

**AS**  
**RELIGIOUS STUDIES**  
**7061/2A**

Paper 2A Buddhism

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**Mark scheme**

June 2022

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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.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://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

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|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Level 5</b><br><b>13–15</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding is accurate and relevant and is consistently applied to the question.</li> <li>• Very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.</li> <li>• The answer is clear and coherent and there is effective use of specialist language and terminology.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Level 4</b><br><b>10–12</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding is mostly accurate and relevant and is mostly applied to the question.</li> <li>• Good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.</li> <li>• The answer is mostly clear and coherent and specialist language and terminology is used appropriately.</li> </ul>               |
| <b>Level 3</b><br><b>7–9</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding is generally accurate and relevant and is generally applied to the question.</li> <li>• Some use of appropriate evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.</li> <li>• The answer is generally clear and coherent with use of specialist language and terminology.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Level 2</b><br><b>4–6</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding is limited and there is limited application to the question.</li> <li>• Limited use of appropriate evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.</li> <li>• Limited clarity and coherence and limited use of specialist language and terminology.</li> </ul>                    |
| <b>Level 1</b><br><b>1–3</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding is basic.</li> <li>• Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information.</li> <li>• 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>  |

**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.

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**Question 1**

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**Explain the Mahayana doctrine of emptiness.****[15 marks]**

**Target: AO1.1:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including 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.

The Mahayana doctrine of emptiness states that nothing has any permanent or self-arising qualities. For Mahayana Buddhists this means that there is no soul, and all things lack independent existence. The analogy of the chariot is used to explain this concept. A chariot is a collection of parts arranged in a specific way. When the parts are deconstructed the chariot is no longer a chariot. There is no chariot nature that exists; it is simply a combination of elements.

For all Buddhists, including Mahayana Buddhists, there is no self, because humans are made up of five aggregates. These aggregates are empty and constantly changing. People are a combination of form, sensations, perceptions, mental formulations and consciousness. Each of these elements is empty of intrinsic existence and therefore there is no enduring quality or soul. Clinging to them as if they were permanent causes hatred and greed. Accepting them is the first stage to reaching enlightenment.

Some Mahayana Buddhists take emptiness to mean that there is ultimately nothing which exists physically outside of consciousness. For these Buddhists, only the mind or primordial wisdom is ultimately real. All things exist only as mental projections in an ever-changing consciousness. Other Buddhists argue that this is incorrect, and through the doctrine of emptiness all things exist; they simply lack intrinsic existence.

**[15 marks] AO1.1**

0 1 . 2

**‘The use of weapons of mass destruction can be justified by Buddhists today.’**

**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: Ahimsa: the concept of ahimsa and its applications to issues concerning [...] war, including weapons of mass destruction; different Buddhist views.

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

Although Buddhism is usually linked with pacifism, the world is not perfect. In a perfect world there would be no need for weapons of mass destruction (WMD). For this reason some Buddhists may justify the use of WMD with the intention of ending suffering. However, Buddhist scriptures are clear about the use of violence being unskillful, and the first precept clearly says not to take life. The use of WMD risks killing people indiscriminately, and this cannot be justified today.

Many Buddhists have followed national policies on war and the use of WMD as a deterrent. For these Buddhists, the threat of using WMD as a last resort can be justified. Many Buddhists join the army to fight against evil and relieve suffering. However, many Buddhists today refuse to fight in war, and may argue that WMD cause huge environmental and human damage, and these cannot be justified.

Some Buddhists may argue that protecting Buddhism’s teachings and the Buddhist community is a higher aim. Violence and war, including the use of WMD, can be justified with this aim in mind. Although killing is against Buddhist teachings and results in demerit, merit may be gained by acting with the intention of protection. However, for other Buddhists, the collateral damage caused by the use of WMD is unacceptable, even when it is for the protection of others. For this reason the use of WMD cannot be justified by Buddhists.

**[15 marks] AO2**



**Question 2**

**0 2 . 1**

**Explain the influence on Buddhists today of Buddhist meditation as a form of therapy.**

**[15 marks]**

**Target: AO1.2:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies.

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.

Meditation as a form of therapy might influence Buddhists to share the benefits of meditation with non-Buddhists. They may believe that meditation is relevant for all people and can offer benefits to everyone. Meditation leads to right thought and can help people to see things clearly. This is beneficial for all people and can offer a welcome relief in a busy society. As a result of this many Buddhist organisations offer meditation to the public.

Buddhists may be influenced to reject meditation as a form of therapy. Buddhist meditation is part of the wider Buddhist teachings, and without these teachings, meditation loses its core purpose. This has led to concern about how meditation may affect people. The side effects of these therapies can cause people to become disassociated and anxious because intensive meditation can be an emotionally difficult experience. This brings into question how useful meditation is as a therapy when isolated from Buddhist teachings.

Buddhists may also be influenced to explain the true nature of meditation to others. These Buddhists may feel that when meditation is used as a form of therapy it loses its collective and holistic nature. Buddhists believe in the interconnected nature of all phenomena, and this sense of interconnectedness may be lacking from individual therapy. Buddhist meditation should enlighten the person about the true nature of reality rather than act as a therapy to help the individual.

**[15 marks] AO1.2**

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**‘For Buddhists, the most important purpose of life is achieving Nirvana.’**

**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 meaning and purpose of life, better rebirth and Nirvana as goals of life and their relative importance; the ideal of the arhat and bodhisattva in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

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

Many Buddhists would argue that achieving Nirvana is the most important purpose of life. The Buddha acts as a role model and his life is a guide to others to help them achieve this purpose. However, for other Buddhists achieving Nirvana might not be possible in this lifetime. For these Buddhists, the purpose of life is to achieve a better rebirth by following Buddhist teachings. This enables them to gain karmic merit and a better rebirth.

For some Theravada Buddhists the most important purpose of life is achieving Nirvana. A Theravada Buddhist might aim to become an arhat, an enlightened person who achieves Nirvana in their lifetime through individual effort. However, for other Buddhists the most important purpose in life is helping to sustain those who can achieve this perfection, with the hope that in a future lifetime they would be able to achieve Nirvana as well. This gains karmic merit which will help them to achieve Nirvana in another lifetime.

Mahayana Buddhists may argue that achieving Nirvana in this life is the most important purpose of life. They do this by developing good character through the six perfections and developing the qualities of wisdom and compassion. However, the bodhisattva will delay the release from samsara until all others are saved. The bodhisattva vow is a set of promises to help others on the path to Nirvana. For these Buddhists, the most important purpose is working towards the enlightenment of other sentient beings.

**[15 marks] AO2**