



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies B

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Religion, Peace and
Conflict

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 1: Religion, Peace and Conflict 2D – Buddhism Mark Scheme

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
Q1 (a)	AO1 3 marks Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three. • The Noble Truths are regarded as the first teachings of the Buddha (1) • A feature of the Noble Truths is that there are four of them (1) • The Noble Truths explain the causes of suffering (1) • The Noble Truths explain the way to end suffering (1) • One feature is that all of existence is dukkha (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Lists (maximum of one mark)	3

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
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 marks. • Buddhists should follow the Five Precepts as they are a guide to living (1). They are the main Buddhist rules of morality (1) • The Five Precepts provide rules that all Buddhists live by (1). They mean that Buddhists will avoid negative actions (1) • They help Buddhists achieve enlightenment (1). The Five Precepts teach them to show compassion to all (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 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. • The birth of the Buddha may be important to Buddhists as it shows he was extraordinary (1), so Buddhists will accept his teachings (1). 'I turned the wheel of Dhamma' (Buddhavamsa XXVI) (1) • The birth of the Buddha is important because it shows his significance (1), it teaches them that they should follow the Middle Way. (1) 'The warrior shines in armour, the holy man shines in meditation. But the Buddha shines resplendent all day and all night' (Dhammapada 26) (1) • Some Buddhists believe the birth of the Buddha is important as the beginning of Buddhism (1). The Buddha explained how to reject privilege (1). 'He who has no attachment, who through perfect knowledge is free from doubts and has plunged into the Deathless — him do I call a holy man' (Dhammapada 411) (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated reason / development • Development that does not relate both to the reason given and to the question • Reference to a source of wisdom that does not relate to the reason 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: • Mahayana Buddhists would argue that all people have Buddha-nature, this means that everyone has the innate ability to achieve Buddhahood • Most Buddhists would agree with this statement as they would argue that as long as Buddhists follow the Middle Way, this is how to reach Buddhahood • Some Buddhists would argue that the Buddha showed the path to Buddhahood. If they follow his dhamma then they can achieve Buddhahood. Arguments against the statement: • Some Buddhists might argue that not all Buddhists can become a Buddha. It is not straightforward and needs focus to make the journey out of samsara, which is not something everyone can do • Some Buddhists may argue that the way to achieve Buddhahood is to not think about achieving Buddhahood. This is very difficult to do, so not all Buddhists can achieve Buddhahood • Some Buddhists might argue that in order to achieve Buddhahood a Buddhist will need to devote their lives to following the Middle Way and to taking on all the precepts. This lifestyle is not possible for everyone. Accept any other valid response. Candidates who do not consider different points of view within the religious tradition (as instructed in the question) cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2.	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. • One reason Buddhists believe punishment might be needed in society is to protect people from criminals' unskilful actions (1) • A Buddhist reason for punishment in society might be to protect victims from suffering (1) • For Buddhists a reason for punishment might be to deter criminals (1) • Compassion might be a Buddhist reason for punishment as it might change criminals (1) • Some Buddhists may think that punishment helps criminals accept that their actions cause suffering (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Lists (maximum of one mark)	3

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
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 marks. • Buddhists may use restorative justice to show compassion (1). It helps the criminal understand what the victim has experienced (1) • Buddhists may use restorative justice as it is non-violent (1). This reduces suffering for the victim and the criminal (1) • Buddhists will use restorative justice as the Buddha used it on Angulimala (1). Finger Garland renounced evil when the Buddha offered compassion (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 belief. Award further marks for each development of the belief up to a maximum of four marks. Award one further mark for any relevant source of wisdom or authority. • Buddhists teach that evil actions do not occur because of innately evil people (1). They believe people make a choice to do evil (1). 'People inflict pain on others in the selfish pursuit of their happiness or satisfaction' (XIV Dalai Lama Nobel acceptance speech) (1) • Buddhists believe that evil actions occur because all things suffer (1). The Buddha explained that it is important to follow the Middle Way to reduce this evil (1). 'Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful' (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta) (1) • Buddhists believe that evil actions occur because of craving (1). They believe that it leads to harmful behaviour (1). The Buddha is quoted as saying 'That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable' (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta) (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated belief/ development • Development that does not relate both to the belief given and to the question • Reference to a source of wisdom that does not relate to the belief 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: • Buddhists may agree and demand justice; because of dependant origination when people are treated with justice, more justice will follow until it is not needed • Some Buddhists would agree because historically Buddhists have not been treated with justice. The Dalai Lama said 'poverty, hunger, and so on... can be resolved through human effort' • Many other Buddhists would argue that demanding justice for people will reduce suffering for the people who face injustice and help them personally gain merit. Arguments against the statement: • Some Buddhists would argue that the role of the individual Buddhist is to do whatever is skilful, and this will depend on the circumstances, so may not always involve working for justice • Some Buddhists would argue that focusing on external factors such as justice may prevent them from focusing on the deeper work of spiritual growth • Some Buddhists may believe that demanding anything, including justice, is not always the right thing to do as it may cause harm to others. Accept any other valid response.	12

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.

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
3(a)	AO1 3 marks Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three. • Some Buddhists dress the deceased in white (1) • Buddhists will remember the Buddha's teaching on impermanence (1) • Some Buddhists will hold the funeral a few days after death (1) • Some Buddhists practise sky burial (1) • Some will make a shrine to remember the person (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Lists (maximum of one mark)	3

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
3(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 marks. • Using Namo Buddhaya may be important to Buddhists as it helps them remember the Buddha (1). They can focus on his life (1) • Using Namo Buddhaya may be important as a form of meditation (1). It is an effective way to gain concentration (1) • Using Namo Buddhaya is a reminder of the dhamma (1). It is used to provide insight into the Buddha's teachings (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
3(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. • One reason a Buddhist may celebrate Wesak is to celebrate the Buddha (1). Buddhists assemble in temples to praise the Buddha (1). 'Monks, this assembly is free from idle chatter, devoid of idle chatter, and is established on pure heartwood' (Anapanasati Sutta) (1) • A Buddhist may celebrate Wesak as it is an important time to remember the life of the Buddha (1). Wesak celebrates the birth, life and parinibbana of the Buddha (1). 'He who has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Teaching and his Order, penetrates with transcendental wisdom the Four Noble Truths' (Buddhavagga) (1) • A Buddhist might celebrate Wesak as it is an opportunity to gain merit (1). They will bring offerings to the monks. (1). The Buddha taught 'There is the case where the donor, before giving, is glad; while giving, his/her mind is bright & clear; and after giving is gratified' (Dana Sutta) (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated reason / development • Development that does not relate both to the reason given and to the question • Reference to a source of wisdom that does not relate to the reason given.	5

Question number	Indicative content	Mark
3(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 this statement: • Many Buddhists would argue that devotional objects are an essential feature of Buddhist worship as they can be an aid to visualisation, whereby they imagine the support of the Buddha • Many Buddhists say that devotional objects are essential because they help focus on the teachings of the Buddha and help them integrate them into their worship • Many Buddhists recognise that devotional objects are essential because of what they symbolise. For example, flowers in a shrine symbolise impermanence. Arguments against the statement: • Many Buddhists might argue that devotional objects are not an essential part of Buddhist worship, meditation is the main form of practice, and this does not require any objects • Many Buddhists would argue that concentration and focus is all that is needed to develop mindfulness during worship. Devotional objects may interfere with focus, not help • Some Buddhists would state that as Buddhists do not worship a god, and that they are trying to achieve enlightenment then other methods of puja, such as chanting are better than using devotional objects. Accept any other valid response.	15

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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
4(a)	AO1 3 marks Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three. • Buddhists believe in ahimsa (1) • Buddhists teach that pacifism is compassionate (1) • Buddhists teach that pacifism is meritorious (1) • Buddhists may teach that pacifism supports the precept not to kill (1) • Buddhists teach that pacifism is skilful (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Lists (maximum of one mark)	3

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
4(b)	AO1 4 marks Award one mark for providing a response. Award a second mark for development of the response. Up to a maximum of four marks. • A Buddhist response might be that there is no such thing as a Just War (1). All war includes violence which is wrong (1) • A Buddhist response to the Just War theory may be that it corresponds with the teaching of right intention (1). A war without correct intention would not be sanctioned (1) • A Buddhist response might be that even Just War is not skilful (1). The result of participating in killing is negative merit (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated response /development • Development that does not relate both to the response given and to the question.	4

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
4(c)	AO1 5 marks Award one mark for each belief. Award further marks for each development of the belief up to a maximum of four marks. Award one further mark for any relevant source of wisdom or authority. • Buddhists believe that the use of weapons of mass destruction is wrong (1). Their use goes against teachings about not causing suffering (1). 'Putting oneself in another's place, one should neither kill nor cause to kill' (Dhammapada 129) (1) • Buddhists believe that the use of weapons of mass destruction goes against the First Precept (1). The Buddha taught that it is wrong to kill (1). 'All tremble at violence; life is dear to all' (Dandavagga) (1) • Buddhists believe that the use of weapons of mass destruction is not a skilful action (1). There are better ways to solve conflicts (1). 'Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased' (Yamakavagga) (1). Accept any other valid response.	• Repeated belief / development • Development that does not relate both to the belief given and to the question • Reference to a source of wisdom that does not relate to the belief given.	5

Question number	Indicative content	Mark
4(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: • Buddhists believe that all actions will have an eternal consequence. Buddhists must be peaceful otherwise the consequences will not be positive • Buddhists believe that all actions should be non-violent in order to reduce suffering and thus any action they take should be peaceful • Some Buddhists would argue that being peaceful is a skilful action. Peaceful actions lead to positive merit, this in turn will lead to enlightenment. Arguments against the statement: • Some Buddhists would argue that there are occasions when violence may be the most skilful action. It may for example be used to protect others • Some Buddhist have resorted to the use of violence in places such as Tibet. Whilst recognising that peaceful actions would be best, violence has been used for self defence • Some Buddhists would suggest that scriptures accept the use of violence in order to save life. For example, in the Upaya Kaushalya Sutra when Shakyamuni Buddha in a past life kills a robber intent on mass murder on a ship. Accept any other valid response.	12

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