



Examiners' Report

June 2023

GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 2C

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Introduction

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. 1.2 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.

(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)

The question asked was: 'Outline three purposes of the Five Roots in Shi'a 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)

The question was answered well, with most candidates able to give either three generic purposes or three purposes related to specific Roots. The mark scheme allowed for both types of responses.

1 (a) Outline **three** purposes of the Five Roots in Shi'a Islam.

(3)

One purpose of the five roots is to believe that Allah is one and only. Another purpose ~~to~~ of the five roots is to teach from the prophets like Muhammad who is the Seal of the prophets. A third purpose of the five roots is to not sin so you can go to heaven in the after-life.



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The candidate gives three purposes in three sentences. (3)

Here, the candidate refers to three specific purposes, which is one of two ways they could have answered this question.

Total: 3 marks

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.3 **The nature of Allah: how the characteristics of Allah are shown in the Qur'an and why they are important:** Tawhid (oneness), including Surah 16: 35 – 36, immanence, transcendence, omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness and justice, Adalat in Shi'a Islam.

The question asked: 'Explain two reasons the characteristics of Allah are important for Muslims.'

Development may be extra information, extra reasoning, quotes or examples.

This question was answered well, with some candidates explaining why Allah's characteristics are important in a generic way and others referring to specific characteristics and explaining their importance. Both ways were valid.

(b) Explain **two** reasons the characteristics of Allah are important for Muslims.

One reason is that Allah's characteristics, ^{such as loving,} show means ⁽⁴⁾ that he loves Muslims and he wants what is best for them.

Another reason is that it shows Allah's power, he is omnipotent and this provides comfort to Muslims as they know nothing can happen to them without him willing it.



The candidate gives two developed reasons.

Reason one

- 'he loves Muslims' (1)
- this is developed by 'best for them'(1)

Reason two

- 'Allah's power' (1)
- this is developed by 'nothing can happen to them' (1)

Total: 4 marks

Question 1 (c)

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, Muhammad.**

The question asked was 'Explain two lessons Muslims may learn from the life of Ibrahim. 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.

Most candidates were able to give examples of lessons from Ibrahim's life but were not able to reference a source of wisdom and so did not achieve full marks.

(c) Explain **two** lessons Muslims may learn from the life of Ibrahim.

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

(5)

One lesson Muslims may learn from Ibrahim is ~~that~~ to have trust in God. This is because Ibrahim sacrificed his ~~an~~ own son as God told him to, and ~~of~~ God rewarded him with ~~a~~ many ancestors. "You will have as many ancestors as stars in the sky." This means that Muslims should not doubt God, as he is all knowing and all powerful.

Another lesson to learn is ~~that~~ not ~~to~~ question God's faith. This is shown in Ibrahim's life, when he destroyed all the false idols and was then set alight. God protected him from the fire showing God's love and his remembrance.



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The candidate gives one developed lesson with reference to a source of wisdom, and another developed lesson.

Lesson one

- 'trust in God' (1)
- this is developed by 'God rewarded him' (1)
- further developed by reference to a source of wisdom, Qur'an (1)

Lesson two

- 'not question God's faith' (1)
- is developed by 'destroyed all the false idols' (1)

Total: 5 marks

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 higher levels. 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 1.7 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 was "All Muslims should believe in al-Qadr." Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- refer to different Muslim points.

In response to this question, the better responses discussed the difference between complete predestination and partial predestination. Writing frames helped some candidates, but not all could utilise them effectively, to appraise the arguments.

*d) "All Muslims should believe in al-Qadr."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

(15)

Some may agree with this statement as Al-Qadr is a belief that Allah is omniscient and knows what he will do and has it written down. This highlights Allah's power as it shows that he knows the ~~the~~ future events that people will do so people have to believe this if they believe Allah is all knowing. However this argument is weak as it assumes that people have to believe in an Al-Qadr if they believe Allah is omniscient which doesn't have to be true.

On the other hand some may disagree with this statement as ~~the~~ some Muslims may choose to not believe in this as they may think that it strips them of their free will. They may think that since ~~the~~ Allah knows everything he will do that our free will is taken away by this so they choose to not follow this belief. However this argument is also weak as it ignores the potential for Muslims to ~~go of~~ go against what Allah has intended for them.

Overall I agree with this statement as it is one of the more important Muslim beliefs as to deny Al-Qadr is the equivalent to denying Allah's omniscience.



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The candidate gives two sides of the argument and develops logical chains of reasoning.

In the first paragraph they link al-Qadr to Allah's omniscient nature. The explanations of the argument are brief and not deconstructed.

The second paragraph offers the alternative view that belief in predestination impacts freewill. They attempt appraisal of their arguments in a basic way.

SPaG – The candidate is given 3 marks because:

- The candidate spells and punctuates generally with accuracy.
- The candidate uses rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall.
- The candidate uses a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate.

To gain a higher mark:

- the arguments for and against would need to include more depth in explanation linked to the statement
- the conclusion would need to contain more justification for the final decision on the statement to be higher in the level

Response: 7 marks

SPaG: 3 marks

Total: 10 marks

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

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: 'Outline three benefits of receiving Khums.'

This question was not answered well because most candidates answered about the benefits of giving Khums, not receiving it. Some centres appeared not to have prepared candidates for this.

Centres are encouraged to teach all aspects of the bullet points of the specification because candidates can be examined on any part of it.

2 (a) Outline **three** benefits of receiving Khums.

(3)

Khums can help to pay for Muslim
education Islamic education.
Khums can support those who
are poor and need help.
Khums can pay to support anyone
who is oppressed,



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The candidate answers stating three benefits in three sentences.

Total: 3 marks

Question 2 (b)

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 Shahadah is important.'

The question was answered well, with most candidates being able to give either generic reasons why reciting Shahadah is important or reasons related to specific events, as indicated in the mark scheme.

(b) Explain **two** reasons why reciting Shahadah is important.

(4)

One reason why reciting the Shahadah is important is because it's the declaration of a Muslims faith, letting yourself, Allah and the Muslim community know that you have accepted Islam and are willing to walk the path that follows. This is the very first step to becoming a Muslim.

Another reason reciting the Shahadah is important is because it could strengthen ones faith. Reminding yourself about God's nature, his angels and prophets etc will help you see what you believe in when drifting from the faith or when in doubt.



The candidate gives two developed reasons.

Reason one

- 'declaration of a Muslim's faith' (1)
- is developed by 'you have accepted Islam'(1)

Reason two

- 'strengthen ones faith' (1)
- is developed by 'God's nature' (1)

Total: 4 marks

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point 2.1 Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam: their nature, history and purpose of the Ten Obligatory Acts; the diversity of practice and importance of Ten Obligatory Acts for Shi'a Muslims today; **their basis in the Qur'an including reference to Surah 9: 71 – 73**; divergent understandings of these principles within Sunni Islam including links with the Five Pillars.

The question asked was: 'Explain two ways the Ten Obligatory Acts have their basis 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', 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.

Most candidates did not respond well to this question. Many candidates did not achieve marks on this question and very few were able to refer to a source of wisdom. Centres that have difficulty finding 'sources of wisdom' should refer to the specification and/or previous mark schemes.

(c) Explain **two** ways the Ten Obligatory Acts have their basis in the Qur'an.

to the
poor."

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

(5)

The ten obligatory acts include Zuhrus and Zakah which involve giving to charity. In the Qur'an it says Allah says to "Give alms to the poor" It is commanded to Muslims as an obligation they have to their religion. There are also many examples of prophets giving to the less fortunate ~~at~~ in the Qur'an and prophets are seen as role models on how to live your life for Allah. As well as this, Sawm is "prescribed" in the ~~Qur'an~~ Qur'an - "fasting is prescribed for you" And many examples of ~~people~~ people relying on ~~God~~ ^{Allah} for things is shown in it.



The candidate gives one developed way with reference to a source of wisdom and another developed way.

Way one

- reference to a source of wisdom, Qur'an 'alms to the poor' (1)
- is developed by 'commanded as an obligation' (1)
- further reverse developed by 'giving to charity' (1)

Way two

- 'Sawm is prescribed' (1)
- is developed by 'fasting is prescribed for you' (1)

Total: 5 marks



More than one source of wisdom can be credited.

Question 2 (d)

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 “The challenges of Hajj make it a difficult Pillar to perform.” Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

It appeared that this question was rushed or missed out by a small number of candidates. All candidates should be encouraged to consider time management when preparing for the exams and answer every question, because every mark is important.

Many candidates did not gain more than Level 2, because they did not consider the value of the arguments given in answering the question.

(d) "The challenges of Hajj make it a difficult Pillar to perform."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

Most Muslims disagree since Hajj is one of the 5 pillars and ten obligatory acts and must be attempted within a lifetime. Most Muslims complete it, even the poor, and those who haven't are likely exempt anyway, as they might be pregnant, disabled, sick or too elderly to do it. This is ~~a relatively~~ ^{quite} a convincing argument since most Muslims want to complete Hajj in order to pray with thousands of fellow Muslims, follow the wishes of Allah and be closer to him through pilgrimage - they don't feel like they are forced to do something they don't want and so the challenges e.g. like travel fees or physical exertion are things they are happy to overcome in order to complete Hajj.

However, many Muslims agree that Hajj is difficult - the most difficult - pillar to perform which is why it is only required to be completed once. Shahadah must always be followed and prayer (salah) must be performed 5 times a day as these pillars aren't as physically taxing or

challenging as Hajj. This is only a slightly convincing argument because although Hajj includes physically taxing things like walking for ^{very} long periods of time and sleeping in a tent, for a healthy human it shouldn't be impossible and Allah already allows the weaker people to not be obligated to put themselves ~~to~~ ^{at} harm.

In conclusion, while the challenges of Hajj make it the most difficult pillar to perform, it isn't impossible as shown by the millions of Muslims who partake in it yearly. The challenges just further prove Muslims' dedication to Allah and his wishes and make the experience more worth it.



The candidate gives two sides of the argument and develops logical chains of reasoning.

In the first paragraph the candidate refers to arguments against the statement. The explanations of the arguments are brief and not deconstructed.

The understanding of Islamic beliefs is good but detail is missing.

In the second paragraph the candidate explains why Hajj is challenging relative to other Pillars. They attempt appraisal of their arguments in a basic way by suggesting why this argument is not convincing.

To gain a higher mark the candidate would have needed to:

- include more depth in explanations linked to the statement
- appraise the arguments made in a more sophisticated way, by developing why some arguments have value and others may not

Total: 7 marks

Paper Summary

Candidates are offered the following advice:

- Centres must teach to the specification, and not overlook any elements. They should make sure candidates are prepared for all parts of the bullet points in preparation for the questions
- 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. This does not need to be referenced and can be paraphrased
- 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. Centres may wish to consider the differentiation of teaching to enable some candidates of different abilities to concentrate on learning the information needed, before embarking on the evaluation
- Candidates should be directed to read the bullet points in the (d) questions and understand that they guide candidates to which viewpoints they should be providing. This will ensure that candidates are meeting all the demands of the question. Centres may wish to consider identifying on the specification the different traditions/viewpoints within Islam that could be used to answer these questions
- Considering the validity of the evidence is one way to appraise arguments
- Candidates should not refer to terminology and sources of wisdom from the other religion they are studying, eg Christianity

Grade boundaries

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