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**GCSE**

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES B**

8063/2X Paper 2 Section A: Perspectives on faith (Islam)  
Report on the Examination

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## General Comments

Despite all the interruptions to their education caused by the pandemic, students had been prepared for many of the topics in the examination although there were examples of unattempted questions in many scripts. Students displayed sound knowledge and understanding of a range of Muslim belief and practice. Evaluative responses generally attempted to develop arguments on more than one side of the debate.

Marks were lost when students did not read the question with sufficient care, e.g. in 01.3, or through failure to refer explicitly to a sacred text or source of authority in 01.4 and 02.4. There was also a lack of understanding of certain terms on the part of some students, notably the Six Articles of Faith and the Imamate.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar were for the most part reasonable, most students gaining two or three marks, but handwriting continues to be a problem.

## Question 1 Islam: Beliefs

01.1 was answered correctly by over 60% of students: the Gospel. Those who answered incorrectly selected either B the Psalms or D the Torah.

01.2 tested knowledge of the Six Articles of Faith in Sunni Islam. Most students gave two articles, but a significant number did not seem to know what the question referred to. Instead they gave two of the Five Pillars.

01.3 was well answered by many students. They named correctly the main religious tradition of Great Britain and were then able to give developed explanations of two ways in which beliefs about God as Creator are similar in Islam and Christianity. Some, however, forgot the instruction to name the main religious tradition, and so even though some of the answers gave detail on two ways, these were capped at two marks. Many referred to belief in one God as a similar way, but failed to link this to belief in God as Creator. A significant number stated that God's creation of humans was a belief common to both religious traditions but the development that humans were created in the image of God could not be credited. Centres might wish to explain to their students why Islam does not accept this belief. The best way of answering this question was to treat both religious traditions together, e.g. 'Christians and Muslims believe that...' Those who wrote one paragraph on Muslim belief and one on Christian belief often repeated the same point and so could at most gain two marks for giving one similar way.

01.4 was one of the best answered questions on the paper. Almost all students were able to give developed answers on the importance of Ibrahim, though a few confused him with Muhammad. Most responses referred to the rebuilding of the Ka'aba and to Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son in response to God's command. Most students, however, failed to gain the fifth mark as they made no attribution to a sacred text or source of authority. The 22% of students who gained that mark often indicated that in the Qur'an, Muslims read about Ibrahim's obedience to or trust in God.

01.5 proved to be the most challenging question on the paper. There were some excellent responses from those students who understood the concept of the Imamate. Their arguments on both sides of the debate were effectively supported with reference to the Qur'an and the Shi'a version of the Shahadah. A number of students argued that it was what distinguished Shi'a from Sunni Islam, and so must be very important. 12% of students, however, did not attempt it, and of those who did, many did not understand the term 'the Imamate'. Some confused it with 'immanent'

and a few thought it was a person. There was still, however, the possibility of reaching the top of Level 2 for giving reasoned consideration of the other side of the argument. Many students did in fact offer very persuasive arguments for thinking that belief in tawhid is the most important of the Five Roots, often supporting their answers with quotations from the Qur'an. Others argued for prophethood, justice or resurrection as more important beliefs or stated with justification that all Five Roots have equal importance. A number pointed to belief in tawhid etc. as being common to both Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, so emphasising the unity of Islam. Some, however, did not focus on the question, which was about the Five Roots, arguing instead for beliefs that were taken from the Five Pillars. These could not be credited, save where they were linked explicitly to one of the Five Roots, e.g. explaining that the Shahadah was a statement arising out of the belief in Tawhid.

Most students gained two or three marks for SPaG, using a range of specialist terms. Almost 6% were awarded no marks, and this was generally because they had written too little for any assessment to be made.

## **Question 2 Islam: Practices**

02.1 almost 90% of students knew that Sawm was the Muslim term for fasting.

02.2 most accurately gave the two parts of the Shahadah. The Shi'a addition was also credited as one of the parts. A number of students, however, gave only a partial statement of each part or did not read the question with sufficient care and gave two occasions when the Shahadah is used or two reasons why it is important. A few gave an explanation of its importance as one way and then gave both parts in the second point, but this could be awarded only one mark, as the first two responses are the ones that count.

02.3 concerning Id-ul-Fitr, was not attempted by more than 8% of students, but those who did attempt it generally answered very well, and the influence of the ways on the lives of Muslims was clearly explained. Some referred to the festival as giving awareness of being part of the Ummah, others to the gratitude felt for having got through the challenge of Ramadan, and others to it as a time for giving to the poor or heeding the message given in the imam's sermon on the requirement to forgive others. Some students, however, thought it referred to Ramadan itself, and others confused it with the festival of Id-ul-Adha.

02.4 was not attempted by over 13% of students. However, over 33% of students gained four or five marks, finding it easy to develop two ways in which the Night of Power is important for Muslims. Over 14% gained five marks, either with reference to the Qur'an as the source of information for the incident or by quoting and correctly attributing 'The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months'. Some students, however, confused this festival with the celebration of Muhammad's Night Journey and ascent and of the revelation of Salah (Laylat ul-Miraj).

02.5 differentiated well between those who read the question carefully and who understood the significance of Jummah, and those who wrote very generally about the importance of prayer or about other practices such as Hajj being more important. There were some excellent responses, taking note of the words 'all' and 'each week' in the statement. There were some references to the teaching of the Qur'an, e.g. 'When the call is made for prayer on Friday...leave all business'. Those who referred to the Khutbah (the imam's Friday sermon) and to Jummah's importance in reinforcing the Ummah gave very persuasive arguments in support of the statement. In support of other views, a number of students referred to the restrictions imposed by lockdown during the pandemic. Some considered the possibility of using apps or livestreaming as an alternative. Most

knew that women are not required to attend and gave other reasons why attending might be difficult or impossible.

Students performed better on SPaG in 02.5 than in 01.5. This was no doubt due to most writing at sufficient length for two or three marks to be awarded.

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

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