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Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies A

Paper 1 Study of Religion

1C Islam

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Introduction

Religious Studies A

Paper 1C: Area of Study 1 – Study of Islam (Paper code: 1RA0/1C)

The paper contributes to 50% of the overall award. The assessment consists of four questions and candidates must answer all questions. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are to use this, rather than other published resources, when planning the course content.

This area of study comprises a study in-depth of Islam as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world. There are four sections: Beliefs and Teachings, Practices Sources of Wisdom and Authority, Forms of Expression and Ways of Life. Candidates studied Islam within the context of the wider British society.

Please note:

AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'

SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.8 Akhirah: Muslim teachings about life after death; the nature of judgement, **paradise and hell; how they are shown in the Qur'an**, including Surah 17: 49–72; divergent ways in which Muslims teachings about life after death affect the life of a Muslim today.

The question asked was: 'Outline three ways paradise is shown in the Qur'an.'

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.

Outline 3 characteristics of Allah:

Allah is creator (1 mark)

Allah is creator, judge and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)

Allah is creator, busy and distant (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of

information)

Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)

Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks)

Candidates should write in three separate sentences: this ensures correct responses are credited fully and avoids losing marks for writing in list format.

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.7 al-Qadr: the nature and importance of Predestination for Muslims; how al-Qadr and human freedom relates to the Day of Judgement, including reference to Sahih Al-Bukhari 78: 685; divergent understandings of predestination in Sunni and Shi'a Islam; **the implications of belief in al-Qadr for Muslims today.**

The question asked: 'Explain two implications of belief in al-Qadr'

Development may be extra information, extra reasoning, quotes or examples. It must link to the point being made.

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.2 The five roots of 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam (Tawhid (oneness of Allah); 'Adl (Divine Justice); Nubuwwah (Prophethood); Imamah (Successors to Muhammad) and Mi'ad (The Day of Judgment and the Resurrection): the nature, history and **purpose of the five roots** with reference to their Qur'anic basis, including Surah 112 (the oneness of Allah); the importance of these principles for different Shi'a communities today, including Sevener and Twelver.

The question asked was: 'Explain two purposes of the Five Roots of Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority..'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for four marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', which must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

If the candidate stated that the source of wisdom was from the Qur'an and then paraphrased or quoted something else from Hadith, it was not credited.

If the candidate gave the paraphrase or quote (eg from hadith) and then put an incorrect source (Qur'an 2:18) in brackets it was awarded and the bracketed reference was ignored.

If a candidate quoted Muhammad and it was Ali or vice versa, and the quote was not accredited to them, it was not credited.

The candidate did not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.

If a candidate gave the right source but the wrong chapter/verse within the correct source then the reference still gained the mark.

There are alternative interpretations of the hadith. Examiners use their judgement when searching for phrases and quotes and take into account that the Arabic can be interpreted differently by different sources. Candidates may use different Qur'an and hadith interpretations. Many candidates were not able to achieve full marks due to the lack of a source of wisdom.

References to sources of wisdom do not need to directly quote but can paraphrase.

Question 1 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates were assessed on AO2, Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise, judge the value of the arguments to reach the higher levels).

Many candidates gave good answers, citing reasons for and against referring to much knowledge but not considering the value of them or analysing/evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments, limiting candidates' progression to the highest level.

Many centres have continued the use of writing frames to encourage appraisal, but many of the candidates did not appear to understand the demands of the skill required, resulting in many formulaic sentences added to what is often good knowledge reflecting AO1, not AO2.

Some candidates wrote 'This is a strong argument because ...' and repeated the previous point or giving another point or reason referring to the statement, not the argument itself. In other examples, candidates wrote 'This is a weak argument because...' and gave generic statements such as, 'it's not in the Qur'an'. The majority of answers did not address the reasons for the diversity within the beliefs of Islam. In some cases, candidates focussed on the strength/weakness of an argument but had not demonstrated any understanding of religion and belief.

Bullet point 1.5 Muslim holy books (kutub): the nature, history, significance and purpose of Muslim holy books with reference to the Qur'an, Tawrat (Torah), including Surah 5: 43–48; Surah, Zabur (Psalms), including Surah 4: 163–171; Injil (Gospel), including Surah 53: 36, Sahifah (Scrolls); **divergent Muslim views about the importance of the holy books in their lives today.**

The question asked was: "Muslim holy books are relevant today."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- refer to different Muslim points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

‘D’ items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

There are 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar on 1(d).

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point 2.8 The nature, origins, activities, meaning and significance of the celebration/ commemoration of Id-ul-Adha, with reference to Surah 37: 77–111, and Id-ulFitr in Sunni Islam with reference to their place within Shi’a Islam; and Id-ulGhadeer, with reference to Hadith and the interpretation of Surah 5: 3, and Ashura in Shi’a Islam with reference to their place within Sunni Islam.

The question asked was ‘Outline three ways the festival of Id-ul-Fitr is celebrated.’

Candidates are asked to ‘Outline’ on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point 2.7 Jihad: the origins, meaning and significance of jihad in Islam; divergent understandings of jihad within Islam, including the difference between lesser and greater jihad; the conditions for declaration of lesser jihad, including reference to Surah 2: 190–194 and 22: 39; the importance of jihad in the life of Muslims.

The question asked was: ‘Explain two reasons why Jihad is important in the life of Muslims.’

Candidates are asked to ‘Explain two’ on (b) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples.

The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point 2.6 Hajj as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role, origins and significance of Hajj, including Surah 2: 124–130; 22: 25–30; **how Hajj is performed** and why Hajj is important for Muslims; benefits and challenges from attending Hajj for Muslims

The question asked was: ‘Explain two features of Hajj.’

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.’

Candidates are asked to ‘Explain two’ on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for four marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a ‘reference to a source of wisdom’ which must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

Question 2 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two. Practices.

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the d items. The candidates are being assessed on AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief.

This constitutes 50% of the overall mark. The question is ‘Evaluate’ this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades).

Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting students’ progression to the highest level. ‘D’ items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Bullet point 2.3 Salah as one of the Five Pillars including reference to Surah 15: 98–99 and 29: 45: the nature, history, **significance and purpose of Salah for Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, including different ways of understanding them**; how Salah is performed including ablution, times, directions, movements and recitations, in the home and mosque and Jummah prayer.

The question asked was: “The differences in Salah between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims show disunity.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- refer to different Muslim points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

‘D’ items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Question 3 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Bullet point 3.7 The imam in Shi'a Islam, including reference to the Hadith of the pond of Khumm: history, major teachings and actions, divergent understandings of their contribution to Islam in Sunni and Shi'a thought, the doctrine of Nass, **the hidden imam**; the inerrancy and intercession of imams; the significance of the imam for different forms of Shi'a Islam today.

The question asked was: 'Outline three teachings about the Hidden Imam.'

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

Question 3 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Bullet point 3.6 Shari'ah Law: how it is agreed upon and the use of analogy (qiyas) and consensus (ijma), including interpretations of Surah 4: 115; its divergence of use by the main schools of Sunni and Shi'a Islam; specific examples showing links between the Qur'an, Hadith, and Shari'ah; divergent understandings of the role and significance of judges (qadis) and scholars (the 'ulema) as sources of authority: the establishment of judges and scholars; **examples of their rulings**; the significance of authority within Islam today.

The question asked was: 'Explain two examples of Shari'ah law rulings of scholars in Islam.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples.

The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

Question 3 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Bullet point 3.3 The Seal of the Prophets, Surah 33: 36–47: Muhammad's role as 'seal of the Prophets'; the final prophet; fulfilling the teachings of all other prophets, **and as a role model to Muslims today; the significance of Muhammad as seal of the prophets and a role model today.**

The question asked was: 'Explain two reasons why following Muhammad is important for Muslims today. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples.

The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development it does not gain a second mark for the source.

Question 3 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the d items. The candidates are being assessed on AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief.

This constitutes 50% of the overall mark. The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades).

Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting students' progression to the highest level. 'D' items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Bullet point 3.8 The imam in Sunni Islam: the origins, nature, **role of the imam in Sunni Islam**, including Sahih Al-Bukhari 73: 34–37; divergent understandings of their contribution to individual and community life in Sunni and Shi'a thought.

The question asked was "The imam is the most important source of guidance for the Sunni Muslim community."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

'D' items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

There are 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar on 3(d).

Question 4 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

Bullet point 4.2 The mosque: divergent understandings of importance of the mosque, the design and different religious features of mosques, and furniture and **objects in the mosque and their use in the various activities that take place**, including reference to Sahih Al-Bukhari 2: 39.

The question asked was: 'Outline three types of furniture or objects used in the mosque.'

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

Question 4 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

Bullet point 4.3 The divergent understandings of the use, significance, meaning and purpose of calligraphy within Islam, including as a rejection of idolatry with reference to Surah 21: 51–62: **the way it is used to express belief, and how it may be used in the mosque and other settings**

The question asked was: 'Explain two ways Muslims may use calligraphy.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples.

The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

Question 4 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four : Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

Bullet point 4.8 **The work of one named Muslim charity working for relief of poverty and suffering in the United Kingdom, what it does and why**, including reference to sadaqah and Surah 2: 271–274.

The question asked was: 'Explain two reasons why one Muslim charity may work to relieve poverty in the UK.'

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples.

The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development it does not gain a second mark for the source.

Question 4 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Forms of Expression and Ways of Life

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the d items. The candidates are being assessed on AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief.

This constitutes 50% of the overall mark. The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades).

Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting

students' progression to the highest level. 'D' items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Bullet point 4.4 Shi'a obligatory actions: understandings and implications of encouraging others to do good (Amr bil Maruf) including Surah 42: 23–26; discouraging others from doing bad (Nahy Anil Munkar), Tawallah and Tabarra; Love for the Prophet Muhammad and his family and disdain for their enemies; **divergent understandings of their importance for Muslims in different traditions of Islam today**

The question asked was: "Shi'a obligatory actions unify Muslims."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- refer to different Muslim points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

'D' items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Summary

- Candidates should write three sentences in 'outline' (a) questions. Each sentence should contain one piece of information. There is no need for development. Incorrect words or sentences should be crossed out
- The 'explain' questions (b) and (c) require two developed points. For (c) items an additional mark is given for a reference to a source of wisdom, which does not need to be referenced and can be paraphrased
- Candidates should be directed to the specification and other published resources to learn key terms and sources of wisdom
- The (d) items need an understanding of religion and belief, as well as the ability to evaluate the validity of arguments in order to reach a conclusion. They should appraise the reasons given, for and against the statement.
- Considering the validity of the evidence is one way to appraise arguments
- Capitalise proper nouns and use subject specific terminology appropriately.