



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies A

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Second
Religion

Option 2D – Buddhism

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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.

Paper 2: Study of Second Religion 2D – Buddhism Mark Scheme

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
1(a)	AO1 3 marks Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three. • Paticca-samuppada means nothing happens on its own (1) • It is dependant origination (1) • It is the conditional arising of rebirth (1) • Various causes occur to produce effects (1) • Everything has a cause (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Lists (maximum of one mark)	3

Question number	Answer	Reject	
1(b)	AO1 4 marks Award one mark for providing a reason. Award a second mark for development of the reason. Up to a maximum of four. • The six perfections are positive qualities a Buddhist seeks to develop (1), in order to progress towards enlightenment (1) • The quality of generosity is important to Buddhists as it shows selflessness (1); for example they try to give alms to Buddhist monks (1) • They are the qualities seen in the life of the Buddha (1), he showed compassion to different people (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	Reject	Mark
1(c)	AO1 5 marks Award one mark for each event. Award further marks for each development of the event up to a maximum of four marks. Award one further mark for any relevant source of wisdom or authority. - Siddhartha's meeting with the Devas made him aspire to Buddhahood (1) but he recognised that he had to teach the Dhamma (1). 'By this act of merit of mine towards the supreme among men I will reach omniscience, I will cause many people to cross over' (Buddhavamsa XXVI) (1) - The event of the birth of the Buddha prophesied that his life would be significant (1), his mother had a dream before he was born that a white elephant had entered her womb (1); 'and from the side of the queen, her son was born without pain and without illness.' (Buddhacarita 1.25.34) (1) - The Buddha's Enlightenment took place whilst sitting under a Bodhi tree after seven days (1). This was the moment when Siddhartha became the Buddha (1) 'Not until I attain the supreme Enlightenment will I give up this seat of meditation.' (Jataka Tales) (1). Accept any other valid response.	- Repeated event/development - Development that does not relate both to the event and to the question - Reference to a source of wisdom that does not relate to the event given.	5

Question number	Indicative content	Mark
1(d)	AO2 12 marks, SPaG 3 marks Candidates must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. Candidates 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. AO2 Arguments for the statement: • The Buddha taught in The Second Noble Truth that the root of all suffering is desire. He highlighted that the Three Poisons are ways that desire is presented; greed, ignorance and anger • Poisons fill lives with suffering, unhappiness and dissatisfaction. They cause people to make bad decisions, which affects their future. They lead to self-serving and dishonest intentions, which cause people to act immorally • The poison of greed causes suffering through selfishness and personal desire. This leads to people becoming attached to material things causing stinginess, lack of compassion, or self-indulgence. Arguments against the statement: • The poisons can be transformed for good. Anger, for instance, can cause Buddhists to rally against intolerance, injustice and immorality, bringing an end to examples of suffering • Buddhists accept that these poisons are in their lives. It is not the poisons themselves, but how people respond to them that causes suffering. 'With the fading of passion, he is liberated.' (Adittapariyaya Sutta: The Fire Sermon) • Suffering often appears to be caused by factors not linked to the Three Poisons. Some illness or natural disasters often impact people without obvious cause or meaning, for example earthquakes. Accept any other valid response.	15

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable response.
Level 1	1–3	A superficial analysis of the statement that uses undeveloped arguments, underpinned by isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief. Judgements are asserted without clear links to the analysis.
Level 2	4–6	A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief. This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.
Level 3	7–9	A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief. This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.
Level 4	10–12	A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by thorough understanding of religion and belief. This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.

'Point(s) of view' **always** means arguments for and against the statement. **Where specified in the bullet points under the question**, it may also include one of the following:

- different views within the religion
- non-religious views
- philosophical arguments
- ethical arguments.

SPaG

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

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
2(a)	AO1 3 marks Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three. • In Theravada Buddhism funerals are led by a monk (1) • A shrine with an image of the deceased is usually present (1) • Mourners offer charity on behalf of the deceased (1) • The body is usually cremated (1) • Ceremonies take place at different times over the following year (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Lists (maximum of one mark)	3

Question number	Answer	Reject	
2(b)	AO1 4 marks Award one mark for providing a reason. Award a second mark for development of the reason. Up to a maximum of four. • Buddhist scriptures show there are many ways to worship (1), because it is part of a personal search for enlightenment (1) • The Buddha explored many types of worship (1) and Buddhists follow his example (1) • Different people find value in different methods of worship (1); people can explore what is most suited for them (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	Reject	Mark
2(c)	AO1 5 marks Award one mark for each reason. Award further marks for each development of the reason up to a maximum of four marks. Award one further mark for any relevant source of wisdom or authority. • Some Buddhists use sacred syllables believing they will gain blessings (1). Theravada Buddhists would focus on the Buddha as they recite (1) they may specifically use 'Namo Buddhaya' (1) • They are the basis of mantras (1) which support Buddhists in their devotion (1); 'because the chant given here brings benefits to those who memorise and recite it,' (The Divine Mantra by Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo) (1) • Buddhists may feel the sacred syllables will help them become spiritually awakened (1) helping in the search for enlightenment (1). 'And those monks... skilled in the exact determination of the syllables... — monks such as these, sire, are called guardians of the Dhamma' (The Blessed One's City of Dhamma From the Milindapañha) (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated reason/development • Development that does not relate both to the reason and to the question • Reference to a source of wisdom that does not relate to the reason given.	5

Question number	Indicative content	Mark
2(d)	AO2 12 marks Candidates must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. Candidates 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. AO2 Arguments for the statement: • Metta bhavana meditation focuses on loving kindness. The person will develop qualities within themselves, enabling them to be more kind and loving towards other people • The meditation begins with the thought: 'May I be free from enmity; may I be free from ill-will; may I be rid of suffering; may I be happy'. This supports the spiritual journey of a Buddhist • Other forms of meditation can be self-centred. Wider practice of metta bhavana, could lead to a real advance in the peace and security of communities. Arguments against the statement: • Theravada Buddhism places a greater emphasis on samatha meditation, where the people try to focus the mind by concentrating at a deeper level by developing mindfulness of breathing • The Buddhist path is to seek self-enlightenment. Other methods of meditation which are more self-centred, such as zazen meditation, may be more effective in pursuing this aim • Vipassana meditation may be more effective; by reflecting on the teachings of the Buddha people develop wisdom, leading to both loving kindness to others and the personal search for enlightenment. Accept any other valid response. Candidates who do not consider different Buddhist points of view (as instructed in the question) cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2.	12

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