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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies Short Course (3RA0)

Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Study of Islam

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## Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies  
Religious Studies A (Short Course)  
Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Study of Islam

The paper contributes to 50% of the overall qualification. The assessment consists of two questions, 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.

### 3RA0\_03\_Q01a

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:  
'Outline **three** beliefs about prophets.'

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:

An example:

Outline 3 characteristics of God:

- **God is creator** (1 mark)
- **God is creator**, judge and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)
- **God is creator**, busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Busy, distant and **God is creator**, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)
- Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)
- Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

### 3RA0\_03\_Q01b

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings - bullet point 1.8 'Akhirah: Muslim teachings about life after death; the nature of judgment, paradise and hell; how they are shown in the Qur'an'.

The question asked was:  
'Explain **two** reasons why the belief in paradise is important to Muslims.'

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.

### **3RA0\_03\_Q01c**

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings - bullet point 1.5. 'Muslim holy books (kutub): the nature, history, significance and purpose of Muslim holy books'.

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** Islamic teachings on Holy Books.'

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.

#### Generic advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom:

- The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If examiners are unsure they will use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and 'Qur'an' or 'Islamic teaching'.
- If the candidate states that it is in Qur'an 2:18 and then states another verse from Qur'an – then this can be awarded. We are not holding candidate to 'verses' but it must be the correct source.
- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (Qur'an 2:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Qur'an and it was hadith or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

### **3RA0\_03\_Q01d**

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.

The question is **'Evaluate'** this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates do excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting student's progression to the higher levels.

'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).

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings - Bullet point 1.8 'Aakhirah: Muslim teachings about life after death; the nature of judgment'.

The question asked was:

"The judgement of Allah will be based on a person's beliefs rather than their actions."

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.

Please note that, neither in the bullet point, nor on the question are candidates required to give a non-religious response. Candidates must respond to the question asked.

### **3RA0\_03\_Q02a**

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices bullet point 2.3. 'how salah is performed, including ablution, times, directions, movements and recitations, in the home and mosque and Jummah prayer'.

The question asked was:

'Outline **three** rules for Salah.'

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

### **3RA0\_03\_Q02b**

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices - bullet point 2.8 'The nature, origins, activities, meaning and significance of the celebration/commemoration of ... Id-ul-Ghadeer'.

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why Id-ul-Ghadeer is important for Shi'a Muslims.'

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.

### **3RA0\_03\_Q02c**

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices - bullet point 2.7 'the importance of jihad in the life of Muslims'.

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why jihad is important for Muslims.'

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.

### **3RA0\_03\_Q02d**

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.

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting student's progression to the higher levels.

'D' items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices - Bullet points 2.2-2.6

The question asked was:

“All the Five Pillars must be followed to be a good Muslim.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Please note that, neither in the bullet point, nor on the question are candidates required to give a non-religious response. Candidates must respond to the question asked.

## **Summary**

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Avoid attaching extra sheets to your examination paper. If possible continue writing on the blank spaces within the scannable pages.
- For Section One candidates need to know the clear difference between the six Beliefs and the five roots.
- For Section Two candidates need to know the clear difference between the Five Pillars and the Ten Obligatory Acts.
- When answering the (a) items write three full sentences.
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in (c) items must be relevant to the question and support the reason given. Exact verse numbers are not required but the source/person must be correctly referenced.
- The (d) items asks for evaluation, after considering the evidence. The higher grades are achieved if the evidence/reasons (knowledge and understanding) given is appraised for its value as part of deciding the evaluation. This does not necessarily have to be in the conclusion.
- On (d) items the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that can be awarded in the answer.
- Candidates should read the questions carefully, answer the question asked fully.