



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2017

**AS (NEW)
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
UNIT 1 – OPTION D
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF BUDDHISM
2120UD0-1**

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2017 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

Rules for Marking

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two stage process.

Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance, if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content.

Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Awarding no marks to a response

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 15 marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> - <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i> - <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i> - <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">13-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples. • Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language /vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">10-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. • Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">7-9 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set. • The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples. • Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">4-6 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance. • A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples. • Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-3 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance. • A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples. • Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication. <p>N.B. A maximum of 1 mark should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 15 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	<p>13-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	<p>10-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	<p>7-9 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2	<p>4-6 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1	<p>1-3 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

Option D: An Introduction to the Study of Buddhism

MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

1. (a) Examine the key ideas of the Four Noble Truths. [AO1 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The Four Noble truths are amongst the first teachings of the Buddha – truths allegedly perceived by the Buddha whilst under the Bodhi tree.
- The first truth – all life is dukkha. Expect candidates to be aware of difficulties of translating this term, and the importance of a wider definition. If dukkha meant suffering alone, the first truth would be easily refutable. However, dukkha is a far more subtle and complex notion, perhaps best translated as unsatisfactoriness. Expect candidates to use their own examples to demonstrate their understanding.
- The second truth – cause of dukkha is clinging, grasping, attachment. 'Tanha' literally means 'thirst'. Candidates should be able to explain this in their own words and use examples and illustrations to show their understanding.
- The third truth is the message that it is possible to overcome attachment and craving, even in its most subtle forms.
- The fourth truth announces the path to attaining 'nirodha' (cessation of dukkha). In a Theravada context this is the Eightfold Path, but in other schools of Buddhism this could be understood in a variety of different ways (e.g. the development of wisdom and compassion, the bodhisattva path, the variety of practices recommended in different schools of Buddhism).
- Candidates may explain that the Four Noble Truths are a formula that reflects a medical metaphor (of diagnosis, identification of symptoms, prognosis and treatment).
- As part of their examination, candidates may relate the Four Noble Truths to other Buddhist teachings (e.g. The three marks of existence, or universal truths, pratityasamutpada, the three fires/poisons).
- Candidates may show their awareness that the Four Noble Truths as expressed in that clear formula are better known in Theravada Buddhism. Mahayana traditions may focus on suffering and the release from suffering in very different ways.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

1. (b) 'The Four Noble Truths are essential for all Buddhists.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The Four Noble Truths are amongst the earliest of the Buddha's teachings, and are presented as the truths he perceived at the point at which he became awakened.
- The Four Noble Truths neatly convey an enormous amount of information about the nature of the condition of sentient beings, and the challenges faced in life, as well as offering a clearly laid out solution. The whole of the Buddhist path could be said to be captured and summarised within them.
- Many (Mahayana) schools of Buddhism do not focus so explicitly on the Four Noble Truths, rather on the bodhisattva path towards developing and perfecting absolute compassion, or on other teachings/practices, such as devotion and gratitude to enlightened beings or the development of insight through the practice of meditation.
- Whilst the Four Noble Truths may not be explicitly mentioned across all Buddhist traditions, all Buddhism could reasonably be said to be about suffering and the cessation of suffering.
- The Four Noble Truths may offer a description of and a solution to the human condition, but they say nothing about regulating the sangha, nothing about other important teachings such as meditation.
- Zen Buddhists might argue that all that is necessary is zazen, Pure Land might argue that all that is necessary is saying the nembutsu, even just once with faith, and the Four Noble Truths are an unnecessary intellectual elaboration.
- Japanese Buddhists might argue in that in this period of Mappo (the Age of the Degenerate Dharma), it is impossible to successfully practice the original teachings of the historical Buddha, and new, more accessible teachings are needed.
- Many Buddhists might argue that the most important thing about Buddhism is that it teaches compassion and kindness. The Dalai Lama says 'my religion is kindness.'

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

2. (a) Examine the dasa sila (ten precepts).

[AO1 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The ten precepts are taken by novices (or samaneras) in the sangha, and are similar to the eight precepts taken by lay people on Uposatha days (days of renewed commitment to the dharma, for example the days on which the Patimokkha is recited) but developed by splitting the precept concerning entertainments into two parts and by adding one rule prohibiting the handling of money.
- In some traditions boys spend some time as samaneras (and, less common, girls as samaneris) as a matter of course, and they take the dasa sila. In other traditions time as a novice is considered the first stage on the path towards ordination into the sangha.
- They are all about 'refraining' from certain practices, which requires the development of great insight and discipline.
- They are: I undertake the precept to refrain from (1) destroying living creatures; (2) taking that which is not given; (3) sexual activity; (4) incorrect speech; (5) intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness; (6) eating at the forbidden time (i.e., after noon); (7) dancing, singing, music, going to see entertainments; (8) wearing garlands, using perfumes, and beautifying the body with cosmetics; (9) lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place; (10) accepting gold and silver (money).
- Candidates will explain the significance of each precept, demonstrating their understanding of the value of the precepts. For example, they might elaborate on the precept of avoiding incorrect speech. This means not only the avoidance of speaking untruths, but also of avoiding exaggeration, gossip, argumentative speech, speech which leads to conflict, or stirs up hatred, or stirs up criticism of the sangha.
- These are precepts which are used for training for the religious life, rather than 'commandments'.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

2. (b) 'Rules are essential for Buddhists today.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may point out that precepts are not 'rules' but commitments made for the purposes of developing in the spiritual life. Even in Theravada there are only four 'parajikas' which can lead to expulsion from the sangha. 'Rules' as such do not play much of a role, even in the monastic sangha. Practitioners 'work with' precepts.
- The monastic life is much more circumscribed by precepts than lay life is, but this does not mean the five lay precepts are unimportant.
- Candidates may interpret modern Buddhists as 'Western Buddhists' (if they note that there are modern Buddhists in Asia too, that would be creditable). They may argue that Western Buddhists are less interested in following rules than in reaping benefits from the practice of meditation.
- Candidates may argue that many Western Buddhists take precepts or change their lifestyle considerably as a result of their religious beliefs. This may involve the following of what appear to be 'rules' for example about vegetarianism, or not getting intoxicated.
- Candidates may wrestle with the question about whether rules are helpful for living a good life (link here with issues in ethics – Natural Law v Situation Ethics) or whether the perceived 'lack of rules' in Buddhism is a benefit.
- Candidates may argue that ultimately Buddhism is not about the observance or otherwise of rules, but of the effort to overcome greed hatred and delusion, and to combat suffering wherever it arises, which is a far more complex and subtle process than observing rules.
- Similarly candidates may argue that Buddhism is ultimately about personal devotion to buddhas, bodhisattvas or particular texts, not about rules.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Section B

3. (a) Explain the account of the birth of the historical Buddha. [AO1 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates will engage with the notions of ritual purity in the account (birth is not standard, thus challenges normal ritual impurity expectations around childbirth).
- Legendary elaborations on the story show the way in which this figure was perceived by the people that remembered him.
- The story is archetypal and patterned on other stories of the birth of great leaders.
- Candidates will bring out these explanations in their account: Siddhartha's mother, Maya, was aware that she would give birth to a great leader because of her dream of a white elephant. As was standard practice, she set off for her parents' house to give birth. Suddhodana sent soldiers ahead to clear the road and set others to guard her as she was carried in a decorated palanquin. She left Kapilavatthu in a long procession and passed a garden called Lumbini Park, and Maya asked to stop. She rested, leaning on one of the Sala trees, and gave birth to the baby from her side. The birth took place on a full moon (which is now celebrated as Vesak, the festival of the Buddha's birth, awakening and death)
- According to the textual traditions, the baby walked seven steps forward and at each step a lotus flower appeared on the ground. Then, at the seventh stride, he stopped and with a noble voice shouted: "I am chief of the world, this is the last birth. There is now no more coming to be."
- Candidates may also reference the prophecy made by Asita about the dual possibilities for Siddhartha, as a world-leader, or a holy teacher.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

3. (b) 'Stories about the Buddha are not meant to be taken literally.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may argue that for many Buddhists, the life story of the Buddha is a matter of fact, and accepted unquestioningly.
- However, few Buddhists would insist on a fundamentalist/literalist interpretation. It is more that 'questioning' the story would not be seen as skilful or useful on the path to enlightenment.
- For many, the story does not have historical importance. It does not matter whether the Buddha actually lived or not, let alone whether the stories about him are 'true' or not. The important thing is that the dharma exists. The Buddha is reported to have said, 'Who sees the dharma, sees me.'
- The story of the Buddha is just one useful way of communicating aspects of the dharma, the meaning is more important than whether the content is historically factual.
- The Buddha is just one enlightened being amongst many in Buddhism, so stories about him are not any more significant than stories about any other enlightened being.
- There is no reason why stories about the Buddha are more important than stories about particular bodhisattvas, or, for example, Amida Buddha who is the focus of devotion in Pure Land Buddhism.
- Some elements of the life story of the Buddha might be taken more literally than others, for instance for some (but not all) Buddhists the Awakening of the Buddha is a historical fact.
- The stories in the life of the Buddha are much more intelligible when read with an awareness of the religious and social context in which they were formed.
- The stories are important for their meaning, not their content. They are hagiographical, which means they tell the reader more about the community that recorded the stories than they do about the figures in the stories.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

4. (a) Examine features of the Buddha's awakening under the Bodhi tree.

[AO1 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Siddhartha (who did not become the Buddha until the point of Awakening) had given up pursuing liberation through various ascetic paths under Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta and had declared the Middle Way. He sat under the tree (which later becomes known as the Bodhi tree), remembering a previous experience of jhana (during a ploughing festival) and made a determination not to move until he had penetrated the true nature of things.
- During the four watches of the night he attained insight into his past lives, insight into the workings of karma and rebirth for all beings, and, according to some accounts, insight into the Four Noble Truths.
- As such he became fully Awakened, attained nirvana, and at this point the title 'Buddha' becomes appropriate.
- According to some accounts Mara (Lord of death and illusion) brought his daughters to seduce Siddhartha whilst he meditated. Siddhartha's focus was not shaken. Mara then sent armies of monsters to attack him. He then claimed that the seat of enlightenment rightfully belonged to him and not to the mortal Siddhartha. Mara's demon soldiers declared themselves his witnesses and Mara challenged Siddhartha, 'who will speak for you?' At this point, according to the account, Siddhartha, unshaken by these attempts to alter his course, reached out his right hand to touch the earth, and the earth itself spoke: "I bear you witness!" Mara disappeared. And as the morning star rose in the sky, he attained Awakening.
- According to some accounts the Buddha continued to sit, experiencing the bliss of enlightenment, until he was persuaded to teach by the god Brahma Sahampati.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

4. (b) 'The Buddha's awakening is the most important event in Buddhism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The Buddha's awakening uncovered the central truths of Buddhism, such as the nature of karma and rebirth, pratityasamutpada and the Four Noble Truths.
- The Buddha's awakening is a pivotal moment in his biography – where despair is overcome.
- The Buddha's many previous lives, narrated in the Jataka Tales, were all directed towards the ultimate fulfilment of this aspect of his life.
- The Buddha's attainment of Awakening uncovered a path, and thus enabling others to follow the path.
- The whole of the Buddhist tradition could be said to be based on the event of the Buddha's Awakening.
- The argument could be made that if the Buddha had attained Awakening, but then not taught, then there would be no Buddhism. This is an argument that the Buddha's decision to teach is the most important event in Buddhism.
- Candidates may argue that the birth of the Buddha is the most important event, because if he had not been born, he would not be Awakened. This would be a weak argument, although candidates might strengthen it by referring to Maitreya Buddha who has not yet had birth in the human realm according to some traditions.
- Candidates may focus on key teachings being the most important aspect of Buddhism, regardless of who realised them and who teaches them. The life of the Buddha is mere incidental, not crucial. 'Who sees the dharma sees me.'
- In some forms of Buddhism the life of the Buddha is not important at all. In Pure Land Buddhism, for example, the Vow of Amida is more important than the awakening of the historical Buddha.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

5. (a) Explain the role and importance of dana (giving) in Buddhism.

[AO1 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Although giving (dana) is not mentioned in the Eightfold Path, it is said to be a foundational virtue in Buddhism.
- It is the first of the paramitas.
- Dana is 'cultivating generosity'. So whilst it might be thought of on a simple level to be making donations to the sangha of time, effort, money or goods, it is more than this. It involves the development of a giving attitude – not just to the sangha, but to anyone in need (the poor, the marginalised) or to philanthropic projects designed to bring about better lives for sentient beings or to benefit the environment.
- The practice of dana purifies the mind of the giver and results in the generation of punya (merit).
- Dana is practice without thought of personal reward. This is a difficult spiritual discipline. Dana can be undertaken with 'impure' motivations – such as because of being stimulated by shame and guilt, or in order to 'appear giving' to the outside world. Alternatively dana can be undertaken with 'pure' motives, in which there is no thought of gain, and no attachment to the gift or to the recipient.
- Dana is a practice which helps to undermine selfishness, ego and attachment to the idea of I and mine. It does this by developing a sense of the transcendence of self. Thus it is an activity which affirms the basic Buddhist teaching of no self or anatta.
- The spirit of generosity engendered in the practice of dana also leads to gratitude for dana received. At the level of ultimate truth there is no distinction between giver and receiver.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

5. (b) 'Punya (merit) depends on dana (giving).'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Punya and dana are related because from the practice of dana arises punya or merit. Every effect has a cause.
- Dana is the primary way of developing punya. The two concepts go hand in hand.
- Lay people might give practical help or materials to the sangha, and the members of the bhikkhu/bhikkhuni sangha may give guidance and spiritual teachings to the lay people. Both types of giving generate merit for the givers.
- Dana is a feature of Buddhist cultures all around the world, because of its ability to generate punya. The development of a spirit of generosity (not just the simple practice of giving material things, time or talents) is central to the Buddhist life and results in positive effects (punya) for the individual and the community (sangha).
- Dana is not the only way to develop punya. Punya may also be developed through sila, or living a virtuous life and keeping the precepts.
- Punya can also be developed through effort involved in chanting of sutras/suttas
- Punya can also be developed through the effort and commitment involved in the serious practice of meditation
- Punya can even be generated through asserting effort over a creative project designed to make people's lives better or to forward the dharma.
- Punya is merit which impacts on karma.
- Punya itself can be dana – it is common practice for Buddhists to express the intention that the punya arising from a particular practice or act of giving be used for the benefit of someone other than the giver. This merit does not have to be for someone living, it can be for the deceased or for persons personally unknown to the giver.
- The sangha is a 'field of merit', so punya depends on the sangha.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.