



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A
Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Philosophy and
Ethics
Option 3C – Islam

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June 2025

Publications Code 1RA0_3C_2506_ER

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Introduction

Religious Studies A

Paper 3C: Area of Study 3 – Philosophy and Ethics – Islam (Paper code:1RA0/3C)

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 aspects of Philosophy and Ethics in the context of Islam as a lived religion within the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections:

- Arguments for the Existence of Allah
- Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

Candidates have studied Islam within the context of the wider British society, the religious traditions of which are, in the main, Christian. They study how the Qur'an informs a Muslim's understanding of the topics and how approaches to the issues are underpinned by philosophical arguments and ethical theory as applicable. Candidates compare and contrast the areas of ethics and/or philosophy within Islam with non-religious views.

Please note:

AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'

SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

Question 1(a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of Allah

Bullet point 1.3 Miracles as proof of the existence of Allah: **the nature and importance of miracles in Islam**; the Qur'an as a miracle including Surah 17: 84–89; examples of miracles; reasons why they might lead to belief in the existence of Allah; Muslim responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that miracles can be scientifically explained and provide no proof that Allah exists; divergent understandings of what miracles show about the nature of Allah for Muslims.

The question asked was: 'Outline three reasons miracles 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 on 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)

This was clearly answered overall with a clear identification of attributes of Allah (e.g. Omnipotence, Omnibenevolence and Omniscience being the most popular) and these were successfully linked to how miracles are important. A minority of students missed the qualifying term of importance in the question and described examples of miracles without addressing the importance.

Question 1(b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of Allah

Bullet point 1.2 Visions as proof of the existence of Allah: the nature and importance of visions in Islam; **Qur'anic examples of visions**, including Surah 19: 16–22; reasons why they might lead to belief in the existence of Allah and Muslim responses to nonreligious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that visions are hallucinations and provide no proof that Allah exists; divergent understandings of what visions show about the nature of Allah for Muslims, with reference to Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi Islam.

The question asked: 'Outline two examples of visions found in the Qur'an'

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.

This was well answered with most candidates accurately explaining examples of visions - the most popular answers included the Visions of Ibrahim and those of Maryam.

Question 1(c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of Allah

Bullet point 1.7 Issues raised by existence of suffering and Allah as compassionate, including Surah 1: **the problems the existence of suffering may raise for Muslims about the nature of Allah**; how the problem and its basis as a philosophical argument may lead some people to reject belief in Allah or cause believers to question their belief.

The question asked was: 'Explain two problems the existence of suffering

may raise
for Muslims about the nature of Allah' 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.

This question was variable in responses. The common error was to offer responses about the problem of evil and to not link this to the question - namely how it may raise issues. Many gave the response to the problem of suffering "Allah has a plan" for example without examining how it may raise issues. Well answered responses related the key elements - divine attributes, the issues and the response. Sources of Wisdom and Authority often were not integrated, and many candidates just added a quotation that was not connected to the reasons and development.

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 (e.g. 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.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of Allah.

Bullet Point 1.1 Revelation as proof of the existence of Allah; the Qur'an as revelation; revelation as shown in the Qur'an as direct (Surah 34:46–50) or through a messenger; **divergent understandings of what revelation shows about the nature of Allah for Muslims.**

The question asked was: "Revelation shows Allah as distant from Humanity."

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: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century.

Bullet Point 2.2 Muslim teaching about the importance of sexual relationships: divergent Muslim teaching about sexual relationships as fulfilling physical, emotional and spiritual needs; Muslim teachings on sexual relationships outside of marriage, including Surah 23:5–11 and same-sex sexual relationships; non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to sexual relationships, including the acceptance of sexual relationships outside marriage and same-sex sexual relationships and Muslim responses to them.

The question asked was: 'Outline three Muslim teachings about sexual relationships.'

This was well answered with clarity and accuracy.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century.

Bullet Point 2.3 Muslim teaching about the purpose and importance of the family: Muslim teaching about the purpose of families, including Surah 46:15–18: procreation and the strengthening of the ummah; divergent Muslim responses to the different types of family within 21st-century society (nuclear, single parent, same-sex parents, extended and blended families).

The question asked: 'Explain two purposes of family life 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.

This was a more challenging question with many students' responses focusing on the purpose of marriage as opposed to the purposes of family life. Other answers looked at role of men and women in the family which did not answer the question.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century.

Bullet point 2.1 The importance and purpose of marriage in Islam: the significance of marriage in Muslim life; **Muslim teachings about marriage**, including Surah 4; non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to the importance of marriage in society, including a lack of importance, cohabitation and Muslim responses to these attitudes.

The question asked was: 'Explain two Islamic beliefs about marriage' 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.

This was a well answered question with most students engaging and answering the question appropriately. Many did not include the Source of Wisdom and Authority.

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.

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century.

Bullet Point 2.7 Muslim teaching about the equality of men and women in the family: divergent Muslim beliefs, teachings and attitudes about the role of men and women in the family with reference to the Qur'an, including Surah 4 and the time of Muhammad.

The question asked was: "In the family men and women are equal"

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.

Many students included good textual and supportive references in this question from a range of sources.

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.