GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2023

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
UNIT 3 - OPTION B
A STUDY OF ISLAM
1120UB0-1**

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.

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 or all 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.

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.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band (marks)	Assessment Objective AO1 – Section A questions [30 marks]
	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including: - *religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching* - *influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies* - *cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice* - *approaches to the study of religion and belief.*
5 **(25-30 marks)**	• 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 shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4 **(19-24 marks)**	• 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 shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3 **(13-18 marks)**	• 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 shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2 **(7-12 marks)**	• 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. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable) • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1 **(1-6 marks)**	• 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. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable) • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication. **N.B. A maximum of 3 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'.**
0	• No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Section B questions [30 marks]
	Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.
5 (25-30 marks)	- Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. - A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. - The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. - Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. - The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. - Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). - Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. - Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4 (19-24 marks)	- 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. - The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. - Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. - Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). - Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. - Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3 (13-18 marks)	- Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. - Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. - The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. - Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. - Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. - Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). - Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. - Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2 (7-12 marks)	- Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. - A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. - Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. - A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. - Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought, appropriately and in context. - Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). - Some mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. - Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1 (1-6 marks)	- 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. - Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. - Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. - Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. - Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). - Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary. - Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.
0	No relevant analysis or evaluation.

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

Section A

0 1 **Examine Sufi teachings on the role of personal, mystical religious experience as a way of experiencing God.**

[AO1 30]

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

- Candidates will probably discuss maqam (development of deep consciousness), fana (eradication of ego) and hal (a state of ecstasy).
- For maqam, Sufis follow strict routines and formal devotions that start with the five Pillars but then progress to additional morning and evening prayers particular to the Sufi order.
- Attendance at Sufi gatherings is usually on a Thursday evening, when formal rituals such as chanting the names of Allah over and over again, singing qasida songs other Sufi devotions take place.
- Fana literally means 'to let the self die'. Essentially this means to give up desires for oneself, to lose ones ego and focus instead on God. Fana and hal are usually co-dependent.
- Hal is entered during Sufi zikr, remembrance of Allah, where a Sufi may reach a state of ecstasy and may jump up in a trance like dance, unaware of their surroundings. As a God-given state, hal can occur at any time, is unpredictable and a temporary state. The Sufi should let go of their attachments to timetable, routine and formal worship, and allow themselves to continue to worship more deeply in the formless state of hal. A believer may speak in tongues, that is to say almost incomprehensible words and sounds, within this state.
- The Medieval Spanish Muslim Ibn Arabi explained the notion of 'self-disclosure of God'. This is the idea that God can be understood and experienced through one's own thoughts and experiences. Ibn Arabi refers to the veils of shari'a being lifted as the greater knowledge reveals a greater truth. The lifting of the veils often involves an understanding of the universe as a whole but also becoming bewildered and asking question, but this confusion through questioning is a sign of a high state of understanding.
- Sufism is not rejecting the revelation of the Qur'an and the traditional forms of Islamic learning, but argue that meditation and self-realisation help them gain a higher spiritual awareness of God. Ibn Arabi refers to a saying of Muhammad which states that to know oneself is to know God.
- Other examples of practical ways of experiencing this such as dhikr (remembrance), muraqaba (meditation) and sama (spiritual listening or 'whirling') may be explored by candidates.

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

0 2 **Explain the problems created by segregation and assimilation for Muslim communities in Britain today.**

[AO1 30]

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

- Integration is usually where different layers of society have distinctive traits but are cohesive as a whole. Assimilation is where religious/cultural traits merge into the whole and have a common core. David Cameron saw the latter as being achieved through British Values.
- During the 1960s it was assumed that multiculturalism - celebrating differences - in time, would knit communities together. Instead, Muslims congregated in certain areas and emphasised their differences. A lack of integration often brought a disadvantage in terms of getting employment, advancing careers and enjoying the benefits of an open society.
- Shared British values are defined as belief in democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of other faiths and beliefs. The vast majority of Muslims and non-Muslims in British society agree with these values. A small minority of Muslims have, on occasion, claimed democracy is against shari'a.
- Some Muslims assimilate well: Sadiq Khan became mayor of London; Sayeeda Warsi a Conservative Party peer and Mishal Hussain a newsreader. Others experience Islamophobia. A website, Tell Mama, set up to report and record Islamophobic crimes, reports a large increase in recent years. This makes it harder to encourage Muslims to integrate.
- Cultural assimilation might mean in terms of clothing, social life and friendships. To some, mixing with others is invigorating and an opportunity to promote their faith; for others, mixing with members of the opposite sex and in the presence of alcohol is something they could not accept.
- However, there are clear examples of segregation. A large percentage of housing in Tower Hamlets in East London is occupied by Bengali Muslims. The majority of young people across East Birmingham, over 60%, are Muslim. In some schools, children come and go every day and meet few other children except other Muslims.
- Further examples that highlight difficulties for integration and assimilation may be explored using halal food, dress, faith schools, madrassahs, etc.
- A minority of Muslims oppose Western society. Groups such as Hizb ut Tahriah preach that Muslims should separate.
- Some Muslims think that if assimilation means mixing with others in the presence of alcohol, wearing entirely Western clothes or compromising on when or if they are able to pray, then this is unacceptable.
- Others point out that core British values do not compromise Islam.
- Life for young Muslims in Britain can be confusing. Often distant from the traditions of their parents, they experiment with different traditions of Islam until they find what is right for them. Going to college and university is a time that many integrate further into Western society. Others react against it and associate with their Islamic society and Muslim friends.

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

Section B

0 3 **'The doors to ijtihad are closed.'**

Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

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

- Ijtihad means 'personal opinion' and was used to interpret the shari'a in situations where traditional teachings were unclear. In the early Islamic world ijtihad was freely practised with success. However, most Sunni Muslims believe that the gates of ijtihad closed soon after the four schools of Sunni law were founded. Al-Shafi and others went into great detail to interpret the Qur'an, sunna, ijma or consensus of scholars to provide all answers for Muslims. The traditional argument is that 'the doors to ijtihad are closed' and should not be opened again.

- In support of this, Sunnis believe that soon after, scholars did not have sufficient knowledge to reinterpret Islam; instead scholars followed taqlid, imitation of earlier scholars and their opinions. Al-Ghazali wrote about the importance of taking a traditional approach to Islam, without the need for further ijtihad; he is sometimes thought of as having closed the gates.

- Shi'a Muslims have their own schools of law and Imams, who are highly trained to interpret shari'a. They did not close the gates of ijtihad, but restricted its interpretation to the most educated of Imams in the line of the Prophet's family. These Imams attended special Hawza schools in which they were specially trained to make judgements. Shi'a Imams used aql, reasoning, to apply shari'a rulings and continued to do so over the centuries. To them, the gates of ijtihad never closed.

- Salafi Muslims would support the case for the doors of ijtihad being open. They base their interpretations on the Qur'an, sunna and teachings of the sahaba (companions). Rashid Rida argues that anyone could read the sources for themselves and make their own ijtihad opinion.

- Some would go as far to criticise taqlid since it is very far removed from the original interpretations of Muhammad and the companions. It is argued that Muslims need to go back to the primary sources themselves and make original interpretations. Reformist Muslims take this line.

- Against this view, others argue that the scholars were the experts. Young Muslims today, who have some education in science or engineering, cannot possibly hope to rival the centuries old expertise of Islamic experts.

- Indeed, Khaled Abou El Fadl argues that opening the gates of ijtihad has led to chaos. People with a passion for Islam but little knowledge have made all kinds of strange rulings which have led to a crisis of authority in Islam.

- Different Muslims may give different answers to this question depending on their tradition. To some, ijtihad was closed from the time of the early scholars onwards. To others, it is wide open for reinterpretation in the modern world.

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

0 4 'Shari'a may be divine, but its interpretation is no more than human.'
Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

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

- It could be argued that the shari'a is considered by Muslims to be divine because Allah sent the Qur'an as the first source of shari'a. Therefore, nothing humans could say would be as good as God's word.
- However, the Qur'an often provides only vague guidance in places, arguably making human interpretation necessary. Nonetheless, the first human interpreter of shari'a was Prophet Muhammad, considered the perfect example an interpreter to help Muslims understand shari'a.
- Muhammad's companions and the early generations of Muslims knew the Prophet well, so their interpretations are considered consistent with the teachings of the Qur'an and therefore valid. Traditional Muslims regard them as the experts in interpretation of shari'a which we can never surpass. Some Muslims may see it as wrong to change what they believe is a fixed, God-given law, which should stay the same forever.
- However, Muslims also find Muhammad's interpretations from the hadith, but these were collected around 200 years later. The problem arises that human collectors like Bukhari applied their own interpretations in deciding which hadith to accept as reliable.
- It could be argued that the tradition of fiqh is due to human endeavour. Human interpretations found answers to key questions that arose on all matters from prayer rituals to food laws and criminal punishment. Although they used the Qur'an and hadith as primary sources to avoid contradiction, they were still arguably human interpretations.
- Fiqh also raises the issue of which law school should a Muslim follow, or even can they mix and match? Shi'a Muslims have further human interpretation via Imams. This clearly would add force to the argument that interpretation and application of the shari'a is no more than human.
- In addition, any individual Muslim could make their own opinions on shari'a. Many Salafi and modern reformist Muslims think that is a good thing. Muslims who read the Qur'an for themselves can decide on the best course of action.
- To support this line of reasoning, Sunni and Shi'a Muslims disagree. Shi'a Muslims believe that their Imams and particularly mujtahid scholars should make the interpretations for people to follow. They are highly educated in fiqh interpretation, Arabic and logic, so they make better interpretations.
- Reformist Muslims may say that human interpretation is good. Humans should reinterpret shari'a for the modern day and make Islam fit better with modern concepts. They argue that without interpretation, there are some unacceptable parts of shari'a, such as the treatment of women as less reliable witnesses than men.

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

0 5 'Islamic responses to scientific views about the origins of the universe are effective.'

Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

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

- Since scientific theories such as the Big Bang are closely linked to the theory of evolution, responses that discuss evolution should be credited as relevant, although evolution should not be the sole focus of the evaluation.
- The Big Bang suggests that the universe started with an explosion from a dense mass, and as the universe expanded particles formed and then collected together to make planets. The steady state theory suggests it had no origin because it was always there in more or less the same state as it is now. The expanding and oscillating theories suggest that the universe went in cycles, perhaps a series of Big Bangs.
- One Muslim response is that these are theories and not proven. The existence of many theories means that scientists cannot be sure. The theory that God made the world could just as equally be true. Some may argue that this is not an effective response because the scientific evidence is overwhelming even if not 100% fact.
- Another Muslim response would be to say that here are some verses in the Qur'an which could go together with these theories, such as the Qur'an 21:30: 'Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder?' Joining together and splitting apart could support the Big Bang or the expanding and oscillating theory. Indeed, explanations by modern Muslim scientists help believers to reconcile these theories with their faith. The effectiveness of this response is that it does not compromise the central beliefs of Islam. For example, the notion of a creator God can be seen to be 'beyond' and 'behind' the events of a Big Bang.
- Some Muslims have responded by rejecting science and believe that they should take the Qur'an literally at face value and always regard its words more highly than any other book. Scientists who do not accept God are a threat because they do not accept the word of God. This kind of response appears only to be effective for Muslims themselves and its effectiveness can be challenged by pointing out many Muslims also accept science.
- Some Muslims largely accept modern science and have used it to make fresh interpretations of the Qur'an. This can be seen in the work of Ibn Tufayl and his story about Hayy ibn Yaqzan, who worked out a theory about the origin of the universe whilst observing things around him, without the help of any divine revelation. This is clearly an effective and coherent reply.
- It could be argued that today, we live in an age of information and knowledge, in which people want to work things out for themselves. The more Muslims engage in the debate, the more effective their response to scientific theories of creation will be.

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

0 6 'Islamic teachings on punishment are still appropriate today.'

Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

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

- There are two opposite modern trends: one is to focus on Islamic aspects of mercy and modernise punishments in line with the world we live in, whereas a second trend is to increase strict punishments and see this as appropriate today. Candidates may evaluate the two approaches.
- The first line of argument is that Islamic teachings on punishments can be appropriate today if they are applied sensibly and understood in relation to historical context. For example, the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century updated their legal codes along the lines of modern European powers without criticism from Islamic scholars.
- Indeed, Reformists argue the death penalty and other physical punishments belong to another age. They deny human rights and, in any case, are unlikely to work for the overall benefit of society. The issue then may be that some punishments are appropriate today but some are not.
- Some would argue that corporal and capital punishments recorded in the Qur'an and the days of Muhammad, were descriptions of cultural practice which are nowadays inappropriate and against human rights.
- However, the other line of argument is that all Islamic punishments are in some way appropriate for today. Pakistan, Brunei, Iran and Saudi Arabia, all have hudud ordinances for certain crimes.
- Indeed, some Muslims look back on a mythical age, imagining a pure society in which people followed the revealed shari'a law. Extreme groups have claimed to put in place strict punishments to create such a society.
- Some would argue that the reality is very different. In support of this view, in many cases early Islamic societies did not apply any one particular version of shari'a punishment: it depended on the opinion of the ruler.
- Despite this, the Shi'a Islamic state of Iran includes qisas punishment in its legal code. Murderers may be taken to court by the victim's family and the life of the murderer demanded in retribution. It is also possible for the victim of a violent attack to request the same physical punishment they have suffered to be carried out on their attacker.
- In Saudi Arabia, both corporal and capital punishments are licit. It is argued that for offences such as those related to drug addiction, harsh punishments are necessary to provide a deterrent. Indeed, in support of this there are many non-Muslim societies that present similar arguments on Utilitarian grounds.
- Islamic revivalists such as the South Asian Scholar Maududi encouraged the use of shari'a punishment as part of a moral code yearned for by people increasingly turning to Islam as their identity. Strict shari'a punishments deter people from transgressing the commands of Islam.
- Some Muslims would argue that the secular state and the changing role of religion in the modern world means that crime and punishment is carried out by secular authorities, and Islamic punishment is the realm of God in the afterlife.

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