



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Religious Studies (4RS1) Paper 2C

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Summer 2025

Question Paper Log Number P80879

Publications Code 4RS1_2C_2506_MS

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Marking guidance for levels-based mark schemes

How to award marks

The indicative content provides examples of how students will meet each skill assessed in the question. The levels descriptors and indicative content reflect the relative weighting of each skill within each mark band.

Finding the right level

The first stage is to decide which level the answer should be placed in. To do this, use a 'best-fit' approach, deciding 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.

Placing a mark within a level

After a level has been decided on, the next stage is to decide on the mark within the level. The instructions below tell you how to reward responses within a level. However, where a level has specific guidance about how to place an answer within a level, always follow that guidance. 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 levels descriptors.

Markers should be prepared to use the full range of marks available in a level and not restrict marks to the middle. Markers should start at the middle of the level (or the upper-middle mark if there is an even number of marks) and then move the mark up or down to find the best mark. To do this, they should take into account 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 barely 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.

Mark scheme

Hinduism

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
1(a)	Award one mark for providing a teaching. Award a second mark for development of the teaching. Up to a maximum of four marks. • Hindu teachings emphasise that the ultimate goal of human life is to attain mukti (1), which involves breaking free from the cycle of samsara (1) • Mukti is achieved when an individual's karma is exhausted (1), which leads to liberation from suffering (1) • Mukti involves the realisation that the Atman and Brahman are one and the same (1). This realisation leads to freedom from the illusion of individuality (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated teaching/ development. • Development that does not relate to both the teaching given and the question.	(4)

Question number	Answer	Mark
1(b)	Students will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • According to Hindu belief, Krishna is considered an avatar of Lord Vishnu, who incarnates in various forms to restore cosmic balance and guide humanity. As an avatar, Krishna embodies divine qualities and serves as a source of inspiration and guidance • Krishna's multifaceted character encompasses his roles as a divine child, a cowherd, a wise	

	counsellor, a warrior, a teacher, and a philosopher. This diversity of roles reflects his ability to connect with people in different aspects of life • Krishna's teachings in the Bhagavad Gita encompass universal philosophical principles that address the challenges of life, duty, righteousness, and the pursuit of self-realisation. These teachings resonate with seekers from diverse backgrounds and guide them on their spiritual journey. Accept any other valid response.	(6)
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Mark	Descriptor
0	• No rewardable material.
1-3	• Limited use of religious terms. • Description of relevant religion, beliefs and values is mostly satisfactory. • Gives a partial explanation of the significance and influence of beliefs and values.
4-6	• Use of religious terms is appropriate and shows understanding. • Explanation of relevant religion, beliefs and values is comprehensive. • Explanation of significance and influence of beliefs and values is assured and comprehensive.

Question number	Indicative content
1(c)	The student must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. The student will be required to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding as well as accuracy of religion and belief when responding to the question and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. The student will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • Swamis are individuals who have dedicated their lives to spiritual pursuits, renouncing material desires and attachments. Following their example can inspire Hindus to prioritise spiritual growth over material pursuits

	• Swamis often possess deep spiritual knowledge and wisdom acquired through years of study and meditation. Following their example can encourage Hindus to find spiritual understanding and enlightenment • Swamis typically lead simple and minimalistic lives, which can serve as a counterbalance to the consumerism and materialism prevalent in modern society. Embracing simplicity can lead to a more sustainable and mindful lifestyle • Swamis often follow a path of renunciation. However, Hinduism recognises various paths to spiritual realisation, including the paths of student and householder. Not everyone is called to the swami's path • Swamis often live in ashrams and monastic settings, which may not be feasible or practical for individuals with family responsibilities, careers, and societal obligations • While Hindus accept that the teachings of swamis hold value, they may not always address the challenges and complexities of modern life. Balancing spiritual pursuits with contemporary responsibilities may require a nuanced approach. Accept any other valid response. (10 marks)
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Mark	Descriptor
0	No rewardable material.
1–3	• Demonstrates isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief. • Identifies information/issues and makes superficial connections between a limited range of elements within the question. • Judgements are supported by generic arguments to produce a conclusion that is not fully justified.
4–6	• Demonstrates limited understanding of religion and belief. • Deconstructs religious information/issues, and makes superficial connections between many but not all of the elements in the question. • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made. Judgements are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence, much of which may be superficial leading to a conclusion that is not fully justified.

7-8	• Demonstrates accurate understanding of religion and belief. • Deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints and that make connections between many but not all of the elements in the question. • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of elements in the question. Judgements are supported by the appraisal of evidence, some of which may be superficial leading to a partially justified conclusion.
9-10	• Demonstrates sustained accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief. • Critically deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints and that make connections between the full range of elements in the question. • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question. Judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence, leading to a fully justified conclusion.

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
2(a)	Award one mark for providing a feature. Award a second mark for development of the feature. Up to a maximum of four marks. • Rituals and worship form a central part of Hindu festivals (1). Devotees gather at temples or sacred sites to offer prayers to deities (1) • Hindu festivals are community events that bring people together (1). People gathering to celebrate fosters a sense of unity (1) • Diwali is linked to the story of the Ramayana (1). This story involves the triumph of good over evil (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated feature/ development. • Development that does not relate to both the feature given and the question.	(4)

Question number	Answer	Mark
2(b)	Students will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • Durga Puja commemorates the victory of the goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasura. It celebrates the triumph of good over evil and the power of divine energy to protect and uphold righteousness • Durga is often depicted as a fierce and powerful goddess riding a lion or tiger. She embodies Shakti, the divine feminine energy that sustains and empowers the universe. Durga Puja honours this aspect of the divine • Durga Puja may be seen as a cultural festival. Elaborate decorations, intricate temporary structures, artistic sculptures of Durga and her retinue, and cultural performances are integral to the celebration. These cultural elements showcase local artistry, creativity, and craftsmanship. Accept any other valid response.	(6)

Mark	Descriptor
0	• No rewardable material.
1-3	• Limited use of religious terms. • Description of relevant religion, beliefs and values is mostly satisfactory. • Gives a partial explanation of the significance and influence of beliefs and values.
4-6	• Use of religious terms is appropriate and shows understanding. • Explanation of relevant religion, beliefs and values is comprehensive. • Explanation of significance and influence of beliefs and values is assured and comprehensive.

Question number	Indicative content
2(c)	The student must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. The student will be required to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding as well as accuracy of religion and belief when responding to the question and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. The student will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • The Ganges is considered a sacred and purifying river in Hinduism. Bathing in its waters and performing rituals can cleanse the body, mind, and soul from impurities, sins, and negative karma • The Ganges is believed to have a direct connection to the divine, and its waters are considered holy. Pilgrimage to the Ganges can strengthen a Hindu's spiritual connection and devotion to their faith • Undertaking a pilgrimage to the Ganges is considered a virtuous act that accumulates religious merit. This accumulation of merit is believed to lead to positive outcomes in this life and beyond • While the Ganges holds significance, there are many other ways to engage in spiritual practices and connect with Hinduism. Requiring everyone to go on pilgrimage might overlook diverse paths to spiritual growth • The Ganges faces significant pollution and environmental degradation due to industrial waste, sewage, and other pollutants. Bathing in polluted waters can pose health risks and harm the environment further • Traveling to the Ganges might be challenging for some Hindus due to geographical distances and financial constraints. Mandating a pilgrimage might exclude those who cannot afford the journey. Accept any other valid response. (10 marks)

Mark	Descriptor
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1-3	• Demonstrates isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief. • Identifies information/issues and makes superficial connections between a limited range of elements within the question. • Judgements are supported by generic arguments to produce a conclusion that is not fully justified.
4-6	• Demonstrates limited understanding of religion and belief. • Deconstructs religious information/issues, and makes superficial connections between many but not all of the elements in the question. • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made. Judgements are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence, much of which may be superficial leading to a conclusion that is not fully justified.
7-8	• Demonstrates accurate understanding of religion and belief. • Deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints and that make connections between many but not all of the elements in the question. • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of elements in the question. Judgements are supported by the appraisal of evidence, some of which may be superficial leading to a partially justified conclusion.
9-10	• Demonstrates sustained accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief. • Critically deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints and that make connections between the full range of elements in the question. • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question. Judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence, leading to a fully justified conclusion.

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
3(a)	Award one mark for providing a way. Award a second mark for development of the way. Up to a maximum of four marks. • Various musical instruments, such as drums and flutes, are used during worship (1). The rhythmic beats and melodies of these instruments enhance the devotional atmosphere (1) • The blowing of a conch shell is often performed at the beginning of worship (1). This is believed to drive away negative energies (1) • The sound of bells ringing during Aarti signifies the devotee's offering (1) and symbolises the awakening of the divine within the worshipper (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated way / development. • Development that does not relate to both the way given and the question.	(4)

Question number	Answer	Mark
3(b)	Students will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • The Aarti ceremony is considered a powerful way for devotees to express their deep devotion and reverence to the deity. Through the act of waving the lamp and singing hymns, devotees convey their love, gratitude, and respect to the divine • Aarti engages multiple senses, including sight, sound, and touch. The visual beauty of the lamp's light, the melodic hymns, and the tactile act of waving the lamp are believed to create a	(6)

	multisensory experience that intensifies the worshipper's connection with the divine • The Aarti ceremony is thought to cleanse the environment and the worshipper's aura. The flames and light are believed to purify the surroundings and protect against negative energies. Accept any other valid response.	
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Mark	Descriptor
0	• No rewardable material.
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4-6	• Use of religious terms is appropriate and shows understanding. • Explanation of relevant religion, beliefs and values is comprehensive. • Explanation of significance and influence of beliefs and values is assured and comprehensive.

Question number	Indicative content
3(c)	The student must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. The student will be required to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding as well as accuracy of religion and belief when responding to the question and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. The student will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • Hinduism values diversity and inclusivity. Emphasising equal importance for all places of worship promotes a sense of unity within the diverse Hindu community, regardless of specific beliefs or practices • Hinduism is practised across a vast and culturally diverse landscape. Places of worship vary by region, and what is

	significant in one area might differ from another. Treating all places of worship equally respects this cultural diversity • Hindus believe that the divine can be accessed and experienced in various ways. Any place chosen for worship can provide unique opportunities for spiritual growth, realisation, and connection with the divine • Certain places of worship are associated with specific events, stories, or divine manifestations. These places might hold particular importance due to their historical, mythological, or spiritual significance • Many Hindus value the opportunity to worship in mandirs, where they can receive guidance from spiritual masters and can focus, without the distractions of the outside world • Individual Hindus and families might have a personal connection to a specific deity and have a shrine in their home as the focus of their worship. This can create a sense of heightened importance for family worship at home. Accept any other valid response. (10 marks)
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