

**A LEVEL**

Examiners' report

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

**H573**

For first teaching in 2016

**H573/04 Summer 2022 series**

# Contents

Introduction .....	3
Paper 4 series overview .....	4
Question 1* .....	5
Question 2* .....	6
Question 3* .....	7
Question 4* .....	10

## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

### Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

#### Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

## Paper 4 series overview

This paper assesses candidates' AO1 and AO2 skills for the Developments in Islamic Thought component.

The overall level of knowledge demonstrated by candidates did not appear to have differed much from previous years. It was generally good and all areas of the specification assessed in this paper had clearly been taught and studied by candidates in reasonable detail. All four questions were attempted this year. There were some examples of good responses for all questions on the paper, with a small number achieving the highest levels. There was also, however, a slightly higher proportion of candidates who did not attempt all three questions compared to previous years.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• had read widely and referred to a range of scholarly views in their responses. This added significantly to the overall quality of their responses and enabled them to demonstrate excellent AO1 skills</li> <li>• for the AO2 element, they were able to articulate a range of different views about the issues raised and used these to make a fully justified conclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• did not give clear definitions of the words being discussed and, in some cases, gave the wrong definition</li> <li>• did not focus specifically on what was required by the question, discussing the topic generally instead</li> <li>• may have answered a question they had practised, from the topic area, rather than the question on the paper</li> <li>• gave arguments that were either one-sided or did not come to a definitive conclusion.</li> </ul>

### Question 1\*

1\* 'Drunken Sufism is un-Islamic.' Discuss.

[40]

**AO1** It appeared that the knowledge of Sufism was generally good. Many candidates included technical terms such as dhikr and fana, and referred to practices such as whirling, which might lead to a 'drunken' sort of state in which a Sufi feels the barriers between themselves and their lord are removed. However, some mistook the meaning of 'drunken' Sufism, with some candidates believing that this approach **always** involves drinking alcohol. 'Un-Islamic' could also have been defined more clearly in some responses. See Exemplar 1.

The less successful responses were those that discussed Sufism generally, and did not focus on discussing specific drunken Sufi practices. In contrast, the best responses showed in-depth knowledge of drunken Sufi practices and how these may differ from other forms of Sufism.

**AO2** Most candidates were able to make balanced arguments and include some reasoning of points for and against the statement. Commonly, candidates discussed whether 'drunken' Sufi practices went beyond the Muhammadan model and therefore constituted 'un-Islamic' innovation, or whether such practices led to deeper realisation of faith and connection with God. Some of the criticisms, however, could have been more refined. For example, 'Sufis worship their leaders and this is shirk' was a criticism made by some. This could be more nuanced because the way it is written does not show understanding of the different ways Sufi leaders are perceived. The candidates achieving the top level, for evaluation, were able to identify key Islamic principles and use these to critically analyse the extent to which drunken Sufism can be considered un-Islamic.

#### Exemplar 1

		<del>It is</del> Some orthodox Muslims would
		suggest that Sufism is un-Islamic since it
		appears to not sufficiently respect Muslim
		teachings and Sharia law. The influential

The extract in Exemplar 1 shows an example of a candidate who has offered a clear definition for the term un-Islamic. This could then be referred back to when building up their arguments.

## Question 2\*

2\* For Muslims, to what extent is the teleological argument more persuasive than the cosmological argument? [40]

**AO1** In the best responses knowledge of the two arguments was generally good and understanding of the views of scholars about these arguments was widely referred to, showing awareness of some of the finer points of justification made for both the teleological and the cosmological argument. While most candidates knew the basics of each argument, a more detailed knowledge would have enhanced their responses. Similarly, candidates should be encouraged to develop a broader knowledge of scholarly opinion, as in many responses the only Islamic scholar mentioned was al-Ghazali. A small minority of candidates unfortunately made no reference to Islamic scholars at all.

The best responses were able to explain how both arguments related to Islamic beliefs, making reference to Qur'anic quotes and/or other relevant sources to help illustrate. The less successful responses showed little knowledge of any aspects of the arguments that might support or challenge Muslim beliefs specifically. As a consequence, because they were addressing the topic generally, they were unable to achieve higher than a Level 2. A few candidates tried to include all of the content covered in the 'God is One' topic resulting in either 'partially relevant material' or 'little relevant material', again limiting the marks they could achieve.

**AO2** The use of developed and logical argument, built up with connecting sentences and paragraphs, was advanced in some responses, which showed that candidates had thought critically and demonstrated coherence in their responses. Some candidates focused their response on the question of whether God exists, rather than justifications. The importance of reading the statement carefully and addressing it should be emphasised, in order to avoid this. Better responses clearly linked the strength and weaknesses of both arguments to Islamic beliefs, in order to illustrate why they may be convincing to Muslims specifically – as the question demands.

### Assessment for learning

When studying the teleological and cosmological arguments there are a number of things candidates need to be able to do, which could inform teaching:

- as well as understanding the nature of these two arguments they also need to be able to refer to Islamic versions – even if they are referencing thinkers such as Aquinas and Paley
- be able to identify and discuss scriptural (Qur'anic) support for the arguments. Surah 3 verse 190 for the cosmological argument and surah 23 verses 12-13 for the teleological argument
- explain some Muslim beliefs that may either be supported by or challenged by the teleological and cosmological arguments, thus making that argument more or less persuasive. For example, in the Qur'an Muslims are told by Allah to observe the signs demonstrating his power and design – this is precisely what the teleological argument does, making it a convincing argument for Muslims.

### Question 3\*

3\* 'The most important commandment for ensuring justice and liberation, is to perform both the greater and lesser Jihad.' Discuss. [40]

**AO1** Understanding of greater and lesser jihad and the various definitions made by scholars of Islam, and conditions associated with, were reasonably well understood by the majority of candidates. Although a small number mixed up the two concepts, limiting the number of marks they could achieve. Candidates who performed the best explored, in some detail, what 'justice and liberation' means to Muslims. They gave explicit examples of how aspects of lesser and greater jihad led to justice and/or liberation or not – as can be seen in Exemplar 2.

**AO2** Many candidates differentiated between greater and lesser jihad and argued one was more relevant than the other for justice and liberation. Some challenged the statement and argued neither was the most important, showing confidence and ability in making a critical analysis of the issue. Many candidates did not pick up on the words 'most important' in the statement and made few comparative references, these were the less successful responses which would not have achieved higher than Level 3. Including some comparative comments would help improve the quality of arguments made here, enabling the responses to move into the higher levels for evaluation.

## Exemplar 2

3.	<p>This essay argues that although Muslims have a duty to perform lesser jihad and to "enjoin good and forbid wrong", the most important commandment for ensuring justice and liberation is the performance of greater jihad.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Scholars</p> <p>Many Muslims and Muslim<del>s</del> disagree over which of the commandments for ensuring justice and liberation is the most important. In this essay I will assess the <sup>interpretations</sup> views of Islamic extremists, Abdul Hakim Murad, <del>Abd</del> and Ali Shariati in order to show that although all of the commandments are important, Muslim's main focus should be on 'greater jihad', the inner struggle that takes place within a Muslim through following the <sup>and teaching</sup> example of Muhammad and Allah in order to rise from the lowest state of being (nafs- almutmainah) to the highest state of being (nafs- alammurah).</p>
	<p>Islamic Extremists <del>is</del> (so called 'salafis') <del>appear</del> wrongfully interpret Islamic teachings on the <sup>struggle for</sup> justice and liberation. These groups of Muslims <del>promote</del> suggest that <del>the</del> <sup>the</sup> most important commandment for ensuring justice and liberation is to <del>is</del> replicate the times Muhammad lived in through promoting violence. However, these 'Salafis' appear to lack any foundational basis to make these claims</p>



	<p>as they seem to <del>not</del> fail to consider that the examples of violence in the Quran such as the Battle of the Trench &amp; <del>are</del> are mostly explained by the context of the time. <del>§3</del> They are wrong to suggest that Islam sends a message of anything other than peace and appear to <del>not</del> <sup>not</sup> apply the key teachings of 'lesser jihad' which are of violence as a last resort <del>and</del> in times of desperate need and <del>to</del> <del>only</del> only in forms of a proportionate response. We can see this since they clearly go against the teachings within 'lesser jihad' that civilian lives may not be harmed. The Qur'an says that 'taking an innocent life is akin to taking all of humanity' emphasising that these 'Salafis' clearly <del>do</del> do not <u>properly</u> conform to the key Islamic teachings on violence. Furthermore, 'Salafis' seem to self-contradict themselves by using modern weapons <sup>such as modern bombs</sup> whilst promoting the idea that we should live <del>to</del> <del>take</del> in <sup>the</sup> way that Muhammad and early Muslims did suggesting <sup>that their views on</sup> <del>that they</del> <del>are</del> <del>the</del> <del>struggle</del> ensuring justice and liberation have intrinsic flaws.</p>
--	---

In Exemplar 2 this candidate achieved a top Level 5 for both AO1 and AO2. It is clear from the introductory paragraph that they fully appreciate what the question is asking and they focus on the precise question throughout the response. They offer an explicit example of how the 'Salafi' interpretation of the commandment of lesser jihad actually leads to the opposite of justice and liberation. It is this example, alongside others focusing on the application of greater jihad, that allowed the candidate to make clear and convincing arguments, leading to a fully justified conclusion. Not many candidates, however, went far into this and some did not directly address it at all, instead writing about the importance of greater and lesser jihad. Some candidates offered alternative commandments that might be considered more important for ensuring justice and liberation, showing a greater breadth of knowledge. For example, some referred to the Five Pillars and the idea of avoiding forbidden (haram) acts. However, a few candidates placed too much emphasis on this, moving away from the main focus of the question.

## Question 4\*

4\* Critically assess the view that different cultural norms have had no influence on the laws of modesty (awra). [40]

**AO1** This question was specifically about the laws of modesty but some candidates focused broadly on the issue of equality, and therefore only the parts of their responses directly relating to modesty were relevant. Focusing on the subject matter specifically is therefore a point to improve on, for some. Many candidates discussed a range of modesty laws in different Islamic/Muslim countries today, and how they had interpreted the Qur'an and Sunnah of Muhammad in different ways as a way of illustrating the influence of cultural norms. This awareness of the complexity of the issue was a strength in some responses. Many candidates also referred to the attitudes of non-Muslim countries, such as the UK and France, to the wearing of the hijab, this to demonstrate how these views may influence the way Muslim women feel about the laws of modesty. The weakest area, for some, appeared to be finding examples to illustrate how cultural norms have not affected the laws of modesty, so this may be an area for some to improve on.

**AO2** The influence of the culture of Madinah and in Islamic law as a source used by some scholars ('Urf), was explained by some candidates to show how cultural norms might be influential, and this was not simply a case of Islamic and un-Islamic dress codes. There were a few examples of really insightful critical analysis in this area. However, some did not recognise the significance of 'no' in the statement: 'no influence'. These responses basically argued that there was some influence but could have made sharper arguments in disagreement with the statement (or agreement) from the point of view being taken. Also, while many candidates covered a few arguments in-depth, a greater range was needed by many, to illustrate greater breadth of points.

---

# Supporting you

---

## Post-results services

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

## Keep up-to-date

We send a weekly roundup to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

## OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses on the relevant subject page on our [website](#) or visit [OCR professional development](#).

## Signed up for ExamBuilder?

**ExamBuilder** is the question builder platform for a range of our GCSE, A Level, Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals qualifications. [Find out more](#).

ExamBuilder is **free for all OCR centres** with an Interchange account and gives you unlimited users per centre. We need an [Interchange](#) username to validate the identity of your centre's first user account for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

## Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals.

It allows you to:

- review and run analysis reports on exam performance
- analyse results at question and/or topic level
- compare your centre with OCR national averages
- identify trends across the centre
- facilitate effective planning and delivery of courses
- identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle
- help pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of students and teaching departments.

[Find out more](#).

## Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on  
**01223 553998**

Alternatively, you can email us on  
**support@ocr.org.uk**

For more information visit

 **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**

 **ocr.org.uk**

 **/ocrexams**

 **/ocrexams**

 **/company/ocr**

 **/ocrexams**

## We really value your feedback

Click to send us an autogenerated email about this resource. Add comments if you want to. Let us know how we can improve this resource or what else you need. Your email address will not be used or shared for any marketing purposes.



**I like this**



**I dislike this**

Please note – web links are correct at date of publication but other websites may change over time. If you have any problems with a link you may want to navigate to that organisation's website for a direct search.



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored. © OCR 2022 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

OCR operates academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers including A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals.

OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up to date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

You can copy and distribute this resource freely if you keep the OCR logo and this small print intact and you acknowledge OCR as the originator of the resource.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.