



GCSE
Religious Studies A

8062/15 Paper 1 Islam

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Students performed well across the paper, and it was encouraging to see the use of technical terms and use of scripture being used more appropriately. Some students struggled with answering the question on Imamate and it is important that centres teach the entirety of the specification to give students the best possible chance of scoring marks across all questions. Equally, students must be taught scripture for each of the points contained within the specification. It was evident that this was an area of weakness for many students who were not able to accurately cite a correct source of authority whilst answering both five-mark questions.

The evaluation questions were generally well answered, and it is pleasing to see less formulaic answers. Centres are reminded that influence questions require students to specifically mention the influence. Students who simply talk about the belief are capped at 2 marks. Overall, students seemed well prepared and were able to complete the paper in the allocated time.

1.1

This question asked students to identify a belief which was not one of the six articles of faith in Sunni Islam. It was generally well answered and identified by most students.

1.2

It is pleasing to note that over 85% of students achieved full marks on this 2-mark response question. It was well answered with the most common responses including the beliefs that the Qur'an is the word of God and that it was revealed to the prophet Muhammed.

1.3

There was real variation in the responses seen to this question asking for two ways in which the belief in the Imamate influences Shi'a Muslims. Many students did not understand the concept of Imamate and were not able to unpack the influence that this belief had. Many students wrote about the belief in the Imamate and not specifically about the influence that it had. These responses were capped at 2 marks. Centres are reminded to teach the entirety of the specification including key beliefs in both Sunni and Shi'a Islam.

1.4

There appeared to be a variety of responses to this question concerning beliefs about the angel Jibril. Some students who had studied the roles of angels were able to complete this with ease. However, many students were unable to refer directly to Muslim beliefs about Jibril. This uncertainty was mirrored with the relevant application of sacred scriptures and many students were capped at 4 marks where there was either no source of authority supporting the belief, or the source was not identified. Centres are reminded that students must specifically identify the source of authority that they are referring to. Simply quoting a verse from the Qur'an or Hadith is not sufficient; students must say which source the quote is from.

1.5

The question asked for an evaluation of the statement: 'For Muslims, the best way of describing God is to say that he is merciful.' A number of responses lacked an understanding of the term mercy. Some students had to refer to other attributes to explain mercy, using aspects such as omnibenevolent / just. This led to a confused approach to the question. Students were better at explaining the other qualities of Allah than mercy. The use of specialist terms and the nature of God appears to have been well taught and this was evident with the excellent use of key terms. Students are clearly being taught to order their writing to enable clarity; SPaG marks reflected this with the vast majority of students achieving Level 2 or 3 for SPaG.

2.1

The question asked students to identify the word for Muslim pilgrimage. Nearly 83% got this correct showing students good understanding of this key term.

2.2

Responses to the question asking for two religious actions Muslims perform during Salah were very good. Most common answers referred to sujood, rakah, reciting the Qur'an and prayer. Some students referred to the actions that are required before Salah and these were capped at 1 mark as it was not the focus of the question.

2.3

This was a well answered question, relating to contrasting ways in which Muslims celebrate Id-ul-Fitr, and most common answers linked to attending the mosque and sharing food with the family. As in previous years some students confused Id-ul-Fitr with Id-ul-Adha and lost marks as a result.

2.4

This question asking for an explanation of why the festival of Ashura is important for Muslims caused many students problems and there were a large number who did not attempt the question. Some were able to refer to the importance of Ashura for Shi'a Muslims but not say why it was important for Sunni Muslims. There were very few students who were able to provide an accurate source of authority, and this led to answers being capped at 4 marks. Ashura is one of the three festivals listed in the specification.

2.5

The question required evaluation of a statement: 'For Muslims, Sawm (fasting) is the most important religious activity during the month of Ramadan'. This was a very well answered question and allowed students to draw upon their broader understanding of the different rituals performed during Ramadan. The question focussed on Sawm, and whilst the other pillars are performed during Ramadan, many

students interpreted this incorrectly and wrote about Hajj which was not creditworthy. It is important that students read the questions carefully and not rely on prepared responses on the Five Pillars.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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