

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

J625

For first teaching in 2016

J625/07 Summer 2022 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 7 series overview	4
Question 1 (a)	5
Question 1 (b)	5
Question 1 (c)	6
Question 1 (d)	6
Question 2 (a)	7
Question 2 (b)	8
Question 2 (c)	8
Question 2 (d)	10
Question 3 (a)	11
Question 3 (b)	11
Question 3 (c)	12
Question 3 (d)*	12
Question 4 (a)	15
Question 4 (b)	16
Question 4 (c)	17
Question 4 (d)*	17

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

Paper 7 series overview

GCSE Religious Studies J625/07 assesses Religion, philosophy and ethics in the modern world from a Muslim perspective. Candidates studied four main themes: Relationships and families, The existence of Allah; Religion, peace and conflict and Dialogue within and between religions and non-religious beliefs and were assessed by a compulsory question on each theme, each following the same four-part structure.

Overall, the standard was comparable to the last time the series was sat by a similar number of candidates in 2019.

Questions 1 and 3, on the topics of relationships and families and religion, peace, and conflict, were better answered. Questions 2 and 4, on the topics of the existence of God and dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes, proved more challenging for many candidates.

Questions set included the requirement to explain key words and concepts; compare different Muslim attitudes towards various issues; refer to sources of wisdom and authority and respond to statements including reference to different points of view.

There were a variety of responses which achieved differentiation. However, there was a lack of responses at the highest levels of response, particularly Level 4 for AO2, for the 12-mark part (d) questions.

The topics of same-sex marriage, pre-marital sex, divorce, injustice, and opinions about taking a life had all clearly been well taught. Areas candidates and centres might focus further on include the role of church schools, reasons for belief in God, common values, examples of proselytising and ecstatic experiences.

Candidates referred well to the Qur'an as a source of wisdom as well as occasional reference to Imams, Islamic tradition, the sayings of Muhammad (Hadith), Shariah law and its concepts, and the opinions of Islamic scholars.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly understood meanings of key words from the specification, and words used in statements they were asked to respond to • used technical words correctly and appropriately • frequently referred to sources of wisdom and authority in part (c) and part (d) responses, including quotations • referred to a range of views or perspectives, especially where different attitudes were required and in part (d) questions • included a conclusion weighing up arguments at the end of the response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not understand key words such as proselyte or ecstatic, so were unable to write correct responses to these questions • missed out some questions, possibly because they did not manage their time well or did not have the confidence to attempt some • wrote only one 'attitude' when asked to compare or identify several, or wrote only one point of view in part (d) questions • did not write a conclusion to part (d) questions, leaving their argument unfinished • did not clearly refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

Question 1 (a)

1 Relationships and families

(a) Describe **one** way in which a Muslim might respond to divorce.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Most candidates responded to this well. The question was not about how a divorce takes place, which some candidates wrote, but about responses to the idea. Various responses included the idea that Muslims might see it as disliked, according to a tradition of Muhammad, and elaborated on this. Some mentioned that a response could be to gain help and support from an Imam or member of the community, who might help ensure fair separation based on the previously agreed contract (*nikkah*) and provide counselling and support.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Describe different Muslim attitudes towards same-sex marriage.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [6]

Most candidates noticed the word different in the question and included more than one attitude towards same sex marriage in their responses. Most wrote that many disapproved of same-sex marriages and quoted the Qur'an to explain this. Another perspective was a more liberal attitude which accepted same-sex marriages according to the culture of the present day. Overall, most candidates answered this question well.

Exemplar 2

Fair + Just

'merciful'

forgiving

Trust

Problems

Test

Dreams, prayers, Quran

(c) Explain Muslim beliefs about the relationship between Allah and human suffering.

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer.

Muslims believe that the relationship between them and Allah is fair and just as Allah is 'merciful', forgiving, and won't let his 'servants' down. Muslims believe that they can experience Allah through ~~prayer~~ prayer, dreams and visions where Allah might give them a clear message.

Muslims believe that Allah is "afaw" judge and won't let injustice occur as he says "I see what you see". Suggesting he is "allknowing". Human suffering is part of a test by Allah as "Allah only tests those he loves the most. Allah sends tests to see how much faith and ~~trust~~ trust Muslims have in him and if they would be able to cope with it. It also challenges their belief and Imaan as well as their strength and knowledge and how much they'd be able to cope it. Allah doesn't burden a soul beyond what it can bear". Allah [6]

He assures his believers in the Quran and will only give them a test which they can bear and will be able to cope with.

This question could involve reference to a variety of different beliefs and shades of interpretation, but whichever way a candidate answers, it is necessary to refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

The response in Exemplar 2 refers to the authority of Allah and the names of Allah and provides a quote from Islamic tradition about life being a test. This is developed further by another tradition about suffering not being more than a believer can bear, bringing the response back to Allah's nature as fair. The challenge to belief adds a further dimension: that suffering challenges Muslims to believe.

This is a thoughtful response which brings in several perspectives and several traditions of wisdom and authority, so achieves Level 3, 6 marks out of 6.

Question 2 (d)

(d) 'Muslims do **not** need reasons to believe in Allah.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs, teachings and practices within Islam.
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Islam. **[15]**

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar **[3]**

The statement here was about 'reasons' to believe in Allah, but many candidates mistook this and thought the statement was about whether Muslims believe in Allah or not and argued that of course they did. Some argued that, on the one hand Muslims submit to Allah who they cannot see, so this is an act of faith without need of reason. On the other hand, Muhammad provided reasons to try to persuade the people to believe in Allah, so it could be regarded as legitimate to have reasons to believe.

Assessment for learning



It is important to focus on the exact wording of the statement. Every word is there for a reason. In this statement, the word 'reasons' is critical: the statement is asking about reasons rather than the belief in Allah. Therefore, candidates who discussed reasons wrote responses which addressed the statement whereas those who explained the belief were less focused.

Question 3 (a)

3 Religion, peace and conflict

(a) State **three** examples of injustice for Muslims.

1

.....

2

.....

3

.....

[3]

This was quite well answered, with lots of different examples cited, including bans on wearing the head scarf (hijab) as an injustice for Muslim women. Generally, injustices such as racism, with examples, were mentioned. Some gave specific examples of injustice or even persecution in different parts of the world and these were creditable.

Question 3 (b)

(b) Outline the relationship between Islam and politics in the 21st century.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

[6]

Most candidates referred exclusively to jihad. A few gave an overview of politics and referred to prominent Muslims in politics in Britain today. Some mentioned the importance of modern issues and how Muslims could represent their views on which laws are made if they become involved in politics. Most candidates made a limited response to this question due to the narrow way the topic was interpreted, usually only about jihad.

Question 3 (c)

(c) Explain why Muslims differ in their attitudes to the concept of forgiveness.

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [6]

Most candidates mentioned two different attitudes: first, that a person should be punished if they did wrong, according to God’s commands, with reference to the authority of the Qur’an or the Shariah. Second, that many preferred to forgive, based on the wisdom of Muhammad’s example, contained in his sayings in the Hadith. Some said the attitude might vary according to their personal experience and if they had been a victim of something; others that forgiveness should be referred directly to God. This question was generally well answered.

Question 3 (d)*

(d)* ‘Muslims should never take the life of another person.’

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs, teachings and practices within Islam.
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Islam. [15]

This was quite well answered from a range of different perspectives. Many referred to war, jihad and the Qur’anic wisdom that taking a life unjustly is like taking all of humankind. Some referred to abortion and different teachings about this, depending on the context and how many weeks the embryo had developed, whether it was considered to have developed a soul or ‘ruh’, or if there were any medical complications. Some balanced discussions were achieved, with different points of view and conclusions rounding off the responses, for many making the best response they achieved on the paper overall.

Exemplar 3

The statement suggests that taking the life of any person can never be justified and is always wrong. This has connotation of absolute pacifism and in this response muslims beliefs regarding pacifism will be discussed.

firstly, those who agree with the statement will argue that the Quran teaches that murder is wrong.

This is seen where it says "Whoever takes the life of one person has ^{killed all of} ~~killed all of~~ humanity..."

This suggests that murder is wrong and its punishment is as severe as the punishment for killing the whole of humanity. Therefore, Muslims should never take the life of another person, since the value of life is so great as explained by this verse. Although those who disagree with the statement will argue that war is a just reason to kill someone, as long as the war is under all conditions set by the Shari'ah. However, pacifist muslims may argue that muslims avoid ~~atqna~~ war all costs suggest by the Quranic teaching of "If the incline to peace, you to incline to peace..." which shows that war

is not an ideal situation, so ~~is not~~ Muslims should never take the life of another person.

Muslims who disagree with the statement may also argue that since Islam permits capital punishment, Muslims are conditional pacifists and therefore it is not true that Muslims can never take the life of another person. ~~Some~~ ~~punishments~~ An example of a crime that warrants capital punishment in Islam is murder, since the Prophet administered this punishment for murderers. This shows that Muslims can take the life of another person, if it is for capital punishment. However those who agree with the statement will argue that forgiveness is better, as that is what the prophet taught. Although, it is not a sin to not forgive a murderer, so Muslims can sometimes take the lives of others.

In conclusion, Muslims are conditional pacifists and under certain conditions Muslims are permitted to kill someone. However, it should be decided.

The response in Exemplar 3 opens with an introduction to the issue and definitions of absolute and relative pacifism.

In the second paragraph, a quote from the Qur'an is used as a reference to sources of wisdom and authority to justify an argument in favour of the statement. Mid-way through the paragraph, a different argument is used: that killing is possibly allowed under conditions of Shariah (Islamic law). This point is less clearly put. At the end of the paragraph, a clearer point with a quote about inclining to peace is made, with this used to argue that killing is not justified.

In the third paragraph, the possibility that capital punishment could be allowed is argued, according to Islamic law. The turns of phrase make the point to develop the argument, although sometimes could be clearer. The knowledge on which this is based is sound and of a reasonable level of detail, 3 marks out of 3 were given for AO1.

A brief but clear conclusion is made in which the candidate makes a judgement. This is required for Level 3. This response is a strong Level 3 at AO2 and achieves 9 marks out of 12. It could be improved further to reach Level 4 by sharpening the style of argument by making points more directly and clearly; and referring to a wider range of material about the taking of life, possibly including discussion of abortion.

Assessment for learning



Candidates are required to refer to points of view, which can be different perspectives and not necessarily agree and disagree. It is important to build up a discussion and reach a conclusion at the end. This might be a personal judgement referring back to the statement. Many candidates missed out concluding remarks, but it was an important feature of Level 3 and 4 responses.

Question 4 (a)

4 Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes

(a) Give **three** ways in which Muslims might proselytise.

- 1
- 2
- 3

[3]

The word 'proselytise' is stated in the specification, but many candidates did not know what it meant. Giving speeches about Islam, street preaching and giving out Islamic literature inviting people to Islam were acceptable. Some candidates mentioned Islamic practices such as the Five Pillars, which are not relevant to proselytising.

Question 4 (c)

(c) Explain why Muslims differ in their attitudes to inter-faith dialogue.

You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

[6]

A few responses referred to different attitudes formed from references to different traditions found in sources of wisdom and authority, which might be interpreted as exclusivist or inclusivists dependent on different points of view. One or two explored different attitudes according to the purpose or context of the dialogue – such as cooperation based around a charitable project, which most supported, or discussion focused on a point of theology, which some found potentially confusing, unless a Muslim was strong in their own position first.

Misconception



Some candidates mistook interfaith to mean dialogue between different groups or sects of Muslims, such as Sunni and Shi'a, which was not relevant here. Sunni and Shi'a are both groups within Islam, members of the same faith.

Question 4 (d)*

(d)* 'It is important for Muslims to share the same values as others in society.'

Discuss this statement. In your answer, you should:

- Draw on your learning from across your course of study, including reference to beliefs, teachings and practices within Islam.
- Explain and evaluate the importance of points of view from the perspective of Islam. [15]

Many candidates missed out this question or perhaps did not leave enough time to respond to it, at the end of the paper. Some were unclear about values. One line of argument was that values should be shared so that a cohesive society could be built, based on those values, especially relevant in modern, multi-faith Britain. Another opinion mentioned was that values are derived from different sources of wisdom and authority so are inherently different according to the religion followed. Examples of responses to issues based on those values helped to illustrate arguments made.

Supporting you

Post-results services

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a weekly roundup to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses on the relevant subject page on our [website](#) or visit [OCR professional development](#).

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is the question builder platform for a range of our GCSE, A Level, Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals qualifications. [Find out more](#).

ExamBuilder is **free for all OCR centres** with an Interchange account and gives you unlimited users per centre. We need an [Interchange](#) username to validate the identity of your centre's first user account for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals.

It allows you to:

- review and run analysis reports on exam performance
- analyse results at question and/or topic level
- compare your centre with OCR national averages
- identify trends across the centre
- facilitate effective planning and delivery of courses
- identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle
- help pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of students and teaching departments.

[Find out more](#).

Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on
01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on
support@ocr.org.uk

For more information visit

 **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**

 **ocr.org.uk**

 **/ocrexams**

 **/ocrexams**

 **/company/ocr**

 **/ocrexams**

We really value your feedback

Click to send us an autogenerated email about this resource. Add comments if you want to. Let us know how we can improve this resource or what else you need. Your email address will not be used or shared for any marketing purposes.



I like this



I dislike this

Please note – web links are correct at date of publication but other websites may change over time. If you have any problems with a link you may want to navigate to that organisation's website for a direct search.



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored. © OCR 2022 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

OCR operates academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers including A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals.

OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up to date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

You can copy and distribute this resource freely if you keep the OCR logo and this small print intact and you acknowledge OCR as the originator of the resource.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.