



A-level
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
7062/2A

Paper 2A Study of Religion and Dialogues: Buddhism

Mark scheme

June 2019

Version: 1.0 Final

196A7062/2A/MS

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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Methods of Marking

It is essential that, in fairness to students, all examiners use the same methods of marking. The advice given here may seem very obvious, but it is important that all examiners follow it as exactly as possible.

1. If you have any doubts about the mark to award, consult your Team Leader.
2. Refer constantly to the mark scheme throughout marking. It is extremely important that it is strictly adhered to.
3. Remember, you must **always** credit **accurate, relevant and appropriate** answers which are not given in the mark scheme.
4. Do **not** credit material that is irrelevant to the question or to the stated target, however impressive that material might be.
5. If a one-word answer is required and a list is given, take the first answer (unless this has been crossed out).
6. If you are wavering as to whether or not to award a mark, the criterion should be, 'Is the student nearer those who have given a correct answer or those who have little idea?'
7. Read the information on the following page about using Levels of Response mark schemes.
8. Be prepared to award the full range of marks. Do not hesitate to give full marks when the answer merits full marks or to give no marks where there is nothing creditable in an answer.
9. No half marks or bonus marks are to be used under any circumstances.
10. Remember, the key to good and fair marking is **consistency**. Do **not** change the standard of your marking once you have started.

Levels of Response Marking

In A-level Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, levels of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Levels of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Levels are tied to specific skills. Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Levels of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully, responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. This should only be necessary occasionally and where this occurs examiners must indicate, by a brief written explanation, why their assessment does not conform to the levels of response laid down in the mark scheme. Such scripts should be referred to the Principal Examiner.

Assessment of Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication will be assessed in all components and in relation to all assessment objectives. Where students are required to produce extended written material in English, they will be assessed on the quality of written communication. The quality of written communication skills of the student will be one of the factors influencing the actual mark awarded within the level of response. In reading an extended response, the examiner will therefore consider if it is cogently and coherently written, ie decide whether the answer:

- presents relevant information in a form that suits its purposes;
- is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear;
- is suitably structured and that the style of writing is appropriate.

Levels of Response: 10 marks A-Level – AO1	
Level 5 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate • Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated • Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 4 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate • Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained • Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 3 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate • Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion • Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 2 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate • Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion • Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary
Level 1 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development • There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion • Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit

Levels of Response: 15 marks A-Level – AO2	
Level 5 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised • Perceptive discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis • There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning • Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 4 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised • Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis • There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning • Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 3 7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A general response to the issue(s) raised • Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought • An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning • Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 2 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response to the issue(s) raised • Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument • Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary
Level 1 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response to the issue(s) raised • A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support • Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit

0 1 . 1

Examine how secularisation has challenged Buddhism.

[10 marks]

Target: AO1:2 Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including influences of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to consideration of the following specification content: the British context.

Today non-religious authorities are treated as ultimate sources of truth and moral values. Buddhist teachings may be accepted or discarded depending on whether they have the support of these authorities. For example, teachings such as the existence of Bodhisattvas, rebirth, and the power of karma, which involve the supernatural, are rejected by scientific understanding. Science is admired as the ultimate source of truth in a secular society, and this has relegated religious views to a secondary position.

Materialistic secular values that promote strong emotional attachment to material wealth and possessions and judge a person's success by their accumulation, stand in complete contrast to Buddhist teachings. One of the five precepts is not to take what is not given, and one of the six Mahayana perfections is generosity. The teaching about material possessions is that of non-attachment. These teachings are challenged by the values of secular society, and isolate Buddhism from the rest of society.

Buddhism may be vulnerable to 'militant atheism'. Buddhism is usually described as non-theistic because it refutes the existence of a divine creator god. However, this may be an over-simplistic view: deities and their worship, the teachings of karma, rebirth, and merit, are regarded as theistic elements of Buddhism that a militant atheist would reject as being religious. Removing all 'religious' elements from Buddhism would reduce it to mere techniques according to David Brazier.

0 1 . 2

‘Buddhism has no successful defence against secularisation.’

Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to consideration of the following specification content: Buddhist responses to materialistic secular values: the value of wealth and possessions; The preservation of traditional forms of Buddhism with reference to Amaravati and the Forest Tradition; the emergence of new forms of Buddhism with reference to Triratna and Secular Buddhism; the appeal of some forms of Buddhism as an alternative to other forms of religious expression; Emphasis on the contribution of Buddhism to society: including the principles and work of Engaged Buddhism as a liberationist approach in supporting the poor and oppressed; Comparison between the significant ideas of Stephen Bachelor and David Brazier about the nature of Buddhism.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments.

For many, Buddhist beliefs and values are successfully challenged by science and materialism and so they reject them, and attempts to take the supernatural out of Buddhism are rejected by many Buddhists as reductionist. However, many teachings and values such as mindfulness, detachment and vegetarianism do chime with the mood of modern secular society, and teaching about the dangers of attachment to any one belief allows Buddhism to co-exist with many other viewpoints.

Some forms of Buddhism may be seen as increasingly irrelevant today, for example centres such as Amaravati which isolate themselves from society as a whole. However, Amaravati does succeed in preserving traditional teaching and other forms of Buddhism do engage with society and seek to re-express Buddhism in terms relevant to the modern age, for example, Triratna and Secular Buddhism. Some groups are successful in raising the profile of Buddhism, which also attracts people simply because it is so different from Christianity.

Some forms of Buddhism fail to convince people that they have any practical value, and some understand Buddhism to say that people need to change their attitude to suffering rather than try to end it, which they feel is both inhumane and unrealistic. However, some Buddhist groups do engage with society by working to support the poor and oppressed so showing relevance and others stress the compassion of Buddha and try to ensure that the teaching of Buddha is properly understood.

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Examine the changing role of the monastic Sangha in Thailand.**[10 marks]**

Target: AO1:1: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Changes in the role of the Sangha partly reflect broader changes in Thai society, for example the move from rural to urban life. In a rural village the traditional role was as the centre of life. The community provided for the monks, all young men entered the monastery for a period, it provided education and led ceremonies. As the rural population decreased, fewer become monks, education is now state provided and the Sangha less relevant. Female-only communities are also emerging.

Thai kings were historically seen as the main patrons of Buddhism in Thailand. Although politics and religion were generally separated for most of Thai history, Buddhism's connection to the Thai state increased in the middle of the 19th century. As Thailand progressed towards the path of a modern nation state, the Sangha was brought formally under the government's control and its organisational structure was state-imposed. The recently passed Monk Act enables the King to appoint or remove senior monks.

Reforms led to the development of a royally-backed sect of Buddhism, divided from the other, larger official branch of Thai Theravada Buddhism. The sects compete for both local and international followers and their financial support, which has led to the development of a number of high-profile monasteries, such as that of the Wat Phra Dhammakaya movement, which offers residential courses for a fee. This temple uses modern methods of propagation, such as a satellite television station and a distance-learning university, and it has a strong online presence.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not consider the changing role.

0 2 . 2

‘Buddhism’s attitude to other faiths is generally positive.’**Evaluate this claim.****[15 marks]****Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to consideration of the following specification content: How far Buddhism should be seen as a collection of different traditions with little in common, with reference to two contrasting forms of Buddhism; Edict 12 of Ashoka on attitudes to other faiths; Buddhist attitudes to religious pluralism with reference both to diversity within Buddhism and diversity between religions, including the views of Nichiren Buddhism; Buddhist responses to issues of freedom of religious expression in society.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments.

Edict 12 of Ashoka recommends respect for the views of others and no criticism of other religions without a good cause. Any such criticism should also be ‘mild’. Excessive praise of one’s own religion is considered harmful to that faith and growth in the ‘essentials’ of all faiths is desired. This tolerance and contact between religions can be seen to be socially beneficial. However, some schools of Nichiren Buddhism see themselves as the only true path, rejecting all other forms of Buddhism and all other religions.

Tolerance of diversity is seen in the peaceful co-existence of many different forms of Buddhism. The Mahayana view is that Buddhism may take the form best suited to its historical and cultural context. Other faiths are similarly seen as responses to their historical and social contexts. Buddhism is strongly pacifist thus would not support violence to defend the faith. However, in practice, some Buddhist communities have difficult relationships with other faiths. For example, Buddhists waged a long war against the Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka in the name of preserving Buddhism.

Buddhism has a generally positive reputation for freedom of religious expression. For example, it is a right enshrined in law in Thailand. However, Thailand also has laws prohibiting the defamation or insult of Buddhism and Buddhist Clergy. Freedom of religious expression is also challenged when the consequences appear to be socially negative or permit practices contrary to Buddhist values. Examples may be drawn from a variety of contexts. For example, using freedom of expression to incite violence may be forbidden.

0 3 . 1

‘It is reasonable for Buddhists to believe in the Trikaya, the three bodies of the Buddha.’

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1:4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

AO1

Buddhism

The Trikaya or three bodies doctrine may be taken to mean that Buddha has three bodies or dimensions. These are the Dharmakaya Buddha, Sambhogakaya Buddha, and Nirmanakaya Buddha, which may be understood respectively as, ultimate reality or truth, enjoyment body, in which aspect Buddha may be known by Bodhisattvas, and transformation body, in which Buddha appears in human form.

Mahayana Buddhism sees Gautama Buddha as a Nirmanakaya Buddha, Theravada Buddhism does not share this belief.

Philosophy

A belief may be considered ‘reasonable’ if it is based on reason and/or consistent with reason.

There is a distinction between ‘belief that’ and ‘belief in’: ‘belief that’ may be seen as intellectual assent to statements of faith such as ‘The Trikaya exists’; ‘belief in’ may be seen as an attitude of trust which assumes belief that The Trikaya exists but goes beyond it, or as a commitment to the ideals represented by the Trikaya.

Arguments from scripture and religious experience may be used to support the view that belief in the Trikaya is reasonable, but these have been extensively criticised.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and philosophy.

AO2

The doctrine is in part a way of understanding the life of Gautama Buddha, seeing him as an expression of ultimate reality or truth. Such faith-based affirmations may not rely on evidence. They reflect one way of interpreting evidence which may also be interpreted differently.

Religious experience such as visions of heavenly Buddhas or Bodhisattvas may be offered as evidence that this belief is reasonable, however, subjective experiences are always open to the challenge that the people who claim to have had them are lying or mistaken, and science offers alternative explanations for such experiences.

It may be argued that Buddhism is always open to the idea that such experiences are mind-produced, part of the conditioned world and not objectively real. According to this view the doctrine of the Trikaya is merely a useful idea that may help one to achieve an end of suffering, not a teaching that one should be attached to or seek to defend.

Belief in the Trikaya is not required of all Buddhists. For example, followers of secular Buddhism have rejected it along with other 'supernatural' elements of the faith. However, if Dharmakaya is interpreted as the emptiness of all apparently existing things, the constant flux behind the world of appearances then its 'truth' may be supported by some insights from modern science.

The conclusion reached may depend on the concept of 'reasonable' used in the answer and the attention paid to 'belief in'.

0 4 . 1

‘Buddhist statements about the Trikaya, the three bodies of the Buddha, are non-cognitive.’

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1:4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

AO1

Buddhism

The Trikaya is the Mahayana concept of Buddha with three aspects: Dharmakaya Buddha, Sambhogakaya Buddha and Nirmanakaya Buddha. Many statements are made about the three bodies including ‘The Dharmakaya is Absolute Truth’, ‘Gautama Buddha was a Nirmanakaya Buddha’.

The significance of such statements is much debated in Buddhist philosophy, but it is clear that for many the Trikaya is a reality and aspects of it are worshipped daily.

Philosophy

The view that religious language about Trikaya is non-cognitive may be related to the challenge of verification and falsification to the meaningfulness of religious language. The view that religious language is a language game, or a Blik, may also be referenced. In each case, the central claim is that the statements inform about the way the speaker sees life, not about the way life is. This may be linked to an anti-realist view of religion.

A range of responses to that view may be presented including eschatological verification, and religious language as analogical or symbolic.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and philosophy.

AO2

Responses to the verification and falsification principles may be evaluated. For example, the principles may be argued to fail their own standards of meaningfulness. They may be considered arbitrary, or to be based simply on a Blik which provides a frame of reference within which each statement is assessed for meaning. This does not mean that the particular frame of reference they assume is better or worse than the religious frame of reference.

Eschatological verification argues that statements such as ‘the Trikaya exists’ do apply to the ‘real’ world and will be verified through experience after death, so they are cognitive. However, this does not help to establish, here and now, whether the statements are meaningful. If the statements are false we will never discover that fact. One issue here is whether the truth or falsity of any statement, or the method of discovering the same, can be determined before the meaning of the statement is known. The two principles might be better described as claiming that the statements in question are meaningful but false rather than meaningless or non-cognitive.

Some Buddhists would challenge the distinction between cognitive and non-cognitive language on the grounds that all world views are mind-produced and therefore, ultimately, illusory. The concepts and statements are either ‘useful’ or ‘not-useful’ in dealing with the process of living; whether they are ‘true or not-true’, cognitively meaningful or not, is irrelevant.

The whole issue of whether there is an external world of which the mind can be aware may be argued to be beyond human understanding, because it requires a perspective external to the reality it is considering. This would make it impossible to determine whether statements about the Trikaya are cognitive or non-cognitive.

0 5 . 1

‘Buddhist ethics is character based.’

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and ethical studies.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1:4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

AO1

Buddhism

Buddhist ethics can be seen to be based on the example of Buddha and an attempt to realise Buddha-nature within oneself. Both ahimsa and compassion may be regarded as key virtues.

The five precepts can be seen as moral rules, the six perfections may be described as virtues to be cultivated.

Ethics

The nature of character based ethics, which may be illustrated through virtue ethics, may be explained, including the identification of an appropriate set of virtues and the idea of the mean. There may, but need not be, reference to thinkers other than Aristotle.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and character based ethics.

AO2

Buddhist ethics can be seen to have many features in common with a character based approach to moral decision-making such as virtue ethics. Compassion is a core virtue, and the six perfections may be seen as virtues. Many Buddhists believe that they share the Buddha's nature and should express that in all their actions. The intention behind the action is more important than the action itself, so that a 'right' action carried out for selfish reasons is not good.

However, the five precepts appear to be rules that must be followed. They are all negative (things one must not do) and imply that some actions are intrinsically wrong. Actions appear to be right or wrong depending on the quality of karma they produce, with those that generate negative karma being wrong and those that generate positive karma being right. This would suggest that Buddhist ethics are not character based.

The consequences of actions are also important, and Buddhism may be seen to have much in common with utilitarianism. The consequences for the individual who carries out the action and other living things have to be considered. This is reflected in the core principle of ahimsa. However, judging the harm caused by an action, and being motivated by a desire to avoid harm, can be seen as a function of character.

Buddhist ethics can be considered teleological in the sense that the moral values aim at bringing about a perfect state of affairs. This is eudaimonia/human flourishing in virtue ethics, in Buddhism it is personal or universal Nirvana, and both involve the end of suffering. The judgement of whether an action will or will not contribute to that final goal has to be taken by the individual in the concrete situation, moral 'laws' will be set aside if they do not contribute to the overall purpose.

0 6 . 1

‘For both Buddhism and Virtue Ethics, genetic engineering is wrong.’

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and Virtue Ethics.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1:4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

AO1

Understanding of the nature and role of genetic engineering, and of the issues it raises, can be credited. This discussion may refer to genetic engineering on plants, animals and/or humans.

Buddhism

Ahimsa requires the commitment to end suffering, and genetic engineering can contribute to that. Compassion is a characteristic of Buddha nature which Buddhists should try to express and maximise in their lives.

Genetic engineering could be judged according to its consequences: it would be vital that this contributed to both short term and long term good.

Virtue Ethics

The goal of virtue ethics is human flourishing, and anything that contributes to such flourishing may be considered good – the benefits to those who benefit from genetic engineering may be considered in this light. Responsible use of the technology, and the necessity of considering the possible consequences, may be demanded by virtue ethics. The need for a development of new sets of virtues relevant to a genetically altered humanity may be considered.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and Virtue Ethics.

AO2

Virtues of love and compassion may be championed by both ethical systems, and require responsible use of the technology to minimise pain and suffering. The use of genetic engineering means that humanity is being/will be moulded to conform to some 'ideal' of what a human being should be. Both ethical systems may have concerns about the underlying vision of the 'ideal'. This is a form of a 'slippery slope' argument. It is not necessarily opposed to the principle of genetic engineering but to its application.

The dangers of genetic engineering and the release of genetically altered material into the environment include the possibility that it will upset the natural balance and/or lead to damaging mutations that are beyond the control of humanity. Both ethical systems would agree on the necessity of knowing the risk attached to such actions. The origin of the genetic material may also be relevant – neither system approves of 'theft' and taking genetic material from people/plants/animals and treating it as a possession that can be used or sold may be challenged.

The mechanics of genetic engineering may include masturbation and disposal of rejected embryos. It also implies that some couples should not 'breed' without, at the very least, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) to determine the genetic health of the embryo. This raises issues for some Buddhists who believe that reproduction should be left to the natural workings of karma. For virtue ethics, and some Buddhists, the failure to use PGD where it could be used to prevent suffering makes society, or individuals, responsible for that suffering.