

# Study of Religion 2019 v1.2

IA2 annotated sample response

May 2020

## Investigation — inquiry response (25%)

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers to match evidence in student responses to the characteristics described in the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG).

### Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

2. demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected
4. analyse perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue selected
5. consider and organise information about religious ethics by interpreting information from sources related to *one* major world religion and the contemporary ethical issue selected, and deciding on the validity of these sources
6. evaluate and draw conclusions about the influence of religious ethics on an adherent's response to a contemporary ethical issue
7. create an analytical essay response that communicates ideas or arguments using understandings of religious ethics.

**Note:** Unit objectives 1 and 3 are not assessed in this assessment instrument.

*This resource contains content that will require teachers to consider sensitivity of the students and the teaching context. Teachers should consult with school leaders and the school community about the suitability of any sample resources.*

# Instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG)

## Criterion: Demonstrating understanding

### Assessment objective

2. demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thorough understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected</li> <li>detailed identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response</li> <li>consistently accurate identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response.</li> </ul>	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected</li> <li>identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response</li> <li>some inaccuracies within the identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response.</li> </ul>	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>narrow understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected</li> <li>simplistic identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response</li> <li>significant inaccuracies within the identification and/or explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response.</li> </ul>	1–2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.</li> </ul>	0

## Criterion: Analysing

### Assessment objective

4. analyse perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue selected

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thorough analysis of perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue selected</li> <li>identified perspectives are convincingly supported through well-reasoned arguments</li> <li>arguments are informed by an in-depth understanding of religious ethics and relevant ethical teachings.</li> </ul>	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considered analysis of perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue selected</li> <li>identified perspectives are supported through reasoned arguments.</li> <li>arguments are informed by an understanding of religious ethics and relevant ethical teachings.</li> </ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some analysis of perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue selected</li> </ul>	2–3

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identified perspectives are supported through arguments</li> <li>basic understanding of religious ethics and ethical teachings.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one or more statements are made on a perspective within a world religion that influences an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue selected</li> <li>significant inaccuracies and/or omissions are evident</li> <li>simplistic and/or erroneous understanding of religious ethics.</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.</li> </ul>	0

## Criterion: Evaluating and drawing conclusions

### Assessment objective

6. evaluate and draw conclusions about the influence of religious ethics on an adherent's response to a contemporary ethical issue

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discerning judgments are made about the extent to which an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue is influenced by religious ethics, approaches to ethical decision-making, and ethical teachings related to the world religion</li> <li>judgments are supported by thorough and justified arguments</li> <li>arguments are consistently established in relationship to the hypothesis.</li> </ul>	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considered judgments are made about the extent to which an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue is influenced by religious ethics, approaches to ethical decision-making, and ethical teachings related to the world religion</li> <li>judgments are supported by reasoned arguments</li> <li>arguments are generally established in relationship to the hypothesis.</li> </ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>judgments are made about the extent to which an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue is influenced by religious ethics, approaches to ethical decision-making, and/or ethical teachings related to the world religion</li> <li>judgments are supported by basic reasons</li> <li>inaccurate or irrelevant reasons affect conclusions in response to the hypothesis.</li> </ul>	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one or more statements are made on an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue</li> <li>simplistic and/or erroneous understanding of religious ethics or ethical teachings</li> <li>significant inaccuracies and/or irrelevant statements throughout the response.</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.</li> </ul>	0

## Criterion: Considering, organising and creating

### Assessment objectives

5. consider and organise information about religious ethics by interpreting information from sources related to one major world religion and the contemporary ethical issue selected, and deciding on the validity of these sources
7. create an analytical essay response that communicates ideas or arguments using understandings of religious ethics

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a diverse range of valid primary and secondary sources is used effectively in response to the hypothesis</li><li>• succinct, with ideas or arguments conveyed logically in relation to the hypothesis devised</li><li>• genre, language (spelling, grammar, punctuation) and recognised referencing conventions are adhered to with minimal errors.</li></ul>	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• valid primary and secondary sources are used in response to the hypothesis</li><li>• conveys ideas or arguments that are related to the hypothesis devised</li><li>• genre, language (spelling, grammar, punctuation) and recognised referencing conventions are generally adhered to, but with some errors.</li></ul>	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• some use of primary and/or secondary sources evident</li><li>• conveys ideas or arguments not related to the hypothesis devised</li><li>• frequent and/or significant errors in genre, language (spelling, grammar, punctuation) and/or referencing conventions impede communication of ideas or arguments.</li></ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.</li></ul>	0

# Task

## Context

You have been examining the religious foundations that form and inform the religious–ethical principles that are evident within different religious traditions.

This has included considering the extent to which religious ethics influence an adherent’s decision-making on an ethical issue.

The focus of your investigation — inquiry response will be to apply your understandings of religious ethics, ethical teachings and approaches to ethical decision-making to one contemporary ethical issue from the perspective of one religious tradition.

## Task

Investigate and analyse *one* contemporary ethical issue from the perspective of Buddhism. Evaluate and draw conclusions about the extent to which religious ethics influences an adherent’s response to the ethical issue within the religious tradition.

The contemporary ethical issue is to be selected from the following:

- beginning and end of life, e.g. reproductive technologies, palliative care
- medical technologies, e.g. organ farming, genetic engineering
- substance abuse, e.g. steroids in sport.

### To complete this task, you must:

- devise a hypothesis in consultation with your teacher to ensure that the aspect/s selected can be presented within the word length (1500–2000 words) for your analytical essay
- locate and use primary and secondary sources
- identify and explain the ways in which the world religion informs an individual’s response to the contemporary issue
- analyse perspectives within the religion that influence an adherent’s response to the issue
- evaluate and draw conclusions about the influence of religious ethics on an adherent’s response to the issue, with reference to the selected religion
- support your explanations, analysis and evaluation with evidence organised from valid sources
- adhere to genre, language and recognised referencing conventions, e.g. citations, bibliography.

**Note:** 15 hours of the time allocation for Unit 3 has been allocated to teaching, learning and preparing a response in relation to this task.

# Sample response

Criterion	Allocated marks	Marks awarded
<b>Demonstrating understanding</b> Assessment objective 2	6	6
<b>Analysing</b> Assessment objective 4	7	6
<b>Evaluating and drawing conclusions</b> Assessment objective 6	7	5
<b>Considering, organising and creating</b> Assessment objectives 5, 7	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>

The annotations show the match to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) performance-level descriptors.

<p><b>Considering, organising and creating [2–3]</b></p> <p>Conveys ideas or arguments that are related to the hypothesis devised</p>	<p>World religions, including Buddhism, face complex ethical questions due to modern scientific developments. This is because developments such as In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF), as a reproductive technology associated with the beginning of life, may challenge key beliefs and values. <u>In Buddhism, it can be argued that the teachings of the Buddha and the lived experience of individuals influence an adherent’s religious–ethical response to using IVF. However, due to a range of views (perspectives) within Buddhism, a Mahayana Buddhist response differs from that of a Theravada Buddhist.</u></p>
<p><b>Evaluating and drawing conclusions [4–5]</b></p> <p>Considered judgments are made about the extent to which an adherent’s response is influenced by religious ethics, approaches to ethical decision-making, and ethical teachings related to the world religion</p>	<p>In Vitro Fertilisation is a complex reproductive technology which according to the respected IVF Australia organisation is used to “...overcome a range of fertility issues” (IVF Australian, 2016). The process involves artificial conception (the joining together of the egg and sperm) occurring outside the female’s body (IVF Australian, 2016). Multiple embryos are then left to develop before two are implanted in the female’s uterine lining. <u>The ethical issue which arises from this, concerns the fate of unused embryos.</u> The National Infertility Association, which provides knowledge and guidance to people making decisions regarding IVF, outlines possible options surrounding remaining embryos. Possibilities include their donation to research or another couple, being frozen indefinitely for future use or being disposed of (Resolve, 2017). <u>The latter choice is the action that offers the most complex ethical issue as it raises the question of whether the destruction of embryos is equivalent to the killing of a human life.</u> It is at this point that religious traditions must look to their key beliefs and sacred texts to answer the big question, “when does an embryo become a human life?” This issue and whether the remaining embryos are destroyed is the major area of contention amongst the Buddhist traditions of Mahayana and Theravada and is often at the core of their ethical decision-making process.</p>
<p><b>Demonstrating understanding [5–6]</b></p> <p>Detailed identification and explanation of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual’s response</p>	<p>To address the consequentialist approach Mahayana Buddhism generally calls upon, in regard to IVF, the view on when life begins as well as their key beliefs and texts should be examined. Daisuku Ikeda is the president of a Nichiren Buddhism (a denomination of Mahayana) organisation, begins by stating that for life to begin, conception is only one part of the equation and</p>

### Analysing [6–7]

Thorough analysis of perspectives within a world religion that influence an adherent's response to the contemporary issue selected

### Analysing [6–7]

Arguments are informed by an in-depth understanding of religious ethics and relevant ethical teachings

### Evaluating and drawing conclusions [4–5]

Considered judgments are made about the extent to which an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue is influenced by religious ethics, approaches to ethical decision-making, and ethical teachings related to the world religion

### Analysing [4–5]

Identified perspectives are supported through reasoned arguments

### Demonstrating understanding [5–6]

Thorough understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected

that “something much more profound must cause life to emerge” (Ikeda, 2004). It is a belief which is at the cornerstone of all Buddhist beliefs, that an adherents' accumulated karma influences their rebirth in the following life. Therefore, as Damien Keown, a respected bioethicist and Buddhist authority corroborates, life emerges when a reincarnated person enters the embryo (Keown, Buddhism and Bioethics, 2016). This is where issue arises for Mahayana Buddhists and where the ethical dilemma must be resolved. The issue stems directly from the one of the most integral texts for Mahayana Buddhists, the Five Precepts. These teachings came from the Buddha and outline how to live a 'good' Buddhist life. The first of these is “...the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures” (Path to Freedom, 2005). As previously stated, the process of IVF can result in the disposal of human embryos and this could pose a problem. However, Mahayana Buddhists generally take a consequentialist approach to ethical dilemmas and therefore, choose to focus more closely on another of the Buddha's central teachings, the Four Noble Truths. These teachings focus on suffering, specifically that suffering has an end (Keown, Buddhist Ethics, 2005). Ikeda, who through his work, aims to spread the teachings of the Buddha, proclaims that one of the ways to end suffering is through always seeking “...to alleviate pain and to augment the happiness of others here amid the realities of everyday life” (Ikeda, 2004). The conclusion can be drawn that if IVF is effective, results in a successful pregnancy and is undertaken with the correct intentions (to end suffering), then the assumed suffering of the childless couple would be alleviated and, therefore, the consequences of the action of IVF are greater than the possible negative karma associated with the potential disposal of the unused embryos. Clearly, the teachings of the Buddha in the form of the Five Precepts and the Four Noble Truths are integral to the Mahayana approach and allows them to form the decision that in the right circumstances, IVF is ethical.

There is less information though when considering the Theravada Buddhist view of the ethical nature of IVF. This is because, generally, the religion takes an absolutist approach, resulting in less of the 'exceptions' and 'grey areas' that Mahayana Buddhism allows. Again, the question of whether IVF is ethical falls on the fate of the remaining embryos and the point at which Theravada Buddhists believe life begins, or when consciousness (the reincarnated life) enters the embryo. Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner, a Professor of social and medical anthropology, provides an insight into the Theravada perspective on conception. She explains that “consciousness arrives fully formed at the point of conception when a force of energy from a previous incarnation arrives in the newly formed embryo.” (Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2010). This is supported by Professor Mathieu Boisvert, a professor of religious studies at the University of Quebec who mentions that first consciousness occurs at conception (Boisvert, 2000). Interestingly, he also explicitly states that it occurs in the mother's womb. This may suggest that if conception happens outside the womb, as is the case with IVF, the belief system may vary. Generally, as Theravada Buddhists believe that consciousness enters the embryo at conception and is therefore a reincarnated person, then the text that closely guides the decision-making process is the first precept about refraining from killing (Path to Freedom, 2005). So, while Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism are similar in that they both look to the Five Precepts, their interpretations differ based on their view of consciousness.

The lived experience of individuals also contributes to gaining an in-depth understanding of ethical decisions making within Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism. Firstly, a Mahayana Buddhist, who has been practicing for 7 years raises some key points a Buddhist ethical response to IVF as a reproductive

**Evaluating and drawing conclusions [4–5]**

Considered judgments are made about the extent to which an adherent's response to the contemporary ethical issue is influenced by religious ethics, approaches to ethical decision-making, and ethical teachings related to the world religion

**Demonstrating understanding [5–6]**

Thorough understanding of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response to the contemporary issue selected

Detailed identification and explanations of the ways in which a world religion informs an individual's response

**Evaluating and drawing conclusions [4–5]**

Judgments are supported by reasoned arguments

**Analysing [6–7]**

Arguments are informed by an in-depth understanding of religious ethics and relevant ethical teachings

technology. He considers that karma places “all the responsibility of one's actions on the individual.” (Kemp, 2017). In his view then, Mahayana Buddhism allows people to arrive at their own conclusions on using IVF. He agrees with the general findings of Mahayana Buddhism and doesn't have an issue with IVF. In regard to the disposal of embryos, the Mahayana Buddhist explained that for consciousness to be present, “feeling, perception, contact, will, attention and material form,” (Kemp, 2017) are required and do not exist in an embryo outside the womb.

The other perspective is from a Zen Buddhist (a denomination of Mahayana Buddhism), who is a member of the Mountain Moon Zen society and practising for 16 years. She is supportive of IVF and even argues that if it had been available to her, she would have undergone the procedure herself. She specifies that right intention is key in deciding whether to partake in IVF. If it is undertaken by someone who really wants children to love and care for then that is a “compassionate and noble intention,” (Miller, 2017). On the other hand, she also clarifies that bad karma would be generated if people have the wrong intention. This view tends to differ from that of mainstream Mahayana beliefs as she explains that “if spare eggs are terminated, that could be problematic because it breaks the First Precept” (Miller, 2017). This difference may be down to her Zen Practice or her own personal values.

A British Theravada Buddhist Monk though presents an interesting view that is a different perspective from that of mainstream Theravada Buddhism. He believes that IVF is ethical and he came to this conclusion through a combination of Western science and the Buddha's teachings. He claimed that logically, “a single embryo may split into two or more viable embryos after a certain number of days,” (Brahm, 2007), and that “there cannot be 2 [streams of consciousness] coexisting in a single embryo,” (Brahm, 2007). Therefore, if an embryo is still in the early stages of development where it has the capability to split into two embryos, then it doesn't have a stream of consciousness (the reincarnated person has not entered the embryo). He then goes on to summarise that until the embryos have passed a certain stage and have been planted into a mother's womb they are not a human life and therefore it is not unethical to dispose of them; although it is stressed that other options are preferable. His differing view from that of mainstream Theravada may be due to the tradition being a highly conservative one originating in Sri Lanka and Thailand and he was born and raised in the UK and exposed to more liberal western influences and modern science.

Therefore, it can be argued that by drawing on personal values and the teachings of the Buddha, Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists use the consequentialists and absolutist decision-making approaches to come to differing views on IVF. The birth technology can result in the disposal of embryos and that is where the ethical dilemma lies. Mahayana Buddhism, through use of texts such as the Four Noble Truths, generally states that IVF reduces suffering of the parents and can be considered ethical. Theravada Buddhism commonly takes a more conservative stance, by drawing on the First Precept and the belief that the embryo contains a consciousness from conception and therefore, makes the conclusion that IVF isn't ethical if disposal of embryos occurs.

## Reference list

BBC. (2014, October 20). Schools – Religions. Retrieved February 11, 2017, from Buddhism:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/buddhism/introduction\\_questions.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/buddhism/introduction_questions.shtml)

Bodhi, B. (1999). The Noble Eightfold Path. Retrieved March 10, 2017, from Access to Insight:

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/waytoend.html>

Boisvert, M. (2000). Conception and intrauterine life in the Pāli Canon. Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion.

Brahm, A. (2007). When Does Human Life Begin in This Body? Perth.

Ellis, R. (2017). Buddhism and Embryo Research. Retrieved February 25, 2016, from ClearVision: <http://www.clear-vision.org/Schools/Students/Ages-17-18/life-and-death/embryoresearch.aspx>

Ikeda, D. (2004). Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death: And Everything in Between, A Buddhist View Life. Middleway Press.

IVF Australian. (2016). IVF Treatment. Retrieved February 9, 2017 from IVF Australia: <http://www.ivf.com.au/fertility-treatment/ivf-treatment>

Kemp, B. (2017, March 3). Mahayana Buddhist Perspective on IVF. (E. Hawkins, Interviewer)

Keown, D. (2005). Buddhist Ethics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Keown, D. (2016). Buddhism and Bioethics. Springer.

Miller, D. J. (2017). My Buddhist Practice and My Attitudes to . Brisbane: Clairvaux MacKillop College.

Path to Freedom. (2005). The Five Precepts. Retrieved February 25, 2017, from Path to Freedom:

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/ptf/dhamma/sila/pancasila.html>

Resolve. (2017). After IVF: The Embryo Decision. Retrieved March 9, 2017, from Resolve: The national Infertility: <http://www.resolve.org/family-building-options/donor-options/after-ivfthe-embryo-decision.html?referrer=https://www.google.com.au/>

Sleeboom-Faulkner, M. (2010). Frameworks of Choice: Predictive & Genetic Testing in Asia. Amsterdam University Press.

### Note:

#### Demonstrating understanding [5–6]

Consistently accurate identification and explanation of the ways different Buddhist traditions inform an individual response to an ethical issue.

#### Evaluating and drawing conclusions [6–7]

The arguments are consistently established in relationship to the hypothesis throughout the response.

#### Considering, organising and creating [4–5]

A diverse range of valid primary and secondary sources is used effectively in response to the hypothesis. In addition, ideas or arguments related to the hypothesis devised are conveyed throughout the response. Genre, language (spelling, grammar, punctuation) and recognised referencing conventions are adhered to with minimal errors.