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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2022**

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

**B120UB0-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2022 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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions [25 marks]</b></p> <p><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>21-25 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>16-20 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>11-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-10 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-5 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

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

**EDUQAS GCE AS – COMPONENT 1**  
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To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

**Section A**

1. (a) **Examine the role of the rasul (messenger) in Islam.**

**[AO1 25]**

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

- Candidates should be able to identify the role of the rasul (messenger) as appointed by God to bring a message, the message being a holy book revealed from God. They should then go on to examine various aspects of this in detail, referring to messengers within Islamic traditions.
- Messengers warned populations of wrongdoing and guided them to the straight path. There are other terms used including nabi (prophets), nadir (warner) and Risalah (the message) used in references concerning messengers. Sometimes terms for messenger are used interchangeably and refer to broader aspects of the role.
- Messengers brought Allah's message. In bringing a message the messenger's main purpose is to allow Allah to address man through human speech (Turner), without which the unseen God cannot provide direct guidance.
- The last Prophet, Muhammad, taught the Arabs to reject polytheism and reform society. The Makkans had gone astray, worshipped idols, abused slaves, killed baby girls and were involved in immoral conduct. The message he brought was to reform Arab society at the time, to teach specifically the things which were wrong and provide a warning about what might happen in the afterlife should the Arabs refuse to listen.
- Previous messengers conducted similar roles. Isa (Jesus) brought the Injil (Gospel), Dawud (David) the Zabur (Psalms), Musa (Moses) the Torah and Ibrahim (Abraham) the Sahifa (Scrolls). The general role of the messenger was the same, to lead the people to the straight path and reject the worship of idols. Ibrahim and Muhammad ensured the Ka'aba was clear of idols, following the commands in the revelations they were given.
- Muhammad had a particular role as 'seal of the Prophets'. Whilst all messengers essentially brought the same message, it could be said that Muhammad played a vital role as the last and final messenger. His purpose was to complete the revelations and provide the final revelation, after which there could be no more.
- The role of messengers was to gently persuade, not burden. They communicated messages gradually so that interest could be awakened and then it could be understood and practiced. This point is emphasised by the scholar Turner.
- Messengers needed to be convincing and steadfast, as they faced opposition and even persecution.

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

**(b) 'Without messengers, Islam could not have succeeded.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 25]**

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

- Without the inspirational character of the messengers, and their strength of purpose in their preaching, it might be argued that nobody would have taken much notice of the messages themselves. The revelations demanded reform and change and were a challenge to the social order, so there were plenty of vested interests against them. Therefore, it could be argued that without messengers, people would have carried out worshipping idols and conducting themselves in immoral ways, and this would constitute the failure of the message of Islam.
- Evidence could be taken from the lives of messengers to show how their steadfastness was essential in ensuring Islam survived. Muhammad and his followers faced persecution, and they gave up their homes and businesses to follow him to Madinah to ensure that the new faith survived. Without Muhammad's leadership, which followed the direct messages from Allah, they might not have had the strength to do this and the fledgling faith might have withered.
- However, it could be argued that messengers did not have any powers or qualities other than those given to them by God. It was all part of God's pre-written plan for humanity. The quote suggests that messengers' personal choices and actions changed the course of history, but Muslims might argue that history, and with it the success of Islam, was predestined by God.
- Other important factors in the success of the messengers could be cited: angels were the ones who passed on the actual message from God to the messenger. In the case of Muhammad, he was illiterate, in Islamic tradition, therefore it was thought convincing that the message must have originated from an external power, since he could not have made it up himself. Therefore, it was not the messenger who helped Islam succeed, but the role of Angel Jibril.
- Details in the message itself, such as God's warning to turn away from idols in order to gain his mercy on the Day of Judgement, might have convinced some to adopt Islam rather than the personality of the messenger.
- The word 'success' might be challenged. At many times messengers faced difficulties. Muhammad, for example, had to spend years in a barren valley when the Makkans exiled him. It seemed as though Islam was not succeeding at that time. It could be argued that the strength of character in facing failures was part of a necessary learning curve for messengers and their followers.

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



**2. (a) Explain the nature of tawhid (oneness) as uncompromising monotheism.**

**[AO1 25]**

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

- Candidates should define and explain tawhid as a core Islamic belief and central to the beliefs and practice of Muslims in their lives.
- Tawhid refers to the Islamic belief in the concept of God as One. It may be translated as 'oneness' or 'unity'. It is sometimes referred to as uncompromising monotheism because it rejects any other association with God. There can be no trinity, son of God, images or incarnations of God: all of these concepts are rejected.
- Tawhid is central in the practice of Muslims. Muslims are required to 'submit' to Allah by accepting this uncompromising belief in the shahadah, read during prayer five times per day. The words are said in Arabic with the translation that there is 'no God but God', in other words rejecting any association with God.
- Tawhid was central to Muhammad's preaching, in opposition to the idol worshippers in Makkah. His mission was to convert people to the message of oneness and to clear the Ka'aba of idols: uncompromising monotheism demanded not just the acceptance of the oneness of God, but also the rejection of all else.
- Many chapters of the Qur'an emphasise tawhid. Sura 112, one of the shorter suras often recited by Muslims in their prayers, refers to: 'Allah, the One and Only' and 'He begetteth not, nor is He begotten.' This latter quote refers to Allah having no sons or offspring. The first quote refers to Allah as 'the' One, i.e. the one and only, underlining God's nature and insisting that God is monotheistic.
- Tawhid implies that there is one all-powerful God, who created the universe and will grant mercy to whoever He wills. Everything is predestined according to His will. Therefore, Muslims do not see hard times as bad, but are all part of God's plan. Some Muslims believe that as God is all-powerful. He also has the power to change His plan and intervene in the creation, whereas others emphasise that everything is pre-written in advance.
- The nature of the masjid (mosque) reflects tawhid. Instead of animate figures, calligraphy is used, engraving the names of God in Arabic using beautiful patterns, but never people or objects. Geometrical shapes represent the idea that everything radiates out from the One central authority and creator, God.
- Associating others besides Allah is known as shirk, the biggest sin in Islam, since it goes against tawhid. Some Muslims forbid prayer at shrines or graves or giving leaders special status as they believe it might compromise tawhid.

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

**(b) 'The shahadah means little until it is publicly declared.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 25]**

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

- The shahadah is the statement of faith and first pillar of Islam. It is a basic statement of belief in One God and that Muhammad is His Prophet. The shahadah is something that Muslims must believe in order to be a member of the faith. It is professed publicly in front of two witnesses when someone reverts or converts to Islam. It is also said daily, five times a day, as part of Muslim prayers. This suggests that it has both a public and a personal role.
- When a Muslim converts or reverts to Islam, they should freely choose Islam, having understood the main beliefs. A person might privately learn and choose Islam but the public declaration is seen as the point at which they become or are accepted as Muslim. This suggests that the public declaration is all-important.
- This moment is public so that Muslim communities can acknowledge and accept the new member and welcome them into the faith. Some mark it by sharing food and celebrating or welcoming the new convert. The public declaration therefore is more meaningful in a social sense and in gaining strength and inspiration from other Muslims for the convert, who may feel a sense of being part of the Ummah or worldwide Muslim community as a result.
- On the other hand, it may be argued that it is what is felt in the heart that matters. Some people at the time of the Prophet said the shahadah out aloud and read prayers, but were known as hypocrites, because they were doing the actions for public show, but did not really believe in the faith. They were condemned as false. Therefore, believing privately in the meaning of the shahadah might be said to be more important and mean more at a personal level.
- The early Muslim community under Muhammad were persecuted in Makkah and kept their faith private at first. However, this was still an important period during which they gained strength to later make their faith public. There may be some Muslims today persecuted for their faith who, as a result, keep it private, but it still means a lot to them.
- Others might argue in a modern, secular society that religion should be your own private affair and there should be no need to make public professions of faith.

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

## Section B

3. (a) Outline the nature and purpose of three different types of prayer in Islam.

[AO1 25]

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

- Candidates should clearly identify three different types of prayer in Islam and give an overview of the nature and purpose of each one.
- Different types of prayer should be identified. Those named in this part of the specification are: salah; tahajjud (night prayer); nafila (extra); du'a (cry out); tasbih (glorify); wird (Sufi prayer) and Jummah (Friday) prayers. Other types of prayer include funeral prayers; traveller's prayers/ combined prayers; tarawih prayers in Ramadan; Id prayers; prayer for rain; prayer for; prayer according to different sects such as Shi'a and prayers visiting holy sites or tombs.
- Salah usually refers to the five daily prayers which fulfils the requirements of the second pillar of Islam. These involve repeating several units of standing, bowing and prostrating, called a rakah, at appointed times during the day. The ritual was set by the example of Muhammad and helps Muslims put aside worldly concerns and focus on God throughout the day.
- Du'a are additional requests to God, often personal. Du'a prayers are usually said after salah prayers with hands cupped upwards and said silently as personal requests to God. Du'a prayers enable a Muslim to develop a deeper faith in God by sharing their problems and feel relief in the confidence that God is watching over them.
- Jummah (Friday) prayers are congregational prayers which unites the Ummah and enables the Imam to give a sermon to teach and guide the faithful.
- Tahajjud (night prayers) are optional prayers to help a Muslim feel closer to God. It is believed that the early hours are the time when God listens and is near to them, in appreciation for the extra effort they have made to pray when they could be sleeping.
- Nafila (extra prayers) are to gain extra reward from Allah. They are additional units of rakah often said before or after the five daily prayers, which some Muslims do with future Judgement in mind, or simply to follow the example of Muhammad or further deepen their devotion.
- Tasbih (glorify) is to focus and meditate upon God. It is the practice of counting prayer beads whilst reciting the names of Allah or simply the word Allah.
- Wird (Sufi prayer) help a Sufi develop a deeper relationship with God through spiritual discipline. This is directed under the guidance of a murshid in a Sufi tariqa order.

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

**(b) 'Prayer is nothing more than a ritualistic act of piety.'**

**Evaluate this view with reference to Islam.**

**[AO2 25]**

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

- Most prayers in Islam, and particularly the five daily prayers, are based on a unit called a rakah. This follows a very precise set of actions, carried out in almost identical fashion by Muslims around the world. They begin with praising God by holding hands to the ears and saying God is great in Arabic. The prayers are recited in Arabic, including Sura Fatiah from the Qur'an, and specific movements are made at various points in the routine. The way in which this is done constitutes a ritualistic practice.
- Prayer is also an act of piety. During prayer, Muslims prostrate themselves by placing their forehead on the ground to show humility and obedience towards Allah. The very act of setting aside time to devote to God five times a day and putting aside worldly concerns may be considered an act of piety.
- So, it could be argued that prayer is indeed a ritualistic act of piety. However, the statement suggests that is all that it is, inviting responses to qualify this with some measurement about how important ritual piety is and whether there are any other important functions of prayer in Islam.
- An essential element of prayer is to make one's intention to dedicate the prayer to God by saying the niyyah, without which the prayer is considered invalid. It is a tradition that all actions in Islam are judged according to the intentions behind them. Therefore, it could be argued that ritual piety is not a function of prayer at all, it is the intention behind it that matters.
- Some Muslims religiously carry out the five daily prayers at set times daily and find the ritualistic piety a great source of strength which helps focus their faith and bring order and routine to their lives, helping to lead them on the straight path of morality. So, to them prayer is ritual piety and more besides.
- Sufi Muslims might agree that prayer is an important act of ritual piety but the purpose is to rise through stations in the arc of ascent towards a deeper union with God. For those reaching higher states of God-consciousness the rituals might become less important.
- The Prophet criticised those who carried out the actions of prayer but did not really believe in Islam, so were labelled hypocrites. This could be taken to mean that the rituals of prayer are inadequate on their own and so prayer is more than ritual piety.

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

4. (a) **Outline the religious, social and political role of masjids (mosques) in the UK today.**

[AO1 25]

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

- This question is focused on masjids in the UK and requires coverage of religious, social and political functions. Candidates should specifically address these to make their responses relevant.
- Masjids are a focal point for the religious activities of Muslim communities. The five daily prayers are organised in masjids, with timetables provided and services held at the right times. Within masjids clean places are laid out with facilities for washing. The Qur'an is recited and prayers led by the Imam, helping to encourage the faithful to observe their prayers and lead them in prayer.
- Masjids are a place where congregational prayer takes place especially on Fridays and for Id prayers. They also provide educational facilities where children are sent to learn their prayers and read Arabic. Therefore, masjids are a focus of the religious life of the community. Other services, such as funeral prayers, are also arranged, as is support for the grieving, which leads to the social role of the masjid.
- Masjids support minority communities. This is especially important in countries such as the UK where many Muslims live as a minority amongst people of other faiths or none. Muslims may discuss matters after prayer and feel strengthened and part of the Ummah, the one world-wide community of Muslims.
- Masjids bring together communities for Id prayers, at which Muslims embrace each other and organise the sharing of meat. Many host Iftar meals in Ramadan to share food together at the end of a day's fasting. Some provide support for those in the congregation who need help or organise charity for those in other countries.
- The social role of masjids varies for women. Many masjids have areas for women but facilitate social interaction within each area. Some do not provide areas for women; others provide mixed facilities.
- Masjids may have certain political roles. Most mosques in the UK are affiliated to the Muslim Council of Britain which represents Muslims at various state occasions and puts forward views to the government about various issues.
- Masjids may provide a forum for local political issues. Muslims may want to come to mosques to debate and discuss national and international issues, foreign policy and their experiences of Islamophobia and how to counter it.
- There are differences of opinion: some masjids choosing to steer clear of politics and others engaging with local matters to become involved in local communities.

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

**(b) 'Prostration is the most important purpose of the masjid.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 25]**

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

- In Islam, the five daily prayers include following a series of actions known as a rakah. Central to this is the act of prostrating the forehead on the ground in obedience and submission to God. Masjids provide a clean place with mats facing the Quiblah in Makkah, to enable prostration to take place, suggesting that nothing is more important.
- However, masjids also have other roles. An Imam delivers a sermon on Fridays to guide the faithful and masjids usually run classes to teach Muslims, particularly children, how to say their prayers and read the Qur'an in Arabic. The community may be strengthened and charity appeals organised. The question here is the relative importance of each function and whether providing a place of prostration is the most important function of all.
- The five daily prayers are seen as compulsory and a pillar of Islam. They require a clean place to prostrate. Prayer in congregation is regarded as gaining twenty-seven times more reward than prayer alone; Jummah prayers on Fridays are always said in congregation. Therefore, it could be argued that providing this is the most important function of a masjid.
- However, without making ablution before prayer (wudu) the prayer might not be considered valid, so masjids also provide wudu facilities. A sermon is part of Friday prayers, for which a mimbar (pulpit) is provided; and a mihrab (niche) marks the direction of prayer, without which Muslims might not know which direction to pray in. It could be argued that all these functions are important, not just prostration.
- Without knowing how to pray, or understanding the main beliefs, it could be questioned whether prayer has true meaning. Therefore, it could be argued that the functions of teaching and guiding Muslims carried out by masjids, providing support and encouragement, teaching Arabic and prayer and so on, are more important.
- Whilst prostration is important, it can be carried out elsewhere. For many Muslims, the opportunity to meet socially and support each other in the Muslim faith, help raise money for charity and develop a sense of feeling part of the Ummah, is something they might not find elsewhere especially when living in a predominantly non-Muslim society such as the UK. So, some might see social functions as more important.

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

**5. (a) Examine the nature of the Qur'an as the final revelation for Muslims.**

**[AO1 25]**

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

- Candidates should respond by looking at the nature of the Qur'an in detail. They should consider its qualities as the final revelation and the implications of this for the beliefs of Muslims.
- The Qur'an is regarded by Muslims as the last and final message from Allah to humankind. It was intended to lead people to the straight path of monotheism, by rejecting idolatry. Hearers are repeatedly asked to believe in: Tawhid, the Oneness of God; Risalah, Prophethood; and, Akhirah, Judgement and life in the hereafter.
- The nature of the Qur'an may be evidenced from specific passages set in the specification. Sura 15:9 refers to the message being guarded against corruption. Muslims believe that earlier revelations were corrupted as people turned away from them and returned to the worship of idols. The Qur'an is intended to be the final revelation to overcome this corruption.
- Sura 51:47 refers to the power and skill of the Creator of the Qur'an. The nature of the Qur'an as a message containing vocative poetic verses of beauty were the creation of a divine being beyond human capability.
- Sura 96: 1-5, the first verses of the Qur'an to be revealed on the Night of Power, explain that it is a book of guidance to teach humankind by the pen what they did not know.
- Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a miracle. It cannot be imitated (i'jaz). It contains the actual, phonic words of Allah about eternal truth. It is an exact copy of the heavenly version held by Allah in heaven, so is clearly regarded as a divine book.
- As Allah's speech, the Qur'an instructs and guides Muhammad to take certain actions, such as to have confidence in victory at the Battle of Badr against a superior force. Muhammad is not an author but a messenger to pass on the Qur'an. It also contains general guidance about the main beliefs in Islam.
- The Qur'an is not different from earlier revelations – they all pertain to the same truth, but all were given to specific communities which need to be guided. However, it is the Qur'an which is the last and only complete revelation surviving today.
- The Qur'an is not organised in any traditional way and often refers to matters in terms which may be understood metaphorically or in a mystical rather than legal sense. This helps to emphasise its divine origin.

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

- (b) **'For Muslims, the Qur'an is as relevant today as it always has been.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 25]**

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

- The Qur'an was revealed in the context of early seventh century Arabia, addressing the idolatry and immorality of the tribes who lived at that time. Some parts of the Qur'an refer quite specifically to issues which would have been live at the time, and to the conduct and morality of the peoples living in Makkah and Madinah. There are parts which issue guidance to Muhammad about how to approach tribal battles. It could be argued that the Qur'an, therefore, had every relevance to seventh century Arabia but has limited relevance today.
- However, the Qur'an is regarded as the last and final message for humankind by Muslims, so surely should be equally relevant for all time. It contains messages about belief in tawhid (Oneness of God), Risalah (Prophethood) and akhirah (life after death), the main beliefs which societies have been called to accept through history at various times in Muslim tradition. These are just as relevant today as ever.
- Muslims may struggle to find guidance for some modern issues from the Qur'an. Society has changed so much, and technology advanced. Issues of genetic engineering, abortion and other aspects of medical ethics simply did not exist at the time of the revelation so there is no specific guidance given. Muslims might use other sources to help guide them, such as the consensus of scholars (ijma) and analogy (qiyas) or reasoning and individual interpretation to help inform decision making today.
- On the other hand, it may be argued that something must underpin decisions today, even if specific guidance is not to be found in the Qur'an. Scholars may look for analogy with similar situations or draw general guiding principles from the text of the holy book because it is regarded as sacred and beyond question. It has moral authority which scholars preaching from their own opinions might not have today.
- Some Muslims argue that the Qur'an should be interpreted literally and that Muslims today should return to following the Qur'an more closely, as they see it, in the modern world, in order to strengthen their faith. Others see Islam in need of reform and the main principles of faith can be maintained whilst reinterpreting the Qur'an to be applied to situations facing the modern world.

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