

2025 HSC Studies of Religion Marking Guidelines

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section I — Religion and Belief Systems in Australia post-1945

Multiple-choice Answer Key

Question		Answer
SOR I	SOR II	
1	1	D
2	2	C
3	3	D
4	4	A
5	5	C
6	6	B
7	7	D
8	8	B
9	9	C
10	10	A

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section I — Religion and Belief Systems in Australia post-1945

Question 11

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough understanding of the importance of religious dialogue in Australia post 1945 Integrates relevant evidence to support response 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a sound understanding of the importance of religious dialogue in Australia post 1945 Uses evidence to support response 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of religious dialogue in Australia post 1945 May use evidence to support response 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about religious dialogue in Australia post 1945 May use evidence 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes statements about religious dialogue in Australia 	1

Sample answer:

Religious dialogue is very important in Australia post 1945 due to changes in Australia's religious landscape, meaning there is a growing need to build respect and peace amongst religious traditions. Christianity now accounts for approximately 44% of the population while other religions represent around 10%, demonstrating that ecumenical and interfaith dialogue is needed for improving religious dialogue. For example, ISRA's interfaith Iftar dinner draws Muslims and non-Muslims together during Ramadan to build greater understanding of this important Muslim event and increase and promote religious harmony, thus breaking down barriers and encouraging greater religious respect in Australian society. Events such as this are important for building religious dialogue and enhancing peaceful relationships between the diverse range of religions in Australia.

Answers could include:

- It is essential for promoting peaceful coexistence, resolving misunderstandings and addressing conflicts that may arise from religious differences.
- As Australia's population becomes more religiously diverse, interfaith dialogue plays a crucial role in ensuring all groups in society feel included and valued.
- Open respectful conversations between people of different faiths, interfaith dialogue helps to dismantle stereotypes, promote acceptance and strengthen social cohesion.
- Australia's population increasingly identifies with no religion at all, nearly 39% reported as having no religious affiliation, interfaith initiatives become essential in bridging cultural divides and combating stereotypes.
- Australia's religious diversity as reflected in the 2021 Census, highlights the need for interfaith dialogue. Engaging in open and respectful conversations between these varied religious groups fosters mutual understanding and helps reduce prejudice.

- Meaningful dialogue among religious traditions supports the reconciliation process and enhances understanding of Aboriginal spiritual traditions.
- In a diverse nation like Australia, such dialogue is vital to ensure that all communities feel heard and valued.

Studies of Religion II

Section I Part B — Religion and Non-Religion

Multiple-choice Answer Key

Question	Answer
12	D
13	B
14	D
15	B
16	A
17	D
18	A
19	C
20	A
21	D

Studies of Religion II

Section I Part B — Religion and Non-Religion

Question 22

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough explanation on how the religious dimension has been a force for social transformation Integrates evidence to support the response 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a sound explanation on how the religious dimension has been a force for social transformation Uses evidence to support the response 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an explanation on how the religious dimension has been a force for social transformation May use evidence to support the response 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about the religious dimension and/or social transformation May refer to the stimulus 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes statements about aspects of religion 	1

Sample answer:

The religious dimension has often been a force for social transformation, serving as a catalyst for change. As the quote suggests, religions have been a force in shaping social norms and values. Significant figures such as Martin Luther King Jr, guided by Christianity’s emphasis on ‘love thy neighbour’ inspired communities to mobilise against systemic racism and segregation. This led to significant legislative changes that advanced civil rights for African Americans. The religious dimension has positively transformed society by promoting justice establishing societal norms and placing a greater emphasis on human dignity.

Answers could include:

- Religious teachings and leaders such as those involved in the abolition of slavery and the civil rights movements often cited their faith as catalyst for fighting injustice.
- The Christian teachings of compassion and care for the marginalised contributed to the development of social welfare systems across the world eg in Europe and Australia.
- Hindu values of non-violence and selfless action help drive social and political change in India, eg the movement for Independence from British rule.
- Hinduism has also been a force in promoting environmental awareness and sustainability. Concepts such as Prakriti (nature) and the belief in the interconnectedness of all living things encourage a sustainable relationship with the environment.
- Movements grounded in the Hindu understanding of the sanctity of nature and the need for humanity to live in harmony with the earth.
- The Jewish teaching of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) encourages social action to improve society. Judaism’s ethical teachings have consistently fostered positive societal changes, for example tzedakah (charity) emphasises the moral responsibility to help the marginalised.

- Islamic teachings on charity (zakat), have led to significant social welfare initiatives.
- Buddhist values on (ahimsa) have inspired peace building efforts.

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section II — Religious Tradition Depth Study

SOR I: Question 12 — Buddhism

SOR II: Question 23 — Buddhism

Part (a)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Buddhism Integrates relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Buddhism Integrates some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes statements about Buddhism 	1

Sample answer:

Pilgrimage expresses key beliefs through visits to sacred sites associated with the life of Buddha. Pilgrims travel to Bodh Gaya, where the Buddha attained enlightenment or Lumbini, his birthplace, reflecting the belief in the Four Noble Truths and the pursuit of enlightenment.

Part (b)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a thorough explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sound explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Integrates relevant terminology 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Uses relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a description of at least ONE ethical teaching relevant to the chosen ethical area • Uses some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes statements about Buddhism 	1

Sample answer:

Two key ethical teachings relevant to bioethics are ahimsa (non-violence) and compassion (*karuna*). Ahimsa emphasises avoiding harm to all living beings, which influences Buddhist views on issues like euthanasia and abortion. Buddhists are generally opposed to actions that cause unnecessary suffering, advocating for life preservation and mindful decision-making. Furthermore, compassion (*karuna*) encourages caring for others' well-being. It also calls for empathy, where the focus is on alleviating suffering rather than prolonging life at all costs.

Part (c)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than the Buddha, provides direction for a meaningful life for Buddhist adherents Uses clear and relevant evidence to support the response Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a sound evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than the Buddha, provides direction for a meaningful life for Buddhist adherents Uses relevant evidence to support the response Integrates relevant terminology 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an explanation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than the Buddha, provides direction for a meaningful life for Buddhist adherents Uses relevant evidence in the response Uses some terminology 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than the Buddha, provides direction for Buddhist adherents May use evidence and/or terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about Buddhism 	1

Answers could include:

- Asoka, the third emperor of the Maurya dynasty, is one of the most significant figures in the history of Buddhism, providing crucial direction for adherents, much like a map guides travellers on a journey toward a meaningful life.
- His personal conversion to Buddhism following the brutal Kalinga War marked a pivotal shift in his reign, and he became a model of Buddhist ethical leadership.
- Asoka’s Edicts, inscribed on pillars and rock faces across India, explicitly promoted key Buddhist values, such as ahimsa (non-violence), compassion (karuna), and respect for all living beings. These principles encouraged Buddhist followers to live harmoniously with others, fostering moral conduct in both personal and societal contexts.
- In addition to promoting ethical teachings, Asoka’s commitment to the Dhamma (the Buddhist path) helped integrate these values into governance.
- He established hospitals for both humans and animals, promoted religious tolerance, and supported Buddhist monasteries and education.
- His efforts in spreading the Buddha’s teachings across India and beyond (to Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia) helped establish a global community of Buddhists, further guiding adherents on the path to enlightenment.
- Asoka’s reign demonstrated how Buddhist principles could be applied in leadership and governance, thus offering adherents practical guidance for living a meaningful, ethical life in line with Buddhist ideals.

SOR I: Question 13 — Christianity

SOR II: Question 24 — Christianity

Part (a)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Christianity • Integrates relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Christianity • Integrates some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes statements about Christianity 	1

Sample answer:

Baptism is an important rite in most denominations of Christianity as it expresses the belief in salvation. The aspersion, affusion or immersion of water signifies the washing away of sin, reflecting the belief that salvation is achieved through faith in Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection offer eternal life.

Part (b)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a thorough explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sound explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Integrates relevant terminology 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Uses relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a description of at least ONE ethical teaching relevant to the chosen ethical area • Uses some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes statements about Christianity 	1

Sample answer:

Two key ethical teachings in bioethics are the sanctity of life and the duty to love your neighbour. The sanctity of life teaches that all human life is sacred, created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), and therefore should be protected. This belief influences Christian views on issues like abortion and euthanasia, where life is valued from conception to natural death. The second teaching is the duty to love one’s neighbour (Matthew 22:39), which emphasises compassion and care for others. This ethical teaching guides Christian responses to medical care, advocating for the alleviation of suffering and the provision of compassionate, ethical treatment in healthcare.

Part (c)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a thorough evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Jesus, provides direction for a meaningful life for Christian adherents • Uses clear and relevant evidence to support the response • Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sound evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Jesus, provides direction for a meaningful life for Christian adherents • Uses relevant evidence to support the response • Integrates relevant terminology 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an explanation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Jesus, provides direction for a meaningful life for Christian adherents • Uses relevant evidence in the response • Uses some terminology 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Jesus, provides direction for Christian adherents • May use evidence and/or terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes general statements about Christianity 	1

Answers could include:

- Paul of Tarsus, a pivotal figure in early Christianity, has provided profound direction for Christian adherents, guiding them on a spiritual journey toward a meaningful life. His letters, known as the Epistles, form a significant portion of the New Testament and have shaped Christian theology and practice.
- Paul’s teachings on ‘sola fide’ (Romans 5:1) underscore the belief that salvation is a gift from God, not earned by works, but through faith in Jesus Christ. This key doctrine has been central to Christian identity, providing adherents with clarity on how to attain salvation and live a life pleasing to God.
- Moreover, Paul’s teachings on love (1 Corinthians 13) and his emphasis on the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) offer Christians practical guidance for moral living, stressing virtues like patience, kindness, and self-control.
- He consistently encouraged the development of a community where believers support one another in love, humility, and mutual respect, exemplified in his teachings on the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12), which emphasises unity and cooperation within the Christian community.
- Paul’s missionary work, spreading Christianity across the Roman Empire, further cemented his role in providing direction, offering a clear example of commitment to spreading the Gospel.
- In these ways, Paul’s life and teachings act as a map for Christians navigating their spiritual and moral journeys.

SOR I: Question 14 — Hinduism

SOR II: Question 25 — Hinduism

Part (a)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Hinduism • Integrates relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Hinduism • Integrates some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes statements about Hinduism 	1

Sample answer:

Temple worship expresses the key belief in Gods and Goddesses. The practice involves offerings, prayers, and rituals dedicated to various deities like Vishnu, Shiva, and Rama, reflecting the belief in the divine presence in idols.

Part (b)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a sound explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area Integrates relevant terminology 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area Uses relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a description of at least ONE ethical teaching relevant to the chosen ethical area Uses some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes statements about Hinduism 	1

Sample answer:

Two key ethical teachings related to environmental ethics are Ahimsa (non-violence) and Ekam Sat (the unity of all existence). Ahimsa encourages respect for all living beings, promoting a lifestyle that minimises harm to animals, plants, and ecosystems. This principle is evident in the Hindu reverence for nature, where many deities are personifications of natural forces, like rivers eg Ganga and trees eg Banyan. Ekam Sat which comes from the Rig Veda, meaning 'the truth is one', the wise call it by many names. It teaches that the ultimate reality is understood and worshipped in different forms, reflecting Hinduism's belief in divine unity and that all life forms are interconnected, fostering a sense of responsibility to protect the environment.

Part (c)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than The Vedas, provides direction for a meaningful life for Hindu adherents Uses clear and relevant evidence to support the response Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a sound evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than The Vedas, provides direction for a meaningful life for Hindu adherents Uses relevant evidence to support the response Integrates relevant terminology 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an explanation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than The Vedas, provides direction for a meaningful life for Hindu adherents Uses relevant evidence in the response Uses some terminology 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than The Vedas, provides direction for Hindu adherents May use evidence and/or terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about Hinduism 	1

Answers could include:

- Mahatma Gandhi, a key figure in modern Hinduism, has provided profound direction for Hindu adherents, guiding them on a spiritual and ethical journey.
- His life and teachings embodied core Hindu principles, acting as a map for those seeking a meaningful life.
- Gandhi’s commitment to Ahimsa (non-violence) was central to his philosophy, not just in the political realm but as a spiritual discipline.
- He believed that non-violence was essential for personal and societal harmony, reflecting the Hindu belief that all living beings are interconnected.
- Through his leadership in the Indian independence movement, Gandhi showed how Ahimsa could be a powerful force for social and political change.
- Gandhi also emphasised the importance of Satya (truth) as the foundation of a righteous life. He viewed truth as not just a moral principle but a spiritual practice, guiding individuals to live authentically and in alignment with their higher self.
- Gandhi’s focus on Swaraj (self-rule) extended beyond political independence, advocating for self-discipline and self-reliance, which are rooted in Hindu values of personal responsibility and spiritual growth.
- Through his adherence to these principles, Gandhi inspired millions to adopt a life of simplicity, selfless service, and non-violence, providing clear direction for Hindus seeking to live in harmony with both their inner and outer worlds.
- His life remains a guiding example of how Hindu ethics can shape personal and societal transformation.

SOR I: Question 15 — Islam

SOR II: Question 26 — Islam

Part (a)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Islam • Integrates relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Islam • Integrates some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes statements about Islam 	1

Sample answer:

The practice of Hajj expresses the beliefs in Tawhid, the oneness of God. The ritual of Tawaf, where pilgrims circumambulate the Kaaba symbolises the unity of the Muslim community and emphasises that Allah should be at the focal point of their existence, reinforcing the centrality of Him in their lives.

Part (b)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a thorough explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sound explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Integrates relevant terminology 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Uses relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a description of at least ONE ethical teaching relevant to the chosen ethical area • Uses some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes statements about Islam 	1

Sample answer:

Ethical teachings stem from the Qurán and Hadith. Mizan (balance) and Khalifa (stewardship) are two ethical teachings related to Environmental ethics. The teaching of Mizan relates to Sura 55:8 “You must not transgress within the balance” which instructs Muslims to maintain that balance in their interaction with creation. This relates to issues such as overfishing or deforestation due to the imbalance they cause. All Muslims are called to be Khalifs, good stewards of the earth, guiding and leading others to preserve and protect the universe Allah created. These teachings of Mizan and Khalifa encouraged organisations such as IFEES, which aims to protect the planet for future generations through programs such as Sumatran Forest Management.

Part (c)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Muhammad and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, provides direction for a meaningful life for Islamic adherents Uses clear and relevant evidence to support the response Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a sound evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Muhammad and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, provides direction for a meaningful life for Islamic adherents Uses relevant evidence to support the response Integrates relevant terminology 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an explanation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Muhammad and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, provides direction for a meaningful life Islamic adherents Uses relevant evidence in the response Uses some terminology 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Muhammad and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, provides direction for Islamic adherents May use evidence and/or terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about Islam 	1

Answers could include:

- Al-Ghazali provided profound direction for Muslims significantly shaping their spiritual, ethical and intellectual lives.
- Al-Ghazali stressed that knowledge should be pursued as true knowledge which leads to spiritual and moral growth. It brings believers closer to God. His guidance led Muslims away from superficial religious practises toward a more authentic and transformative faith, where intellect and spirituality work in harmony.
- Al-Ghazali led a life of moral integrity embodying virtues like patience, humility and honesty. He discouraged hypocrisy and showed true moral behaviour comes from sincerity.
- Al-Ghazali helped Sufism gain greater acceptance in Islam, therefore making it more accessible for adherents to express their faith. Fostering a deeper connection to Allah through spiritual exercises, self-purification and following guidance from a Sufi master.
- Al-Ghazali emphasised that worship should be done with the utmost mindfulness and devotion. He exemplified this in his own prayer, fasting and acts of charity, striving for excellence (Ihsan) in every act – making it meaningful.
- Al-Ghazali’s concept of Sufism guides adherents to a path of spiritual enlightenment founded on Islamic tradition.

SOR I: Question 16 — Judaism

SOR II: Question 27 — Judaism

Part (a)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Judaism • Integrates relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines how ONE significant practice expresses ONE belief of Judaism • Integrates some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes statements about Judaism 	1

Sample answer:

Jewish marriage reflects the belief in the Covenant. Through the wedding vows and the Ketubah, the couple form a divine partnership, symbolising the Covenantal relationship between Yahweh and His people.

Part (b)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a thorough explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sound explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Integrates relevant terminology 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an explanation of TWO ethical teachings relevant to the chosen ethical area • Uses relevant terminology 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a description of at least ONE ethical teaching relevant to the chosen ethical area • Uses some terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes statements about Judaism 	1

Sample answer:

Two key ethical teachings that guide the approach to bioethical issues are Pikauch Nefesh and Lo Tirtzach. Pikauch Nefesh (Lev.19:6), reflects the understanding that the preservation of life takes precedence over many other religious laws. Lo Tirtzach (Deut. 5:17) prohibits the taking of innocent life and reaffirms the moral law prescribed by God. These teachings are integral in Judaism’s approach to issues in bioethics such as abortion and euthanasia.

Part (c)

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a thorough evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Abraham and Moses, provides direction for a meaningful life for Jewish adherents • Uses clear and relevant evidence to support the response • Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sound evaluation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Abraham and Moses, provides direction for a meaningful life for Jewish adherents • Uses relevant evidence to support the response • Integrates relevant terminology 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an explanation of how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Abraham and Moses, provides direction for a meaningful life for Jewish adherents • Uses relevant evidence in the response • Uses some terminology 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines how ONE significant person or school of thought, other than Abraham and Moses, provides direction for Jewish adherents • May use evidence and/or terminology 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes general statements about Judaism 	1

Answers could include:

- Heschel highlighted the importance of engaging with Jewish tradition as a source of wisdom and guidance, as the traditional/sacred texts provide insights that can be applied to contemporary challenges helping adherents navigate their spiritual journeys.
- His ideas focus on spirituality, ethics and the deep connection between humans and the divine.
- Heschel emphasises the importance of cultivating the sense of awe and wonder in the divine, encouraging Jews to recognise the sacredness of life and the world around them.
- He calls for active awareness of God’s presence in the world, urging followers to live with a sense of divine partnerships in all aspects of life – giving it purpose.
- Heschel stresses the significance of direct religious experience, advocating for a relationship with God that is deeply personal, emotional and experiential rather than purely intellectual – making it meaningful.
- He highlights the profound ethical duties Jews have towards others particularly through justice and compassion.
- Heschel emphasised ‘Tikkun Olam’ as a way to contribute to society and lead a meaningful life.
- He stressed the importance of community in fostering spiritual growth, believing that the collective experiences within the Jewish community provide support and strength, guiding individuals towards a more meaningful experience.

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section III — Religious Tradition Depth Study

SOR I: Question 17 — Buddhism

SOR II: Question 28 — Buddhism

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive analysis of how the ethical teachings of Buddhism guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus effectively throughout the response Supports a cohesive and well-structured response with detailed relevant and accurate information Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	17–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough analysis of how the ethical teachings of Buddhism guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus within the response Supports a structured response with relevant and accurate information Uses relevant and accurate terminology 	13–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an analysis of how the ethical teachings of Buddhism guide adherents to navigate the world today Refers to the stimulus within the response Supports the response with relevant information Use accurate terminology 	9–12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a description of the ethical teachings of Buddhism May refer to the stimulus within the response Uses some information and/or terminology 	5–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about Buddhism May use some terminology 	1–4

Answers could include:

Buddhism provides a comprehensive ethical framework that guides adherents in their daily lives in navigating the complexities of the world today.

- The relationship between Buddhists and the natural world can be explored through three concepts; nature as teacher, nature as spiritual force, sustainable living necessary for the future.
- A Buddhist approach to environmental issues is based on a concern for balance, harmony in the world, where all species depend on each other as a matter of concern for this balance.
- Buddhists believe that the environment can assist an adherent in finding enlightenment. 'The merit of those people who plant groves, parks, build bridges, make ponds, dwelling places, grows day and night and such religious persons go to heaven'. (SN 1.47 Vanaropa Sutta – Discourse on the Merit Gained in Planting Groves).
- Key Buddhist environmental, ethical teachings could include; conditioned arising, the Eightfold Path, Ahimsa, Asteya, Karma, Samsara, Sufficiency, Anicca, The Four Noble truths amongst others.

- Buddhist ethical response to environmental issues; Prajna (development in understanding) Samadhi (practice of meditation), then shapes the Sila (a person's ethical behaviour).
- The teachings of Continued Arising derived from Buddha, 'Nothing exists entirely alone, everything is in relation to everything else.' Buddha guides adherents to treat the environment with compassion and careful consideration of implications, exploitation could lead to a lack of balance in the world with serious consequences.
- Buddhist organisations exist to create balance in the world, and have been instrumental in environmental initiatives responding to human-induced climate change.
- During the week surrounding Earth Day in 2024 (April 19–28), Interfaith 'Power and Light' invites faith communities including Buddhists and affiliated organisations to join their annual week of spiritually informed Earth practice. The 'Faith Climate Action Week' theme for 2024 was 'Common Ground, Cultivating Connections Between Our Faith, Food and Climate', where Buddhists are called to examine their responsibility to use agricultural practices that safeguard 'Sacred Earth' and how Buddhists navigate environmental issues with just solutions.

SOR I: Question 18 — Christianity

SOR II: Question 29 — Christianity

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive analysis of how the ethical teachings of Christianity guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus effectively throughout the response Supports a cohesive and well-structured response with detailed, relevant and accurate information Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	17–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough analysis of how the ethical teachings of Christianity guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus within the response Supports a structured response with relevant and accurate information Uses relevant and accurate terminology 	13–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an analysis of how the ethical teachings of Christianity guide adherents to navigate the world today Refers to the stimulus within the response Supports the response with relevant information Uses accurate terminology 	9–12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a description of the ethical teachings of Christianity May refer to the stimulus within the response Uses some information and/or terminology 	5–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about Christianity May use some terminology 	1–4

Answers could include:

Christianity provides a comprehensive ethical framework that guides adherents in their daily lives and in navigating the complexities of the world today.

- Ethical teachings guide decision making when dealing with issues around the sanctity of life, moral responsibility and human dignity.
- The teaching of ‘Sanctity of Life’ upholds that life is a gift from God.
- ‘So God created mankind in his own image’ (Gen 1:27) implies human life is sacred and should be treated with respect.
- When applied to the issue of euthanasia, Christianity opposes the practice, as the deliberate ending of life contradicts the teaching and belief that God has authority over life and death.
- The principle of ‘Love and Compassion’ emphasises Jesus’ teachings of love, compassion and mercy towards others.

Bioethics

- ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Matt 22:39) reflects this teaching when applied to end-of-life care, where Christians are encouraged to show compassion towards the dying, advocating for palliative care over euthanasia.
- Many Christian denominations have interpreted biblical text and formed specific guidelines on bioethical issues eg the Catholic stance on bioethics opposes cloning, abortion and reproductive technologies that destroy embryos.

- Some Pentecostal Christians may emphasise the moral implications of genetic research advocating for care and caution in biotechnology.
- The teaching of 'Free Will' shows Christians that they must make decisions with responsibilities.
- 'You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free' (Gal 5:13).
- Christians are encouraged to consider personal responsibilities with acts of compassion and love for others, many Christian denominations encourage or promote organ and tissue donation.

Environmental ethics

- The ethical teaching of stewardship applies to issues related to the environment, based on Gen. 2:15, 'God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it'.
- Eco justice, based on the teaching of love thy neighbour, may be applied to how Christians respond to issues related to climate change.
- The social justice teaching of solidarity and subsidiarity apply to this area, as God created all things and responsible action to environmental issues at local levels fulfils this duty for Christians.

SOR I: Question 19 — Hinduism

SOR II: Question 30 — Hinduism

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive analysis of how the ethical teachings of Hinduism guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus effectively throughout the response Supports a cohesive and well-structured response with detailed, relevant and accurate information Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	17–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough analysis of how the ethical teachings of Hinduism guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus within the response Supports a structured response with relevant and accurate information Uses relevant and accurate terminology 	13–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an analysis of how the ethical teachings of Hinduism guide adherents to navigate the world today Refers to the stimulus within the response Supports the response with relevant information Uses accurate terminology 	9–12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a description of the ethical teachings of Hinduism May refer to the stimulus within the response Uses some information and/or terminology 	5–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about Hinduism May use some terminology 	1–4

Answer could include:

- Hinduism provides a comprehensive ethical framework that guides adherents in their daily lives and in navigating the complexities of the world today.
- Ethical teachings of Hinduism stem from the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Dharma Shastras. These texts offer moral principles that help individuals make ethical decisions.
- Ahimsa is the teaching of non-violence. Its emphasis is on kindness and non-harm. Ahimsa guides bioethical decisions such as euthanasia, abortion and IVF. ‘The one who injures another is an enemy of themselves’ (Yajurveda 16:6).
- Dharma is an adherent’s duty and their responsibility which is outlined in The Manu Smriti. It influences decisions on organ donation, medical treatment and end of life care. Adherents are to act with care and compassion for others. ‘Dharma is the foundation of the universe and foundation of all moral actions’ (Manu Smriti 1:5).
- Karma teaches that every action has consequences. It encourages Hindu adherents to make choices that results in positive outcomes for themselves and society. Bhagavad Gita (chapter 4, verse 16): ‘Even the wise are sometimes bewildered when it comes to action. Therefore, without attachment, perform your duties, as the wise do.’
- In relation to bioethics, acts such as organ donation or medical research could be viewed as good Karma as it is seen as contributing to other’s wellbeing.
- The teachings, which are found in the sacred scripture, are relevant and appropriate to world today as they address dilemmas such as genetic manipulation and animal testing. They encourage Hindus to make choices that reflect respect for life and a sense of responsibility toward the world.

SOR I: Question 20 — Islam

SOR II: Question 31 — Islam

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive analysis of how the ethical teachings of Islam guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus effectively throughout the response Supports a cohesive and well-structured response with detailed, relevant and accurate information Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	17–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough analysis of how the ethical teachings of Islam guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus within the response Supports a structured response with relevant and accurate information Uses relevant and accurate terminology 	13–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an analysis of how the ethical teachings of Islam guide adherents to navigate the world today Refers to the stimulus within the response Supports the response with relevant information Uses accurate terminology 	9–12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a description of the ethical teachings of Islam May refer to the stimulus within the response Uses some information and/or terminology 	5–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about Islam May use some terminology 	1–4

Answers could include:

Islam provides a comprehensive ethical framework that guides adherents in their daily lives and in navigating the complexities of the world today.

- The ethical teachings of Islam derived from the Quran, Hadith, Ijma and Qiyas provide a framework for adherents navigating bioethical issues in the modern world.
- Key ethical teachings are connected to principal beliefs guide decision making and responses to ethical issues.
- Adherents face the challenge of applying traditional teachings with modern medical practices and technological advancements.
- Islam permits assisted reproductive technology such as invitro fertilisation within strict ethical parameters, meaning sperm or egg donation is not permitted as it can introduce issues of unknown parentage and lineage which is not permissible.
- Muslims believe in the sanctity of human life and that life begins at conception, as the Hadith states ‘The creation of each of you is brought together in the womb of his mother ... his provision, his age and whether he will be wretched or blessed’ therefore abortion is generally regarded as morally impermissible particularly after the first trimester once ensoulment has occurred – as Muslims are instructed to not take life, which Allah has made sacred (Quran 6:15).
- Diverse views exist on abortion, Sunni and Shiite consider abortion to be permissible both for the mother and public interest of the community if the foetus is diagnosed with foetal abnormalities which will compromise the quality of life or welfare of the family.

- If the pregnancy endangers the mother's life, their necessity overrides prohibition and abortion is considered morally permissible.
- Sacred texts ultimately inform Islamic teachings that guide adherents to embrace their personal struggles and complexities faced in the world today.

SOR I: Question 21 — Judaism

SOR II: Question 32 — Judaism

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive analysis of how the ethical teachings of Judaism guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus effectively throughout the response Supports a cohesive and well-structured response with detailed, relevant and accurate information Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	17–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thorough analysis of how the ethical teachings of Judaism guide adherents to navigate the world today Integrates the stimulus within the response Supports a structured response with relevant and accurate information Uses relevant and accurate terminology 	13–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an analysis of how the ethical teachings of Judaism guide adherents to navigate the world today Refers to the stimulus within the response Supports the response with relevant information Uses accurate terminology 	9–12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a description of the ethical teachings of Judaism May refer to the stimulus within the response Uses some information and/or terminology 	5–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about Judaism May use some terminology 	1–4

Answers could include:

Judaism provides a comprehensive ethical framework that guides adherents in their daily lives and in navigating the complexities of the world today.

- Jewish ethics encompass three expectations:
 - The practice of goodness is based upon the holiness of God
 - The ethic is for the whole community not just the individual
 - The ethical traditions direct the practical activities of daily life.
- Sources of ethical teaching:
 - The Ten Commandments which are the Code of Behaviour given to Moses by God
 - The Prophetic Vision/teachings
 - The Book of Proverbs.
- There is a continual interaction between Halacha (Jewish law) and ethical issues confronting society.
- Judaism sees sexuality and sexual expression as a positive action. It regards sex as a legitimate good, a mitzvah which is an act compatible with holiness. However, Judaism imposes certain restraints and discipline in certain areas to protect adherents from abuse. (Kiddushin/Kadeisha) ‘It is not good for man to be alone’ (Gen 2:18).
- ‘Go forth and multiply’ (Gen 1:28) is one of the main ethical teachings in the area of sexual ethics. It is taken from God’s blessing to Adam and Eve.
- Jewish law traditionally opposes birth control or abortion when practiced for selfish reasons.

- Tzniut addresses the notion of pre-marital sex. When performed before marriage, the sexual act can destroy sexuality and undermine self-respect. Having sex is one of the three stages of marriage – betrothal, contract, consummation because the sexual act is so important, barriers have to be formed – Orthodox men and women are not left alone before marriage. This is known as neggiah. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Ex 20:14) is the appropriate teaching here.
- Jewish ethical teachings provide a moral compass for adherents offering guidance in navigating the modern world's complex sexual ethics issues. The diversity of Jewish thought ensures that there is always room for personal interpretation.

Studies of Religion II

Section IV — Religion and Peace

Question 33

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a sustained and reasoned explanation of how TWO religious traditions support adherents towards achieving inner peace Integrates the statement effectively throughout the response Supports a cohesive and well-structured response with detailed, relevant and accurate information Integrates relevant and accurate terminology 	17–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a reasoned explanation of how TWO religious traditions support adherents towards achieving inner peace Integrates the statement within the response Supports a structured response with relevant and accurate information Uses relevant and accurate terminology 	13–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides some explanation of how TWO religious traditions supports adherents towards achieving inner peace Refers to the statement in the response Supports the response with relevant information Uses accurate terminology 	9–12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a description of how at least ONE religious tradition supports adherents in achieving peace May refer to the statement Uses some information and/or terminology 	5–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes general statements about religion and/or peace May use some terminology 	1–4

Answers could include:

Christianity

- Christians believe that peace is central to the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- True peace comes from a relationship with God which is expressed through love, forgiveness and reconciliation with others.
- The 'Peace of Christ' is seen as a gift from God.
- 'Peace I leave you; my peace. I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.' (John 14:27).
- Meditation on the scripture can bring comfort and a sense of tranquillity, reminding Christians of God's love.
- The teaching of 'forgiveness' is reflected in the concept that living in a peaceful world can deeply influence an adherents' inner peace, especially when suffering at the hands of another. Forgiveness brings a person closer in their relationship with God, heals relationships with others and self.
- Christianity teaches that peace reflects God's kingdom on Earth. When one sees peace in the world, through acts of mercy or justice, they may feel more attuned to God's will – enhancing their attainment of inner peace.

- 'Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God' (Matt 5:8).

Buddhism

- Buddhists believe inner peace is closely linked to the concept of dukkha – the ceasing of suffering.
- The path to inner peace is known as the Noble Eightfold path. It involves practices of meditation, wisdom and ethical conduct.
- World Peace plays an important role in a Buddhist's attainment of inner peace as they need to be in an environment conducive to personal spiritual growth.
- Meditation (Dhyana) and mindfulness (Sati) help to create a mind and body for the path to inner peace.
- These both help to clear the mind and deepen awareness. Regular meditation – whether focussed on breath or loving – kindness cultivates a peaceful mind, clarity and greater emotional balance.
- The emphasis on the teaching of 'right action, right speech' creates harmonious relationships with others, in turn making it easier for Buddhists to cultivate their peaceful environment.
- 'The mind is everything. What you think you become' Buddha.
- 'Peace comes from within. Do not seek it without' Buddha.
- 'Let go of attachment, let go of desire. Let go of ego. Let go of your sense of self. You will find peace.' Thich Nhat Hanh.

2025 HSC Studies of Religion Mapping Grid

Studies of Religion I

Section I — Religion and Belief Systems in Australia post–1945 and

Studies of Religion II

Section I

Part A — Religion and Belief Systems in Australia post–1945

Question		Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
SOR I	SOR II			
1	1	1	Present religious landscape in Australia – denominational switching	H2
2	2	1	Present religious landscape in Australia – immigration	H2
3	3	1	Stolen generations — effect of dispossession	H2
4	4	1	Ecumenical movements within Christianity	H3
5	5	1	Religious traditions in the process of reconciliation	H2
6	6	1	Account for the present religious landscape – secularism	H1
7	7	1	Aboriginal spirituality determined by the Dreaming – ceremonial life	H3
8	8	1	Religious landscape in Australia – rise of new age religions	H6
9	9	1	The importance of Native Title for the Land Rights movement	H5
10	10	1	Changing patterns of religious adherents	H6
11	11	5	Explain the importance of ecumenism, interfaith dialogue and reconciliation in multifaith Australia	H2, H5, H8

Studies of Religion II

Section I

Part B — Religion and Non-Religion

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
12	1	The global distribution of the five major religious traditions	H6
13	1	Human search for personal fulfilment through non-religious practices – Atheism	H1
14	1	The rise of new religious expressions – search for personal fulfilment	H6
15	1	The significance of the religious dimension in human history	H1
16	1	Expressions of religious dimension in human history – Animism	H2
17	1	Expression of the religious dimension in human history	H1
18	1	Human search for personal fulfilment through non – religious practices – Agnosticism	H2
19	1	Influences on the growth of new religious expressions and spiritualities	H2
20	1	The human search for personal fulfilment through non-religious practices – Humanism	H2

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
21	1	The response of ONE religious and ONE non-religious belief system	H2
22	5	The significance of the religious dimension in human history – social transformation	H2, H6, H8

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II
Section II – Religious Tradition Depth Study

Question		Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
SOR I	SOR II			
12 (a)	23 (a)	3	Buddhism – significant practices	H4, H8
12 (b)	23 (b)	5	Buddhism – ethics	H5, H8, H9
12 (c)	23 (c)	7	Buddhism – significant people and ideas	H2, H5, H8, H9
13 (a)	24 (a)	3	Christianity – significant practices	H4, H8
13 (b)	24 (b)	5	Christianity – ethics	H5, H8, H9
13 (c)	24 (c)	7	Christianity – significant people and ideas	H2, H5, H8, H9
14 (a)	25 (a)	3	Hinduism – significant practices	H4, H8
14 (b)	25 (b)	5	Hinduism – ethics	H5, H8, H9
14 (c)	25 (c)	7	Hinduism – significant people and ideas	H2, H5, H8, H9
15 (a)	26 (a)	3	Islam – significant practices	H4, H8
15 (b)	26 (b)	5	Islam – ethics	H5, H8, H9
15 (c)	26 (c)	7	Islam – significant people and ideas	H2, H5, H8, H9
16 (a)	27 (a)	3	Judaism – significant practices	H2, H8
16 (b)	27 (b)	5	Judaism – ethics	H5, H8, H9
16 (c)	27 (c)	7	Judaism – significant people and ideas	H2, H5, H8, H9

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II
Section III – Religious Tradition Depth Study

Question		Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
SOR I	SOR II			
17	28	20	Buddhism – ethics	H4, H5, H8, H9
18	29	20	Christianity – ethics	H4, H5, H8, H9
19	30	20	Hinduism – ethics	H4, H5, H8, H9
20	31	20	Islam – ethics	H4, H5, H8, H9
21	32	20	Judaism – ethics	H4, H5, H8, H9

Studies of Religion II
Section IV – Religion and Peace

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
33	20	Two traditions and inner peace	H2, H5, H8, H9