



GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES A 8062/11

Paper 1 Buddhism

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 credible 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 credible 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

Buddhism: Beliefs

0 1 . 1

Which one of the following terms is the word for the Eightfold Path in Buddhism?

[1 mark]

- A Dukkha**
- B Magga**
- C Samudaya**
- D Tanha**

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

Answer: **B Magga**

0 1 . 2

Give two Buddhist beliefs about Bodhisattvas.

[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 responses should be considered for marking.

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

A being that is already enlightened/ Wisdom and compassion are the two main qualities a Bodhisattva develops / out of compassion Bodhisattvas remain in the cycle of samsara / they help others achieve enlightenment (Buddhahood) / the Bodhisattva is the ultimate goal for Mahayana Buddhists / Bodhisattvas try to develop the six perfections and become a “perfected person” / there are earthly and heavenly or transcendent Bodhisattvas / earthly Bodhisattvas continue to be reborn into the world / heavenly or transcendent Bodhisattvas remain in some region between the earth and nirvana as spiritual or mystical beings / heavenly Bodhisattvas remain active in the world and appear in different forms / Mahayana Buddhists pray to Bodhisattvas / Avalokiteśvara is the Bodhisattva of compassion / Maitreya is the future Bodhisattva / Manjushri is the Bodhisattva of wisdom / “ however innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to save them; however inexhaustible the defilements are, I vow to remove them/ the current Dalai Lama is believed to be a reincarnation of Avalokiteśvara, etc.

0 1 . 3

Explain two ways in which believing in sunyata (emptiness) influences Buddhists 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:

- Sunyata is essential for achieving enlightenment / understanding this as a restatement of anatta lets go of the ego.
 - By following the example of the Buddha, Buddhists can free themselves from unsatisfactoriness / free from dukkha.
 - Buddhists realise that nothing exists independently but only in relation to, and because of, other things/ this is called dependent arising (12 Nidanas or paticcasamuppada)
 - Buddhists who realise that everything depends on and interlinks with everything else encourages them to trust others / show compassion to others / be selfless.
 - The teaching of sunyata helps Buddhists to understand that there is no fixed, stable self, and the universe is neither fixed nor stable either.
 - Realising that everything is impermanent reduces suffering / results in being less attached to things / people / pets etc.
 - It can refer to a meditative experience or state / it is also said that the realisation of sunyata is the key to attaining true wisdom.
 - Sunyata is the reality of all worldly existence / it is the skilful means of disentangling oneself from clinging to things, etc.
- NB- Students might give an example such as the chariot analogy or the laptop analogy.

0 1 . 4

Explain two reasons why experiencing the ascetic life was important to Siddhartha Gautama.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Buddhist 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 reason

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

Second reason

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

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

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

- Siddhartha Gautama's decision to give up his life of comfort and ease was his first step to becoming a Buddha / during Siddhartha Gautama's ascetic life he encountered an Indian ascetic who encouraged him to deprive himself / Siddhartha Gautama said that he would do so in order to attempt to achieve supreme knowledge.
- Without experiencing the ascetic life, the middle way may never have been discovered / he would never have become the Buddha / Siddhartha Gautama realised the middle way when he heard the words of a teacher "...If the strings are too tight..."
- Siddhartha Gautama was no closer to the truth of why people suffer / he was no closer to the truth of how to get rid of suffering / no closer to enlightenment / it wasn't working / there was no cure for suffering through asceticism / he became really ill and weak / he was near death / it is an extreme way of living which contradicts the magga.
- Siddhartha Gautama discovered a way of meditating during his ascetic life.
- Siddhartha Gautama had been shielded from any suffering in the palace but now experienced suffering first hand through his ascetic years / this allowed, when he became the Buddha, to teach from experience.
- Siddhartha Gautama is said to have rejected severe asceticism as profitless / it did not lead to enlightenment.
- That said, in attempting to transcend desire, asceticism promoted a sense of separation from material phenomena for Siddhartha Gautama / a clinging to the concept of detachment itself which forms a major obstacle to enlightenment.

Sources of authority might include:

'Attachment is the root of suffering.' Upadana Sutta 12.52.

"I teach suffering and the end of suffering." The Buddha.

‘There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable.’ The Buddha in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – The First Sermon at Benares.

“Even the gods envy those awakened and mindful ones.” The Dhammapada V181

‘When the great being was practising severe austerities for six years it was to him like a time of intertwining the sky with knots...’ The Jataka, vol. 1, p67

‘To be a renouncer was a young man’s aspiration, and from this point of view the Buddha was but one of many youths who left home, attracted by the challenge of the wandering life.’ Michael Carrithers, The Buddha; a very short introduction.

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

0 1 . 5

'For Buddhists, the 'Three Marks of Existence' is the most important part of the Dhamma (Dharma).'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

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

[12 marks]
[Plus 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

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

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

Arguments in support

- Buddhists believe that there are three characteristics that are common across everything in life / these are known as the Three Marks of Existence / the Three Marks of Existence is the most important Buddhist teaching as they can help Buddhists to achieve nibbana / they can help Buddhists end suffering / they are called dukkha, anatta and anicca.
- Buddhism teaches that there are three characteristics that are fundamental to all things, the Three Marks of Existence so nothing in Buddhism can be as important / understanding this is part of life for Buddhists.
- Understanding the Three Marks of Existence is the most important thing for achieving enlightenment / enlightenment is the goal of the Buddhist path so shows how important the Three Marks of Existence are.
- Dukkha (suffering) is one of the Three Marks of Existence and as such is the fundamental concept in Buddhism / the Buddha spoke about dukkha firstly in his first sermon.
- Understanding anicca which is the second Mark of Existence is a fundamental teaching in Buddhism again, showing its importance / attachment can cease when people understand anicca.
- Understanding that there is no fixed part of a person that does not change (anatta) is also fundamental to understanding Buddhism so vitally important / understanding that people are made up of five parts (aggregates or skandhas) allows Buddhists to see the continuation of kammic energy that is a person's kamma passing on to another human being.
- The Buddha taught that all phenomena, including thoughts, emotions, and experiences, are marked by three characteristics / they are also known as the Three Universal Truths which by definition makes them the most important teachings in Buddhism, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- The Four Noble Truths are arguably the most famous of the Buddha's teachings / they are the fundamental teachings in Buddhism so make them the most important.
- Four Noble Truths can be broken down into four separate truths and some Buddhists may argue that the Noble Eightfold Path is the most important teaching as it shows the way out of suffering / the Eightfold Path gives three disciplines or trainings that are more important for Buddhists than the Three Marks of Existence.
- Some Buddhists would say that because Buddhism is a practical faith any teachings about meditation, the central practice of Buddhism must be the most important / how to meditate and the benefits of meditation are the crucial teachings of Buddhism.
- Mahayana Buddhists might argue that Nagarjuna's teachings on sunyata remain the most important teachings for Buddhists today / there are more Mahayana Buddhists than Theravada Buddhists as practitioners of the Buddhist faith today.
- No one teaching of the Buddha can be taken out of context or out of a relationship to any other teaching of the Buddha, so all are equally important, etc.

NB. Students can refer to any part of the Buddha's teachings eg The Five Moral Precepts. Different Buddhist traditions such as Pure Land and Zen may see different aspects of the Buddhas teaching as more important.

0 2 Buddhism: Practices

0 2 . 1 Which one of the following describes a worship ritual in Buddhism?

[1 mark]

- A Gompa**
- B Puja**
- C Vihara**
- D Wesak**

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

Answer: **B** Puja

0 2 . 2 Give two reasons why worship at home is important to many Buddhists.

[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 responses should be considered for marking.

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

Worship at home can be more convenient for many Buddhists / makes worship part and parcel of daily life / can be done with family members / constant reminder of Buddha's teachings / fewer distractions than worship in the temple / better conditions for meditation / allows Buddhists to express their gratitude on a more personal level / allows Buddhists to show their respect for the Buddha on a more personal level / it gives an opportunity to acknowledge how important the Buddha is in their lives but to do this privately / it allows Buddhists to focus on their faith more at home / it allows Buddhists to deepen their understanding of the Buddha's teachings without the distractions of puja in a temple / Buddhists can remind themselves of his teachings on the nature of existence and the way of life leading to wisdom and compassion through puja at home / Buddhists can develop their wisdom and compassion more easily in a home setting / on a practical level, some Buddhists may find worshipping at home much easier as they do not have to locate a monastery or vihara to worship at and haven't got the practicalities to think about accessing worship at a Buddhist place of worship, etc.

0 2 . 3 Explain two contrasting reasons why festivals are an important part of Buddhism.

[4 marks]

Target: AO1:3 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs

First contrasting reason

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

Second contrasting reason

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

Contrast may mean opposing or mean different views.

If similar reasons are given only **one** of them may be credited up to 2 marks max.

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

- Festivals in Buddhism are a time of joy / giving Buddhists an opportunity to remember and celebrate the Buddha's life and his teachings, such as Parinirvana Day.
- Festivals give Buddhists an opportunity to meet together / to worship and meditate together / community spirit of a gathered Sangha.
- Allows for some Buddhists (Mahayana Buddhists) to celebrate the birth of Bodhisattvas / significant events in a Bodhisattva's life.
- Allows Theravada Buddhists to celebrate significant events in the Buddha's life.
- Festivals celebrate the culture / heritage / tradition of Buddhism / strengthens their belief in Buddhism.
- Some Buddhist festivals involve a retreat and as more solemn festival occasions / these allow for reflection on the Buddhist path.
- Festivals are an opportunity to exchange cards and gifts (Wesak) / earn merit by offering gifts to monks and nuns (Kathina festival) etc.

NB- Credit a contrast between reasons for celebrating any two Buddhist Festivals.

0 2 . 4 Explain two ways in which Buddhists might practise the Five Moral Precepts.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Buddhist 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 way

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

Second way

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

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

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

- The first moral precept is not to harm or take life of anything that has a life force / this means damage, murder and manslaughter and refers to all forms of life, human, animal and plant / Buddhists might choose to be vegetarian.
- The second moral precept is to not take the not given / this refers to stealing and deliberately taking something belonging to someone else / it also means misappropriation which is taking something that you perceive as belonging to someone else, ie finding a wallet full of money on the floor but keeping it for yourself; taking a persons freedom away and exploitation.
- The third moral precept is to not engage in any sexual misconduct / misuse of the senses such as committing adultery
- The fourth moral precept is to not speak any falsehoods / this includes not just lying but also white lies / no perjury / no representing something as other than how a person has seen it / no backbiting and gossiping, etc.
- The fifth moral precept is not to take intoxicants as they tend to cloud the mind / this could affect Buddhists as they try to meditate and focus clearly on the Buddha's teachings.
- Buddhists might practise the Five Moral Precepts by developing metta (loving kindness) and karuna (compassion), etc.

NB. Students can treat the Five Moral Precepts holistically or individually. They must receive credit if they correctly explain each precept in terms of skilful means rather than unskilful means (as they are usually presented). Good or skilful intentions lead to good or skilful actions which have positive consequences in this life and in future lives.

NB. If the student quotes one or more of the five precepts and makes it clear that this is a precept, this would be a source of authority and should be credited.

Sources of authority might include:

“My religion is simple; my religion is kindness”. The Dalai Lama

‘Perform those actions you will never regret: actions that will ripen into future joy and delight.’ (The Buddha.)

‘He who destroys life, tells lies, takes what is not given him, commits adultery and takes intoxicating drinks, digs up his own roots even in this very life.’ (Dhammapada 246–247.)

‘To do good is difficult. One who does good first does something hard to do. I have done many good deeds, and, if my sons, grandsons and their descendants up to the end of the world act in like manner, they too will do much good. But whoever amongst them neglects this, they will do evil. Truly, it is easy to do evil.’ (Emperor Asoka, edict number 11.)

‘To enter the Buddha Way is to stop discriminating between good and evil and to cast aside the mind that says this is good and that is bad.’ (Zen Master Dogen.)

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

0 2 . 5 'In today's world, it is difficult for many Buddhists to meditate.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

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

[12 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

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

Arguments in support

- Meditation is difficult because it is difficult to gain a deeper compassion for others / reduce suffering / this is the central message of meditation / Vipassana is a difficult meditation practice often requiring a teacher.
- It is difficult to concentrate for long periods of time as meditation suggests / 'Resolutely train yourself to attain peace.' The Utthana Sutta of the Sutta Nipata.
- Meditation involves an 'emptying of the mind' and in the modern world with so much sensory stimulation it makes it difficult to achieve / thoughts will always come and go and Buddhists might hang on to their thoughts.
- Mindfulness, giving a deeper insight into the nature of reality through meditation is too abstract a concept for the average person to comprehend / gaining some awareness and knowledge of what 'the self' means is virtually impossible.

- Meditation to develop insight into Buddhist teachings can never be fully mastered / understanding of the Dharma / wisdom / 'Meditation brings wisdom; lack of meditation leaves ignorance'.
- Meditation practices set up by the Buddha were for a bygone age and it is impossible in a busy world to find time to meditate / Buddhists cannot just become monastic to practise meditation successfully, etc.

Arguments in support of other points of view

- Samatha Meditation (breathing and calm meditation) can be done without a teacher and is popular.
- Mindfulness is a key stage in the Noble Eightfold Path/ practising mindfulness is accessible to many.
- For the monastic Sangha, meditation is the central practice, and done regularly, so is not difficult in today's world.
- There are lay Sangha members who choose to live together so they can practise meditation regularly / Buddhists on retreat may practice meditation regularly.
- It is not difficult as it is the central practice for Buddhists, open to all / it enables Buddhists to find a state free from suffering.
- The Buddha was able to meditate, and he led by example / if the Buddha can meditate and alleviate suffering, so can Buddhists.
- After practising meditation, the meditator can receive great insights into the truths of existence / the Buddha referred to meditation as in 'the footsteps of' himself or the path he trod.
- There are lots of meditation classes today to assist people with the techniques and practices / meditation has positive benefits for the mind and body, so people embrace the concept.
- Many non-Buddhists are using meditation to alleviate stress and hassle from their lives, so it is not an impossible practice to go through / with the practice of meditation it can be done at any time to suit the individual / there are meditation classes available online so therefore accessible, etc.