



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A
Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Second
Religion
Option 2C – Islam

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies 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 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 Christianity as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections:

- Beliefs and Teachings;
- Practices.

Candidates had studied Christianity within the context of the wider British society.

Please note: AO stands for 'Assessment Objective' SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

Question 1a

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point: 1.4 Risalah: the nature and importance of prophethood for Muslims, including Surah 2:136; what the roles of prophets teach Muslims, exemplified in the lives of Adam, Ibrahim, Isma'il, Musa, Dawud, Isa, and Muhammad.

The question asked was: Outline three reasons why prophets are important in Islam.

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.

A very straight forward question answered well by the vast majority.

Question 1b

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 Muslim teachings about life after death affect the life of a Muslim today.

The question asked was: Explain two teachings about the nature of judgement.

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

Some confusion about the difference between the nature of judgement and the process of judgement day for some candidates.

Question 1c

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 Muslim teachings about life after death affect the life of a Muslim today.

The question asked was: Explain two ways the Qur'an shows angel Jibril. 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.

Well answered and often referred to the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet (pbuh) or to Maryam about Isa.

Question 1d

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.

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 alBukhari 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 was: "Belief in predestination is more important than human freedom."

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.

This question generated some really interesting debate and was well answered on the whole. Some level 4 answers were able to reference different beliefs from both a Sunni and Shi'a perspective.

'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 2a

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point: 2.4 Sawm as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role, significance and purpose of fasting during Ramadan, including Surah 2:183–185; those who are excused from fasting and why. The significance of the Night of Power: the nature, history and purpose of the Night of Power; why Laylat al-Qadr is important for Muslims today.

The question asked was: Outline three purposes of fasting in Ramadan.

Well answered and candidates were able to call about a wide range of purposes particular to empathise with the poor and starving as well as to follow in the Prophets footsteps.

Question 2b

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point: 2.2 Sawm as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role, significance and purpose of fasting during Ramadan, including Surah 2:183–185; those who are excused from fasting and why. The significance of the Night of Power: the nature, history and purpose of the Night of Power; why Laylat al-Qadr is important for Muslims today.

The question asked was: Explain two roles Shahadah plays 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.

A very well answered question often referencing birth, death and a entrance to the faith.

Question 2c

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: Explain two ways Muslims perform Salah. 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.

Very well answered as candidates could refer to a wide range of responses about the process of Salah.

Question 2d

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.

Bullet point: 2.5 Zakah as one of the Five Pillars and Khums: the nature, role, significance and purpose of Zakah and Khums, including Surah 9:58–60 and 8:36–42; why Zakah is important for Sunni Muslims; why Khums is important for Shi'a Muslims; the benefits of receiving Zakah or Khums.

The question asked was: "The main purpose of Zakah is to relieve poverty."

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.

A very interesting and well answered question that drew upon the advantages of Zakah. Many candidates were able to go beyond the statement and this of alternative aspects of the faith that should help relieve poverty to counter the statement.

Summary

- Candidates should write three sentences in 'outline' (a) questions. Each sentence should contain one piece of information. There is no need for development.
- 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

