

## **Assessment Schedule – 2023**

### **Scholarship: Religious Studies (93603) FINAL**

#### **Question One**

##### **Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking**

The candidate should choose relevant findings from research in the psychology of religion and spirituality, be able to substantiate whether the findings are “convincing and useful”, and bring strong analysis and critical thinking as they examine “for whom, and to what extent” the relevant findings are convincing and useful. The candidate’s examples and understanding should be examined in light of both authoritative academic practice (particularly the sub-discipline of the psychology of religion and spirituality) and the “for whom” they identify – for instance, it might be passages from authoritative religious sources that appear to support or diminish how convincing and useful the findings are. The candidate can also bring in historical examples and contemporary reports to support their examples and analysis. They should demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of religious and spiritual practices as proscribed by the traditions they identify. They should also examine key assumptions about the nature of religious belief and practice made by experts in the psychology of religion and spirituality. They should make judgements about the nature of the evidence they use in their analysis.

Responses might include:

- exploration of differences between religious / spiritual practice and academic understanding of that practice
- an apologetic but critically examined exploration of the history and nature of meditation – for instance, in one or more religious traditions, supported with useful but limited research from the psychology of religion and spirituality
- reference to what they consider the authoritative sources of key beliefs and practices of religion and spirituality to be
- clarification of methodologies used by researchers in the psychology of religion and spirituality to back up their critical thinking
- analysis of historical debates
- 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
<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes simple assumptions and does not defend them</li> <li>• gives limited or inaccurate alternative viewpoints</li> <li>• dismisses other points of view or is disengaged from them</li> <li>• provides an argument that relies on rhetoric, slogans, or stereotypes</li> <li>• may identify and explain some of the possible key ideas from the question</li> <li>• provides a description of their understanding of the psychology of religion and spirituality, but demonstrates limited analysis</li> <li>• does not define or analyse key elements of the question</li> <li>• will score a 1 or 2 if there is no attempt at analysis</li> <li>• will score a 3 if they show an attempt at analysis, but this lacks consistency or depth</li> <li>• will score a 4 if there is analysis generally present, but the essay parameters are not clearly defined.</li> </ul>				<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gives a clear, precise interpretation of the question, and answers consistently</li> <li>• bases their answer on clearly articulated reasons or arguments</li> <li>• clearly explains the assumptions their argument makes, and anticipates and defends these assumptions</li> <li>• accurately identifies rival points of view, and the assumptions behind these rival points of view</li> <li>• offers logical reasons for rejecting rival points of view</li> <li>• addresses issues given in the context of the essay question</li> <li>• will score a 5 if there is a lack of clarity, or inadequate consideration of important points, or some unsupported generalisations</li> <li>• will score a 6 if there is clarity and adequate consideration of important points, along with well supported generalisations.</li> </ul>		<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates perceptive and insightful comprehension of religious ideas related to their chosen approach(es) to understanding the psychology of religion and spirituality</li> <li>• chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• explains why someone who held those views would find their position compelling and reasonable</li> <li>• articulates the assumptions behind various viewpoints and explains why they come to different conclusions</li> <li>• will score a 7 if there are minor weaknesses in critical evaluation, or a lack of sustained reference to source evidence</li> <li>• will score an 8 if the analysis and critical thinking is sustained throughout the response.</li> </ul>	

**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 complex challenge of examining how convincing and useful research from the school of the psychology of religion and spirituality is. Their selection and use of historical, contemporary, psychological, theological, and other debates about the nature of religious and spiritual practice, from within and without, will be appropriate to answering the question. Their synthesised response will show their ability to explore different claims to be the authority on what religious and spiritual practice are about, particularly around their understanding of what the essence of religion and spirituality is in relation to the growing body of research in the psychology of religion and spirituality.

Responses might include:

- an insightful unpacking of a range of research that demonstrates weaknesses and strengths in the findings
- a drawing together of historical and contemporary examples, theological and psychological debates, and a range of authoritative writings to support their argument
- reference to, and an understanding of, the issues addressed by contemporary schools of the psychology of religion and spirituality
- debate about the range of perspectives and approaches in evidence within the psychology of religion and spirituality
- discussion of key religious concepts that guide people 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
<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draws from one or more disciplines for knowledge and skills, but does not show consistent understanding</li> <li>refers to sources on the psychology of religion and spirituality that are not always relevant</li> <li>draws from these sources in isolation without showing how they fit together or mutually support each other</li> <li>shows an inaccurate or overly simplistic picture of the information from these sources</li> <li>uses these sources selectively and does not note any nuance or complexity</li> <li>will score a 1 or 2 if there is a lack of highly developed knowledge and skills, and no attempt at integration or synthesis</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>				<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draws from one or more disciplines for highly developed knowledge and skills to show understanding</li> <li>refers to a range of relevant sources about the psychology of religion and spirituality</li> <li>demonstrates awareness of any debate, subtlety, and nuance in and about these sources</li> <li>explains how the information from these sources relates to each other, and how they support each other or are in tension with each other</li> <li>will score a 5 if there is clear, informed integration, but this may not always be consistent or clearly expressed or applied</li> <li>will score a 6 if there is a balanced integration of texts and references, with strong synthesis and application, appropriate to the question.</li> </ul>		<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>displays a synthesis of highly developed knowledge and skills with independent reflection and extrapolation, very ably showing relationships and connections between religious ideas and the approaches to understanding the psychology of religion and spirituality they have focused on</li> <li>demonstrates sophisticated integration and abstraction</li> <li>demonstrates the implications of various answers beyond the immediate context into other areas where religion and spirituality and methodologies in the psychology of religion and spirituality intersect</li> <li>takes principles from one context and shows how these relate to another context in which the relevance was not immediately clear</li> <li>will score a 7 if there are minor lapses in the consistency of sophistication or independent thought</li> <li>will score an 8 if they demonstrate sophisticated skills of integration, synthesis, and application consistently throughout their response.</li> </ul>	

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

Candidates should communicate their own substantive argument about whom and to what extent findings in the psychology of religion and spirituality are convincing and useful, as in whom can be trusted. 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, psychological, apologetic) they use to show their understanding of debates around and findings of the psychology of religion and spirituality should be soundly laid out in order to give their argument strength and clarity.

Responses might include:

- an argument that the psychology of religion and spirituality is challenged by a reliance on reportage and having to use secular measuring tools for sacred experiences, yet is rewarded with affirming the benefits of selected, measurable religious and spiritual practices
- religious and spiritual perspectives and experiences give full meaning and participation for the followers, which researchers can only research piecemeal
- an argument for both the outsider and insider benefiting from the psychology of religion and spirituality research by enhancing understanding of religious and spiritual practice
- while researchers cannot really unpack experiences within the sacred dimension, they can convincingly examine the impact of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices on well-being and sociability
- findings help those with a heart for comparative religion to see commonalities across all worldviews
- research findings help religious and spiritual practitioners understand the depths of human experience better **and** help those without religious or spiritual commitment to understand the nature of religiosity and spirituality better.

**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
<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interprets the question inconsistently / incompletely, or does not address the question at all</li> <li>asserts a point of view without giving arguments or reasons for this view</li> <li>provides ideas unsupported by systematic discussion</li> <li>repeats ideas without developing them further</li> <li>includes inaccurate information or terminology that has a significant impact on the overall argument</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will score a 1 or 2 if there is a lack of logical development in the essay</li> <li>will score a 3 if they have provided a simple argument, but with inconsistencies, inaccuracies, or a lack of clarity</li> <li>will score a 4 for communicating a relatively simple argument that is explicit.</li> </ul>				<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writes a response that has a logical shape to its development</li> <li>presents ideas systematically, dealing with different topics consecutively</li> <li>develops ideas and provides facts that are clearly elucidated, with clarity in the use of terms and religious ideas</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will score a 5 if the argument wavers or is not consistent</li> <li>will score a 6 if they have a balanced and valid argument that is mostly substantiated and is sustained throughout.</li> </ul>		<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides a novel line of argument that advances the discussion and does not just repeat the standard arguments</li> <li>chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing, and expounds them with precision and clarity</li> <li>discusses key rival stances for and against the conclusion they are proposing, and anticipates the main objection(s) to this position</li> <li>extensively and thoroughly explores the ideas they have chosen</li> <li>presents an argument with convincing logical development, precision, and clarity, while demonstrating originality</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will score a 7 if their argument could be more convincing</li> <li>will score an 8 for a powerful and sustained argument.</li> </ul>	

## Question Two

### Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

The candidate should show an understanding of religious and spiritual perspectives and experiences, particularly highlighting challenges and rewards for researchers, while examining grounds on which the school of psychology of religion and spirituality can authentically clarify and expand one's understanding of religious and spiritual experience. The candidate's examples and understanding should be examined in light of both authoritative academic theories (psychological, sociological, scientific) and well-chosen examples of religious and spiritual perspectives and experiences. The candidate can also bring in historical examples and contemporary reports to support their examples and analysis. They should also examine key assumptions about the nature of religious perspectives and experiences made by researchers in the psychology of religion and spirituality. They should make judgements about the nature of the evidence they use in their analysis.

Responses might include:

- exploration of differences between religious / spiritual experience and academic understanding of that experience
- reference to what they consider the authoritative sources of religious and spiritual perspectives to be
- clarification of methodologies used by researchers in the psychology of religion and spirituality to back up their critical thinking
- analysis of examples from the psychology of religion and spirituality that explore religious and spiritual experiences
- 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
<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes simple assumptions and does not defend them</li> <li>• gives limited or inaccurate alternative viewpoints</li> <li>• dismisses other points of view or is disengaged from them</li> <li>• provides an argument that relies on rhetoric, slogans, or stereotypes</li> <li>• may identify and explain some of the possible key ideas from the question</li> <li>• provides a description of their understanding of the psychology of religion and spirituality, but demonstrates limited analysis</li> <li>• does not define or analyse key elements of the question</li> <li>• will score a 1 or 2 if there is no attempt at analysis</li> <li>• will score a 3 if they show an attempt at analysis, but this lacks consistency or depth</li> <li>• will score a 4 if there is analysis generally present, but the essay parameters are not clearly defined.</li> </ul>				<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gives a clear, precise interpretation of the question, and answers consistently</li> <li>• bases their answer on clearly articulated reasons or arguments</li> <li>• clearly explains the assumptions their argument makes, and anticipates and defends these assumptions</li> <li>• accurately identifies rival points of view, and the assumptions behind these rival points of view</li> <li>• offers logical reasons for rejecting rival points of view</li> <li>• addresses issues given in the context of the essay question</li> <li>• will score a 5 if there is a lack of clarity, inadequate consideration of important points, or some unsupported generalisations</li> <li>• will score a 6 if there is clarity and adequate consideration of important points, along with well supported generalisations.</li> </ul>		<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates perceptive and insightful comprehension of religious ideas related to their chosen approach(es) to understanding the psychology of religion and spirituality</li> <li>• chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• explains why someone who held those views would find their position compelling and reasonable</li> <li>• articulates the assumptions behind various viewpoints and explains why they come to different conclusions</li> <li>• will score a 7 if there are minor weaknesses in critical evaluation, or a lack of sustained reference to source evidence</li> <li>• will score an 8 if the analysis and critical thinking are sustained throughout the response.</li> </ul>	

**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 complex question of what it is about religious and spiritual experiences that can both challenge and reward researchers. How do they understand religious and spiritual experiences that they identify? How do they understand challenge and reward in academic terms? Their selection and use of historical, contemporary, psychological, theological, and other debates and case studies within religion and spirituality will be appropriate to answering the question. Their synthesised response will show their ability to explore pertinent examples of religious and spiritual perspectives and experiences, and examine these in relation to the growing body of research in the psychology of religion and spirituality, particularly to explore what is challenging and rewarding about it.

Responses might include:

- an insightful unpacking of a range of research that demonstrates challenges and rewards in the findings
- a drawing together of historical and contemporary examples that highlight areas the psychology of religion and spirituality has explored with varying degrees of success
- reference to, and an understanding of, issues addressed by contemporary schools of the psychology of religion and spirituality
- debate about the range of perspectives and approaches in evidence within the psychology of religion and spirituality
- clarification of what they understand religious and spiritual perspective and experiences to encompass.

**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
<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draws from one or more disciplines for knowledge and skills, but does not show consistent understanding</li> <li>refers to sources on the psychology of religion and spirituality that are not always relevant</li> <li>draws from these sources in isolation without showing how they fit together or mutually support each other</li> <li>shows an inaccurate or overly simplistic picture of the information from these sources</li> <li>uses these sources selectively and does not note any nuance or complexity</li> <li>will score a 1 or 2 if there is a lack of highly developed knowledge and skills, and no attempt at integration or synthesis</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>				<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draws from one or more disciplines for highly developed knowledge and skills to show understanding</li> <li>refers to a range of relevant sources about the psychology of religion and spirituality</li> <li>demonstrates awareness of any debate, with subtlety and nuance in and about these sources</li> <li>explains how the information from these sources relates to each other, and how they support each other or are in tension with each other</li> <li>will score a 5 if there is clear, informed integration, but this may not always be consistent or clearly expressed or applied</li> <li>will score a 6 if there is a balanced integration of texts and references, with strong synthesis and application, appropriate to the question.</li> </ul>		<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>displays a synthesis of highly developed knowledge and skills with independent reflection and extrapolation, very ably showing relationships and connections between religious ideas and the approaches to understanding the psychology of religion and spirituality they have focused on</li> <li>demonstrates sophisticated integration and abstraction</li> <li>demonstrates the implications of various answers beyond the immediate context into other areas where religion and spirituality and methodologies in the psychology of religion and spirituality intersect</li> <li>takes principles from one context and shows how these relate to another context in which the relevance was not immediately clear</li> <li>will score a 7 if there are minor lapses in the consistency of sophistication or independent thought</li> <li>will score an 8 if they demonstrate sophisticated skills of integration, synthesis, and application consistently throughout their response.</li> </ul>	

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

Candidates should communicate their own substantive argument about what is challenging and rewarding for researchers as they explore religious and spiritual perspectives and experiences. 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, psychological, theological) they use to show their understanding of debates around the findings of the psychology of religion and spirituality should be soundly laid out in order to give their argument strength and clarity.

Responses might include:

- researchers are treading on holy ground and cannot really enter it on secular terms
- this is a win-win for both sides, as it reveals the fullness of human potential
- it is such a wide field to study, from cults to altered states, which requires psychology to work with many disciplines for authentic reward
- researchers might have neurological, evolutionary, or developmental know-how, but they are trying to examine a reality from the outside which they can't actually clarify and expand, except superficially.

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

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interprets the question inconsistently / incompletely, or does not address the question at all</li> <li>asserts a point of view without giving arguments or reasons for this view</li> <li>provides ideas unsupported by systematic discussion</li> <li>repeats ideas without developing them further</li> <li>includes inaccurate information or terminology that has a significant impact on the overall argument</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will score a 1 or 2 if there is a lack of logical development in the essay</li> <li>will score a 3 if they have provided a simple argument, but with inconsistencies, inaccuracies, or a lack of clarity</li> <li>will score a 4 for communicating a relatively simple argument that is explicit.</li> </ul>				<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writes a response that has a logical shape to its development</li> <li>presents ideas systematically, dealing with different topics consecutively</li> <li>develops ideas and provides facts that are clearly elucidated, with clarity in the use of terms and religious ideas</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will score a 5 if the argument wavers or is not consistent</li> <li>will score a 6 if they have a balanced and valid argument that is mostly substantiated and is sustained throughout.</li> </ul>		<p>The candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides a novel line of argument that advances the discussion and does not just repeat the standard arguments</li> <li>chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing, and expounds them with precision and clarity</li> <li>discusses key rival stances for and against the conclusion they are proposing, and anticipates the main objection(s) to this position</li> <li>extensively and thoroughly explores the ideas they have chosen</li> <li>provides an argument with convincing logical development, precision, and clarity, while demonstrating originality</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will score a 7 if their argument could be more convincing</li> <li>will score an 8 for a powerful and sustained argument.</li> </ul>	

**Cut Scores**

Scholarship	Outstanding Scholarship
13 – 18	19 – 24