



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

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

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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

Sikhism

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
1(a)	Award one mark for providing a way. Award a second mark for development of the way. Up to a maximum of four marks. • Guru Nanak is revered as the founder of Sikhism (1) and his teachings laid the groundwork for the Sikh religion (1) • His teachings stressed that all human beings are equal in the eyes of Waheguru (1), transcending caste, creed, and religion (1) • Guru Nanak emphasised the Sikh value of service to others (1). He highlighted the importance of living a life contributing positively to society (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
1(b)	Students will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • Leadership in the Gurdwara, often comprised of a group of dedicated individuals, provides spiritual guidance to the Sikh community. This involves organising and leading religious services, including the daily recitation of Gurbani and conducting regular prayer sessions	(6)

	• Leaders in the Gurdwara promote community service and engage in outreach initiatives to address the needs of the wider community. This could involve providing langar to visitors, supporting charitable activities, and helping those in need • Gurdwara leadership manages the administrative tasks of the institution, including financial management, maintenance of the physical premises, and ensuring compliance with legal requirements. Accept any other valid response.	
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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:

- Guru Gobind Singh is considered a very important figure because he transformed the institution of Guruship by declaring the Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru of the Sikhs. This decision ensured that Sikhism would not be subject to human leadership disputes
- Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa, a community of initiated Sikhs who live by a distinct code of conduct. This act not only solidified Sikh identity but also instilled a sense of unity, discipline, and courage among Sikhs
- Guru Gobind Singh championed the principles of equality and justice, actively challenging the social norms of his time. He emphasised that all individuals, regardless of caste or background, were equal in the eyes of Waheguru
- Some Sikhs might argue that the earlier Gurus were instrumental in shaping Sikh identity and community through their teachings and establishment of institutions. Guru Gobind Singh's contributions built upon this foundation
- Sikhs could argue that the most influential Guru is the one that established the religion, Guru Nanak. It was he who first took the risk of challenging established beliefs, such as the caste system, and who founded Sikhism based upon a belief in the equality of all men and women
- It can be argued that every Guru made significant contributions each of them building upon the achievements of their predecessors. Sikhism today is the product of all of those historical developments, and there is no value in discriminating between them.

Accept any other valid response.

(10 marks)

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 reason. Award a second mark for development of the reason. Up to a maximum of four marks. • Sikhs may go on pilgrimage to visit historical sites associated with the lives of the Gurus (1) such as visiting their birthplaces (1) • Pilgrimages provide a focused environment for Sikhs to engage in intense spiritual practices (1), including using meditation or self-reflection (1) • Sikhs believe that visiting sacred sites can bring blessings (1). The spiritual significance of these sites is believed to rejuvenate the spirit (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated reason / development. • Development that does not relate both to the reason given and to the question.	(4)

Question number	Answer	Mark
2(b)	Students will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • Festivals reinforce Sikh identity by commemorating events from Sikh history, emphasising the values and teachings of the Gurus. These celebrations remind Sikhs of their unique heritage and inspire them to uphold Sikh principles • Sikh festivals celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the Sikh community, including music, dance, traditional clothing, and food. These cultural elements contribute to a sense of pride and identity • Celebrating festivals brings joy, celebration, and a break from routine. This festive atmosphere uplifts spirits, providing moments of happiness and respite from everyday challenges. 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 Harimandir is the holiest site in Sikhism, serving as the central place of worship. Visiting it allows Sikhs to connect with their faith on a profound level and experience a unique spiritual atmosphere • The Harimandir has a rich history closely tied to the Sikh Gurus and their teachings. Visiting the site enables Sikhs to immerse themselves in the history and heritage of their faith • It is a place where Sikhs from around the world gather. Visiting it fosters a sense of unity and belonging within the global Sikh community and renews their belief in the equality of all • For Sikhs, the spiritual journey is deeply personal. While the Harimandir holds significance, the path to enlightenment varies for each individual. Mandating a visit might not align with everyone's unique journey • Not all Sikhs may have the means to visit the Harimandir due to factors like distance, health, financial constraints, or travel restrictions. Saying that everyone should try to visit could be seen to reflect badly on those who genuinely wish to but cannot • The core teachings of Sikhism emphasise equality, selflessness, and devotion to Waheguru. Some Sikhs might argue that their sole focus should remain on embodying these teachings in daily life. Accept any other valid response. (10 marks)

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
3(a)	Award one mark for providing a purpose. Award a second mark for development of the purpose. Up to a maximum of four marks. • The langar emphasises the Sikh principle of equality (1) by providing a space where people from all walks of life can sit together and share a meal (1) • The langar is a place where Sikhs can express their belief in serving others (1) without any expectation of reward (1) • It helps overcome divisions based on religious belief (1) promoting interaction between individuals who might not otherwise do so (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated purpose / development. • Development that does not relate both to the purpose given and to the question.	(4)

Question number	Answer	Mark
3(b)	Students will develop responses using ideas/reasoning/arguments such as: • The central focus of a Gurdwara's interior is the Guru Granth Sahib, and the decorative canopy and platform that represents the throne of the Guru. Its prominent placement signifies the central role of the Guru Granth Sahib in Sikh worship and learning • Gurdwara interiors typically follow minimalist aesthetics to avoid distractions and keep the focus on the Guru Granth Sahib. The simplicity of design reflects the emphasis on humility and inner reflection in Sikhism • Gurdwaras offer a community space where the congregation gathers for worship, prayer, and	(6)

	learning. The layout and seating arrangements facilitate communal interaction, fostering a sense of unity and togetherness.	
	Accept any other valid response.	

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
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: - Being part of the Khalsa is seen as important for many Sikhs because it represents a profound commitment to Sikh identity, values, and principles. It signifies a dedication to living a life aligned with the teachings of the Gurus - The Khalsa promotes unity and brotherhood among Sikhs. By being part of the Khalsa, Sikhs strengthen their bond with fellow members, fostering a sense of belonging to a larger Sikh community

	• The Five Ks symbolise purity, equality, and the removal of social distinctions. Being part of the Khalsa demonstrates a commitment to equality among all Sikhs, regardless of their background • Being part of the Khalsa aligns with the vision of Guru Gobind Singh, who established the Khalsa as a means to uphold righteousness, protect the oppressed, and promote justice • Sikhism respects individual spiritual journeys. Not all Sikhs may feel called to be part of the Khalsa, as spirituality can be practised through personal devotion, meditation, and ethical living without formal initiation • Being part of the Khalsa often involves external symbols, such as some of the 5 Ks, that can be misunderstood by non-Sikhs. Some Sikhs may be concerned about being misconstrued or facing discrimination due to their appearance. Accept any other valid response. (10 marks)
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Mark	Descriptor
0	No rewardable material.
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	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.
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