



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**Religious Studies 4050**

**Unit 9: Islam: Ethics**

**405009**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **Unit 9: Islam: Ethics**

### **General Comments**

There were many good scripts indicating that students had a thorough understanding of the specification. Many schools and colleges had prepared their students well and answers showed high levels of understanding and evaluative skills.

Some less able pupils appeared not to know some of the keywords.

The most common mistake was to misunderstand the question, and students need to be prepared to read the question carefully and recognise the command words in the question. The better answers responded directly to the question asked. 4-mark questions were sometimes not answered in enough detail to achieve full marks, and too often they read as a list. To obtain full marks at least one point needs to be developed. Students may benefit from studying the Levels of Response grids in the mark schemes so that they are familiar with what is required to achieve the higher levels.

### **Part A**

#### **Question A1: Conflict and Suffering**

Most students answered all parts of this question well.

In A1(a), most students understood what is meant by disarmament and gave an example of either unilateral or multilateral disarmament.

In A1(b), most students could answer why Muslims supported disarmament, referring to the idea that Islam is a religion of peace.

In A1(c), students often showed a clear understanding of the challenges of pacifism. Higher scoring answers argued that pacifism was good but not always possible. There was some confusion over the religion of Mahatma Gandhi.

In A1(d), in relation to the use of nuclear weapons, there were many one sided responses, indicating students found it difficult to give a second viewpoint.

#### **Question A2: Life and Death**

This question was answered reasonably well by most students.

In A2(a), many answers showed good knowledge of Islamic teaching regarding the sanctity of life. However, there was significant number of students that failed to respond to the command word 'what' and answered 'why' instead. Several students gave arguments for and against abortion instead of answering the question asked.

In A2(b), there was some good answers showing good understanding of contraception with answers being supported appropriately with Islamic teaching.

Many students found A2(c) a difficult question to answer. They did not understand the term surrogacy and there were a significant number of non-attempts. Those who attempted answer to often did not develop a point in order to achieve full marks. Students need to be aware that any term which appears in the specification may be used on the paper.

### **Question A3: Crime and Punishment**

A3(a) was answered well by the majority of students, who showed excellent knowledge of the causes of the crime.

A3(b) was answered well with views supported by Islamic teaching. Some less able students appeared not to understand the key term corporal punishment, confusing it with capital punishment.

In A3(c), there were some good answers clearly showing how reformation could have a positive effect both on the criminal and society. Many argued that other aims of punishment, particularly deterrent, were more important. Some less able students had limited understanding of what reformation meant and simply listed the aims of punishment rather than evaluating which was the most important. There was a number of students who made general comments and did not refer to Islam in their answer.

### **Question 4A: Wealth and Poverty**

This question was answered very well by most students.

Answers to A4(a) and (b) showed excellent understanding of emergency and long term aid with most students responding with a definition and an example of each. A small number of students confused the terms emergency and long term aid.

In A4(c) the majority of students gave well argued answers showing high evaluation skills. Most argued Muslims had a duty to help the poor. Most were able to support their answers with teaching from the Qur'an and Hadith. Weaker answers failed to give a second viewpoint.

## **Part B**

### **Question B5: The Environment**

Students were able to give good answers to all parts of this question.

Most students responded well to B5(a), showing a good understanding of why Muslims value the created world. Most developed the ideas of the world being the perfect creation of Allah and of humans being stewards.

There were some good responses to B5(b), in which students evaluated two points of view and supported this with Islamic teaching. Students made very good use of teaching from the Hadith in their responses.

In B5(c) many students showed a good understanding of conservation and were able to give examples. Once again students need to answer the question asked, which was 'how' not 'why'. Weaker answers consisted of a list rather than any development of points and therefore were unable to achieve the higher levels.

In B5(d) the majority of students gave well argued responses and were able to score high marks. Points made were supported by Islamic teaching.

### **Question B6: Relationships and Lifestyle**

This question was answered reasonably well by most students. However a significant number of students failed to remain focused on the questions that were asked.

In B6(a) there were some excellent answers which concentrated on explaining the role of the mother and father. Some students lost focus and answered on the importance of the family rather than the role of parents. Students need to respond to the question that is asked rather than write down all they know about a topic.

B6(b) answers were generally well done with students showing good understanding of the issues surrounding faith schools.

For both B6(c) and (d) there were some well developed answers relating to the issue as to whether Muslims should work anywhere that alcohol was sold. Once again too many students answered on Islamic attitudes towards drugs and alcohol rather than on what the question was actually asking. Some of the best answers debated the issues that Muslims should close all paths to haram activity and should not encourage others to break God's law or introduce them to the possibility of doing so. Others included reference to some products which contained alcohol but were used for good, that people might have no choice if they wanted to work, and that each person has individual responsibility and people at work cannot be held responsible for the decisions of others.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [AQA results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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