
- consistency and inconsistency
- different views/interpretations
- possible consequences/implications
- the relative importance of components
- understanding of underlying order or structure.

(iii) Evaluation

Evaluation involves making a judgement or measurement based on an issue. Award an evaluation mark where a candidate presents a relevant, accurate and developed point which may include:

- the relevance and/or importance and/or usefulness of a viewpoint or source:
- positive and negative aspects
- strengths and weaknesses
- any other relevant evaluative comment.

Use of sources

Award marks where candidates use a referenced and relevant source in support of their knowledge and understanding, critical analysis, evaluation or a reasoned view.

Overview of detailed marking instructions

Knowledge, analysis and evaluation questions (20 marks)

Award up to **a maximum of 10 marks** for each developed point of knowledge used to support the analysis and evaluation.

Award up to **5 marks** for analytical comments and up to **5 marks** for reasoned evaluative comments.

Marking instructions for each question

Part A — Origins

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
1.			This question focuses on knowledge, analysis and evaluation. **5 marks** are available for analysis and **5 marks** are available for evaluation. **A maximum of 10 marks** are available for knowledge and understanding that is relevant to both the question and the answer.	**20**	**Purpose** The purpose of the question is to allow candidates the opportunity to present knowledge and understanding about religious explanations for the origins of universe and to analyse and evaluate these arguments. Candidates may also present, analyse and evaluate scientific explanations of the origins of universe. **Specific marking instructions** Marks will be **capped at 8 knowledge and understanding marks** if a candidate fails to attempt **both** analysis **and** evaluation skills. **Knowledge and understanding — up to 10 marks may be awarded for:** • a description of religious explanations of the origins of universe • a description of scientific explanations of the origins of universe • relevant sources **Examples of knowledge points:** • the creation stories of Genesis are generally thought by Liberal Christians to be symbolic in nature and not a literal account • Literalists Christians believe that God created the universe and life in six days and rested on the seventh **Analysis — up to 5 marks may be awarded for:** • analysis of religious explanations of the origins of universe • analysis of scientific explanations of the origins of universe • analysis of different sources used to support the explanations **Examples of analysis points:** • an implication of the Liberal Christian response is that it is presents a more believable account for modern day Christians, allowing them to reconcile their faith in God as Creator with convincing scientific findings • an implication of the Literal Christian response is that there is little challenge to their faith; the theory of the Big Bang is not in the bible, therefore it holds no validity in comparison to God's word

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					• a consequence of the scientific account is that it is the only explanation necessary, removing the need for a Creator God — an assumption based on faith rather than reasoned interpretation and judgement **Evaluation — up to 5 marks may be awarded for:** • supported judgements on the religious/scientific explanations for the origins of the universe **Examples of evaluation points:** • I agree with the Liberalist view as I think that the Big Bang Theory reveals the beauty, mystery and magnitude of God's ways in creating a universe as complex as it is • I disagree with the Literal Christian viewpoint as I think the Bible was written at a time when there was a lack of scientific knowledge meaning that it is unlikely that such an ancient text is going to provide a literal and accurate account

Part B — The existence of God

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
2.			This question focuses on knowledge, analysis and evaluation. **5 marks** are available for analysis and **5 marks** are available for evaluation. **A maximum of 10 marks** are available for knowledge and understanding that is relevant to both the question and the answer.	**20**	**Purpose** The purpose of the question is to allow candidates to the opportunity to present knowledge and understanding about religious arguments for the existence of God and to analyse and evaluate these arguments. Candidates may also present, analyse and evaluate scientific explanations for the existence of God. **Specific marking instructions** Marks will be **capped at 8 knowledge and understanding marks** if a candidate fails to attempt **both** analysis **and** evaluation skills. **Knowledge and understanding — up to 10 marks may be awarded for:** • a description of religious views for the existence of God • a description of non-religious arguments which challenge the existence of God • relevant sources **Examples of knowledge points:** • Aquinas believes that the universe which exists has a cause of its existence as objects cannot bring themselves into existence • The Big Bang was an explosion approximately 13.8 billion years ago that caused the expansion of the universe from an incredible hot, dense singularity **Analysis — up to 5 marks may be awarded for:** • analysis of religious views which challenge the existence of God • analysis of non-religious arguments for the existence of God • analysis of different viewpoints/relevant sources **Example of analysis points:** • an implication of religious arguments is that each of these shows that the Universe cannot exist without a creator and that God therefore must exist • while it might seem reasonable, given the complexity of the natural world, to point to this as proof of a designer God, an implication of a world that is full of suffering and evil is that it cannot be the product of an all-powerful, all loving and all-knowing God

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					Evaluation — up to 5 marks may be awarded for: • supported judgements on the religious arguments for the existence of God **Examples of evaluation points:** • I agree with religious arguments because, although the Big Bang theory explains the origins of the Universe, it can't answer the question of what caused the Big Bang itself • I disagree that religious arguments for the existence of God offer reliable proofs as they are all written by people who believe in God and assume that God exists • I disagree with religious arguments for the existence of God as the Bible is out of date and offers no empirical evidence to show that God exists

Part C — The problem of suffering and evil

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
3.			This question focuses on knowledge, analysis and evaluation. **5 marks** are available for analysis and **5 marks** are available for evaluation. **A maximum of 10 marks** are available for knowledge and understanding that is relevant to both the question and the answer.	**20**	**Purpose** The purpose of the question is to give candidates the opportunity to present knowledge and understanding about God's responsibility for suffering and evil and to analyse and evaluate these arguments. Candidates may also present, analyse and evaluate explanations on whether responsibility lies with God. **Specific marking instructions** Marks will be **capped at 8 knowledge and understanding marks** if a candidate fails to attempt **both** analysis **and** evaluation skills. **Knowledge and understanding — up to 10 marks may be awarded for:** • a description of arguments that claim God is responsible for suffering and evil • a description of arguments that claim human beings are responsible for suffering and evil • relevant sources **Examples of knowledge points:** • all Christians believe God is omnipotent, which means all powerful • Christians believe that as creator, God must have made natural evil, like diseases and natural disasters **Analysis — up to 5 marks may be awarded for:** • analysis of the arguments that claim God is responsible for suffering and evil • analysis of the arguments that claim humans are responsible for suffering and evil • analysis of different viewpoints/relevant sources **Examples of analysis points:** • an implication of the belief that God is omnipotent, is that He is powerful enough to stop suffering and evil but chooses not to • a consequence of believing God is responsible for creating natural evil is that some believe it is part of His divine plan for humanity that we don't understand **Evaluation — up to 5 marks may be awarded for:** • supported judgements on the extent to which responsibility for suffering and evil lies with God

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					Examples of evaluation points: • I agree that God is responsible for suffering and evil because if he's omnipotent he could stop atrocities like the Holocaust but didn't. He has the power to end all suffering but chooses not to, so it's his responsibility • I agree that God is responsible for suffering and evil because even though human beings misuse their free will, God is responsible for giving us free will so therefore the responsibility must lie with him

Part D — Miracles

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
4.			This question focuses on knowledge, analysis and evaluation. **5 marks** are available for analysis and **5 marks** are available for evaluation. **A maximum of 10 marks** are available for knowledge and understanding that is relevant to both the question and the answer.	**20**	**Purpose** The purpose of the question is to give candidates the opportunity to present knowledge and understanding of religious explanations for miracles and to analyse and evaluate these explanations. Candidates may also present, analyse and evaluate scientific explanations of miracles and present a reasoned conclusion on the extent to which they agree with the explanations. **Specific marking instructions** Marks will be **capped at 8 knowledge and understanding marks** if a candidate fails to attempt **both** analysis **and** evaluation skills. **Knowledge and understanding — up to 10 marks may be awarded for:** • a description of miracles • a description of religious explanations for miracles • a description of non-religious counterarguments • relevant sources **Examples of knowledge points:** • a miracle is an event which defies rational or logical explanation and can only be understood as an act of God • an example of a miracle is when Bartimaeus who was sitting by the side of the road begging for a living, called out to Jesus, asking for mercy, and Jesus healed him, restoring his sight **Analysis — up to 5 marks may be awarded for:** • analysis of religious explanations for miracles • analysis of non-religious explanations for miracles • analysis of evidence used to support religious and non-religious explanations implications/interpretations of sources

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					Examples of analysis points: • one implication of a miracle account such as the healing of Bartimaeus is that God can intervene help even when it goes against the laws of nature • a consequence of a non-religious view on miracles is that it could weaken a person's faith if rational explanations are offered for apparent miracles instead of claiming that these are a result of the power of God **Evaluation — up to 5 marks may be awarded for:** • supported judgements on the religious arguments for miracles **Examples of evaluation points:** • I believe that a God who would intervene to help one person would not be a truly loving God. If God is capable of miracles, why does anyone suffer? • I think that we don't fully understand the intricate detail of the Universe and can often see things as miraculous when the truth is that we don't yet have the knowledge to understand the workings of God

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]