



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies A

Paper 2 Study of Second Religion

2C Islam

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Summer 2024

Publications Code 1RA0_2C_2406_ER

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Introduction

Religious Studies A

Paper 2C: Area of Study 2 – Study of Second Religion – Islam (Paper code: 1RA0/2C)

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award.

The assessment consists of two questions and candidates must answer both 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 two sections:

Beliefs and Teachings

Practices

Candidates have studied Islam within the context of the wider British society, the religious traditions of which are, in the main, Christian.

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 1.1 The six Beliefs of Islam: **their nature, history and purpose**, including Kitab al-iman 1: 4; how they are understood and expressed in Sunni and Shi'a Muslim communities today; the importance of these principles for Muslims.

The question asked was: 'Outline three purposes of the Six Beliefs for Muslims.'

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)

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 reasons why al-Qadr is important for 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 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.8 Akhirah: Muslim teachings about life after death; the nature of judgment, **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: 'Explain two ways hell is shown in the Qur'an.'

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' 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.

Question 1 (d)

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, for the arguments to reach the higher levels).

Many candidates gave excellent answers, citing reasons for and against, 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 had attempted to introduce a writing frame to encourage appraisal, but many of the candidates did not appear to understand the demands of the skill required.

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 did not demonstrate any understanding of religion and belief.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

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: "Kutub, other than the Qur'an, have been failures."

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 1(d).

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

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: ‘Outline three ways Salah is performed.’

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 ways greater Jihad differs from lesser Jihad.’

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 2.2 Shahadah as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role and significance of Shahadah for Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, including reference to Surah 3: 17–21; **why reciting Shahadah is important for Muslims**, and its place in Muslim practice today.

The question asked was: ‘ Explain two reasons why reciting the Shahadah is important in 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 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 2 (d)

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.

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-ul-Fitr in Sunni Islam with reference to their place within Shi'a Islam; and Id-ul-Ghadeer, 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: "Id-ul-Adha is the most important Muslim celebration."

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.

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.

