



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2022**

**GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 3C**

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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. 1.4 Muslim attitudes towards religious experiences and their use as philosophical arguments for the existence of Allah:** the nature of a religious experience; Surah 2: 118; divergent understandings of the nature and importance of religious experiences in Islam, with reference to Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi Islam; Muslim responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments that religious experiences do not provide proof that Allah exists (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: 'Outline **three** ways religious experiences show Allah exists.'

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 religious experiences.

1 (a) Outline **three** ways religious experiences show Allah exists.

(3)

religious experiences bring a muslim closer to God, ~~the~~ muslims believe that it is Allah who is trying to contact them, thus leading to the belief in Allah and it shows that there is a higher being. Religious experiences such as ~~the~~ miracles, that cannot be natural but only supernatural, shows there is a higher being.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate answers giving two ways in sentences (2).

The candidate has developed the first argument but cannot be credited for this.

Total: 2 Marks



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Write three sentences with three separate/different points

## Question 1 (b)

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

**Bullet point 1.5 Design argument: the design argument and its use in Islam as a philosophical argument for the existence of Allah and what it shows about the nature of Allah:** divergent understandings of the nature and importance of the design argument for the existence of Allah in Islam, including reference to Surah 2: 164; Muslim responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments against the design argument as evidence for the existence of Allah. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked: 'Explain **two** ways the design argument 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 .

Many candidates seemed ill-prepared for this question and concentrated on describing the Six Beliefs, rather than the way they are expressed.

Centres should be familiar with, and prepare candidates for, all parts of the specification. Centres are advised to refer to the specification, Specimen Assessment Materials (SAMS) and online support given by the senior examination team. Centres should not rely completely on text books or support from social media.

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

(4)

We believe that Allah is the designer, the fashioner. The world as we see it today is full of beauty and complexity. Earth's existence didn't miraculously happen by chance or the 'Big Bang'. All of mankind and animalkind were created by the mercy of Allah. We are all fortunate as humans to be the most honorable creation than his worshipping angels, who are all in submission day and night.

Everything exists because of Allah's presence and authority. Without him, there would have been no such thing as life. He is the First and last. Al - Awwal and Al - Akhir.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate gives two developed ways:

- Way one 'the fashioner' (1) this is developed by 'beauty and complexity' (1)
- Way two 'didn't miraculously happen' (1) this is developed by 'created by the mercy of Allah' (1)

Total: 4 Marks

## Question 1 (c)

### 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: 'Explain **two** examples of visions 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 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 were able to describe examples of visions but not many were able to reference a source of wisdom and so did not achieve 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.



Yusuf A.S

(c) Explain **two** examples of visions in the Qur'an.

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

(5)

One example is from the time of Prophet Yusuf (A.S). The lord of that land had a vision of which was a message from Allah and the prophet revealed it to him. It says in the Quran "I saw 7 bulls be eaten by 2 strong ones, and saw 7 cows slaughtered by 2 strong ones, I saw ~~en~~ crops dry out and dry lands," Surah 12:43.

The second one is when Prophet Ibrahim has a vision in which Allah orders him to sacrifice his son to Allah to see his dedication towards him. The prophet accepts Allah's message and right when he is about to sacrifice him, his son is replaced by a lamb. (Surah Ibrahim)



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

- Example one 'a message from Allah' (1) is developed by ' prophet revealed it' (1) further developed by reference to a source of wisdom, Qur'an 'I saw 7 bulls' (1)

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

- Example two 'sacrifice his son' (1) is developed by 'dedication towards him' (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 had not demonstrated any understanding of religion and belief.

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

**Bullet point 1.7** Issues raised by existence of suffering and Allah as compassionate, including Surah 1: the problems the existence of suffering may raise for Muslims about the nature of Allah; **how the problem and its basis as a philosophical argument may lead some people to reject belief in Allah or cause believers to question their belief.** (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: "The existence of suffering leads to doubts about Allah's existence."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- refer to relevant philosophical arguments
- reach a justified conclusion.

This question was answered well, with many candidates confidently explaining philosophical arguments and also Muslim responses. There were many references to suffering being a test and the importance of faith in Allah.

\*(d) "The existence of suffering leads to doubts about Allah's existence."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- refer to relevant philosophical arguments
- reach a justified conclusion.

(15)

Some may agree with this statement, as if God is compassionate and benevolent, he would prevent people from suffering and going through hardships. A God who willingly lets people suffer and deemed compassionate is contrasting and leads to doubts in the affirmity of Allah's existence and beliefs about Allah.

Moreover, the existence of suffering may lead to doubts over God's existence as if God is all compassionate and knowledgable, and if God actually existed, why would he create a world with natural disasters and hazards like earthquakes and volcanoes, or allow wars and famine as innocent creation suffer unfairly. This links into the belief of the inconsistent triad which theorizes there is always a loophole or gap or region where suffering could be stopped but wasn't reaffirming the statement casting doubt towards God's existence.

Also, if God is all knowledgable and all powerful and God exists he would know everyone's future

and fate so surely would prevent suffering of people, which also shadows doubt towards God's existence.

However, most Muslims know that suffering is a part of life, and how you deal with suffering shows your character and strengthens you <sup>and they know</sup>. We are all going to be judged on the Day of Reckoning and given either reward or punishment which motivates Muslims to stay steadfast and on the right path. Moreover, life is a test and suffering is a part of that test and Allah never 'burdens a soul more than it can bear' proving God's existence simultaneously within suffering.

Also, God has given humans free will out of compassion as he doesn't want mindless robots rather devoted worshippers and unfortunately humans cause suffering by their free will so not technically his fault.

Lastly Allah bestowing mercy and alleviating suffering shows his omnipotence and his care for all his servants allowing Muslims to understand God's reasoning and plan and know everything happens for a reason.

In conclusion suffering doesn't cast doubt on Allah's existence as everything happens for a reason and suffering is a test and inevitable part of life to make you a better person.

(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 arguments. The arguments are explained well and use technical terminology with accuracy.
- In the second half, they offer an alternative view, suggesting that suffering has an important role in life as a test and character building. They have begun to deconstruct the religious information and issues.

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

- Appraise the evidence presented to consider the validity of arguments

SPaG – The candidate was awarded 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.

Level 2

Response: 6 Marks

SPaG: 3 Marks

Total: 9 Marks

## Question 2 (a)

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

**Bullet point. 2.8 Muslim teachings about gender prejudice and discrimination:** Muslim attitudes to gender prejudice and discrimination, including Surah 33: 35; examples of gender equality in action in Islam. (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: 'Outline **three** Muslim teachings about gender prejudice and discrimination.'

Candidates were able to outline a range of different teachings on gender prejudice and discrimination and usually answered in sentences.

Some candidates misunderstood the question and wrote about same-sex relationships for which they were not credited.

2 (a) Outline **three** Muslim teachings about gender prejudice and discrimination.

(3)

Men and women have different roles and responsibilities. Both

In Islam they are both equal.

On day of judgement they will all be judged equally.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate outlines three teachings in three sentences.

Total: 3 Marks



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

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

The question asked: 'Explain **two** Muslim teachings about marriage.'

The majority of candidates seemed well-prepared for this question, with many referring to sources of wisdom to develop their answers.

(b) Explain **two** Muslim teachings about marriage.

(4)

Marriage is the only halal way to consummate sex, and ~~there~~ there is reward for having sex with your spouse.

Marriage is a way to strengthen the ummah by having kids and bringing them up according to Islamic teachings.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate gives two developed teachings.

- Teaching one 'only halal way' (1) is developed by 'reward' (1)
- Teaching two 'strengthen the Ummah' (1) is developed by 'Islamic teachings' (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 2.6 Muslim teaching about divorce: divergent Muslim beliefs**, teachings and attitudes towards divorce and remarriage, including Surah 2: 226 – 241 and the different rules for performing a divorce in Shi'a and Sunni Islam; different non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to divorce and remarriage, including the application of ethical theories, such as situation ethics, and Muslim responses to them (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: 'Explain **two** different Muslim teachings about divorce. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

This question was generally answered well, with most candidates able to explain different Muslim approaches to divorce, and with some candidates focussing on the difference between Sunni and Shia approaches.

The majority of candidates did not refer to a source of wisdom.

References to sources of wisdom are not needed and the quote can be paraphrased.

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

(c) Explain **two** different Muslim teachings about divorce.

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

(5)

Divorce is allowed in Islam, if it is completely necessary, as it is also frowned upon. It is narrated the the prophet Muhammad said: 'Divorce is the most despicable legal act in the eyes of Allah'. Therefore divorce is ~~not~~ frowned upon.

A man can give divorce three times to his wife and after she must wait a period of three months thereafter she is free to remarry.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

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

- Teaching one 'allowed' (1) is developed by 'frowned upon' (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.

- Teaching two 'divorce three times' (1) is developed by 'period of three months' (1)

Total: 5 Marks

The candidate is awarded 5 marks.

(c) Explain **two** different Muslim teachings about divorce.

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

(5)

Divorce is an act which is allowed according to the ~~is~~ Shariah Law. It can happen in a couple are ~~was~~ not getting along very well. ~~The~~ The prophet Muhammad also allowed divorce to happen but he said Divorce is the worst Halal (allowed) act.

~~The~~ Also divorce is something which is disliked by Allah as it breaks the bonds between individuals and it breaks families apart. Islam teaches to create a strong family so ~~the~~ that the society become stronger.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

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

Teaching one 'allowed according to shariah' (1) is developed by 'not getting along' (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

Teaching two 'disliked' (1) is developed by 'breaks the bonds' (1)



References to sources of wisdom are not needed and the quote can be paraphrased. If a reference is given then the source must be accurate.

## Question 2 (d)

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

**Bullet point 2.5 Muslim teaching on contraception:** divergent Muslim teachings and attitudes about contraception and family planning including reference to Sahih Al-Bukhari 34: 432, and 62: 136; **different non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to family planning and the application of ethical theories, such as situation ethics, and Muslim responses to them.** (Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)

The question asked was: "Contraception should not be used."

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 contraception and family planning; however very few achieved higher than Level 2, due to the lack of appraisal of the arguments and evidence.

Most candidates did not consider why Muslims did not think the same and could not explain the diversity of opinions. Writing frames helped some candidates, but not all could utilise them effectively, to appraise the arguments.

Centres should refer to training materials online.

(d) "Contraception should not be used."

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)

Most Muslims would agree with the statement "Contraception should not be used" as some ways of contraception such as the pill, kills the baby which is a very big sin which means by doing so you are displeasing Allah. In the Qur'an it exclaims "do not kill your children in fear of poverty. We shall provide for them and you". This quote from the Qur'an states that even if you are in poverty children should not be killed as you are stopping Allah's plan and killing his creation and even if you are in poverty, Allah is by your side and will help you along the way. However, some Muslims may disagree with this statement as it teaches in the Qur'an that if ~~pregnancy~~ pregnancy could possibly end up too with the wife's death taking place then it is completely fine to use ~~contraception~~ contraception. It also says in the Qur'an "no one should be burdened with more than they can bear" which shows that if a family really can't take care of another child contraception is acceptable.

Atheists believe that contraception in every way is completely acceptable as they do not believe in Allah and do not believe that killing a child is a sin as they might not be ready for a child or just don't want one.

In my

In conclusion, I believe that a condom is acceptable to use as contraception but killing the child is not as it is a sin.

However, if the birth of a child can cause the mother's death

then I believe ~~other~~ all types of contraception is acceptable. Overall,

condom contraception is and is not acceptable on certain situations.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

- In the first half, the candidate explains the different Muslim views on contraception and family planning. They have built up the arguments with logical chains of reasoning.
- In the second half they have briefly explained non-religious arguments but not given much detail.

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

Level 2

Total: 6 Marks



## Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this year's examination, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Centres must teach to the specification, making sure candidates are prepared for all parts of the bullet points in preparation for the questions
- When answering (a) questions candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no expectation to develop: they will not receive credit
- The 'explain' questions require two developed points. However, candidates should also be prepared to 'describe' where indicated on the specification
- Candidates should be directed to the specification and other published resources to learn key terms and sources of wisdom
- The (d) items need an understanding of religion and belief, as well as the ability to evaluate the arguments, in order to reach a conclusion. 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 . The diversity within the religion is one of the ways to appraise the arguments. Why do they not all agree?

## **Grade boundaries**

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<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

