

Marking guidance for levels-based mark schemes

How to award marks

Focus of marking:

The focus of marking for GCSE Religious Studies 12-mark 'Evaluate' questions is on Assessment Objective (AO2). Although AO1 information (knowledge and understanding) can be used to support AO2, the question now asks for evaluation of the statement, and therefore the level descriptors refer to the evaluation process shown by candidates. Nest heading styles appropriately.

Finding the right level:

The indicative content provides information for the examiner to indicate possible responses to the question. This will never be an exhaustive list and any relevant points will be credited by examiners, who are subject experts.

The levels descriptors reflect the requirements of each level as a candidate evaluates the statement given.

Deciding on which level an answer should be placed:

Examiners will first read the entire response. Using a 'best-fit' approach, examiners will decide which level most closely describes the quality of the answer. Answers can display characteristics from more than one level, and where this happens, markers must use the guidance below and their professional judgement to decide which level is most appropriate.

Statements relating to the treatment of students who do not fully meet the requirements of the question are also shown in the indicative content section of each levels-based mark scheme. These statements should be considered alongside the level descriptors.

Award a mark within the level:

Examiners will be prepared to award the full range of marks available in a level and not rely on the middle mark available. They will start at the middle of the level and then award the higher mark if the response is closer to the next level up and award the lower mark if the response is closer to the lower level.

To do this, examiners will consider how far the answer meets the requirements of the level:

- If it meets the requirements fully, markers should be prepared to award full marks within the level. The top mark in the level is used for answers that are as good as can realistically be expected within that level.
- If it only just meets the requirements of the level, markers should consider awarding marks at the bottom of the level. The bottom mark in the level is used for answers that are the weakest that can be expected within that level.
- The middle marks of the level are used for answers that have a reasonable match to the descriptor. This might represent a balance between some characteristics of the level that are fully met, and others that are only barely met.

Support with level descriptors:

Level	Marks	Descriptor	Could be...
1	1-3	A superficial analysis of the statement that uses undeveloped arguments, underpinned by isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief. Judgements are asserted without clear links to the analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showing understanding which will not be clear.• Listing basic information which may be incorrect or irrelevant.• Asserting judgements or providing opinions, without clear links religious arguments.• An answer which does not look at different points of view.
2	4-6	A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief. This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selecting some relevant religious arguments which include some development but may not be fully explained.

		leading to a conclusion with limited justification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing simple judgements linked to the religious arguments discussed. • Offering a conclusion which provides a final decision but has limited justification.
3	7-9	A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief. This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting relevant religious arguments and explaining them in relation to the statement. • Explaining these with layers of development, which are linked together, and which are linked to the statement. • Selecting material and giving explanations which demonstrates that the candidate understands the material. • Providing analysis which typically leads to reasoned judgements, clearly linked to the analysis of the argument. • Providing a partially justified conclusion where, it is not entirely clear as to how the final judgement was formed.
4	10-12	A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing analysis of religious arguments which demonstrate a thorough understanding of the

		<p>thorough understanding of religion and belief.</p> <p>This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.</p>	<p>material, through explanation and selection of material*.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing analysis which leads to reasoned judgements in relation to the question, is clearly connected to analysis given and is typically supported by the appraisal of the arguments*. • Providing analysis which leads to a conclusion which is consistent with the analysis*. <p>*It is worth noting that a level 4 answer does not need to be perfect.</p>
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