



A-Level

Religious Studies

7062/2D Study of Religion and Dialogues: Islam

Report on the examination

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General Comments

All questions were marked with direct reference to the published Level Descriptors for AO1 and AO2.

This paper was very accessible, and students produced some excellent responses across all questions. A number of scripts were particularly impressive, with some exceptional individual answers. Students displayed AO1 knowledge and understanding at a level broadly consistent with previous years. Most were able to engage with alternative viewpoints in their AO2 responses and successfully incorporated content from various parts of the specification in their dialogue answers.

In A Level AO1 responses, the instruction ‘examine’ requires more than a basic outline. Students need to provide detailed, accurate, and relevant knowledge that clearly demonstrates their understanding. Answers that simply described beliefs or concepts without further development generally did not progress beyond Level 3.

For AO2, the depth of critical engagement is key to achieving higher levels. To be considered perceptive, students needed to go beyond agreeing or disagreeing with a claim. They had to explore the wider implications of their arguments, consider alternative perspectives, and respond to potential criticisms.

Some students, particularly in AO2 and dialogue essays, approached critical analysis in a formulaic way, for instance by adding phrases like “this is a strong or weak argument” at the end of each paragraph. While this method was credited when used meaningfully, it often lacked substance. Simply labelling an argument without explaining why it is strong or weak, or how it holds up in relation to opposing views, does not meet the criteria for critical evaluation.

In dialogue essays, students aiming for the higher AO1 levels needed to show clear, relevant understanding of both philosophical or ethical theory and Islamic perspectives. Less successful responses often showed imbalance with one area more developed than the other. That said, dialogue essays were often more successful than single AO1 or AO2 responses by the same student. These essays tended to be better structured and more clearly planned, which contributed to their overall effectiveness.

It was also noted that many students chose to answer questions in a different sequence than that presented in the exam paper. This approach is completely valid and has no effect on marking. It can, in fact, help students play to their strengths and manage their time more effectively.

1.1

Examine the meaning and significance of beliefs about the hand of God and the face of God. [10 Marks]

This question was generally well attempted, with many students demonstrating clear awareness of the three key theological perspectives: Mu'tazili, Ash'ari, and Hanbali. Stronger responses went beyond simple identification, offering thoughtful analysis of both the meaning and significance of the topic, which enabled them to access the higher mark bands. However, some answers lacked balance or neglected to address all elements of the question. Centres are reminded of the importance of preparing students to respond fully to questions with multiple components, as partial responses limit the marks that can be awarded.

1.2

'Muslims can only rely on greater jihad to guide moral conduct.' Evaluate this claim. [15 marks]

Responses to this question varied in quality, though many students showed an understanding of both greater and lesser jihad. Better answers offered a balanced approach, thoughtfully engaging with a range of perspectives. These students often accessed the higher levels by integrating a wide variety of sources, drawing effectively on religious teachings, scriptural references, and ethical theories to construct well-reasoned arguments and counterarguments.

2.1

Examine the influence of inclusivism on Muslim relations with other faiths. [10 marks]

Responses to this question were mixed. Less successful answers often concentrated on defining inclusivism, without fully examining its impact on Muslim relations with other faiths. As a result, these responses tended to remain descriptive and did not meet the higher-level criteria. In contrast, stronger students engaged directly with the question's emphasis on influence, demonstrating an ability to apply their knowledge analytically. These responses considered a variety of perspectives and contextual factors, allowing students to access the higher mark bands through more evaluative and focused discussion.

2.2

'Islam is no longer a source of truth and moral values.' Evaluate this claim. [15 marks]

This question was generally well answered, with a number of students producing excellent responses. Stronger answers demonstrated critical engagement with the statement, incorporating a broad range of religious and ethical theories to construct thoughtful and well-supported counterarguments. Where students applied this evaluative approach effectively, they were able to reach the higher levels.

3.1

'Philosophy cannot support belief in religious sources of authority.' Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and philosophy. [25 marks]

AO1

There were some excellent answers which considered specific sources of authorities including the Qur'an and Hadith. The less successful answers tended to focus on the Shariah more broadly without going in to detail, these responses often tended to reference philosophical theories in passing rather than in detail. Responses demonstrated a broader engagement, drawing on a range of philosophical theories to both support and challenge the statement. Many students effectively incorporated the Cosmological, Teleological, and Ontological arguments, alongside relevant criticisms, allowing them to access the higher levels.

AO2

Most students were able to give different points of view, and many were able to talk about both religious and philosophical ideas in an evaluative way. The majority of students were able to make some evaluation. The best answers showed excellent critical analysis, setting beliefs about Muslim sources of authority and the views of different philosophers in perceptive discussion with one another.

4.1

'Islam should reject the truth claims of other religions.' Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and philosophy. [25 marks]

AO1

This question proved more popular, and there were some excellent responses that demonstrated both strong knowledge of Islam and Philosophy. Students drew on a wide range of philosophical theories to support and challenge the claim, enabling many to achieve higher marks in the AO1 section. The more able students used a wide range of Muslim teachings including the revelation, compilation and authority of the Qur'an. Philosophical theories included Aquinas, Swinburne and Hume.

AO2

Most answers included different views, even those which drew on limited knowledge and understanding were able to give different points of view. The majority of students were able to evaluate the statement and produced some good responses. The best answers showed excellent critical analysis, giving views from a wide range of scholars in perceptive discussion with one another, and with Muslim views about other faiths', and their own, truth claims.

There were some answers that only offered one view, with limited evidence or argument to support the student's opinion, and these answers were capped at level 2.

5.1

'The conscience is the best guide for Muslims to make decisions about embryo research.' Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and ethical studies. [25 marks]

AO1

This question was less popular, and many students struggled to offer detailed knowledge on the role of conscience within Islam. Stronger responses interpreted conscience as the '*nafs*', and this was credited when appropriately applied to the context of embryo research. However, a significant number of students misinterpreted embryo research as IVF, which limited the relevance and accuracy of their answers. There were some thoughtful responses that explored the benefits of using conscience, particularly when linked to the development of medicine and the preservation of life.

AO2

Most answers included different views, even those which drew on limited knowledge and understanding. The majority of students made an attempt at evaluating, with the best answers showing excellent critical analysis whilst offering views from a range of Muslim approaches to moral decision. The strongest responses focused on whether or not, or how far, the conscience offers clear guidance for Muslims concerning embryo research, and these responses tended to achieve higher marks. There were some answers that only offered one view, with limited evidence or argument to support the student's opinion, and such answers were limited to level 2.

6.1

'Neither Islam nor ethical theories deal effectively with issues of animal life and death.' Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and ethical studies. [25 marks]

AO1

This question proved more popular, with some excellent responses demonstrating both strong religious knowledge and focused critical evaluation of ethical theories. Students effectively explored a range of scenarios in discussing the statement, including intensive farming, the requirement for halal food, and the relationship between Islamic principles and ethical theories. There were some excellent responses to this question with a good range of ethical and religious viewpoints given.

AO2

Most students were able to offer two different views, with the better responses giving a balance of religious and ethical viewpoints. Most responses made an attempt at evaluation. The best answers showed excellent critical analysis, using a good understanding of different ethical

approaches and Muslim teaching critically to analyse how effectively they can be applied to specific issues concerned with animal life and death. Where students were able to offer this critical evaluation alongside religious and ethical theories, they were able to score highly, A minority of student offered only one view, often with limited evidence or argument, these answers were limited to level 2.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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