



GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES (SHORT COURSE) 8061/4

Section 4 Judaism

Mark scheme

June 2025

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.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Mark Schemes for GCSE Religious Studies

This paper requires expert markers who have wide knowledge and understanding of the particular subject content of the Specification. With the exception of the multiple-choice question, many of the questions asked have many different creditable answers and students are able to bring to their answers their own knowledge, understanding and background. They will offer details, arguments and evidence which the examiner, with the help of the mark scheme, will need to judge as creditable or not. It is therefore important that the examiner has a good understanding of the principles and spirit of the mark scheme in order to be fair and consistent when marking students' answers. The Content included is designed to be as helpful as possible but in many cases is not exhaustive. So Content sections are introduced by the sentence:

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

this is to remind examiners that there may well be additional correct answers which, with their expertise, they will be able to allow. With all questions if an examiner has any doubt about answers being creditworthy they should consult their team leader.

Structure

The mark scheme for each question shows:

- the question; Each question is printed in full before its target and mark scheme. It is always important that examiners remind themselves of the exact question being asked. In particular, they will need to do this in instances where the answer appears to be 'straying' from the question set or perhaps offers a valid alternative not included in the mark scheme
- target; The target provides the specific assessment objective which the question is testing. It reminds examiners of the skills the question is designed to test, eg knowledge and understanding, evaluation
- the total marks available for the question and if Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar is assessed
- the typical answer(s) or content which are expected
- generic instructions related to the question target of how to award marks (ie levels of response grid).

Themes papers guidance (Specification A and Short Course)

In questions where students may choose religions from which to illustrate their answer, there may be some general Content, ie credible comments which students will make which could be applied to any religion or perhaps to a secular viewpoint as well. Where these are appropriate they are usually given first. The mark scheme will also include, under separate headings, Content sections for each of the six religions allowed within the Specifications.

General Guidance

.../. means that these are acceptable alternative answers in the mark scheme, eg Guru Har Krishan / Guru Tegh Bahadur / Guru Gobind Singh.

Answers may include specialist terms, in Hebrew or Arabic for example. If this is the case, the mark scheme will usually indicate this by providing in brackets the English as well, eg 'Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement)'. In such questions, answers will be credited whether provided in the original language or in English.

Some mark schemes use bullet points to separate content. Each bullet point refers to a different possible 'belief' or 'teaching' or 'way', depending on the question. Obliques (.../.) used within the bullet point indicate different ways in which the point may be expressed and points which may be made to give the further detail or development needed for the second mark.

Where a student has crossed out a complete answer, it should be marked if it remains legible, unless an alternative is provided in which case only the alternative should be marked. When part of an answer is crossed out, then only what remains should be considered.

In questions where credit can be given to the development of a point, those developments can take the form of:

- example or evidence
- reference to different views
- detailed information.

1-mark multiple-choice questions

Such questions have four alternatives and the one correct answer will be given together with the correct letter, eg 'Answer: D Trinity'.

2-mark short-answer questions

The principle here is provided in the mark scheme: 'One mark for each of two correct points.' Students may give **more than** the two answers required by the question. In such instances:

- **award for the first two answers only, wherever they appear**
- if a student gives more than one answer on the first line and another answer/other answers on the second line, the 'first two answers' will be the **first two** on the first line and **only these two** should be considered for marks. Other answers must be ignored
- if on the first line the first two answers given are correct, award two marks, regardless of what is written elsewhere in the answer
- if the first two answers can only be awarded one mark yet there is a third answer that is correct, this correct third answer must be ignored and no mark given for it
- however, if the student gives some **elaboration after the first answer**, which is clearly developing their first answer, (which they are not required to do), do not consider this elaboration to be their second answer (unless the elaboration happens to contain a second correct answer to the question asked), regardless of whether there are other answers provided. In this case, the second answer also, if correct, may be credited for the second mark.

4 and 5-mark answer questions

Examiners should take care to note the target of the question. Clear information is provided for these types of question on how to award marking points. Examiners should carefully read the additional instructions provided for each type of question (eg for influence questions the final sentence in the general guidance box reminds the examiner that the second mark (detailed explanation) awarded in each case must show clear 'influence').

12-mark answer questions

The 12-mark questions test Evaluation skills (AO2). The mark scheme for these answers is based on Levels of Response marking in which the examiner is required to make a judgement on the completed answer taken as a whole.

Level of response marking instructions

In GCSE Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, level of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Level 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.)

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.

Level 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. If examiners have any doubt about what level to award a response, they should consult their team leader.

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before examiners apply the mark scheme to a student's answer they should read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. They should then apply the mark scheme. It may be necessary to read the answer more than once to be sure of assigning the correct Level.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in 12-mark questions.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) will be assessed against the following criteria:

Level	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
High performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy. • Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall. • Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate.	3
Intermediate performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy. • Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall. • Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate.	2
Threshold performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy. • Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall. • Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate.	1
No marks awarded	• The learner writes nothing. • The learner's response does not relate to the question. • The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning.	0

0 1 . 1

Which one of the following is a word used by some Jews to describe a future Jewish leader?

[1 mark]

- A Commandment**
- B Covenant**
- C Messiah**
- D Mitzvot**

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

Answer: **C - Messiah**

0 1 . 2

Give two Jewish beliefs about life after death.

[2 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

One mark for each of two correct points.

If students provide more than two responses only the first two should be considered for marking.

Students may include two of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Some Jews believe in a physical resurrection so no cremation / many Jews believe the soul is immortal / some Jews believe Judgement happens soon after death / God will judge the soul / souls go to be cleansed in Sheol / some Jews believe God will decide on the Day of Judgement who goes to heaven and who goes to hell / Olam Ha-Ba the world to come / there will be no misery for the righteous / the soul is purified to be reunited with its ancestors in Gan Eden / Jews who follow all of God's laws will go to Heaven / Heaven will be with God / Gehinnom where wicked souls are punished / some Jews believe they will be resurrected to live again / some Jews do not believe that the afterlife is important / greater focus on life in this world, etc.

0 1 . 3 Explain two ways in which belief in the key moral principle of healing the world influences Jews today.

[4 marks]

Target: AO1:2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including influence on individuals, communities and societies

First way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

Second way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

To be a ‘detailed explanation’ the ‘influence’ of the way must be included.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Healing the world is a human duty to respect God’s creation – tikkun olam / influences Jews to take care of the environment / “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” (Genesis 2:15) / role of stewardship as given by God / sabbatical year for soil to replenish itself / treat God’s creation with justice and compassion / respect animals who are also God’s creation.
- Healing the world is an action that draws people closer to God / the world can be healed by adopting right thought and actions to others / influences Jews into acting to increase social justice / create social harmony / causing people to suffer fewer injustices / may volunteer for charities / behave in a moral way to improve life on Earth / all the ethical mitzvot contribute to the healing of the world eg feeding the hungry / Jews have a duty to make the world better for everyone.
- Influences Jews to present themselves as a good example of trying to change the world for the better by following the mitzvot / keeping Shabbat provides a day of renewal to help to bring about a better world.
- Healing the world is a serious issue with today’s climate crisis / may motivate people to join campaigns / live sustainably / raise awareness, etc.
- Some Jews believe that by healing the world, they bring the Messianic Age closer / so believe this is a crucial way of life / hence they live their lives to heal the world, such as living an environmentally friendly existence, supporting specific charities and so on / or might have a job which helps the environment, such as a park ranger or conservationist, etc.

0 1 . 4 Explain two Jewish beliefs about the sanctity of human life.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Jewish belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

First belief

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 2 marks

Second belief

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 2 marks

Relevant and accurate reference to sacred writing or another source of Jewish belief and teaching – 1 mark

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Belief that all life is holy as it is created by God / human life is precious and should not be abused / belief that all forms of life were created by God and should be respected / human life has a special status / humans were the pinnacle of creation / created in the image of God.
- Jews believe that preservation of human life overrides almost any other religious consideration / they may therefore break laws they would not normally break in certain circumstances eg travelling on Shabbat to save a life, eating terefah food.
- Pikuach nefesh is believed to be an obligation to save a life even if doing so breaks Jewish law / life is sacred, special and God given / some Jews believe life begins at conception / human life belongs to God / only God can take a life / Jews believe they must preserve life, etc.

Sources of authority might include:

‘So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.’ (Genesis 1:27)

‘Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.’ (Genesis 2:7)

‘Do not murder.’ (Exodus 20:13)

‘Do not profit by the blood of your fellow.’ (Leviticus 19:16)

‘In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.’ (Job 12:10)

‘Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice...’ (Psalm 49:7-8)

‘For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.’ (Psalm 139:13)

‘Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I sanctified you; and I ordained you a prophet to the nations.’ (Jeremiah 1:5)

‘He who destroys one soul of a human being, the Scripture considers him as if he should destroy a whole world, and him who saves one soul of Israel, the Scripture considers him as if he should save a whole world.’ (Sanhedrin 4:5)

Accept all other sources of authority that correctly support the beliefs given.

0 1 . 5 For Jews, the divine presence (Shekhinah) is the best way to describe God.

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

- refer to Jewish teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]
[SPaG 3 marks]

Target: AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including significance and influence

Level	Criteria	Marks
4	A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. References to religion applied to the issue.	10–12
3	Reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. Clear reference to religion.	7–9
2	Reasoned consideration of a point of view. A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. OR Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons / evidence. Maximum of Level 2 if there is no reference to religion.	4–6
1	Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.	1–3
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	0

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No marks awarded	• The learner writes nothing. • The learner's response does not relate to the question. • The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning.	0

Students may include some of the following evidence and arguments, but all relevant evidence and arguments must be credited:

Arguments in support

- Shekhinah refers to the divine presence of God on earth / unity of God immanent on Earth and in creation / means 'God's manifested glory' or 'God's divine presence' / describes God's omnipresent nature / God's presence guided Moses through the wilderness to the Promised Land / reminder of the promise God made the Jews never to leave them in the Covenant.
- Shekhinah seen as a sign of the power and glory of God / God's presence among his people / some of the prophets made reference to the presence of God in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem which replaced the tabernacle.
- Any other description of God can make God sound human which he is not / eg God as judge, God as king will naturally bring human characteristics into a description, making it less than perfect.
- Descriptions in the Torah of humans experiencing the divine presence / Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden / the tabernacle referred to as an early dwelling place for God / during the exodus Jewish scriptures state they were led by a pillar of fire or a cloud, possible manifestations of the Shekhinah.
- Some Jews believe they can experience the presence of God today through prayer / Talmud states where 10 or more adult men are together God is present (minyan) / when worshipping in the synagogue the Ner Tamid is a symbol of the eternal presence of God / some Orthodox Jews believe God's presence can be felt when praying at the Western Wall / some Reform Jews believe Shekhinah refers to the feminine presence of God being loving and caring because in Hebrew Shekhinah is feminine word, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- The unity of God “The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4) ensures his overall power, no one or nothing greater than God / therefore he can be worshipped as sole Creator / God is One is also non-specific in relation to gender etc.
- The Tenakh gives other Names of God and Rabbis identify 7 names as most Holy – so other names are equally important.
- God is Lawgiver / God is Judge.
- God as merciful, forgiving, loving are important descriptions if people are to pray to God and understand his power / having many different words to describe God adds to an understanding of his omnipotence and omniscience / encourages people to communicate with God in prayer and worship.
- God is a spiritual concept so all words to describe him will be inadequate.
- Shekhinah is an aspect of God rather than a description of God, etc.