



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2024**

Religious Studies

Assessment Unit AS 6

assessing

An Introduction to Islam

[SRE61]

TUESDAY 28 MAY, MORNING

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of a mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for **GCE Religious Studies**

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, including:
 - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching;
 - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies;
 - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice; and
 - approaches to the study of religion and belief (AO1); and
- analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study (AO2).

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication.

Levels of response

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit' bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement. The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Each of the two assessment objectives have been categorised into five levels of performance relating to the respective abilities of the candidates. Having identified, for each assessment objective, the band in which the candidate has performed, the examiner should then decide on the appropriate mark within the range for the band.

Other Aspects of Human Experience at AS Level

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, when required, to access Bands 3–5.

Synoptic Assessment at A2 Level

Candidates must support their answer with reference to at least one other unit of study to access Bands 4–5.

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience in their AO2 response to access Bands 3–5.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within levels of response as follows:

- Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.
- Level 2: Quality of written communication is limited.
- Level 3: Quality of written communication is good.
- Level 4: Quality of written communication is very good.
- Level 5: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate makes only a basic selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material lacks clarity and coherence. There is little or no use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are basic and the intended meaning is not clear.

Level 2 (Limited): The candidate makes a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is limited use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

Level 3 (Good): The candidate makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

Level 4 (Very Good): The candidate makes a very good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with clarity and coherence. There is very good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a very good standard to make meaning clear.

Level 5 (Excellent): The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

Band	AO1 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent response to the question asked • Demonstrates comprehensive understanding and knowledge • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A very high degree of relevant evidence and examples • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure • An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response to the question asked • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding and almost totally accurate knowledge • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A very good range of relevant evidence and examples • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good response to the question asked • Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding and mainly accurate knowledge • Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A good range of relevant evidence and examples • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response to the question asked • Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding • Demonstrates limited understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A limited range of evidence and/or examples • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[6]–[10]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response to the question asked • Demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding • Demonstrates minimal understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • Little, if any, use of evidence and/or examples • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[0]–[5]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis • An excellent attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • An excellent attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • An excellent attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure • An extensive range of technical language and terminology with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response demonstrating a very good attempt at critical analysis • A very good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A very good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • A very good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable response demonstrating a good attempt at critical analysis • A good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • A good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response demonstrating a modest attempt at critical analysis • A limited attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A limited attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which struggle to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience • A limited attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[6]–[10]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis • A basic attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A basic attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which fail to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience • A basic attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[0]–[5]

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, where necessary, to access Bands 3–5.

Section A

Answer **one** question from Section A

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

1 (a) In what ways do the key features of a mosque help Muslims worship Allah?

Answers may include:

- Comments relating directly to the key features of a mosque.
- Comments linking the key features to aspects of Islamic worship.
- Consideration of the dome, evident from outside, Islamic symbol on top, symbolic of the universe, magnifies the voice of the Imam who leads worship through prayer and offers teaching in the khutbah.
- Consideration of the minaret which calls Muslims to prayer each day, five times, gathering the worshipping community (ummah).
- Consideration of the washing fountains, the performance of wudu, the preparation of the mind, body and heart for worship.
- Consideration of the shoe rack, the removal of shoes, preparing for worship of Allah and showing respect.
- Consideration of the prayer hall, the empty space, allowing the rakah to be performed, no images to distract or lead to idolatry or shirk, enables the reciting of the Qur'an.
- Consideration of the mihrab, indicating the direction of Mecca, showing submission to Allah.
- Consideration of the minbar which enables worshipping Muslims to see the Imam as he leads the prayer and recitation, also to be able to hear the sermon/khutbah to encourage fuller submission to Allah and worship.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) "For Muslims, ibadah is only about observing religious duties." Assess this claim. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Evidence of addressing the question.
- Consideration of the term 'ibadah' and its meaning.
- Consideration of ibadah as worship.
- Consideration of what could be included within ibadah, ibadah as a way of life.
- Consideration of the Shahadah as the first stage of submission to Allah, worship and ibadah.
- Consideration of Salah, personal and public worship or ibadah.
- Consideration of how the pillars of Zakat, Sawm and Hajj may all form part of worship or ibadah.
- Consideration of how, for some Muslims, observing religious duties could be perceived as doing your duty.
- Consideration of the word 'duty' which could seem negative, or an unwanted responsibility.
- Consideration of how some Muslims will be focused on doing the right thing before Allah in order to achieve paradise, rather than doing one's duty.
- Consideration of how for committed Muslims there will be the desire to submit to Allah and to do all that they can to worship and serve him, it is not seen as a 'duty'.
- Consideration of how Islam stresses the need for correct motivation or intentions in order for their observances to have any value before Allah.
- Consideration of how ibadah may mean serving the needs of the ummah, their society or even the wider world.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

2 (a) Explain the significance of the festivals of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha for Muslims.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Consideration of both Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha and how they are observed.
- Evidence of focusing on the question and significance in particular.
- Consideration of how festivals are attached to two of the Pillars of Islam: at the end of Sawm and the end of Hajj.
- Consideration of how challenging the two Pillars are and their completion is highly significant, how this relates to the festivals.
- Consideration of how the successful completion of the Pillars deserves a time of celebration and the two festivals do this.
- Consideration of the unifying effect of the two festivals, bringing people together, enjoying shared meals, including and remembering the poor and those who have died.
- Consideration of how the Pillars and the festivals remember the prophet Muhammad, his example, other prophets and key people of the past.
- Consideration of the rituals connected with the two festivals, cards, gifts, shared meals.
- Consideration of how most Muslims will celebrate the festivals even if they have not kept the Pillars of Sawm or Hajj.
- Possible acknowledgement of Eid-ul-Adha as the greater Eid.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) Evaluate the view that Hajj is the most challenging yet rewarding of the Pillars for Muslims. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Evidence of focusing on the question.
- Consideration of challenging aspects of Hajj.
- Consideration of the challenges presented by the millions of Muslims who are present at Hajj, physical danger and discomfort.
- Consideration of the challenges presented by the rituals that are to be carried out during Hajj, e.g. Circling the Kaba, going between Safa and Marwah.
- Consideration of the physical challenges presented by the pilgrimage, e.g. going from place to place, the heat.
- Consideration of the financial challenge of travelling to Mecca once in a lifetime.
- Consideration of the challenges presented by other Pillars.
- The challenges presented by Shahadah, committing yourself to submitting to Allah and the example of the Prophet Muhammad.
- The challenges presented by Salah, praying five times per day throughout your life.
- The challenges presented by Zakat, purifying your money by giving 2.5% of your income to Allah.
- Consideration of the challenges presented by Sawm, fasting during the daylight hours during Ramadan, praying and reading the Qur'an.
- Consideration of the rewards of going on Hajj, e.g. awareness of the international Muslim community or ummah, praying collectively together using the words of the Qur'an, being in Mecca the city of Muhammad, being in places where other prophets or key people had been and imitating what they had done, e.g. Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Adam and Eve, the forgiveness of all sins by being at Arafat, the Mount of Mercy and confessing your sins.
- Consideration of the rewards of the other Pillars, e.g. committing to the Islamic faith, praying to Allah and drawing close to Him, worshipping by giving money to Allah and the poor, sharing in the hard experience of Sawm and remembering the poor, being rewarded by Allah for submission to all of the Pillars.
- Consideration of whether or not Hajj is 'the most' challenging and/or rewarding of the Pillars.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

Section B

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Answer **one** question from Section B

- 3 (a)** “Muhammad’s call was important both for him and the early Islamic community.” Give an account of the evidence to support this statement.

Answers may include:

- Clear focus on the question.
- Evidence given to focus on both Muhammad and the Islamic community.
- Consideration of the significance of the Night of Power or the call experience for Muhammad.
- Consideration of how Muhammad was given a clear message and mission.
- Consideration of how the call changed the direction of Muhammad’s life.
- Consideration of how the call strengthened Muhammad and gave him the ability to challenge the beliefs and practices of that time.
- Consideration of how Muhammad’s call gave him the confidence to endure persecution and the resilience to carry on.
- Consideration of how the call led Muhammad to go to Medina, establish a Muslim community there and continue to conquer Mecca and all of Arabia.
- Consideration of the significance of the call for the Muslim community.
- Consideration of how the call was the beginning of the revelation of the Qur’an which is the word of Allah and was fundamental to the Islamic faith and establishing the early community.
- Consideration of how Muhammad’s call, life, teachings and example have encouraged people to commit themselves to the Islamic faith and follow the example of Muhammad.
- Consideration of how Muhammad’s call transformed people’s beliefs, morality and religious practices.
- Consideration of how Muhammad’s call established a community of faith which was very encouraging and supportive.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “Political leaders should act morally, both in public and in private.”
With reference to other aspects of human experience, evaluate this view.
Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Reference should be made to other aspects of human experience.
- Consideration of the wide variety of responsibilities that political leaders have.
- Consideration of the primary responsibility to be a leader and to lead in a moral way.
- Consideration of the moral responsibility of political leaders to care for and protect people in their society.
- Consideration of the need to have a morality that underpins decisions and laws, which are in the interest of the general public.
- Consideration of how a political leader is expected to have a personal moral responsibility or integrity in how they lead publicly and how they conduct themselves privately.
- Consideration of how a political leader could be accused of moral hypocrisy, e.g. carrying out restrictions during the covid pandemic.
- Consideration of how personal religious or moral views could become problematic or create conflict as they carry out their political affairs and decision making, e.g. caring for the poor, weapons, abortion law, going to war.
- Consideration of how political leaders may take very different views when it comes to making moral decisions, could cause conflict.
- Consideration of the impact of the pressure on political leaders in wanting to be popular, wanting to be voted into position and their willingness to take a moral stand.
- Consideration of religious leaders who have been motivated to become involved in politics due to their religious beliefs and in order to deal with moral issues or moral abuses, e.g. Martin Luther King, William Wilberforce, Desmond Tutu, Oscar Romero.
- Consideration of examples of societies where political, moral and religious leadership are closely interwoven.
- Consideration of how power or personal views can lead to moral corruption, e.g. financial gain, favouritism, Nazi Germany, apartheid in South Africa, the Morality Police in Iran or Afghanistan.
- Consideration of the extent to which the private morality of a leader is significant in relation to their ability to lead.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5.

(AO2)

[25]

50

AVAILABLE
MARKS

- 4 (a) Discuss how the process of compiling the Qur'an influenced its final structure and style.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Evidence of focus on the question.
- Evidence of particular focus on compiling, structure and style, although not necessarily in an equal way.
- Consideration of how the recording and compiling of the Qur'an began with the revelation to Muhammad on the Night of Power, it was pressed into Muhammad, he memorised the revelations.
- Muhammad recited the revelations to his followers over 23 years.
- Consideration of how the revelations were recited and memorised, recorded on scraps such as pottery, parchment, bones and kept in Hafsa's chest.
- Consideration of how Muhammad began the compilation of the Qur'an but was unable to complete this process because he died.
- Consideration of the final version being recorded under the reign of Uthman.
- Consideration of how the lengthy process of revelation and compilation impacted the structure and style.
- Consideration of the structure of the Qur'an, it has 114 chapters, apart from Surah 1 the Surahs are organised in order of length from the longest to the shortest, the Qur'an is not in chronological order.
- The Surahs are made up of ayas or verses and are generally focused on a particular theme.
- There is repetition in the Qur'an, like a collage of key teachings and themes.
- In relation to understanding the Qur'an and issues raised by structure, there is the law of abrogation to help to deal with apparently contradictory teachings, the later teaching supersedes the earlier teaching.
- In relation to the style of the Qur'an, consideration of how scholars have analysed the Surahs and have allocated some Surahs to the Meccan period and others to the Medinan period depending on the topics being covered and the language being used.
- Consideration of the impact of the way the Qur'an is recorded, its structure and style for Muslims.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “Obedience to a sacred text is a duty that religious believers find extremely difficult.” With reference to other aspects of human experience, assess this claim. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Reference should be made to other aspects of human experience.
- Consideration of the significance of sacred texts.
- Consideration of the belief that sacred texts contain the word of God.
- Consideration of the fundamental desire to follow or obey the sacred text.
- Consideration of the extent to which a believer may feel that obedience is a ‘duty’.
- Consideration of possible motivations for being obedient to a sacred text.
- Consideration of the idea of being rewarded for being obedient.
- Consideration of the consequences of not obeying a sacred text, punishment from God or exclusion from the religious community or other punishments.
- Consideration of why it might be very difficult to obey a sacred text.
- Consideration of the extent to which obedience is ‘extremely’ difficult.
- Consideration of different ways in which people may understand the authority of a religious text.
- Consideration of how obedience to a sacred text could be costly, e.g. personal decisions, sacrifices, persecution.
- Consideration of different ways of interpreting and applying a religious text.
- Consideration of the role of using reason, science, or other new discoveries to take a fresh look at a sacred text.
- Consideration of the significance of the context in which a sacred text was written and perhaps, a very different modern context.
- Consideration of the difficulties posed by secularism, liberalism, pluralism, atheism, assimilation.
- Consideration of the role of religious leaders and establishments in interpreting and applying sacred texts.
- Consideration of how personal religious experiences many seem more significant than a religious text.
- Consideration of how individuals can be distracted, influenced or even misinformed by other sources such as television, or social media.
- Consideration of why it may not be very difficult to obey sacred texts, e.g. support from your family, your religious community, general support from the wider community.
- Consideration of the importance of perspective and attitude as religious believers may feel that the importance of obedience outweighs any perceived difficulty.
- Consideration of how some might take a religious text too far, e.g. to justify political ends.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5.

(AO2)

[25]

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

50

100