



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2023

**AS
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
OPTION B: AN INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM**

B120UB0-1

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2023 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:

Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

Rules for Marking

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content.

Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Awarding no marks to a response

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 25 marks <i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> - <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i> - <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i> - <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
5	21-25 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples. • Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	16-20 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. • Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	11-15 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples. • Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	6-10 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance. • A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples. • Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	1-5 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance. • A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question. • The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples. • Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. <p>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 25 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">21-25 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">16-20 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">11-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">6-10 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES – COMPONENT 1

OPTION B: AN INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

SUMMER 2023 MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

Either,

0 1

(a) **Examine the benefits of zakah for Muslims.**

[AO1 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Zakah is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a tax of 2.5% of wealth/profit on all Muslims who can afford it. Traditionally Muslims also gave a proportion of their crops, if they farmed, and of gold or accumulated wealth. All of this is paid annually but only from those Muslims who have sufficient to first take care of themselves and their families.
- Zakah might be seen as a type of benefit for those in need. Zakah payments may be given to mothers, the pregnant, to students, to soldiers, to those who are old, ill, mentally ill, the homeless, rather like a form of social security originating before the time when social security systems began. The ill benefit in that they are able to feed themselves and get support for their illnesses with the money given; those who are not able to earn a living such as mothers and students are able to support themselves with the money given so they may continue to live their lives.
- The givers of zakah may also benefit from the process. Although they are giving up some of their wealth, they are not losing out because they gain reward from Allah. Part of giving zakah is getting rid of selfishness. The prophet taught that the Muslim who did not desire for others what they desired for themselves was not amongst the true Muslim community. Therefore, giving zakah helps the giver to become sympathetic towards the poor and rid themselves of an attitude of greed.
- Zakah is an act of worship required by Allah as one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a compulsory act which Muslims complete for Allah in the hope of favourable judgement in the future. Therefore, the benefit from zakah may be something which opens the gates of eternal life in heaven for the givers.
- Receivers of zakah should accept Allah's blessings just as much as givers, since their practical benefit may be seen not just in monetary value but also as a blessing from Allah, reminding them that they are looked after in hard times and helping to develop their trust in God.
- Accept various examples of how zakah may benefit others, including ways in which it may be organised through mosques and charities to provide emergency relief for famine, floods, and the disposed and so on.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘Support for the poor is central to Islam.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The concept of Ummah or brotherhood in the one worldwide community of Muslims is a strong concept in Islam. Muslims consider each other like family members even if they are strangers. When Muslims pray shoulder to shoulder in a mosque, there is no difference between rich and poor.
- When Muslims partake of the Hajj pilgrimage, the same emphasis on equality is seen through the white ihram clothing. It could be said that the emphasis on equality in Islam supports the poor as they are regarded as fully equal and of equal value with the rich, despite the materialism often seen in the world around.
- Zakah is a compulsory tax payment and as such can be seen as a central part of Islam, because it is one of the five pillars which all Muslims are expected to complete as far as is possible during their lifetime. In Muslim history, one of the early Caliphs Abu Bakr went to war against Muslims who had not paid zakah, so important was it to ensure that the tax was paid and the poor supported.
- The Prophet taught that all Muslims were equal and even went without food when he was hungry in order to support fellow Muslims who were also poor and facing hardship for the cause of Islam.
- Nevertheless, there are many examples from the Muslim world and from Muslim communities where the poor are not well supported or where the rich separate themselves from the poor. This might suggest that support for the poor by some Muslims is not considered important.
- The main beliefs in Islam include tawhid, Risalah and Akhirah – belief in the oneness of God, Prophets and life after death. The main statement of faith, the Shahadah, refers to belief in one God, Allah, and the last Prophet Muhammad. In this fundamental statement of faith, there is no mention of support for the poor. Therefore it could be argued that such support, whilst important, may be not central.
- Candidates might define what they understand by central and match it to various categories of action used in Islam, and to the practice of zakah, and make a judgement as to how far they consider it central.
- Support for the poor may also come through the Shi’a Khums payment or from additional voluntary acts of charity known as Sadaqah, which might be used to support an argument.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Or,

0 2

(a) **Examine the categories of halal (blessed, allowed) and haram (forbidden) as guides for Muslim living.**

[AO1 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Five categories of action were put together by the scholars of Shari'a in the eight to tenth centuries. They form moral guidance, drawn from references to the primary sources of Shari'a, the Qur'an and Hadith, interpreted by the main law schools and by scholars. Halal and haram are two categories out of the five so both fall within the category of guidance for Muslims.
- Halal (sometimes referred to as mubah) and haram are sometimes thought of as opposites but this is not strictly true. Halal is approved but not compulsory and the opposite of this is makruh, disapproved. Haram is forbidden and the opposite of this is fard, compulsory. There is a middle category of action called mustahab which is neither recommended nor discouraged.
- For both categories, Muslims try to establish what they are doing is right first, although there it is not regarded as wrongful if a Muslim made a mistake unknowingly but their intention was right. For example, if a Muslim ate a food containing alcohol, which is haram, by mistake, thinking it was halal, then this was not a haram action as they were unaware of the action and did not intend to go against this guidance.
- Halal actions include preparing animals for food by saying the name of God at the time of slaughter, and draining the animal of blood. This is believed to make the meat blessed by God as well as clean to consume.
- Halal also includes a person's freedom to choose respectable clothing, within the guideline of modesty; to work in a halal location where immoral activities do not occur; to choose anything which might be said to be approved in line with traditional Islamic teaching.
- Haram actions include eating pork or alcohol in normal circumstances, unless there is no other choice. Other haram activities include sex outside of marriage and immoral activities.
- Different Muslims may make different interpretations of the two categories. For example, most Muslims include pre-stunned, slaughtered meat as halal but some oppose this; some accept meat of the 'people of the book' i.e. Christians and Jews as halal, and so accept most meat available in the UK, whereas others regard this as haram.
- In circumstances of hardship or necessity, a haram action such as eating pork might become halal; or a halal action which might put a Muslim in danger at that time might instead be postponed.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘The five categories of action provide clear guidance for Muslims today.’
Evaluate this view. [AO2 25]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The five categories of action were formulated by the scholars in the early centuries of Islam after the Prophet’s death. The scholars and founders of law schools lived much closer to the time of the Prophet and took great efforts to try to understand clearly what he did and what he meant, so that they could properly interpret the Qur’an and Sunnah, the primary sources of Shari’a. In theory, this should make the five categories clear guides to apply.
- After hundreds of years, most Muslims still use these guides to help shape their daily actions. Many Muslims in the UK today often refer to halal and haram actions. They check ingredients on their food to see if there are any they consider haram. This might appear straightforward to apply in the modern world.
- However, circumstances are very different from the early days of Islam and there are many technological changes and changes to the way people live in the modern world which create new questions Muslims ask for guidance on.
- Even for seemingly straightforward questions like halal food, modern techniques such as pre-stunned animal slaughter are debated. One Muslim food authority, the HFA, accepts this whereas another, HMC, rejects it. It may be confusing for ordinary Muslims to make sense of this and apply it in their own lives.
- Shari’a suggests that natural, God-given ways are best and that harm should be avoided. Difficult ethical situations arise regarding abortion and genetic engineering which was not an issue in the early days of Islam. What if intervention in natural processes could help overcome suffering? Muslim scholars voice opinions about how far these should be applied, but they are not necessarily in agreement.
- On the other hand, it could be argued that it is easy for Sunni Muslims to make or follow an opinion, as they are free to choose an opinion of a scholar or make their own mind up and as long as their intention is good they should not spend time becoming confused. Shi’a Muslims follow the opinion of their Imams so need not worry about confusion.
- Others might argue that believers are concerned to do the right thing and confusion could lead to doubt. For some it is better to consider personal conscience and direct interpretation of the Qur’an and Sunnah without using the five categories as a guide, to avoid confusion.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Section B

Either,

0 3

- (a) **Explain the significance of the events of Akhirah (the Day of Final Judgement) from the last trumpet onward.** [AO1 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The time after the blowing of the trumpet refers to a period of time which may not be the same as an earthly day as known today. Setting the context of these events within those which come before may help to show their significance.
- Many signs herald the coming of the last days, including corruption and hypocrisy. Muslims will build many mosques but lack honesty; the environment will change, and rains will come to Makkah; there will be earthquakes and natural disasters. The sun will rise in the west.
- A figure called dajjal will appear and cause chaos and suffering. Mahdi will appear and defeat the dajjal, along with Isa (Jesus) who will return and begin a reign of justice and peace before the coming of the end of time.
- Many Shi'a Muslims equate the Mahdi with their twelfth Imam who became occluded or hidden and is said to return at this time. This has significance in that they believe they should follow their Imam's guidance in place of the Twelfth Imam until he is able to return and focus their thoughts on this.
- Angel Israfil blows the trumpet heralding the beginning of the last days during which the world will end, and the dead will be resurrected for the Day of Final Judgement.
- The souls of the dead have been waiting in a state of barzakh and will be reunited with the physical bodies for the Day of Final Judgement. The dead are questioned in their graves by angels Munkar and Nadir.
- There is a gathering which some believe will be at the Plain of Arafat in Makkah and others believe may be in Syria. This has significance for some Muslims who pray for forgiveness and make a fresh start when visiting Arafat on the Hajj pilgrimage.
- The recording angels Raqib and Atib, who record a person's actions in their book of deeds, hand this over to the individual for Judgement. Judgement is announced and those granted eternal life in Paradise then cross a narrow bridge. Muslims think of the recording angels during their daily actions as they believe they are being watched and want to do the right thing to please Allah.
- Muhammad will intercede to help the good cross into Paradise. It is said that anyone who has a grain of goodness in their heart will be forgiven, dependent on Allah's mercy but no one should take this for granted. Muslims therefore should not be arrogant or lax about fulfilling the requirements of their faith because they cannot assume they have already done enough to be granted heaven.
- Paradise is described as a garden with flowing fountains and beautiful tranquillity whereas hell is a place of torture and burning coals. These are the two destinations after Judgement.
- Judgement overall influences Muslims to follow the requirements of Islam in the belief that this will lead to a better afterlife.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘The Day of Final Judgement should inspire faith not fear.’
Evaluate this view.**

[AO2 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The Day of Final Judgement is something that Muslims may think about in their daily actions, because they believe that the recording angels are watching them from their shoulders and recording their deeds. Therefore, they want to gain as many good deeds as possible to balance their record on the Day of Final Judgement.
- With this in mind, a Muslim might fear the Day of Final Judgement. They would worry that their actions might add bad deeds and they might end up in hellfire. When considering neglecting prayer, not fasting, or cheating on others, a Muslim might fear hellfire, and this might encourage them to keep to the straight path of their faith.
- Hellfire is described as a place of terrible suffering, hot coals and everlasting torture. The entrance to Paradise is described in Islamic tradition as a narrow bridge. Therefore, Muslims might fear the Day of Final Judgement lest they be unable to cross that bridge.
- However, Muslims consider God the All-Compassionate, All-Merciful. An Islamic tradition suggests that God is always more merciful than wrathful; another that God forgives all who have a grain of goodness left in them. Therefore, Muslims might look forward with confidence to the Day of Final Judgement because they might feel that God will forgive them their sins and misdemeanours.
- Paradise is described as a beautiful place full of gardens, flowing rivers, abundant fruits and virgins. This is a blissful place without the suffering many endure in this world. Therefore, Muslims might feel they are going to a better place and leaving behind their stresses, worries and illnesses in this world.
- It could be argued that Muslims should neither fear nor welcome the Day of Final Judgement because it is not their call. God decides the fate of all and Muslims must accept what is written for them as their destiny. There is not use fearing it because they cannot change it if it is predestined.
- At the same time Muslim should not be presumptive that they will be rewarded as this is arrogant and does not recognise that God is the ultimate judge who can do whatever God wills. To claim that a Muslim will go to Paradise is to take away God’s judging role from Him.
- Different Muslims may have different emotions of fear and confidence at different times in their lives. Some, particularly Sufis, argue that they should develop their nearness through remembrance of God here and now, without worrying about the future.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Or,

0 4

(a) **Outline Muhammad's teachings in Makkah, following the Night of Power until his migration to Madinah.** [AO1 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Muhammad received the first revelation of the Qur'an on the Night of Power, after which he told his wife but had doubts and fears and did not receive another message for some months. During this time he only taught his wife Khadijah and her close associates.
- Following another revelation of comfort, Muhammad gained the instruction to begin teaching and called his family together. He asked them to reject idolatry and follow the one unseen God. He appealed to them to accept him and his trustworthy reputation, but they rejected him.
- Muhammad received further revelations and taught a basic message of belief in One God, Prophets as messengers and life after death. These teachings were given in the market places of Makkah and around and under the protection of Muhammad's uncle Abu Talib, despite the threats and criticisms of many.
- With the death of his uncle, Muhammad and his small community of followers were exiled to a desolate valley outside Makkah. They faced hardship, and the Prophet was attacked with stones when he visited the village of Taif. However, under guidance of revelation, Muhammad taught the Muslims not to take revenge and to forgive their enemies.
- Some Muslims such as Bilal, a slave who had gained freedom through Islam, were beaten and tortured but remained loyal to Muhammad's teachings. Muhammad taught the young Muslim community to be faithful and loyal to their faith despite difficult circumstances, as they would gain a greater reward from God in the afterlife.
- Muhammad instructed some Muslims to take asylum in a neighbouring kingdom of a Christian king, where the Muslims explained the similarities between their faiths based on what Muhammad had revealed to them.
- As persecution increased, Muhammad taught his followers to be ready to forgo their property for the sake of their faith and leave their friends, families and possessions for the sake of Islam and leave Makkah. They were escaping persecution for a new life in Madinah. Muhammad had a loyal following who were prepared to trust him.
- Muhammad is said to have received a progressive revelation from God. His years of teaching in Makkah went through various stages as he was guided by God to cope with the difficult circumstances he faced. The details of Islam and the requirements of faith were revealed slowly in stages: the stages in Makkah focused primarily on main beliefs and the unity of the community in the face of persecution. Details of the five pillars came later.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **'Islam could have easily failed during the Makkan persecution.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- As Muhammad continued to preach Islam in the Makkan period, persecution became more intense. He had lost the protection of his wider family with the death of his uncle Abu Talib, and faced both physical and verbal abuse on a daily basis. This was extremely trying for Muhammad and his followers who were sorely tested by events.
- Public preaching risked attack and the Muslim community did not feel that they could safely practice their faith in public. Without this religious freedom, the faith could not have been easily maintained and it could be argued that it was only a matter of time before it failed.
- Community is an important aspect of Islam and developing good community relations was extremely difficult whilst under threat. Developing fellowship between Muslims was difficult given that it was not safe to congregate in any great number. It could be argued that without the strength of fellowship, Islam could have easily failed.
- For a few years, the Muslim community was exiled into a barren valley. At this time those following Muhammad could have easily given up and returned to Makkah, where they would have much better prospects.
- On the other hand, the evidence is that the community did not fail and it held together long enough to make a fresh start in Madinah. Actually, the holding together through persecution may have strengthened the bonds between believers and adherence to their faith, rather than weakened it, as the believers helped each other through the hard times in the valley and became more committed to their faith.
- It might be argued that it was God's will to test the Muslim community. God decides all things and predestines all actions. Following God's will in submission to Islam, even if times are hard, should not be described as a failure.
- Muhammad was known for his strength of character and he took verbal and physical abuse calmly without reacting to the provocation. It could be argued that his strength of character as the final messenger of God was not close to failure at all, as he had the strength of faith to continue his mission.
- It may be argued that Islam is a religion from God which existed from God and in various forms at different times throughout human history, such as with the earlier Prophets Ibrahim and others. It was not a human creation at one point in time, so unlike human creations, would not fail.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Or,

0 5

(a) Examine the observance of Ashura by Shi'a Muslims.

[AO1 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The occasion of Ashura is marked by Shi'a Muslims annually. It is one of the most important times for Shi'a Muslims and they observe it with some distinct practices usually not shared by Sunni Muslims.
- Shi'a Muslims believe that Ali was the legitimate successor of the Prophet whereas Sunni Muslims recognise Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman as Ali's predecessors. During the time of Caliph Ali, there was a division and civil war between his followers and those of Sunni leader Muawiya who also claimed the Caliphate.
- Hassan and Husayn, from his family line, upheld their claim despite being hopelessly outnumbered at Karbala where they faced a larger army of opponents. They faced martyrdom rather than surrender to the opposing forces. This event is marked with displays of sorrow and suffering and various practices on the occasion of Ashura.
- Processions take place and some Shi'a Muslims symbolically flagellate themselves. This varies from tapping their hands into their chests, to harder and more painful actions. Through these Shi'a Muslims feel they understand the pain of the martyrs at Karbala. They display their commitment to uphold the principles of the right and the true regardless of personal hardship and pain.
- Some Shi'a Muslims enact ta'ziyah passion plays, particularly in Iran and Iraq. These plays act out events from Karbala so that the younger generation may learn about the history and communities by get a sense of what it meant and bring the events more clearly into their minds.
- Sermons, speeches and recitations may be given at Shi'a mosques over the month of Muharram, in which Ashura occurs, so that the community may learn more about their faith and develop strength together.
- Some Shi'a Muslims visit Karbala and other holy sites such as the grave of Imam Ali at Najaf in Iraq. Over 2 million are said to congregate in Karbala and street processions can be seen where pilgrims mark displays of grief by weeping.
- During the occasion of Ashura many Shi'a Muslims wear black as they are in mourning for the martyrs of Karbala. It is not an occasion of celebration or festivity.
- Shi'a Muslims mark this occasion differently from Sunni Muslims who may fast and recall the deliverance of Moses (Prophet Musa) from slavery in Egypt into freedom.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **'It is excessive to use self-harm in religious devotions.'**
Evaluate this view with reference to Ashura.

[AO2 25]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In marking Ashura, many Shi'a Muslims make displays of sorrow and suffering, including weeping, tapping their chests, and in some cases physically flagellating themselves in actions which may cause pain or self-harm.
- It could be argued that Ashura is a particularly special occasion for Shi'a Muslims and they remember the suffering that their martyrs Hassan and Husayn went through. This was a physical suffering, so through using some form of self-harm it may engender a sense of empathy and understanding with the events of the day.
- In marking the occasion Shi'a Muslims may argue they are benefitting by marking standing up for the right and the true. Some say they do not recognise it as self-harm or pain because they carry out these actions for the sake of God out of devotion.
- The concept of self-harm could be discussed, since it could be argued that a person fasting in Ramadan might suffer headache and pain after a long day's fast in the summer months, so it might be argued that it is all part of effort to please God and not unique to Shi'a Islam.
- However, Sunni Muslims might argue that harming or hurting oneself is going against what a caring and compassionate God wants and therefore they might describe it as excessive.
- There are different ways in which Shi'a Muslims can mark Ashura. Some tap themselves symbolically without any real pain or self-harm; others attend sermons and speeches or learn from passion plays. It could be argued there is plenty to be involved with here, without going to the extremes of self-harm, which is therefore unnecessary.
- Self-harm could make it difficult for a Muslim to carry out their normal daily routines, going to work and looking after their family, if they needed time to recover or became ill. This could be seen as hampering these other essential duties in Islam and therefore the self-harm could be seen as excessive.
- In some countries Shi'a Muslims take part in processions and even shed blood as part of their self-flagellation. They might argue that their blood brings them closer to and more passionate about their Shi'a heritage, stemming from Karbala.
- Others might argue that it is harmful or inappropriate in some countries and might cause issues if carried out with such passion in public places in front of children or people of other faiths.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.