



Cambridge International AS & A Level

HINDUISM

9487/02

Paper 2 Development of Hinduism

For examination from 2021

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Specimen

This document has **22** pages. Blank pages are indicated.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptors for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Generic Levels of response descriptions

These level descriptors address Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1 and 2, and should be used in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Assessment Objectives**AO1: Knowledge and understanding**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of teachings, beliefs and practices, including relevance for individual Hindus and communities.

AO2: Analysis and evaluation

Analyse, evaluate and discuss evidence, points of view and issues in Hinduism.

Generic marking principles

- (a) Examiners should use the performance summary statements at the top of the descriptors to help to identify a level which matches the candidate's response. However, the final decision on the band and the mark within the band should be made on the basis of **all** the descriptors in the level and not primarily using the performance summary statement.
- (b) Examiners should start at the lowest level, if the answer meets all the criteria they should then move to the next level and so on. The Examiner should repeat this process until there is a match between the overall answer and the level descriptor. Examiners should use a best-fit approach when deciding upon the level, it is possible for a different level to be chosen for each AO.
- (c) If the Examiner identifies all aspects of the level descriptor within the answer then the highest mark for the level should be given. Examiners should also make reference to the indicative content when deciding on the mark within a level to ensure that there is sufficient relevant content evident within the answer for the level and mark. Examiners should be prepared to credit material in answers which is not contained in the indicative content.

- (d) The Examiner may need to make a judgement within a level or between two or more level statements. Once a 'best-fit' level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:
- Where the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, you should award the highest mark.
 - Where the candidate's work **adequately** meets the level statement, you should award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range.
 - Where the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, you should award the lowest mark.

5 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 3	<p>Accurate knowledge with good understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant. 	5
Level 2	<p>Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Addresses some aspects of the question. • Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant. 	3–4
Level 1	<p>Basic knowledge and basic understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant. 	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

10 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 4	<p>Accurate knowledge with good understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant. 	9–10
Level 3	<p>Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a developed response. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	6–8
Level 2	<p>Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Addresses some aspects of the question. • Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant. 	3–5
Level 1	<p>Basic knowledge and basic understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant. 	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

15 mark questions

Level	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	Marks
Level 5	<p>Thorough discussion supported with evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses the importance and/or strength of different arguments/points of view. Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions. 	13–15
Level 4	<p>Coherent discussion supported with evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses different arguments/points of view in some detail. Uses accurate evidence to support a structured discussion. Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view. 	10–12
Level 3	<p>Clear discussion with some support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises different arguments/points of view and discusses at least one in some detail. Uses some evidence to support discussion. Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view. 	7–9
Level 2	<p>Attempts a discussion with limited support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines one or more argument/point of view. Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view. 	4–6
Level 1	<p>Basic response with a point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> States a point of view. Little or no supporting evidence. May attempt a basic conclusion, which may not directly address the question. 	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(a)	<p>'The 'heart of Hinduism' – the Puranas, the Epics, and especially the Bhagavad Gita – is alive ... [today] and beating vigorously ... The fact they have grown over many centuries and were performed and interpreted in ever new ways throughout the ages, has kept them alive and full of meaning for every new generation of Hindus.'</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Klaus K Klostermaier</i></p> <p>Outline what the passage above says about the importance of non-Vedic texts.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: The passage identifies the Puranas and the Epics as being extremely important, in fact central to an understanding of Hinduism. It specifically highlights the Bhagavad Gita from among the whole body of these texts, implying that this has even greater importance than the other texts. It states that these are the vigorously beating heart of Hinduism in the current era. So candidates might interpret the passage as saying that Hinduism in the contemporary world is effectively based on these texts rather than the ancient Vedas, which may seem less relevant to contemporary society.</p> <p>The passage also gives reasons for the assertion above, and candidates might use these in developing their outline. The passage recognises that these texts are popular and explains that this is because they are both accessible and amenable to continuing interpretation and re-interpretation. They are widely translated, and so accessible for readers, and they are also the subject of dramatic performance in film and theatre. This helps to ensure they can remain relevant in a changing world.</p>	5	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>All accurate interpretations will be credited as appropriate.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(b)	<p>Explain why the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita on achieving liberation might be important to Hindus.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: The Bhagavad Gita is a section of the Mahabharata Epic. Although this is usually regarded as a smriti text, it is extremely popular and influential in contemporary Hinduism. It could be argued that its popularity and accessibility contribute to the importance given to its teachings.</p> <p>Many different ideas arise within the dialogue, including dharma (duty/ righteousness), dharma yuddha (righteous warfare), varna (social class), the gunas (fundamental qualities), the nature of atman (soul), rebirth or reincarnation and concepts of deity. Many of these concepts are related to moksha (liberation), as different paths towards liberation identified by Krishna. All these ideas existed within Hinduism before the Bhagavad Gita was written and different texts explore them in different ways. The Bhagavad Gita is unusual in that it examines different paths to liberation and explains how each path leads to that goal. Candidates might explain that it would therefore be possible to gain an understanding of several ways in which Hinduism might be practised by reading this single text.</p> <p>Liberation is a key concept for Hindus, because it is the ultimate aim of life in samsara (the cycle of birth, death and rebirth). All schools of Hinduism address this issue. Teachings on liberation are considered important, and an accessible text such as the Bhagavad Gita which enables ordinary people to access those teachings directly is likely to be highly valued.</p>	10	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>Candidates should be familiar with the story but do not credit narrative detail of the Bhagavad Gita that is not linked to the question.</p> <p>Alternative, accurate explanations will be credited as appropriate.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(c)	<p>Assess the claim that studying the Bhagavad Gita is the best way to understand contemporary Hinduism.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: Candidates might begin by reflecting on the multiplicity of Hindu texts and noting that the Vedas are commonly held to be the most important and authoritative. They are the oldest Hindu texts and are generally considered to be the foundation of Hinduism. Accepting them as authoritative has been used to define what it means to be a Hindu. However, candidates might also point out that much of the content of the Vedas relates to the performance of ritual and other priestly duties, so they have limited relevance for Hindus who are not priests. They might also note the different views of astika (orthodox) and nastika (heterodox) schools.</p> <p>Candidates might observe that the concept of Hinduism is debatable in itself, given the diversity of forms and practices grouped under that umbrella term. That being the case it could be argued that it is impossible to establish a single ‘best’ way to understand Hinduism in its entirety, but that the Bhagavad Gita offers useful insights into specific forms of Hinduism such as Vaishnava traditions. Candidates might also argue that the popularity of the Bhagavad Gita means it is particularly helpful in understanding popular or cultural Hinduism.</p> <p>The brahminical tradition, with its focus on varnashramadharma, might be the form of Hinduism with which candidates are most familiar, and they might use this to argue that the Vedas are the foundation for the religion. However, it could also be argued that modern practice uses an understanding of varnashramadharma that is rooted more widely. Concepts explored in the Bhagavad Gita have their origins in the Vedas, but the Bhagavad Gita offers expansion and clarification, which is arguably more important to modern Hindus. Candidates might also reflect more broadly on the issue of relevance to contemporary lives and the implications of the age and status of the Vedas as shruti.</p>	15	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>Candidates should be familiar with the story but do not credit narrative detail of the Bhagavad Gita that is not linked to the question.</p> <p>Credit all relevant discussion.</p> <p>Candidates can argue for or against the claim as long as their discussion is focused on the question.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(c)	<p>Candidates might also consider issues of language and the accessibility of texts for ordinary Hindus – the original language of the Vedas predates their written form and translation into modern languages can be difficult. It could therefore be argued that more modern texts, like the Bhagavad Gita, are needed to enable wider understanding. Candidates might also refer to other popular texts, such as the Ramayana. The general popularity of the Bhagavad Gita might also be considered as a part of its influence on the religion.</p> <p>Finally, it could be noted that it is possible to practise Hinduism without direct reference to texts. Many common practices of contemporary Hinduism (such as murti puja) are not easily shown to have their foundations in instruction from religious texts.</p>		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(a)	<p>Summarise the difference between smriti and shruti.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: Smriti and shruti are terms used to classify types of religious text according to their perceived origins. Shruti is usually translated as ‘heard’ and smriti as ‘remembered’ although it can also be thought of as ‘tradition’.</p> <p>Shruti texts are considered to be direct revelations (although there is disagreement as to the nature of the revealer) and they are therefore regarded as having no beginning or origin and no author.</p> <p>Smriti texts may be commentary or interpretation of shruti texts, or they may be philosophical or spiritual works. Both smriti and shruti texts are considered to have authority, and can be understood and interpreted in different ways, but shruti texts cannot be superseded.</p> <p>Candidates might also note that, although most Hindus are clear on the difference between the two types of text, there is no universal agreement on which texts have which status. It is also true that some branches of Hinduism do not consider the Vedas to be authoritative and may therefore reject their status as shruti. Similarly, later texts such as the Mahabharata are sometimes described as shruti.</p>	5	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>Alternative, accurate explanations will be credited as appropriate.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(b)	<p>Explain how Hindus might use the Manusmriti in their lives.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: Much (although not all) of the Manusmriti is practical in nature, focusing on social mores and values and giving instruction and guidance on how to behave in different roles and different situations. The text sets out details of the responsibilities of the different varnas and includes some very specific teachings about the place and role of men and women. Some candidates might explain that Hindus can use it in exactly the way it was apparently intended – as a kind of guide to living which informs them about their dharma. It also gives guidance on both civil and criminal law and might be used in discussion and debate on these issues.</p> <p>Candidates might also comment that the great age of the Manusmriti (between 3000 and 1800 years old) means that its direct usage is no longer relevant. Hindus might respect the text as a part of their history, and support some of the values and ideals identified in it, but without regarding the explicit rules as binding or helpful in contemporary life. Many of the text's specific rules on the role, responsibility and relationship of the different varnas and of men and women might seem inappropriate or outdated to Hindus in the contemporary world. This might restrict using the text as a practical guide for living in the contemporary world.</p>	10	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>Alternative, accurate explanations will be credited as appropriate.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(c)	<p>‘Hinduism cannot be fully understood without knowledge of the Manusmriti.’ Discuss this claim.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: Candidates might use the well-known nature of the Manusmriti and its great age to argue that the text is indeed fundamental to an understanding of Hinduism. It has been historically important in social formation and it remains arguably the most studied by brahmins, and therefore the most influential text of its kind. While the name Manusmriti clearly implies that the text has smriti rather than shruti status there is no universal agreement on this. Different forms of Hinduism may accord shruti status to different texts. Astika (orthodox) schools of Hinduism, with their emphasis on the Vedas and the centrality of dharma, might find the Manusmriti of greater significance than nastika (heterodox) schools.</p> <p>The Manusmriti was also influential in the development of the brahminical forms of Hinduism which inform much of the study of Hinduism today. Many contemporary ideas about varna (social divisions), ashrama (stages of life) and the associated dharma and about the rights and status of women have been strongly influenced by the Manusmriti, even if that influence is not always explicitly understood. However, it could also be argued that, when combined with its focus on social structures and roles, the text is of greater concern to philosophers, historians and sociologists than it is to practitioners of Hinduism as a religion.</p> <p>However, it is only one text of the dharma shastra literature. There are differing views on how many texts of this type might have existed, although many survive only in fragmentary form or as references in other texts. Candidates could argue that the continued existence of the Manusmriti demonstrates its importance in understanding Hinduism. Or they might argue that it is at least equally important to understand the historical development of the dharma shastras as a branch of Hindu literature. It could also be argued that the Manusmriti sets the boundaries which distinguish astika schools of Hinduism from Shramana traditions such as Buddhism, which reject the authority of the Vedas.</p>	15	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>The focus should remain on the value of the Manusmriti for understanding Hinduism. Candidates may reference other texts but this should be in comparison with the value of the Manusmriti for understanding Hinduism, not a general discussion of the importance of Hindu texts.</p> <p>Credit all relevant discussion.</p> <p>Candidates can argue for or against the claim as long as their discussion is focused on the question.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(c)	<p>Another perspective might be to consider the wide-ranging content of the Manusmriti and whether this makes the text more or less significant than other more specific or focused texts. Candidates might refer to texts from outside the syllabus, such as the Naradasmriti (which is entirely focused on legal procedures). They might also argue that it is more important to understand process than content because all non-shruti literature has been subject to development and change over time. Many of the areas with which the Manusmriti is concerned, such as gender roles and the nature of virtuous behaviour, are of interest and relevance to Hindus in the contemporary world.</p>		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3(a)	<p>Outline the distinct characteristics of Shaivism.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: Shaivism is named for Shiva, and candidates should know that Shaivite traditions focus on the worship of Shiva. For Shaivites, Shiva is the Supreme Brahman, who manifests creation and creates maya. Hindu belief traditionally describes Shiva as the destroyer but Shaivite traditions might also consider him to be the creator – his contradictory nature is embraced by his devotees.</p> <p>Most Shaivites believe in the possibility of jivanmukta – achieving liberation while still within samsara (the cycle of birth, death and rebirth). Shaivism recognises three paths to liberation – service, worship and meditation/yoga. Whichever path is followed, the devotee must be wholly focused on Shiva to achieve liberation as his gift.</p> <p>The bhakti tradition is strong in all forms of Shaivism, with devotional practices often tending towards austerity and asceticism. In some forms, Shaivism is not compatible with the duty of some ashramas (stages of life). For example, some Shaivite sadhus live on cremation grounds, dress in skulls, cover themselves in ashes and deliberately flout moral norms in a ritual context. They might also observe what can seem to be quite extreme austerities, such as vowing not to sit or lie down, holding an arm in the air for a period of years or attaching weights to pierced skin. The ascetic (sannyasa) lifestyle is considered by many to be the best path and the Brahminical association between this lifestyle and old age is not as pervasive among Shaivites.</p> <p>Other specifically Shaivite practices include wearing a linga instead of a sacred thread, and the Shaivite tilaka of three horizontal lines, sometimes with a red dot to represent Shiva's third eye.</p> <p>Belief in avatars (the incarnation of a divine being) is found in Shaivism, for example Mahisha, but candidates might explain that in contrast to Vaishnavism, the concept of avatars is not particularly significant in Shaivism or not particularly well known by Shaivites.</p>	5	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>Characteristics could refer to belief, practices, appearance and other elements which distinguish Shaivites from other Hindus.</p> <p>Descriptions of Shiva, his murti and/or attributes are not characteristics of Shaivites or Shaivism.</p> <p>There are different sub-sets of Shaivism and candidates are not expected to know and/or name them. The focus is on what makes them Shaivites.</p> <p>Examples are used to illustrate the concepts but candidates do not need to use examples to gain the marks.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3(b)	<p>Explain the importance of Ganesh within Smartism.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: Smartism is a sect of Hinduism that practises panchayatana puja – the worship of five deities. The deities are Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesh, Surya and Shakti. All these deities are considered equal, in contrast to some other forms of Hinduism which recognise a single deity as Supreme. Although all five deities are recognised and their murti (image) present during worship, Smartas may focus on one deity as the primary deity for that particular act of worship. This is made clear by the physical arrangement of the murti during puja – the central deity is the principal one.</p> <p>Smartism is often aligned with Advaita philosophy, so these five deities are not truly separate and distinct but are all Brahman (Absolute reality) and are therefore equally important. However, named deities usually have specific areas of concern and devotees might choose to focus on one rather than another, depending on their situation.</p> <p>The importance of Ganesh in Smartism is connected with more widespread beliefs about his nature and attributes. Ganesh is the god responsible for obstacles, both placing them and removing them. He guards entrances and doorways and is associated with knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, Smarta worshippers might place Ganesh at the centre of their shrine for puja offered before a journey, a test or other undertaking.</p> <p>In the Smarta tradition the choice to worship any saguna deity is seen as a step on the path towards realising the true nature of reality as nirguna Brahman. This is as true of devotion to Ganesh as it would be of any other deity. However, Ganesh could be said to have additional importance as the god of beginnings. He is recognised before acts of worship to other deities as well as receiving worship in his own right.</p> <p>While Ganesh is recognised as one of the five forms of saguna Brahman by Smartas there is also a branch of Hinduism, the Ganapatyas, that worships him as the Supreme Brahman. Candidates might suggest that this indicates both his popularity and importance as a prelude to discussing the relationship between personal named deities as forms of saguna Brahman and the Absolute qualitless nirguna Brahman.</p>	10	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>The focus of the question is on the importance of Ganesh within Smartism. Do not credit narrative details of Ganesh's life without reference to the question.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3(c)	<p>‘Vaishnavism is the most influential Hindu tradition.’ Discuss this claim.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: Candidates might approach this question by establishing a context and asking ‘most influential where?’ Or they may consider what knowledge of Vaishnavism might influence – for example, the study of Hinduism as a religion, knowledge of Hinduism by non-Hindus or the practice of Hinduism in different places.</p> <p>They might argue that in India this statement makes little sense, given that India is the place of origin for the religion, the place where all its current forms developed and the place where most of the world’s practising Hindus still live. It could also be argued that sectarian divisions are blurred and confused in the reality of a majority Hindu country and it is in Hinduism’s very nature to be pluralist and accepting of multiple and diverse expressions. Candidates might also consider whether the names of traditions and the ways in which they are distinguished from each other have the same meaning and significance for practising Hindus as they do for scholars of religion.</p> <p>Outside the context of its place of origin, candidates might consider how scholarly and cultural understandings of Hinduism are formed and the amount of contact scholars and non-Hindu individuals might have with the religion. If one form of Hinduism is more outgoing, widespread or communicative than others it might develop greater influence. Candidates could argue that the bhakti movement (formed to promote the spread of bhakti yoga) has its most successful expression in Vaishnavite groups such as the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).</p> <p>An alternative approach for candidates might be to consider the ambiguity and overlap between the different types of Hinduism. Candidates might argue that it is impossible to identify a discrete form of Hinduism in a way that marks it out as wholly distinct from all other forms and in a way that is universally agreed upon. So there can be no ‘most influential’ form.</p>	15	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>There are different sub-sets of Vaishnavism and candidates are not expected to know and/or name them. The focus of the question is on whether it is the most influential Hindu tradition. Do not credit narrative explanation of Vaishnavism which is not linked to the question.</p> <p>Credit all relevant discussion.</p> <p>Candidates can argue for or against the claim as long as their discussion is focused on the question.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3(c)	<p>Many Hindus worship a personal pantheon of deities which cross the sectarian divides academic study often considers absolute. Similarly, the history of the study of religion shows the influence of Christianity, and particularly Protestant forms of Christianity, on the way scholars have conceived and spoken about the object of their studies. It could be argued that there is not actually any real thing called Vaishnavism or even Hinduism. It could be argued that Vaishnavism is the only 'real' form of Hinduism, and all other forms are discrete alternative religions. That would make it meaningless to discuss the influence of Vaishnavism on Hinduism as a whole.</p>		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4(a)	<p>'The sum total of all that lives is God. We may not be God but we are of God even as a little drop of water is of the ocean.'</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Mohandas K Gandhi</p> <p>Describe what the passage above says about the nature of God.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: The passage describes a God that is made up of all living things. It claims that when all living things are put together the result is God. It does not say categorically either that we are God, or that we are not – instead it says that we are made of God. This is illustrated with the analogy of a drop of water being made of the ocean – the same substance but on an incomprehensibly different scale.</p> <p>The passage is open to a variety of different interpretations supporting different beliefs about the nature of God. It could be considered to be describing a pantheist belief in God, which understands God as part of the universe or claims the universe to be a manifestation of God. Or it could also be considered to be coming from a monist perspective, arguing that there is only one ultimately real substance and that is God. It could support a monotheist belief in a single deity, without making claims as to the ultimate relationship of the substance of that deity and the rest of the universe. It does not even rule out the pantheist belief that God includes, but is greater than the universe.</p> <p>The passage is clearly claiming that God is the source of all life but it is ambiguous about the nature of God.</p>	5	Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4(b)	<p>Explain the importance of ishvara in contemporary Hinduism.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: Candidates might focus on ishvara as a personal deity in the practical sense.</p> <p>Candidates might consider its importance in relation to individuals, families and communities and they might note that murti puja, which is strongly associated with concepts of ishvara, is probably the most popular form of Hindu practice. While popularity does not correspond to philosophical importance, it does indicate the importance of ishvara in understanding the realities of Hinduism as a living tradition.</p> <p>Alternatively, some candidates might take a philosophical or theological perspective, describing how different views of the Absolute and/or of God have influenced contemporary Hindus.</p> <p>Candidates might choose to build on Question 4(a), explaining the relationship between ishvara as a personal God and concepts of saguna Brahman. They might also consider the role of ideas about and worship of ishvara in relation to achieving moksha (liberation), which is seen as the ultimate goal by most Hindus. The importance of the concept of ishvara might be explored from an individual perspective as being directly related to the contribution it makes in achieving moksha. Alternatively, candidates might consider the importance of ishvara from the more abstract perspective of its significance in understanding contemporary forms of Hinduism.</p> <p>Some candidates might present ishvara and saguna Brahman as being effectively synonymous and so of equal importance. For other Hindus this is an incomplete understanding of the Absolute. If the path to liberation is understood as overcoming avidya (ignorance), an incomplete understanding is an obstacle to liberation. Hindus who take this view are likely to consider achieving a correct understanding of the true nature of things as more important for their liberation than the concept of ishvara. Other candidates might comment that the matter is more complex and that ishvara may include other understandings of Brahman. They might refer to the</p>	10	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>Examples are used to illustrate the concept but candidates do not need to use examples to gain the marks.</p>

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4(b)	<p>Smarta perspective of focus on ishvara as a first step towards realising the truth, or they might consider the bhakti marga (path of devotion) as one of the possible paths to liberation.</p> <p>Some Hindus consider all religions to be paths to the same truth. Ishvara may therefore be considered as one among the many possible names for a concept of God shared by all religions. This would make it an important concept for understanding Hinduism as Sanatana dharma, although it would still only give a partial picture of Hindu concepts of deity and the Absolute.</p>		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4(c)	<p>Evaluate the claim that Hinduism is best described by the term ‘monism’.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following: There are many different named deities associated with Hinduism. This might lead candidates to argue that, on the face of it, Hinduism is a polytheistic religion that involves the worship of many, wholly separate, deities. This, and other descriptors (e.g. henotheism) might be examined in turn in relation to different understandings of Hinduism. Candidates might argue that rather than worshipping distinct entities many Hindus understand the deities as different parts or aspects of a greater whole, such as Shiva or Devi, or as being related in some way to a single Supreme deity.</p> <p>The focus of the question is Hinduism as monism, and any exploration of different descriptive terms should recognise this. Monism might be understood as a broader concept than monotheism. Monotheism relates to singleness of deity whereas monism relates to the existence of only one reality or substance from which everything else is formed.</p> <p>Candidates might consider different forms of Vedanta, in particular Advaita, in relation to this idea. They might consider whether God is best seen as an impersonal Absolute without attributes (nirguna) or with personal attributes and qualities (saguna) and how each concept relates to a monist perspective.</p> <p>Candidates might conclude that there is one term which best describes Hinduism in their view, or they might consider that Hinduism is too diverse to be summed up with a single term. They might conclude that all these terms are drawn from Western philosophy, and so are rooted in a wholly different understanding of reality to that of Hindu philosophers and practitioners.</p> <p>Some candidates might suggest that religious practice is as important, or more important, in understanding Hinduism than philosophical perspectives. They might consider forms of worship or puja encouraged by Ramanuja and Madhva representing Vishistadvaita (qualified non-dualism) or Dvaita (dualism), and the importance for many Hindus of bhakti or devotion to a personal deity.</p>	15	<p>Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks.</p> <p>The focus should be on whether monism is the best way to describe Hinduism. Candidates may refer to other named theistic traditions but this should be in comparison with the value of the term monism in describing Hinduism, not as a general discussion of the other theistic terms.</p> <p>Credit all relevant discussion.</p> <p>Candidates can argue for or against the claim as long as their discussion is focused on the question.</p>