

New  
Specification



*Rewarding Learning*

ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)  
General Certificate of Education  
2017

---

## **Religious Studies**

Assessment Unit AS 5

*assessing*

The Celtic Church in Ireland in the 5th, 6th and 7th Centuries

**[SRE51]**

**THURSDAY 25 MAY, MORNING**

---

**MARK  
SCHEME**

## **General Marking Instructions**

### ***Introduction***

The main purpose of a mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

### ***Assessment objectives***

Below are the assessment objectives for **GCE Religious Studies**

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, including:
  - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching;
  - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies;
  - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice; and
  - approaches to the study of religion and belief (AO1);and
- analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study (AO2).

### ***Quality of candidates' responses***

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17- or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

### ***Flexibility in marking***

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

### ***Positive marking***

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17- or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

### ***Awarding zero marks***

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication.

### ***Levels of response***

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit' bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement.

The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Each of the two assessment objectives have been categorised into five levels of performance relating to the respective abilities of the candidates. Having identified, for each assessment objective, the band in which the candidate has performed, the examiner should then decide on the appropriate mark within the range for the band.

### ***Other Aspects of Human Experience at AS Level***

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, when required, to access Bands 3–5.

### ***Synoptic Assessment at A2 Level***

Candidates must refer to different units of study in their AO1 response to access Bands 4–5.

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience in their AO2 response to access Bands 3–5.

### ***Quality of written communication***

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within levels of response as follows:

Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.

Level 2: Quality of written communication is limited.

Level 3: Quality of written communication is good.

Level 4: Quality of written communication is very good.

Level 5: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

**Level 1 (Basic):** The candidate makes only a basic selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material lacks clarity and coherence. There is little or no use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are basic and the intended meaning is not clear.

**Level 2 (Limited):** The candidate makes a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is limited use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

**Level 3 (Good):** The candidate makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

**Level 4 (Very Good):** The candidate makes a very good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with clarity and coherence. There is very good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a very good standard to make meaning clear.

**Level 5 (Excellent):** The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

Band	AO1 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An excellent response to the question asked</li> <li>• Demonstrates comprehensive understanding and knowledge</li> <li>• Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</li> <li>• A very high degree of relevant evidence and examples</li> <li>• A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure</li> <li>• An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very good response to the question asked</li> <li>• Demonstrates a high degree of understanding and almost totally accurate knowledge</li> <li>• Demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</li> <li>• A very good range of relevant evidence and examples</li> <li>• A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure</li> <li>• A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good response to the question asked</li> <li>• Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding and mainly accurate knowledge</li> <li>• Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</li> <li>• A good range of relevant evidence and examples</li> <li>• A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence</li> <li>• A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited response to the question asked</li> <li>• Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• Demonstrates limited understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</li> <li>• A limited range of evidence and/or examples</li> <li>• A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence</li> <li>• A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[6]–[10]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic response to the question asked</li> <li>• Demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• Demonstrates minimal understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</li> <li>• Little, if any, use of evidence and/or examples</li> <li>• A basic answer with basic structure and coherence</li> <li>• A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[0]–[5]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis</li> <li>• An excellent attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked</li> <li>• An excellent attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience</li> <li>• An excellent attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought</li> <li>• A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure</li> <li>• An extensive range of technical language and terminology with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very good response demonstrating a very good attempt at critical analysis</li> <li>• A very good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked</li> <li>• A very good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience</li> <li>• A very good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought</li> <li>• A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure</li> <li>• A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reasonable response demonstrating a good attempt at critical analysis</li> <li>• A good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked</li> <li>• A good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience</li> <li>• A good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought</li> <li>• A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence</li> <li>• A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited response demonstrating a modest attempt at critical analysis</li> <li>• A limited attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked</li> <li>• A limited attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which struggle to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience</li> <li>• A limited attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought</li> <li>• A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence</li> <li>• A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[6]–[10]

Band	AO1 Performance Descriptors	Marks
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis</li> <li>• A basic attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked</li> <li>• A basic attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which fail to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience</li> <li>• A basic attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought</li> <li>• A basic answer with basic structure and coherence</li> <li>• A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> </ul>	[0]–[5]

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, where necessary, to access Bands 3–5.

## Section A

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answer **one** question.

- 1 (a) Describe how the social and religious background that existed in pre-Patrician Ireland influenced Christianity.

Answers may include:

- Society was strictly hierarchical with an over-king, a minor king, followed by the nobility (this group produced the druids), the Brehons and poets. Christian missionaries, such as Patrick and early missionaries knew that conversion depended on converting the king, the nobility and their families and the rest of the tribe would follow.
- Society was also largely rural; the road network was poor which meant that communication within the country was difficult and travel for most people, including missionaries was extremely difficult.
- Inheritance was shared equally among brothers and women had a life stake in their father's land which meant that women had status in their own right which had ramifications for missionaries.
- Celtic society was religious and pagan with worship of the sun which is illustrated at sites like Newgrange and Knowth in Co Meath. The fact that religious belief and religious practice was central to life in Ireland meant that Christianity was built on solid pagan foundations.
- Strong belief in a world after death where wells, caves and burial places were viewed as entrances to the other world; this was again congenial to Christian missionaries who were able to easily adapt these beliefs. Christianity often built its Churches on earlier Celtic religious sites and continued to use holy wells which were the foci of Christian religious practice.
- The oak groves were important religious sites and were adopted by the new religionists and adapted for Christian purposes.
- Some 400 gods can be identified with a tendency to find the Divine in all created nature which is close to the immanence of God in Christianity and the Christian view of nature as a product of God's creation.
- Triunities (groups of three) of the gods often containing three female deities. This figure of three provided an important connection and foundation to Celtic Christianity in the teaching and development of the doctrine of the Trinity and the use of the shamrock.
- In many ways the Druids fulfilled a similar role to that of the later Celtic Christian clergy who fulfilled an important role in marriages, funerals and most generally in the conduct of religious practice. They also came from the upper classes.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]



- (b) “The references in early sources to the mission of Palladius to the Irish are problematic, but also significant”.

With reference to this statement, evaluate the suggestion that Patrick took the credit for the work of Palladius. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- There is a paucity of references to Palladius in Irish sources, but the sources that exist are important.
- Prosper’s *Chronicles* around 429 mentions the problems associated with the Pelagian heresy and at the ‘instigation of the deacon Palladius,’ Pope Celestine sends Germanus to Britain to deal with the problem of heresy and Palladius’ mission to Ireland was a result of the mission of Germanus.
- From an impeccable external source Prosper mentions Palladius around 431 as being sent as the first bishop to the Irish. The conclusion might be that there were a considerable number of Christians in Ireland at this time.
- Some scholars (e.g. Carney) question Prosper’s references, since he refers to the Irish as ‘Scotti’, which may have been a reference to Scotland and consequently some have asked; was Palladius ever in Ireland? There has been much controversy as to whether Scotti refers to Ireland and the Irish or to the Scots.
- Later references in the seventh century in Muirchú’s *Life of Patrick* may have a hagiographical element and this associated Patrick’s mission with Palladius who had, we are led to believe, incidentally failed to evangelise, whereas Patrick was successful in this task. Again, Muirchú has his own reasons for wishing to minimise the importance of Palladius, thus giving Patrick the credit for the conversion of the Irish.
- Some scholars are of the view that Palladius’ work was carried on by Auxilius and Secundinus, who were both associated with Leinster, e.g. Kiltashie and the cell of Auxilius and Dunshaughlin with its fort of Secundinus. These seem to have been fifth century missionaries, possibly successors of Palladius.
- Tirechan’s *Brief Account* again refers to “Palladius also called Patricius”, which is again problematic and has led some to say that Palladius was really Patrick all along. Later hagiographical writers may have wished to write Palladius out of the historical narrative in order to embellish the Patrician record of the conversion of the Irish.
- An assessment of the extent to which Patrick took credit for the work of Palladius citing appropriate evidence
- Evidence from Patrick’s writings.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

- 2 (a) With reference to the contribution of any **two** monastic founders, explain the development of monasticism in Ireland.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Patrick seems to have encouraged monastic practice, though he founded no monasteries; candidates could choose any two figures from the late 5th to the early 7th centuries.
- Finnian of Clonard founded the Clonard monastery around 520. He was a bishop as well as an abbot and was greatly influenced by Enda. Finnian seems to have put greater emphasis on study and teaching and on developing the intellectual side of those who came in contact with him. His legacy is also seen in the tendency of bishops to live a monastic lifestyle. He encouraged his followers to found monasteries of their own.
- Enda built his monastery on Aran Island. Asceticism and manual work were important features of Irish monasticism and this is partly due to the influence of Enda. He was dedicated to asceticism through manual work and tradition has it that he forbade the use of tools to till the thin, poor soils of Aran. His influence was important given that as many as ten daughter houses were founded.
- The hagiographer Cogitosus writes an account of Brigit of Kildare who refused marriage and having been converted by Bishop Mel asked for land on the Curragh of Kildare. She built a church and convent and was noted for her piety and generosity to the poor. Conleth came as the sacramental administrator and consequently a double monastery was founded, the first in Ireland. Men and women had separate quarters, but worshipped in the same church.
- Brendan of Clonfert founded one of the great monastic schools at Clonfert and a convent for his sister. He is also known as Brendan the Navigator and for reasons probably of peregrination and the search for sanctity, he set sail on a small boat made from animal skins from the west of Ireland and was away for seven years and on his return founded further monastic communities.
- Comgall of Bangor in his monastic school promoted a tradition of learning rather than asceticism, thus Bangor became an important site of classical learning which in later centuries was such an important influence on the whole of Europe during what was known as the Dark Ages when learning was in steep decline.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) Comment on the view that Celtic monasticism was both limited and negative in its influence. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- In the earlier period the diocesan clergy tended to dominate communities, but over time with the foundation of monasteries throughout the island, the influence of monasteries was of enormous importance and came to rival the normal ecclesiastical constitution of the Church.
- Compared to Europe the influence of the monasteries was profound. In the sixth and seventh centuries, the Irish Church was distinctly monastic in character and the diocesan system seems to have been partially submerged by the dominance of the monastic system.
- The growth of 'paruchia' and the association of monasteries with prominent, usually aristocratic families and the fact that the monasteries derived status, social and political structure that favoured kin and kinship meant that their influence was far from limited.
- Monastic asceticism viewed as having a negative influence often with poor food and fasting, punctuated sleep, between sessions of prayer, almost continuous silence, poverty, avoidance of even simple comforts, chastity, obedience, rigorous discipline and punishment.
- In hindsight, from the 21st century, it could be argued that Jesus performed miracles to heal and remove suffering; therefore some have argued that the self inflicted pain encouraged by the monasteries was unnecessary, if not indeed masochistic.
- Life from the 5th to the 7th centuries was short and hard for many people who often died young from infectious diseases, high infant mortality, various forms of malnutrition, pestilences and famines which were quite common as were tribal and internecine wars and conflicts. It could be argued that the severe asceticism of monasteries was unnecessary against this background.
- For many it seems difficult to believe that the Christian God of love required the harsh asceticism of the monastic life as expiation for sin and also in order to develop moral and spiritual character.
- The Christian doctrine of The Fall and Original Sin required humanity to suffer and practice asceticism and prayer in order to acquire salvation, so the harsh life of the monasteries was regarded as necessary.
- Also, some attempt at citing the positive contribution of Celtic monasticism in that its practices were seen as character building. They also saw themselves as soldiers of Christ and in that, they endeavoured to become Christ-like.
- The positive contribution of Celtic monasticism's promotion of education and learning, which was so important later in Europe's Dark Ages
- The positive contribution of Celtic monasticism to penitential practice.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

**Section A**

**50**

## Section B

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answer **one** question.

- 3 (a) In what ways are the Penitentials important sources of information for life and religious practice in the Celtic Church?

Answers may include:

- Particular reference should be made and examples provided as to how the Penitentials provide a considerable amount of information and evidence about life and practice in the Celtic Church, e.g. that they were with some flexibility, based on Brehon law.
- Life in the Celtic Church was particularly harsh and ascetic; the method of contraries which included the self infliction of pain and suffering to counter sin and the Penitentials which were viewed as 'medicine for the soul'.
- The Penitentials were largely guidelines for the clergy as a way of regularising and providing common practice throughout the Church and to a considerable extent in society itself and further they also provided an important basis for secular law.
- Penitential practice was more demanding of the clergy in comparison to the laity.
- The seriousness with which sin was viewed by all in the Celtic Church; Celtic Christianity viewed God as punitive, but who could forgive. Considerable flexibility, e.g. the payment of compensation to an injured party by taking the place of a murdered son. The Penitentials could sometimes illustrate good judgement, considerable intelligence and a sense of justice and proportion.
- The Penitentials provided an alternative to excommunication, so to that extent they offered a more humane way of dealing with sin.
- The Penitentials also provide an insight into the clerical mind at the time, e.g. the importance of guilt and then penance and also 'sin of the heart' from where all sin has its origins (Finnian). The intention rather than the external action is of central importance. The Penitentials also illustrate a pastoral as well as a punitive approach to sin.
- The Penitentials also provide an insight into the nature of the legal and judicial system in the Celtic period, e.g. penalties calculated with consideration of the status of a person killed, so that the murder by a cleric receives ten year exile and a layman three years on bread and water. Also, the contribution of Anamchara and the notion of a 'soul-friend'.
- Banishment was part of the legal code and so constantly re-offending culprits were exiled.
- A considerable emphasis on sexual sin and the view of the time that women were usually the cause and source of such sin. This emphasis might partly be explained by the pressures of the celibate, clerical and monkish life and to this extent it is again possible to get an insight into the life and mind of Celtic monks of the period.
- Reference might be made to information contained in the Penitential texts of Finnian, Columbanus and Cummean.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, consider the importance of self-denial and asceticism for the religious life. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- References which are either historical and/or contemporaneous.
- The view that though people feel that suffering should be avoided, it does often change people for the better and can have a cathartic and positive effect, e.g. people can become more empathetic as a result.
- Alternatively, in what is a very hedonistic world, it is often argued that there is quite enough suffering without inflicting it gratuitously on oneself or others. Self-sacrifice and asceticism are now often viewed as anachronistic, masochistic and counter-cultural.
- Some have argued that instead of punishing ourselves we ought to use that energy more positively to do good, by showing love and acting in an altruistic and agapeistic way towards others.
- Reference could be made to the Christian practice of Lent which still employs personal self-denial and asceticism and people sometimes refer to the spiritual and psychological benefits that they gain from these practices as a result.
- Convents and religious congregations of monks and priests still follow rules of poverty and chastity and generally live frugally and they would testify to these practices.
- Some might refer to the Islamic practice of Ramadan which has self-denial in the form of not eating for a month from sunrise to sunset and why Muslims still carry out this practice.
- It has been argued that modern life leads to selfishness and satiation. Consumerism, exploitation of the erotic, addiction to social media, fashion and this (and much more) stunts the psychological, moral, spiritual growth and maturation of the individual; therefore self-denial and asceticism are an important counter to these cultural and social trends.
- Some Christians recognise the value of self-denial, yet distance themselves from asceticism.
- The Opus Dei is an example of a group in the Catholic Church who continue the practice of strict self-denial and asceticism with some, e.g. practicing mortification of the flesh by flagellation, but such groups have sometimes been criticised for what appears to some to be gratuitous, masochistic and outdated practices and taking asceticism and self-denial to an unnecessary extreme. This group would of course offer a robust response to such criticism.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5.

(AO2)

[25]

50

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

- 4 (a) “Hagiographical writings seek to edify and enhance the religious authority and sanctity of the saint they describe.”

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

With reference to this quotation, discuss the importance of Muirchú’s **Life of Patrick**.

Answers may include:

- Hagiography means ‘writing about saints’; they were not biographies, but were written to praise the saint, to extol his/her importance and religious authority over a church or monastery which claimed the saint as their patron. This had the effect of lending weight to the religious importance and authority of that church or community.
- Muirchú’s work probably written in the second half of the seventh century and as a hagiography, the reasons for Muirchú’s writing of it are somewhat more complex than the statement might suggest.
- Muirchú was wishing to associate Patrick with the Ui Neill in the North of Ireland and the importance of his climax with the conversion Loeghaire, the Ui Neill king at Tara, thus lending Patrick’s religious authority and importance to the Ui Neill clan.
- The occurrence of this event at the Easter vigil is of considerable importance.
- Association of the Ui Neill to Patrick therefore strengthens the authority to the claims of Armagh and also, the detailed description of Daire’s grant of land to Patrick and legal title and Patrick’s miraculous raising of the dead horse and Daire which again enhances Patrick’s sanctity and religious authority in the story.
- Muirchú also wants to explain why Patrick is buried in Downpatrick when it would seem that Armagh might have had that right and honour.
- Emphasis on Patrick’s sanctity, e.g. his miraculous powers, prayer, prophecy and visions.
- Muirchú takes Patrick’s religious authority and sanctity for granted; also that Patrick was sent by God to convert the Irish and he enhances Patrick’s authority by, e.g. the miraculous stories, malediction.
- Candidates could discuss the ‘value’ of the **Life of Patrick**, e.g. the insight gained into aspects of religious outlook and life at the end of the seventh century, such as awareness of the remnants of the pagan cult of the deer associated with Armagh.
- Some historical content may be obvious, but it is difficult to disentangle historical fact from hagiography.
- The question, long debated, of whether or not Muirchú gives us any insight into Patrick himself which is thrown into relief in relation to the contrast between the Patrick of the **Confessio** and Muirchú’s **Life of Patrick**.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, explore the view that in a secular age, religious writings are no longer relevant or important. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Answers may use examples that are either contemporaneous and/or historical.
- Possible reference to the historical past when religious authority was equal if not above that of the political leaders.
- Society and culture in the past were deeply steeped in religious belief and explanations for life and the world were based on the teachings of scripture, e.g. in Christianity, the Genesis accounts of creation as an explanation for the origins, purpose and meaning of the world; the destiny of humankind was based on the hope and certainty of the resurrection of Christ. In such a world religious authority was of the utmost importance.
- The reasons for and the consequences of the decline of faith since the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution in the 18th century; epitomised by the growth and the success of science; natural and not supernatural explanations being offered for everything, including the origins and destiny of the Universe and man which are firmly based in this world.
- Those of a secular persuasion tend to see religious leadership as peddling narratives that lack reason and evidential foundations which is essential in science. Candidates might cite, e.g. the work of Richard Dawkins or Peter Singer as figures who represent such points of view in both atheistic science and Utilitarian ethics.
- Alternatively, candidates might point to the influence of figures like Pope Francis, the Dalai Lama or Bishop Desmond Tutu who are very influential and whose views are often quoted and referred to in the media which might point to a thirst for religious guidance.
- Many people in the west may no longer go to Church, but they are not irreligious as is shown in recent census where people do claim religious allegiance and if this is true, the voice of religious authority may still be relevant.
- Religious writings provide some yardsticks for aspects of life, e.g. ethical direction and for many people it is impossible to live in a world that is completely devoid of meaning and purpose. Religion and therefore religious authority provides such direction.
- Even for the atheist, values are still required and religious writings still provide both ethical and spiritual direction.
- Candidates might refer to examples where religious writings have been shown to be flawed and wanting, e.g. the recent clerical scandals in Ireland and elsewhere and the consequent criticism and decline in church attendance; some have asked, why should religious writings be regarded as relevant or important when they are obviously so flawed and at times plainly hypocritical.
- Flawed interpretation of religious writings, e.g. Qur'an misinterpretation.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

- Also, the influence of education and freedom of thought brought by the democracy and the autonomy of the individual which means that many people discount the authority of religious writings.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5.

(AO2)

[25]

**Section B**

**Total**

**AVAILABLE  
MARKS**

50

**50**

**100**