



Examiners' Report

June 2023

GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 3C

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June 2023

Publications Code 1RA0_3C_2306_ER

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Introduction

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. 1.2 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 non – religious 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. (Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)

The question asked was: 'Outline three ways visions may lead to belief in Allah.'

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 ways or three examples of specific ways visions lead to belief in Allah.

1 (a) Outline **three** ways visions may lead to belief in Allah.

(3)

- They cannot be explained scientifically therefore they must be from Allah
- It proves that Allah is always watching you and is the all knowing
- It shows that Allah exists as he is the only one capable of doing such a thing.



The candidate answers giving three ways in three sentences.

Total: 3 marks

Question 1 (b)

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: 'Explain two ways revelation shows the nature of Allah.'

Candidates are asked to explain two points and develop them. Development may be extra information, extra reasoning, quotes or examples.

This question was answered well, with many candidates referring either to examples of how Allah is described in revelation, or what the fact that Allah reveals himself, shows about his nature. Both ways were credited.

The candidate gives two developed ways.

(b) Explain **two** ways revelation shows the nature of Allah.

(4)

One way ~~reve~~ revelations show the nature of Allah is the Qur'an. The Qur'an was a revelation from Allah sent ~~w~~ through Prophet Muhammad which includes everything about the dunya and him which shows he is omniscient. Another way revelation shows the nature of Allah is because it is a spiritual message that cannot ~~be passed~~ come from humans, which show the power of Allah. He is omnipotent.



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Examiner Comments

Way one

- 'everything about the dunya' (1)
- this is developed by 'shows he is omniscient' (1)

Way two

- 'cannot come from humans' (1)
- this is developed by 'shows the power of Allah' (1)

Total: 4 marks

Question 1 (c)

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

Bullet point 1.8 The different practical and philosophical solutions offered to the problem of suffering and Allah as compassionate within Islam: **Qur'anic including Surah; Surah 2: 151 – 177, theoretical and practical responses, including life as a test, prayer, and charity;** divergent understandings within Islam of their success in solving the problem.

The question asked was: 'Explain two Qur'anic responses to suffering. 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.

Most candidates did well on this question and were able to reference a source of wisdom, and so achieved full marks.

There are alternative interpretations of verses in different Qur'an interpretations.

Candidates are not expected to quote word-for-word and may paraphrase.

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

(c) Explain **two** Qur'anic responses to suffering.

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

(5)

- Qur'anic responses to suffering is that suffering allows to test a person's faith and if true faith strengthens it further, ~~so~~ ultimately proving the strength of someone's faith and how patient they are "give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere and when affected with calamity say ("To Allah we belong and to him we return")".

- ~~Suffering~~ Another Qur'anic response is that a person suffering is not to much for them as Allah does "not test a soul beyond it can bear", evidently showing the caring nature of God to not put his mankind through a situation they are unable to cope with.



Response one

- 'test a person' (1)
- is developed by 'how patient they are' (1)
- further developed by reference to a source of wisdom, Qur'an 'give glad tidings' (1)

The reference to a source of wisdom was found to be accurate, after using a search engine.

Response two

- 'not too much for them' (1)
- is developed by 'does not burden a soul' (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 good 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 had not demonstrated much understanding of religion and belief.

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

Bullet point 1.6 Cosmological argument: **the cosmological argument and its use in Islam as a philosophical argument for the existence of Allah**, including reference to kalam in the writings of Al-Ghazali, including *Kitab al-Iqtisad fil'Itiqad*; what the cosmological argument shows about the nature of Allah; divergent understandings of the strengths and challenges of the cosmological argument in Islam; **Muslim responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments against the cosmological argument as evidence for the existence of Allah.**

The question asked was: "The cosmological argument provides evidence for the existence of Allah." Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- ◆ refer to Muslim teachings
- ◆ refer to non-religious points of view
- ◆ reach a justified conclusion.

This question was answered well, in terms of knowledge, with many candidates confidently explaining the cosmological argument as well as non-religious points of view. There were many references to kalam and Ghazali's teachings, as well as scientific responses. However, not many candidates achieved beyond Level 2, due to limited, or no, appraisal.

Centres are encouraged to teach candidates the difference between design and causation, so that they do not confuse the two.

*(d) "The cosmological argument provides evidence for the existence of Allah."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

(15)

Some people may or may not agree with the ~~cosmological argument~~ statement. In this essay I will assess a few points and clarify on them and finally giving my opinion based on the points made.

For the people who may agree, such as Muslims, they may agree due to the fact that everything within the universe has a cause and so the universe itself must have a cause. Muslims believe this cause is ~~the cres~~ Allah (SWA). In the Qur'an it states "The Lord - who created the heavens and the Earth and the alternating between the night and day". Strengthening an argument for the statement, I believe this argument is extremely convincing as the theory of cause and effect (cosmological argument) can be seen ~~every~~ in everything.

On the other hand, an argument against this

statement would be that the cosmological argument may not apply to the universe.

This point argues that though everything may have a cause seem to have a cause, it may not be the case. Also the existence of Allah ~~is~~ cosmological argument does not prove ~~that it~~ can be used to ask why Allah (swa) does not have a cause. The first point of this argument is weak due to it only being based on a lack of evidence and the second point is also fairly ~~weak~~ weak seeing that Allah (swa) is transcendent and self sufficient meaning he does not require a cause.

A second argument for ~~this case~~ the statement would be that the universe, unlike Allah (swa), is not self sufficient and is still bound to terms, laws and ~~the~~ other boundaries. Allah (swa) however is shown to be omnipotent, ~~and~~ transcendent and the creator of the universe, proving his ~~power~~ might; "Praise Allah (swa), mighty and exalted is he". ~~to~~ This argument is strong as it explains why Allah (swa) does not require a cause.

In conclusion, I agree with the statement as ~~it~~ the points seem ~~logical~~ logical and also ~~except~~ the points made explain why Allah (swa) does not need a cause.

(Total for Question 1 = 27 marks)



The candidate has given two sides of the argument that are supported to form logical chains of reasoning.

In the first part, the candidate explains the philosophical argument of causation from the Muslim perspective. The arguments are explained well and use technical terminology with accuracy.

In the second half, they offer alternative views, suggesting that causation is not proven and can also raise questions about the cause of Allah.

They begin to deconstruct the religious information and issues. They attempt appraisal by suggesting these points are weak and offer a direct rebuttal.

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

- Include more depth in explanations linked to the statement
- Appraise the evidence presented to consider the validity of arguments

SPaG – The candidate is given 3 marks because:

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

Response: 7 marks

SPaG: 3 marks

Total: 10 marks



Centres are encouraged to teach candidates the difference between design and causation so they do not confuse the two.

Question 2 (a)

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: 'Outline three Muslim teachings about the roles of men and women in the family.'

The majority of candidates were able to outline different teachings on the roles of men and women and answered in sentences. A minority of candidates misunderstood the question and wrote about the status of men and women, which was not credited.

2 (a) Outline **three** Muslim teachings about the roles of men and women in the family.

(3)

One teaching is that Men are the protectors and provides for the family. Another teaching is that ~~both~~ both the father and mother has a duty to care for children in the family. Lastly, another teaching is that ^{both parents} ~~they~~ must raise any children to be a good muslim.



The candidate outlines three teachings in three sentences.

Total: 3 marks



Write a separate sentence for every new point, to avoid losing marks.

Question 2 (b)

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

Bullet point 2.4 Support for the family in the ummah: **how and why the community tries to support families**, including through worship, rites of passage, classes for parents, groups for children and counselling; divergent understandings of the importance of this support for Muslims today and how it might strengthen the ummah, with reference to Surah 3: 102 – 105.

The question asked: 'Explain two ways the ummah supports families.'

The majority of candidates seemed well-prepared for this question, by referring to the examples given in the specification.

(b) Explain **two** ways the ummah supports families.

(4)

one way the ummah supports families is through counselling in mosque provides it, which parents who are going through a rough spot they can go to Islamic counselling and will help repair their relationship. Another way the ummah supports families is through education where there is mosque, which the children can ask for help if needed and where they are taught about Allah and the Quran, which would not only help the muslim ummah grow stronger but help the family which rules to be followed, Halal and the difference of Haram.



The candidate gives two developed ways.

Way one

- 'counselling in mosque' (1)
- is developed by 'help repair' (1)

Way two

- 'education' (1)
- is developed by 'taught about Allah' (1)

Total: 4 marks

Question 2 (c)

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 was: 'Explain two Muslim responses to the different types of family within 21st-century society. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

This question was generally answered well, with many candidates able to explain different Muslim responses to different family types. However, a minority did not appear to understand the question and referred to religious/conservative families and modern/non-religious families. These responses were not credited. Examples of different family types are given in the specification.

References to where the 'source of wisdom' is from are not needed and the quote may be paraphrased.

If a reference **is** given, then the source must be accurate.

(c) Explain **two** Muslim responses to the different types of family within 21st-century society.

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

(5)

One Muslim response is that a nuclear family is best as it provides children a stable upbringing and it promotes love between family members.

Another Muslim response is that extended families are the best instead as families are highly valued in Islam. The importance of family members is shown in the Hadith 'He is not one of us... who does not acknowledge the honour of our elders'.



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

Response one

- 'nuclear family is best' (1)
- is developed by 'stable upbringing' (1)

Response two

- 'extended families are the best' (1)
- is developed by 'highly valued' (1)
- further developed by reference to a source of wisdom, Hadith (1)

The reference to a source of wisdom was found to be accurate after using a search engine.

Total: 5 marks



Give the 'source of wisdom' reference accurately, if you give it.

Question 2 (d)

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: "Marriage is still important." Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- ♦ refer to Muslim teachings
- ♦ refer to non-religious points of view
- ♦ reach a justified conclusion.

Candidates were able to explain Muslim and non-religious views on marriage; however few achieved higher than Level 2, due to the lack of appraisal of the arguments and evidence. Most candidates did not consider why there was a diversity of opinion. Writing frames helped some candidates, but not all could utilise them effectively, to appraise the arguments. Centres should refer to training materials online.

The candidate has given two sides of the argument that are supported to form logical chains of reasoning.

(d) "Marriage is still important."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

(12)

Some Muslims may agree with this statement by posing the argument that ~~the~~ the prophet Muhammad himself got married and all Muslims should strive to be like him and copy what he did. In fact, in the hadith the prophet said "Marriage is part of my sunnah" which clearly shows the importance of marriage to this day.

In addition to this, in the Quran Allah says 'we have created you in pairs'. This quote shows ~~the~~ humans are meant to marry each other as it ~~is~~ Allah's will for us to be married. This quote is also highly accurate as it is from the Holy Quran which is believed to have no errors and is the direct words of Allah who is also believed to be inerrant. Therefore,

Moreover, a Muslim may also argue that Allah created humans with a natural desire of sex. Sex is actually an act of worship to Allah and can only be done within marriage as fornication is haram in Islam and Allah has forbade it. Furthermore, a Muslim can argue that in the 21st century, more explicit photos and pornography is accessible and available so a human's desire may expand. The only way to fulfil this desire is through the halal means which is marriage. Therefore marriage is still important.

However, on the other hand, some non-Muslims may argue that not believe in the Islamic concept of sex is only permissible in marriage and argue that the whole point of sex is to find love and have a relationship with someone you love. Marriage is not needed and is irrelevant and is therefore not important.

Furthermore, humanists and atheists may argue disagree with the statement and argue that it is a person's choice if they want to enter marriage. They may not want to rush in to marriage but rather wait and see if they are compatible with each other first. Marriage may also be costly, especially in the 21st century and someone may not have the means to afford it, thus marriage is not important.

Overall, after assessing both sides I agree with the statement as marriage is part of the prophet's sunnah and he encouraged it. It is also the only way to procreate in a halal way and to also fulfil our sexual needs.



In the first half, the candidate explains the different Muslim views on why marriage is important. They have built up the arguments with logical chains of reasoning.

In the second half, they explain non-religious arguments about why some people may not want to marry. There is no evidence of appraisal.

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

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

There are no SPaG marks for this question.

Total: 6 marks

Paper Summary

Candidates are offered the following advice:

- Centres must teach to the specification, and not overlook any elements, making 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, which 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 them to which viewpoints they should be providing, to ensure that they are meeting all the demands of the question. Centres may wish to consider identifying on the specification the different traditions/viewpoints within Islam, as well as non-religious views identified, that could be used to answer these questions considering the validity of the evidence is one way to appraise arguments

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