

Assessment Schedule – 2025

Scholarship Religious Studies (93603)

Question One

Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

The candidate should examine the nature of the dispute about the demands of diversity, inclusion, and equity (DIE) in religious tradition(s); is the dispute political? Theological? Personal? Contextual? etc. In this examination, they should show how DIE demands are understood and responded to in relation to the religious tradition's own principles and measures of accountability. To support their qualification as to how a religious tradition has responded, they will need to be analytical and critical in their thinking around perspectives on the key ideas in the two parts of the question. They should make judgements about the nature of the evidence they use in their analysis.

Responses might include:

- an in-depth discussion of what they understand accountability to be, and how it should be applied
- exploration of how religious and secular understandings of what DIE ideas are to be unpacked and explained
- reference to what they consider to be the key principles for understanding DIE ideas
- critical examination of historical examples of best or absent DIE practice
- reflection on contemporary issues that inform their debate.

Q1 Score Allocation – Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: • makes simple assumptions and does not defend them • gives limited or inaccurate alternative viewpoints • dismisses other points of view or is disengaged from them • provides an argument that relies on rhetoric, slogans, or stereotypes • may identify and explain some of the possible key ideas from the question • provides a description of their understanding of diversity, inclusion, and equity in religious traditions, but demonstrates limited analysis • does not define or analyse key elements of the question • will score a 1 or 2 if there is no attempt at analysis • will score a 3 if they show an attempt at analysis, but this lacks consistency or depth • will score a 4 if there is analysis generally present, but the essay parameters are not clearly defined.				The candidate: • gives a clear, precise interpretation of the question, and answers consistently • bases their answer on clearly articulated reasons or arguments • clearly explains the assumptions their argument makes, and anticipates and defends these assumptions • accurately identifies rival points of view and the assumptions behind them • offers logical reasons for rejecting rival points of view • addresses issues given in the context of the essay question • will score a 5 if there is a lack of clarity, inadequate consideration of important points, or some unsupported generalisations • will score a 6 if there is clarity and adequate consideration of important points, along with well supported generalisations. Note: For a score of 5 or 6, there must still be enough Scholarship-level analysis and critical thinking, particularly evidence of the examination of key assumptions and alternative points of view.		The candidate: • demonstrates perceptive and insightful understanding of religious ideas related to their chosen arguments • chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing • adopts for the sake of argument the alternative viewpoints, and can explain how and why they give the answers they do from the point of view of a person who affirms those viewpoints • explains why someone who holds those views would find their position compelling and reasonable • articulates the assumptions behind various viewpoints and explains why they come to different conclusions • will score a 7 if there are minor weaknesses in critical evaluation, or a lack of sustained reference to source evidence • will score an 8 if the analysis and critical thinking are sustained throughout the response.	

Skill 2: Integration, synthesis, and application of highly developed knowledge, skills, and understanding to complex situations

Candidates must integrate their ideas from their own content knowledge to communicate their argument effectively. They will demonstrate highly developed religious knowledge and skills as they explore the measures of accountability that religious traditions may be subject to in relation to their own principles and the demands of DIE ideas. They will need to integrate, synthesise, and apply their selection and use of historical, contemporary, theological, and other evidence in relation to their argument. Their synthesised response will show their ability to explore both sides of the argument they have set up, and demonstrate a strong understanding of how internal debate is a part of any religious tradition, and that lived religion is strongly linked to what principles they prioritise.

Responses might include:

- an insightful unpacking of a range of historical examples to support their argument
- highlighting key debates in religious traditions around DIE issues
- reference to, and an understanding of, the issues addressed by the modern DIE ideas
- debate about the range of perspectives and approaches in relation to DIE
- discussion of key religious concepts that guide people who are committed to their traditions
- choosing several key case studies to substantiate their argument.

Q1 Score Allocation – Skill 2: Integration, synthesis, and application of highly developed knowledge, skills, and understanding to complex situations

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: - draws from one or more disciplines for knowledge and skills, but does not show consistent understanding - refers to sources on DIE in religious traditions that are not always relevant - draws from these sources in isolation without showing how they fit together or mutually support each other - shows an inaccurate or overly simplistic picture of the information from these sources - uses these sources selectively and does not note any nuance or complexity - will score a 1 or 2 if there is a lack of highly developed knowledge and skills, and no attempt at integration or synthesis - will score a 3 or 4 for integrated ideas based on knowledge and skills; for a score of 3, there are appropriate pieces of evidence, but these are not integrated well.				The candidate: - draws from one or more disciplines for highly developed knowledge and skills to show understanding - refers to a range of relevant sources about DIE in religious traditions - demonstrates awareness of any debate, subtlety, and nuance in and about these sources - explains how the information from these sources relates to each other, and how they support each other or are in tension with each other - will score a 5 if there is clear, informed integration, but this may not always be consistent, or clearly expressed or applied - will score a 6 if there is a balanced integration of texts and references, with strong synthesis and application, appropriate to the question.		The candidate: - displays a synthesis of highly developed knowledge and skills with independent reflections and extrapolation, very ably showing relationships and connections between religious ideas and the dispute about how to respond to the challenge of modern ideas relating to DIE in religious traditions - demonstrates sophisticated integration and abstraction - demonstrates an understanding of the implications of holding varied positions on DIE in religious traditions beyond the immediate context - takes principles from one context and shows how these relate to another context in which the relevance was not immediately clear - will score a 7 if there are minor lapses in the consistency of sophistication or independent thought - will score an 8 if they demonstrate sophisticated skills of integration, synthesis, and application consistently throughout their response.	

Skill 3: Logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas

Candidates should communicate their own substantive argument about the nature of the debate around DIE in relation to the particularities of their chosen religious tradition's response; and in the end, how do they measure up and on what grounds? The candidate's argument should show logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas as they access relevant knowledge and skills in response to the question. They should be able to advance their argument accurately, non-pejoratively, fluently, and logically, establishing a valid position for their answer to the question. The approach(es) (e.g. historical, theological, apologetic, etc.) that they use to show their understanding should be soundly laid out to give their argument strength and clarity.

Responses might include:

- Their own internal checks and balances only reaffirm their weakness – they have not responded well.
- Is everyone to be accorded human dignity without distinction? Both the modern DIE ideas and religious principles agree, so accountability is not an issue.
- This is a real battlefield of whose understanding of what DIE is should be accepted. Religious traditions claim to have the authentic visions and internal checks and balances to keep true to these values, as they understand them. Let each be accountable in their own domain.
- Religious traditions should listen to the demands of the modern DIE ideas, as this will enable them to re-examine whether their religious practices actually demonstrate concern for all humanity / all of God's creation.
- Religious traditions should be held accountable because they have failed to protect the vulnerable. Their patriarchal, hierarchical, and exclusive systems work against human dignity.
- There has been a history of debate that seems to listen to DIE concerns, but then continues with the status quo of patriarchy, hierarchy, and privilege, which exacerbates DIE inequity.
- Religions that remain authentic to their grounding principles actually show a better understanding and practice of diversity, inclusion, and equity than secular demands manage.

Q1 Score Allocation – Skill 3: Logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: - interprets the question inconsistently / incompletely, or does not address the question at all - asserts a point of view without giving arguments or reasons for this view - provides ideas unsupported by systematic discussion - repeats ideas without developing them further - includes inaccurate information or terminology that has a significant impact on the overall argument - will score a 1 or 2 if there is a lack of logical development in the essay - will score a 3 if they have provided a simple argument, but with inconsistencies, inaccuracies, or a lack of clarity - will score a 4 for communicating a relatively simple argument that is explicit.				The candidate: - writes a response that has a logical shape to its development - presents ideas systematically, dealing with different topics consecutively - develops ideas and provides facts that are clearly elucidated, with clarity in the use of terms and religious ideas - will score a 5 if the argument wavers or is not consistent - will score a 6 if they have a balanced and valid argument that is mostly substantiated and is sustained throughout. Note: For a score of 5 or 6, there must still be enough Scholarship-level logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas.		The candidate: - provides a novel line of argument that advances the discussion and does not just repeat the standard arguments - chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing, and expounds them with precision and clarity - discusses key rival stances for and against the conclusion they are proposing, and anticipates the main objection(s) to this position - extensively and thoroughly explores the ideas they have chosen - presents an argument with convincing logical development, precision, and clarity, while demonstrating originality - will score a 7 if their argument could be more convincing - will score an 8 for a powerful and sustained argument.	

Question Two

Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

The candidate should choose relevant findings from their research to show their understanding of the range of voices responding to diversity, inclusion, and equity ideas, to clarify confluence and differences in understanding. To support their outlined scenario of possible change, they will need to be analytical and critical in their thinking around concepts of progress and tradition. They should make judgements about the nature of the evidence they use in their analysis.

Responses might include:

- exploration of a range of religious understandings of what DIE ideas are
- an in-depth discussion of what religious change is and how one evaluates it
- recognition that evaluation requires a reference to the authoritative sources for understanding DIE ideas
- critical examination of historical examples of best or absent DIE practice
- reflection on contemporary issues that inform their debate.

Q2 Score Allocation – Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: • makes simple assumptions and does not defend them • gives limited or inaccurate alternative viewpoints • dismisses other points of view or is disengaged from them • provides an argument that relies on rhetoric, slogans, or stereotypes • may identify and explain some of the possible key ideas from the question • provides a description of their understanding of diversity, inclusion, and equity in religious traditions, but demonstrates limited analysis • does not define or analyse key elements of the question • will score a 1 or 2 if there is no attempt at analysis • will score a 3 if they show an attempt at analysis, but this lacks consistency or depth • will score a 4 if there is analysis generally present, but the essay parameters are not clearly defined.				The candidate: • gives a clear, precise interpretation of the question, and answers consistently • bases their answer on clearly articulated reasons or arguments • clearly explains the assumptions their argument makes, and anticipates and defends these assumptions • accurately identifies rival points of view, and the assumptions behind them • offers logical reasons for rejecting rival points of view • addresses issues given in the context of the essay question • will score a 5 if there is a lack of clarity, inadequate consideration of important points, or some unsupported generalisations • will score a 6 if there is clarity and adequate consideration of important points, along with well supported generalisations. Note: For a score of 5 or 6, there must still be enough Scholarship-level analysis and critical thinking, particularly evidence of the examination of key assumptions and alternative points of view.		The candidate: • demonstrates perceptive and insightful understanding of religious ideas related to their unpacking of voices of evaluation, along with their chosen scenario of change • chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing • adopts for the sake of argument the alternative viewpoints, and can explain how and why they give the answers they do from the point of view of a person who affirms those viewpoints • explains why someone who holds those views would find their position compelling and reasonable • articulates the assumptions behind various viewpoints and explains why they come to different conclusions • will score a 7 if there are minor weaknesses in critical evaluation, or a lack of sustained reference to source evidence • will score an 8 if the analysis and critical thinking are sustained throughout the response.	

Skill 2: Integration, synthesis, and application of highly developed knowledge, skills, and understanding to complex situations

Candidates must integrate their ideas from their own content knowledge to communicate their argument effectively. They will demonstrate highly developed religious knowledge and skills as they substantiate their ideas and argument in response to the challenge of outlining possible changes in a religious tradition in relation to diversity, inclusion, and equity understandings. They will need to integrate, synthesise, and apply their selection and use of historical, contemporary, theological, and other evidence in relation to their argument. Their synthesised response will show their ability to explore both sides of the argument they have set up, and demonstrate a strong understanding of what the relationship between tradition and progress is.

Responses might include:

- an insightful unpacking of a range of historical examples to support their understanding of a range of voices within a tradition
- highlighting key debates in religious traditions around DIE issues
- reference to, and an understanding of, the issues addressed by the modern DIE ideas
- debate about the range of perspectives and approaches in relation to DIE
- discussion of key religious concepts that guide people committed to their traditions
- choosing several key case studies to substantiate their argument
- an astute choice of a combination of religious beliefs and practices to substantiate their change scenario.

Q2 Score Allocation – Skill 2: Integration, synthesis, and application of highly developed knowledge, skills, and understanding to complex situations

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: - draws from one or more disciplines for knowledge and skills, but does not show consistent understanding - refers to sources on diversity, inclusion, and equity in religious traditions that are not always relevant - draws from these sources in isolation without showing how they fit together or mutually support each other - shows an inaccurate or overly simplistic picture of the information from these sources - uses these sources selectively and does not note any nuance or complexity - will score a 1 or 2 if there is a lack of highly developed knowledge and skills, and no attempt at integration or synthesis - will score a 3 or 4 for integrated ideas based on knowledge and skills; for a score of 3, there are appropriate pieces of evidence, but these are not integrated well.				The candidate: - draws from one or more disciplines for highly developed knowledge and skills to show understanding - refers to a range of relevant sources about diversity, inclusion, and equity in religious traditions - demonstrates awareness of any debate, with subtlety and nuance in and about these sources - explains how the information from these sources relates to each other, and how they support each other or are in tension with each other - will score a 5 if there is clear, informed integration, but this may not always be consistent, or clearly expressed or applied - will score a 6 if there is a balanced integration of texts and references, with strong synthesis and application, appropriate to the question.		The candidate: - displays a synthesis of highly developed knowledge and skills with independent reflection and extrapolation, very ably showing relationships and connections between religious ideas and modern ideas relating to diversity, inclusion, and equity in religious traditions - demonstrates sophisticated integration and abstraction - demonstrates an understanding of the implications of holding varied positions on diversity, inclusion, and equity in religious traditions beyond the immediate context - takes principles from one context and shows how these relate to another context in which the relevance was not immediately clear - will score a 7 if there are minor lapses in the consistency of sophistication or independent thought - will score an 8 if they demonstrate sophisticated skills of integration, synthesis, and application consistently throughout their response.	

Skill 3: Logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas

Candidates should communicate their own substantive argument in response to both parts of the question – about how a range of voices have evaluated their own religious tradition's response to DIE principles, and about possible changes to a religious tradition to keep it authentic and relevant. Their argument should show logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas as they access relevant knowledge and skills in response to the question. They should be able to advance their argument accurately, non-pejoratively, fluently, and logically, establishing a valid position for their answer to the question. The approach(es) (e.g. historical, theological, apologetic, etc.) that they use to show their understanding should be soundly laid out to give their argument strength and clarity.

Responses might include:

- There are so many incidents of this religious tradition not supporting the outsider over many centuries, despite clear prescriptions in scripture, that the DIE examination gives weight to much-needed change.
- This religious tradition has not responded well to DIE ideas over the last century or so; it is losing its credibility and numbers.
- The modern DIE ideas are not the measures this religious tradition would evaluate its progress by – these are the most important equivalent ideas, and major change is not necessary.
- Traditions are set up in all walks of life, based on a range of principles and necessities – this religious tradition has always been in tune with these DIE ideas, because they are in sync with their guiding principles; calls for change are out of tune with reality.
- This tradition in all its truth, clarity, and authority progresses divine truths, which subsume DIE values.
- Some within this religious tradition have moved away from its foundational vision and let it down when evaluated against DIE ideas, but those who are true to the foundational vision have remained beyond scrutiny.
- Many religious voices have called for and initiated change in response to the call for greater diversity, inclusion, and equity in religion and society.

Q2 Score Allocation – Skill 3: Logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas

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The candidate: - interprets the question inconsistently / incompletely, or does not address the question at all - asserts a point of view without giving arguments or reasons for this view - provides ideas unsupported by systematic discussion - repeats ideas without developing them further - includes inaccurate information or terminology that has a significant impact on the overall argument - will score a 1 or 2 if there is a lack of logical development in the essay - will score a 3 if they have provided a simple argument, but with inconsistencies, inaccuracies, or a lack of clarity - will score a 4 for communicating a relatively simple argument that is explicit.				The candidate: - writes a response that has a logical shape to its development - presents ideas systematically, dealing with different topics consecutively - develops ideas and provides facts that are clearly elucidated, with clarity in the use of terms and religious ideas - will score a 5 if the argument wavers or is not consistent - will score a 6 if they have a balanced and valid argument that is mostly substantiated and is sustained throughout. Note: For a score of 5 or 6, there must still be enough Scholarship-level logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas.		The candidate: - provides a novel line of argument that advances the discussion and does not just repeat the standard arguments - chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing, and expounds them with precision and clarity - discusses key rival stances for and against the conclusion they are proposing, and anticipates the main objection(s) to this position - extensively and thoroughly explores the ideas they have chosen - provides an argument with convincing logical development, precision, and clarity, while demonstrating originality - will score a 7 if their argument could be more convincing - will score an 8 for a powerful and sustained argument.	

Cut Scores

Scholarship	Outstanding Scholarship
13 – 18	19 – 24