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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2022**

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

**2120UB0-1**

## **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 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.

## AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 15 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>13-15 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 shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</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 /vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 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 shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</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> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 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 shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</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> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 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>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</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> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 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>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</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> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. A maximum of 1 mark 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>

Band	<p align="center"><b>Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 15 marks</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i></p>
5	<p align="center"><b>13-15 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>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</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> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
4	<p align="center"><b>10-12 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 response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</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> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
3	<p align="center"><b>7-9 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>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</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> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
2	<p align="center"><b>4-6 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>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</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> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
1	<p align="center"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</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 grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

**GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES – UNIT 1**  
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To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

**Section A**

1. (a) Explain the nature and purpose of different types of giving in Islam. [AO1 15]

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

- **Sadaqat**  
This is giving in excess of zakah. It is giving freely from one's own heart and not in response to a specific religious duty. Sadaqat today has come to mean any voluntary giving in the broadest sense. Sadaqat is encouraged as an act that brings merit and spiritual benefit when practised on a regular basis, bringing divine favour and an investment in preparation for the afterlife.
- **Zakah**  
Zakah is sometimes understood as an act that 'purifies', so it is defined as 'giving for the sake of purification'. This is based on Sura 9:103. Zakah is a pillar of Islamic teachings. Zakah requires 2.5 % of an individual's wealth and assets based on an annual average. There are certain exceptions for the poor. Money is the most common form of zakah, but land and goods/offering still persist in certain parts of the world. Muslim Aid identifies that it is the broad category of the 'poor and needy' that can receive zakah, but there are specific guidelines that have been developed based upon Qur'anic teaching. The poor and needy are thus defined as: people that 'may have some wealth and funds but it is not enough'; the destitute who 'have no wealth or funds ... living their life on the very basics necessities of life'; people who collect zakah and distribute it; converts to Islam; people in debt who cannot repay it; and, people on journeys who have run out of money. In addition, there are guidelines as to what zakah cannot be used for, including: building mosques; to bury the dead; and, to clear a debt of one that has died.
- **Khums**  
The concept of khums originated with idea of war booty at the time of Muhammad, 20% of which went to Muhammad and his family. Indeed, the word khums means 'a fifth'. Although this was not really practised widely after the death of Muhammad, it has become an important means of financial support in Shi'ism in particular for the leaders who coordinate its distribution. Khums is much broader than zakah in that it is more specifically defined than just surplus income. It covers all sorts of earnings, for example, originally things such as profits from investments in lands, riches from war and discovered treasure. Today, like zakah, it is calculated after basic needs have been met and covers all business investments, trading, agriculture, savings and earnings, inheritance and gifts.

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

**(b) 'Support for the poor is the basis of Islam.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

There are different reasons for giving, but the issue here is whether or not 'support for the poor' is the main reason. Candidates may use some of the lines of reasoning below to support their argument.

- One line of argument is that it may be the immediate reason. Islam has always had a major concern with equality and a concern for those in need. This stems back from the time of Muhammad when his radical social teachings expressed a concern for orphans, widows and the poor.
- In support of this would be the argument that Muhammad gave to the poor in establishing the pillar of almsgiving. This is compulsory and also the bare minimum. Extra giving is both encouraged and commended.
- Another line of reasoning is that concern for the poor is certainly an important aspect of Islam. The theme of concern for the poor runs through four of the five practices in that after fasting the festival of Id-ul-Fitr remembers the poor, after Hajj the festival of Id-ul-Adha gives food to the poor and prayers for the poor are often given.
- A strong argument would be, then, that it appears to be a major focus of the teachings of Muhammad.
- A final line of reasoning in support of the above arguments could be that the establishment of many Muslim charities with a clear emphasis on the poor, for example, Muslim Aid, Islamic Relief, Muslim Hands, and the Ummah Welfare Trust demonstrate that giving seems to be focused on the poor.
- Nonetheless, there is a strong counter argument based upon the reasoning that it is 'obedience' that is the main basis for Islam due to a Muslim being one who submits, that is, submission to the one God Allah and recognition of Muhammad as seal of the prophets.
- There could be strong support for the reasoning that, Islam, following Muhammad's example, has concern for any social injustice. For example, Muhammad did much for the status of women and orphans, the neglected in society, and so this can be applied today to include giving to help the abused and those who are in need of medical treatment and not just the poor.
- An alternative perspective and argument could be that there are spiritual benefits to giving for the individuals and communities involved: giving is a demonstration of Allah's compassion through the giver; it encourages personal sacrifice and a concern for others; and, for the individual and communal benefits of physical and spiritual rewards.
- One could argue that concern for the poor may be the main reason for giving, but not the only one. The main reason does not mean it is the priority and giving should always extend beyond the poor: giving to the poor is a minimum expectation.

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



2. (a) **Examine how three of the five categories of action may guide Muslims during life.** [AO1 15]

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

Candidates can explain, with examples to support their explanations any three from the following five categories:

- **Fard or wajib (obligatory):** Actions that are necessary to comply with. In applying this to Muslim life this involves the following areas: observing 5 pillars; eating halal food; maintaining a high standard of personal hygiene; not allowing debt; and, community obligations. These fard actions are mainly individual but the last one is collective. Community responsibilities include the performance of funeral prayers. Fard actions are binding and are all clearly indicated in the Qur'an and the actions of Muhammad. As such, they are rewarded when followed, whereas to neglect fard acts would mean punishment, if not in this life then in the afterlife.
- **Mustahab (preferred, commendable):** actions that are seen as noble. In applying this to Muslim life this involves the following areas: male circumcision; extra prayers; visiting friends and family; tidy room; correct funeral rites; marriage; looking after parents.
- **Halal/mubah (permissible):** actions that are almost neutral. In applying this to Muslim life this involves the following areas: anything that is not in the other categories and covers freedom of personal choice and preference for things. The term mubah is synonymous with the more popular use of the term halal to describe this category. Halal literally means 'blessed', in other words, divinely allowed. Mubah or halal acts are neutral in that there is no reward for acting within this category, nor any risk of sin or punishment.
- **Makruh (discouraged, reprehensible)** are seen as bad actions although not forbidden. In applying this to Muslim life this involves the following areas: urinating in stagnant water; sleeping late in the morning; certain rules during prayer, e.g. cannot play with clothing or body, move head left or right or crack fingers; breathing into a beaker; abortion. There is no set punishment for such actions, but they are seen as unvirtuous and un-Islamic.
- **Haram (absolutely forbidden):** things that under no circumstances are allowed. In applying this to Muslim life this involves the following areas: drinking alcohol; eating pork; killing innocents; adultery; acts of homosexuality; shirk; euthanasia.

Candidates may explain each in turn or include the three within a general discussion of the role of the categories within Islamic teaching.

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

**(b) 'The five categories are not a clear enough guide for Muslim life.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

The five categories are intended to support Muslim living but the issue here is whether or not they are 'a clear guide'.

- One line of argument is that the five categories make it simple for Muslims to follow their daily life without constantly having to refer to the full body of Islamic teaching.
- Another line of reasoning is that some categories are very clear, for example, fard and haram are the main categories that highlight crucial information.
- Nonetheless, there is a strong counter argument based upon the reasoning that viewing them as rigid laws can be the cause of confusion and a lack of clarity. For example, the coffee debate illustrates this fact well where in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in Makkah, and in other places such as Cairo, coffee drinking was acceptable; however, concerned with the behaviour that such social gatherings could lead to and the fact that coffee was an intoxicant, it was prohibited (haram). Nonetheless, later coffee was tentatively re-established as mustabah. This indeed questions the stability of the categories.
- However, in contrast to this the fact they were developed in the first place was due to the recognition of their being confusion; therefore it could be argued that they are a stage ahead of a state of confusion and more a positive move towards clarity. Where else could a Muslim turn to other than the rulings of learned Islamic scholars? This would be too complicated a matter. Indeed, if they are applied thoughtfully and carefully then they can be seen as very useful as a guide for today.
- An alternative perspective and view could be that some categories are unclear because there are also some modern medical issues that are not dealt with by the five categories, for example, matters of bioethics. There are also arguments about homosexuality within Islam.
- A strong argument to take would be that it is the example of Muhammad's sunna that should be the most useful guide primarily and it is this that brings clarity. The categories are there because there was some confusion in the first place and so are not really the first place to look.
- Another argument could be that there can be confusion when behaviour incorporates more than one category – there is a principle when one action devalues another it can become haram when in itself it is not. For example, conducting business during Friday prayers. In addition, a neutral act can become meritorious depending upon intention.
- It could be suggested that to see the five categories as a 'whole' is illogical, and certainly to assume that because some are clearer than others seems to devalue the categories as a whole. Indeed, it appears to be that their use in the pursuit of clarity is the real purpose for developing them so that they are a clear guide.

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

## Section B

3. (a) Explain how the Hijrah (migration) to Madinah influenced the development of Islam. [AO1 15]

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

- We can identify and summarise the key factors that led to the Hijrah as follows: persecution; threats on life; inability to practise Islam freely; lack of influence and spread of Islam; continued growing opposition from leading Makkans.
- The person and message of Muhammad was seen as a threat to religious beliefs, to trade, to ancestors and to the status of Makkan leaders.
- Attempts to migrate to Taif had failed; Muhammad had made converts from Madinah at trade fairs and saw this as a sign from God.
- Muhammad and his followers were in a desperate situation. They feared for their lives. There was only one solution, and this was to flee for safety, to a place beyond the reach of persecution and oppression.
- It was secretly orchestrated and executed. It is so important an event to Muslims that it marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. It is called the 'Hijrah' ('flight') and was significant for the development of Islam because Muhammad's life was saved.
- It was a psychological turning point of inestimable importance transforming a 'faith minority' into a community and eventually an empire.
- The Hijrah was just as much a warm welcome into a new world. It was a completely different environment in Madinah.
- Madinah was offering an environment in which to establish formal practices of Islam.
- In addition, Muhammad was desired as an arbitrator and offered high rank and status if he were to choose to leave Makkah and settle in Madinah.
- Most important of all, just as Allah provided protection for the 'escape', it is believed that such an environment conducive to the development of Islam in Madinah was also the will of Allah.
- We can get an idea of how Islam developed from the Suras in the Qur'an. They contain laws to govern the Muslim community: pillars of Islam; rite and ritual; marriage; commerce; finance; international relations; war/peace; rules regarding hypocrites and 'people of the Book'.

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

**(b) 'The Hijrah to Madinah was essential for establishing Islam.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- There is a clear contrast between Mecca and Madinah in the early history of Islam in relation to 'implications' that each environment had for the establishment and growth of Islam.
- Muhammad in Mecca had acted as a missionary to his pagan kinsmen. The Medinan situation demanded other measures to keep the recently formed Muslim community intact, secure from external threat or sabotage from within.
- Muhammad recognised the differences and made most of the opportunity to manipulate the essential support that he had in Madinah.
- Muhammad was well aware of the 'superficial' allegiance to Islam engendered by the constitution of Medina. Many, however, embraced Islam only in a nominal sense while remaining attached to pagan practices.
- Muhammad understood that it would take several generations to 'Islamise' the new adherents. This supports the view that Madinah was essential for a whole-hearted embrace of Islam.
- In addition, Aslan argues that this attitude of making the best of support and building a community was a typical Arab approach, rather than it being specific to Muhammad or Islamic ideas
- Despite its ingenuity, Muhammad's community was still an Arab institution based on Arab notions of tribal society. There was simply no alternative model of social organisation in seventh-century Arabia, save for monarchy.
- Since there are so many similarities between the Ummah and traditional tribal society, that Muhammad himself saw the Ummah as 'a tribe, though a new and radically innovative one'. This suggests that Madinah was ideal for Islam to establish itself, but not necessarily to grow.
- Whatever the case may be, it is Muhammad's radical religious, social and economic reforms enabled 'a new kind of society, the likes of which had never been seen in Arabia'.
- Madinah under Muhammad was a reworking of society along Islamic precepts, be they moral, ethical or socio-political.
- The key loyalty was not loyalty to the tribe, as had been the case in pre-Islamic Mecca, but a common belief in one God. Therefore, what actually developed in Madinah was actually an ideal model of Islam.

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

**4. (a) Examine Islamic teachings about shahadah (bearing witness). [AO1 15]**

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

- The shahadah is as follows: “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”
- The term ‘shahadah’ literally means witness, evidence or testimony. It is derived from the terms ‘ash-shadu’ above (“I declare” or “I bear witness”).
- Shahadah is the ultimate declaration of faith for Islam. It is more than a creed or statement of belief.
- The first part of the shahadah affirms the Islamic concept of tawhid because it includes the statement that Allah has no equals. Shahadah clearly recognises that tawhid is the first and foremost belief for Muslims. Tawhid is so vital to faith that it must be ‘declared’.
- It is not just a matter of personal belief, but rather a public testimony of truth.
- For a Muslim it is a declaration of universal truth. It is therefore, a Muslim duty, to declare the shahadah. One could even go as far to say that to ‘bear witness’ is almost tantamount to worldly, religious and legal verification that it is beyond question, in other words, a ‘proof’.
- The shahadah is used as a means of recognising conversion. A convert must repeat the shahadah twice with intent in front of witnesses to become a Muslim. In this sense it is a psychological mechanism reflecting a shift of perspective and a transition in being.
- Despite being crucial to the act of conversion it is also vital that this state of mind be maintained and a disciplined approach to life adopted following it. Converts repeat this statement twice with sincerity and then they belong to Islam.
- It is often returned to and ‘renewed’ daily by Muslims. It is for Muslims a reflection of eternal fact and not simply a ‘belief’.
- It is whispered to a newborn child at birth, it is recited at death to the dying, and it has a key role in both prayer and worship.
- It is argued that shahadah brings together all the other four Pillars and is the basis for all articles of faith in Islam.
- It would therefore be a mistake to think of the shahadah as simply something that is there to declare oneself Muslim.
- The shahadah is there as a constant reminder of the oneness of God, the crucial role of Muhammad as ‘seal’ of the prophets but most importantly to facilitate God-consciousness.
- The shahadah puts Allah above all. God is first in one’s life as a Muslim. A constant, mindful awareness of this in every aspect and action of daily life is the goal of every Muslim devotee.

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

**(b) 'The shahadah is meaningless unless it is declared in public.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- The shahadah is the basis of Muslim faith. Some scholars would even say that it 'encapsulates' the very essence of Islamic theology. Shahadah, however, is on the whole, a 'declaration', a statement made that clarifies one's faith and, for a Muslim, declares an essential truth. Indeed, it is an act of declaration and it is intended as such.
- The question then arises, is it more to do with private thoughts, intentions and belief, or, it is more to do with making a statement for the benefit of others?
- One line of argument would be that the shahadah is indeed a statement made that underlines the importance of personal faith. For an individual Muslims it reminds them that they should put Allah above all. Allah is first in one's life as a Muslim not just in religious matters but in matters that pertain to all aspects of life. A constant, mindful awareness of Allah's unique and ultimate status in every aspect and action of daily life is the goal of every Muslim devotee. As Maqsood confirms: 'It involves far more than words; your whole life must back up what has been declared.'
- Supporting this line of argument, is the fact that the shahadah is integrated within personal aspects of a Muslim life, notably on landmark occasions when it is often recited. For example, at birth it is whispered into a baby's ear; it is recited to those who are nearing death; but it also plays an integral role in aspects of prayer and worship. It is almost as if it were a personal landmark, or that it indicates a doorway or entrance for access to Muslim faith and to Allah.
- However, in the same way in that it provides access to Allah's graciousness, it is also firmly based in the act of conversion, whereby a convert only has to state the shahadah in all sincerity to become Muslim. The area of conversion is where the dual nature of the shahadah is revealed. Although one does not have to say the shahadah in front of anyone to be a Muslim (as Allah knows the hearts of all), in order to be technically recognised by the Ummah as Muslim, one needs to bear witness in front of either two witnesses or the Imam. In this sense, one could argue it is more a public statement of faith. It is, in essence, an action.
- In addition, one could argue that the importance of 'bearing witness' has a sort of a proselytising feel to it, an urge to declare and share Allah's grace which makes it essentially of public importance. In the same way the notion of 'bearing witness' has parallels with Arabic legal practices involving witnesses to establish the truth. This legal parallel once again suggests the importance of affirmation of the shahadah.
- It would appear, then, that the shahadah tends to have both a dual nature and purpose. The extent to which the personal faith aspect is more important than the public testimony aspect is determined not by its nature but clearly dictated by the context in which it is recited.

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

5. (a) Explain the nature and purpose of angels in Islam.

[AO1 15]

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

- The Islamic belief in angels is one of the central teachings of Islam along with the nature of Allah, prophethood, judgement, predestination, afterlife and revelation.
- A belief in angels is considered one of the six major beliefs.
- Angels are regarded as intermediaries sent directly from Allah who obey his commands in all things.
- If angels did not exist then revelation to humanity from Allah would be impossible.
- All angels have a spiritual role in Paradise and the blessed will be in Paradise with these angels, who are the keepers of Paradise. Angels are crucial to Islam.
- The idea of a God who is so perfect and transcendent and yet needs to communicate with humanity and display His Immanence is accounted for through angels.
- Angels are made of light, they are sexless and they have consciousness and full awareness of all matters but they do not have free will. As such, they are totally obedient, but this does not mean that they are perfect since only Allah is perfect.
- Physically, they have hands and wings, but they do not need to eat.
- Angels in Islam are “mirrors” in that they reflect the divine essence, enabling people to have a glimpse of this reflection and know God.
- In this sense, it is believed that the existence of angels reflects people’s needs and not those of Allah.
- In Islam there are special roles for named angels:
- **Israfil** is the angel who will blow the trumpet from a holy rock in Jerusalem to announce the Day of Judgement – Akhirah.
- **Jibril** is the angel of revelations, obviously significant for the crucial role in revealing the Qur’an to Muhammad on the Night of Power.
- **Mikail** is seen as an equal of Jibril and is generally seen as the sustainer of creatures and the natural world.
- There is also an Angel of Death that separates souls from their bodies; souls remain in Barzakh, an intermediate state beyond all concept of space and time, and rejoin their bodies on the Final Day of Resurrection and Judgement. Another pair of angels test Muslims in the grave. When souls pass to heaven there will be companies of angels to witness this event.
- There are also pairs of angels with specific roles: there are two ‘recording angels’ that sit on an individual’s shoulders and write down each action that a person performs during life. These actions are the basis for the book of deeds that are handed to an individual on judgement day and determine whether or not they enter heaven or live a life of eternal torment in hell, depending on which hand they are given their deeds in. Left signifies hell and right heaven.

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

**(b) 'Angels do not play a vital role in Islam today.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Islam has a very developed doctrine with regards to angels, which is at the heart of Islamic teachings and recognised as one of the main teachings and beliefs of Islam. The question really is, has the concept of an angel retained its importance today as an essential element of Islamic teaching?
- A line of argument that indicates the relative unimportance of angels to the Islamic faith would be to stress the fact that Muhammad, as the Seal of Prophets, brought with him the final revelation. Does this mean that the role of angels as intermediaries is at an end? Certainly, one does not need the role of an angel for conversion to, or belief in Allah and Muhammad as the prophet of Allah. Indeed, the gift of the Qur'an is final.
- In addition, one could argue that the true role of angels is to serve and to praise Allah; their purpose and function is heavenly and not mundane. Although there are recording angels, they have no impact or influence on any conscious choices made; the guide now is clearly the Qur'an.
- Finally, angels are creatures of 'mythology' and are symbolic for some; such an argument suggests that a belief in angels is not necessary and peripheral to the needs of Muslims, as only serves as an illustration for teaching purposes where relevant.
- In contrast to this line of thinking, however, is the fundamental Islamic acceptance of the articles of faith. A belief in angels is therefore essential. Added to this argument, as support, is the fact that Islam does have a very detailed and developed teaching about angels. For instance, to forget to acknowledge the importance of Jibril allows the potential for Muslims to lose the significance of Allah's transcendence, and thus the fact that humanity has a need for intermediaries if they have any hope of receiving the message of Islam.
- There are also clear Qur'anic references to angels and a very detailed account in Islamic teachings of their specific names and mundane duties. Mikail is there as sustainer for humans even today; the recording angels are busy as we write; the angel of death is poised to act whenever a person is close to death; and, the ultimate role is still yet to come on the Day of Final Judgement when several angels are involved with events.
- It would seem, then, that a temptation to disregard angels as unessential for Islam is directly related to the notion of the apparent inactivity since the final revelation and the Day of Final Judgement. However, this is not entirely true and a belief in angels, according to Islam should be avoided at one's peril. Despite the temptation to not ascribe equal value to the teachings about angels in Islam to other teachings, it must be remembered that their place as one of the fundamental teachings in Islam, namely as an article of faith, is there for this very reason. One could even suggest that for a Muslim, an emphasis on angels is necessary to remind a Muslim of their constant spiritual activity and hence their importance?

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