



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Religious Studies (8RS0)
Paper 4D

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2024

Publications Code 8RS0_4D_2406_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2024

Introduction

The general understanding of this paper continues to improve year on year and so it was reassuring to note, that most centres have strengthened the preparation of their candidates to meet the criteria of this specification. The candidates who did well demonstrated a personal engagement with the concepts and were also able to develop their responses well. However, there were some candidates who, although they demonstrated knowledge, did not fully articulate this in order to show understanding.

It was encouraging to see that the majority of candidates attempted all the questions.

The questions on the paper this year were:

Q01: Explore key features of beliefs about angels within Islam.

Q02: Assess the diversity of ways Muslims practise the five pillars.

Q03: Assess the significance of the Qur'an as the basis for Muslim belief.

Q04(a): Explore key features of Hadith.

Q04(b): Analyse the implications of Hadith for Muslim living today.

Better responses were able to establish relevance and this in turn enabled examiners to identify why a particular point had been made. Good candidates clearly reflected on issues, rather than merely learning them, thus providing thoughtful insights. In doing so, they were able to offer effective arguments. Successful candidates were consistent throughout the paper in demonstrating sound knowledge and understanding such as

Question 1

Candidates generally answered this question well. Higher scoring candidates clearly explained features of angels including the roles and responsibilities of different named angels, such as Israfil blowing the trumpet on the day of judgment and Jibreel communicating with Messengers. The best answers explained intricate points of belief such as angels being created from light and having no free will and linked this to the importance of the belief in angels for Muslims.

Lower scoring candidates did not provide enough detail within their answer or provide adequate features. For example, only one or two features were mentioned and no further detail was provided.

Question 2

Candidates generally performed well on this question. The highest scoring answers compared the practise of the five pillars between varying groups of Muslims, highlighting

their differences and similarities. Examples included different points of law for Sunni and Shi'a Muslims around prayer and Zakah. The highest scoring candidates were very clear on how the five pillars related to identity with some very articulate answers. These included ideas such as prayer providing a collective identity as it can be read in congregation and is a common feature for Muslims.

Lower scoring candidates were very descriptive of the individual pillars and did not adequately develop AO2 material or link this to identity. These answers were mostly descriptive.

Question 3

High scoring candidates were confident with this answer and were able to articulately answer the question with a tight focus of the significance of the Qur'an. The AO2 material in higher scoring answers highlighted various reasons as to why the Qur'an is significant such as the belief that it is Divine and the basis for Islamic law which would impact how Muslims live. The significance of the Qur'an was often contrasted to other sources of Shari'ah such as Hadith and scholarly interpretation. The focus on significance was where candidates scored the highest marks.

Lower scoring responses were rather descriptive around what the Qur'an is how it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. These answers did not have a focus on significance and were very weak on their AO2 material. It is important that candidates are familiar with the differing requirements of AO1 and AO2.

Question 4a

This question was not answered as well as it could have been. It was surprising that most candidates did not provide key details around the features of Hadith. There was no real mention of components such as chain or narrators and text. There were also no real details around the assessment criteria by many candidates and how differently assessed hadith have different applications. Terms such as Sahih (sound) or Hasan (good/acceptable) were barely used. Most candidates did highlight that Hadith are the recorded sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Again, a detailed explanation of this was not included in answers. Hadith literature includes the sayings, actions, descriptions and silences of the Prophet Muhammad.

Question 4b

Candidates who scored highly on this question were very good and focusing on the implications of Hadith for Muslim living. This included analysing how Hadith are

interpreted and how they are used alongside the Qur'an for guidance. Some good arguments were also used to suggest that Hadith literature is not relevant today as they are outdated. There were also some arguments which referred to the numerous ways Hadith can be interpreted such as metaphorical or literal. Examples were used by some of the highest scoring candidates where specific instances of Hadith were put forward that shape Muslim practise such as rituals relating to prayer.

Lower scoring candidates did highlight some implications but they were not very well developed or and lacked detailed analysis of these implications.

