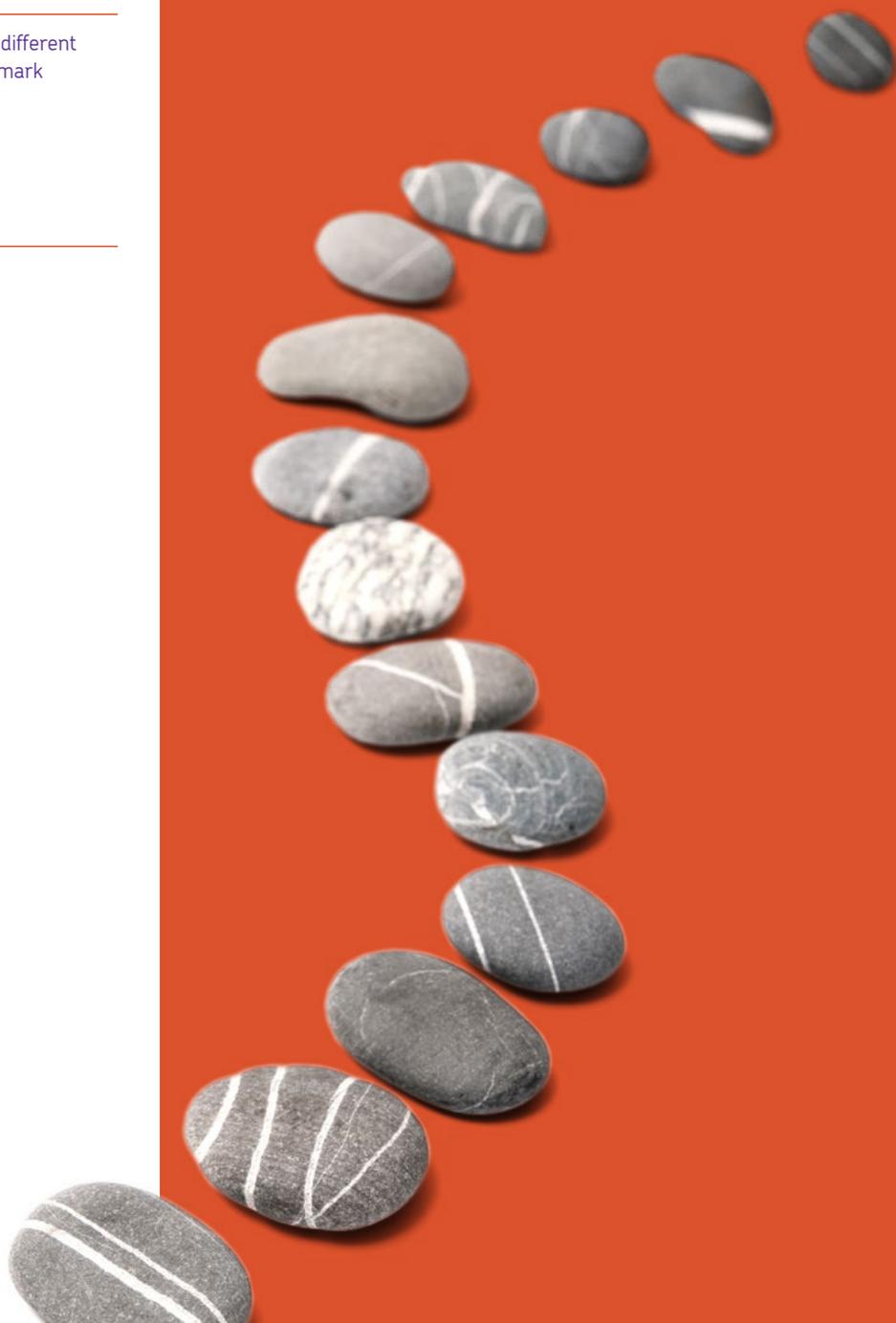# A-LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
(7062)

Example responses and commentaries
Paper 2D Islam

See a range of student responses that demonstrate how different levels are achieved and understand how to interpret the mark scheme.

Version 1.0 Autumn 2019

EXAMPLE RESPONSES

10 mark questions: A01

Levels of response mark scheme

Level and marks	Description
Level 5 9-10	• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate • Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated • Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 4 7-8	• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. • Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained • Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 3 5-6	• Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate • Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion • Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 2 3-4	• Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate • Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion • Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary
Level 1 1-2	• Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development • There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion • Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary
0	No accurate or relevant material to credit

0 1 . 1 Examine how secularisation has challenged Islam.

[10 marks]

One way in which secularisation has challenged Islam is that it relegates religion to the personal or private sphere in secular governments. For example the UK is a liberal democracy under UK law not Shariah Law. This is a challenge to Islam as it undermines the Quran as the infallible word of Allah and Island as 'The religion of truth' (48), as it is not the basis for legislation. This is a further challenge as it means that Shariah Law is not used as the basis for punishment in secular countries. Therefore, commands from Allah such as 'cut off their hands as recompense' for theft do not apply. This is a challenge for Island as it means that its infallible teachings are not promulgated worldwide thus this undermines Shariah law as 'the most characteristic and decisive monument in the religious culture of Islam' (David Waines) as it is largely ignored in secular countries.

Another way that secularisation has challenged Islam is that is can lead to a lack of freedom of religious expression for Muslims. This is demonstrated in France with their legislation known as 'Laïcité' – a proponent of secularisation in their country this means that Muslims in France are not allowed to wear a burkha in public areas or express their religion. This is a challenge for Islam as the Quran clearly states to 'lower your gaze and guard your private parts (22) therefore this element of secularisation prevents this command being truly actualized. It is also a challenge as it removes the ability to publically proclaim Islam in order to entice reverts to the faith. For example Muhammad stated that a Muslim should 'bring others to the way of your Lord through wisdom and good teachings' thus is prevents this.

A final way that secularisation has challenged Island due to the rise of militant atheism. Militant atheism, the perspective that religion is dangerous, is a proponent of increased secularisation. A prominent militant atheist is Sam Harris who states that 'we are not at war with terrorism, we are at war with Islam.' These inflammatory statements which are allowed to flourish in secular societies are a challenge to Islam as they promulgate ignorance and discrimination toward the faith which can lead to a lack of safe freedom of expression. Also in the worst cases it can lead to attack on Muslims such as at Chapel Hill in February 2015 where an atheist killed 3 Muslims in America.

This a coherent and focused answer of a good length –around 400 words.

It is typical of many very good answers in presenting three good paragraphs. The first is centred on the relegation of religion to the personal sphere – which is related to the use of civil rather than Shari'ah law. The second paragraph on freedom of religious expression uses specific examples, as does the third on the challenge of militant atheism. The answer could have been approached differently – for example, the first paragraph could easily have related to challenges to religion as a source of truth and the last to the attempt to undermine religion as 'irrational', but the interpretation of the question is legitimate.

Level 5, 10 marks.

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15 mark questions: AO2

Levels of response mark scheme

Level and marks	Description
Level 5 13-15	• A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised • Perceptive discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis • There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning • Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 4 10-12	• A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised • Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis • There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning • Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 3 7-9	• A general response to the issue(s) raised • Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought • An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning • Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 2 4-6	• A limited response to the issue(s) raised • Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument • Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary
Level 1 1-3	• A basic response to the issue(s) raised • A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support • Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary
0	No accurate or relevant material to credit

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Islam has no successful defence against secularisation. Evaluate this claim

[15 marks]

Universal secularisation is prominent in today's world and is usually due to a number of reasons for example: it is as a result of the increasing emphasis on the use of evidence and reason as the basis of decision, and the promulgation of ignorance which results in discrimination towards religions such as Islam in secular societies this results in using a liberal democracy as the basis of government which entails the relegation of religion to the private sphere. Islam would defend itself against this by supporting the Qur'an as the infallible word of Allah, emphasising the importance of religion in society such as regarding social justice issues and also by educating people of the faith. In my view, these defences are successful and are the reason why Islam has not been adversely effected by universal secularisation but is the fastest growing religion in the west.

One way that Islam does have a successful defence against secularisation is that it supports that Quran as the infallible word of Allah. This defends Islam against the rise of liberal democracies and the lack of using Shariah as the basis of decision making for example Ghulam Jarwar references the Quran as the 'complete book of guidance for mankind'. Therefore the use of this as a basis for legislation provides a defence against Islam as it provides clear guidance for Muslims such as being the foundation for the five fold classification for shariah law whereby certain actions such as eating pork are haram (forbidden). This not only provides a defence against a liberal democracy due to the clarity of shariah it also does as it is the infallible word of Allah. Esposition labels it 'the literal uncreated word of God'. This is the ultimate defence against secularisation as it suggests that Shariah and Allah's word is the perfect basis for legislation. This is supported by Ayatollah Khomeini who stated that one should follow the example of Muhammad as both religious leader and statesman in order to defend the practise of Islam as the basis of Law and combat secularisation in government. However, one could suggest that these defences are not successful. Firstly, Muhammad did not leave a form of government for Muslims to use therefore secular governments are just as appropriate. Al Ravia supports this by stating that Muhammad left 'no specific government' for later generations. Thus, the defence against secular governments by using Muhammad's example (sunnah) is weak as his leadership was descriptive of the tribal system not prescriptive. Furthermore Islam's defence against secularisation that one should use the shariah as the infallible word of Allah is not successful. This is because theocracies, where the shariah Law is promulgated it is tyrannical. For example: it undermines female rights as they interpret the Qur'an in too much of a literal sense and in conformity with their 'culturally entrenched notions of female subservience' (Sardar and Davies). Therefore the defence against secularisation that one should instead ground legislation in shariah is unsuccessful as it leads to tyranny.

Overall, despite the defences against one proponent of secularisation, a liberal democracy being largely unsuccessful it is not fair to suggest that it has no successful defence. This is because, to Muslims, the infallible word of Allah will always have more credence than fallible human debate and legislation.

Another defence from Islam against secularisation would be to promulgate Islam as the one, superior faith to convert others.

From one perspective this defence is unsuccessful due to the lack of evidence and reason for this proportion to entice converts and prevent secularisation. For example Sam Harris labels religion as 'the most perverse misuses of intelligence' and Dawkins suggests intellectually wrong as it leads to statements without reason. Therefore, this defence against secularisation that one should convert in order to

save their souls, and not enter Jahannam is unsuccessful as it is intellectually insufficient thus is does not entice ethers to join the faith as it is not supported by reason. Also the prevalent Islamophobia renders this ability to defend against secularisation unsuccessful as Islam is met with hostility. For example it is incompatible with female rights in some regard as it gives them less inheritance rights as men receive 'a share unto that of two females' thus the defence against secularisation through conversion is unsuccessful.

However, despite the favour of reason and Islamophobia this defence is still in many ways successful. Firstly the idea that Islam is supported by the infallible Quran as the one true faith with statements like 'Islam is superior although the idolaters hate it' (61) add to its success as it is grounded in God. Also, the defence against secularisation through educating people of the faith such as the 'Islam for beginners' course at the London Central mosque in order to entice converts is successful and prevents Islamaphobia as a byproduct of secularisation. Christopher Caldwell supports this when stating that Islam has a 'wordy dynamism' which renders is immune to secularisation. Therefore by educating people of this and using the infallible Quran Islam does have a successful defense.

To conclude, Islam does have a successful defence against secularisation. Its defence against liberal democracy through the use of an infallible source of authority defends their beliefs, also the use of education in order to entice converts also defends against secularisation especially regarding social justice issues as this states against secularisation but shows that Islam is vital for society in order to help others such as through paying zakat. Therefore Islam does have a successful defence against secularisation as it reinforces the infallible Quran and Muhammad's example that 'none are higher than the other'.

The first paragraph is an introduction which repeats some of the material from 1.1.

The argument that relying on the Qur'an, Sunnah of the Prophet and the Shari'ah as defences is offered and critically assessed. There is a final judgement, which is more a personal opinion than reasoned argument, but, without doubt, reflects how some Muslims believe that they can defend their faith.

The second section explores how trying to spread the faith can be a defence and assesses the weaknesses of such a response, using precise examples to show how this defence can be successful.

The answer has a very successful, evaluative, structure, uses detailed evidence and stays focused on the question.

Level 5, 15 marks

25 mark questions

Target: AO1:4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

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'For both Islam and Virtue Ethics, genetic engineering is wrong.'

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and Virtue Ethics.

[25 marks]

Islam and virtue ethics do not take such an absolutist stance regarding genetic engineering in order to say that it is wrong. Virtue ethics uses elements such as the golden mean to bring a situational aspect to the decision thus they would not agree with the vice of excess in this issue such as designer babies, but would cultivate virtues like compassion to support genetic engineering such as IVF to help families wanting a baby. Furthermore its emphasis on theoria would support the cultivation of science and Aristotle's emphasis on the importance of using the rational part soul. Islam too would support the use of genetic engineering in regards to its promotion of science and medicine as Muhammad stated that one would 'discover new horizons'. However, their reasons against genetic engineering are fundamentally different as although both Islam and virtue ethics may say it is wrong sometimes Islam refers to this as the violation of God as the sole creator (al khaliq) thus we would commit sin to replicate this but virtue ethics would refer to its secular principles such as is eudaimonia is restricted. Overall they both think that genetic engineering is wrong in some circumstances but for different reasons.

From one perspective virtue ethics refutes this statement and suggests that genetic engineering is not wrong. This is supported by Aristotle's emphasis on theoria (scientific discovery). Thus if genetic engineering furthered that, it would be commended. This idea is supported by Islam as the Quran states that 'he has taught you what you did not know (239). Therefore this can be applied to genetic engineering in order to promote the acquisition of new knowledge which is in keeping with the notion of theoria.

Overall, virtue ethics and Islam both appeal to the importance of science here in order to suggest that genetic engineering is not wrong.

Virtue ethics is a person centred approach which puts great emphasis on activating virtues such as compassion in order to make oneself a better person. Therefore, it would agree with genetic engineering in some circumstances where it is the more compassionate option such as somatic cell therapy for ill people. Some Muslims would reject this as they would suggest that by taking on this compassionate role we undermine Allah as 'al rahman' – all loving as we ignore the fact that 'he does not burden a soul with more than it can bear' (2) by alleviating our suffering. Therefore in reference to genetic engineering being positive as it is compassionate Islam does not agree with this always. Furthermore, the fact that virtue ethics is person centred whereas Islam is deontological suggests that virtue ethics would not allow it if it did not cultivate virtue, like compassion yet Islam would not allow it if it were against Allah's infallible word thus the act itself is wrong in itself. Overall, regarding genetic

engineering as positive due to it cultivating virtue, many Muslims would disagree with this as it undermines Allah's all loving plan for us, suggesting that they disagree whether and why it is wrong.

Finally, virtue ethics references that some forms of genetic engineering are wrong as they display the vice of excess. This is clear within the example of designer babies and the wasting of numerous embryos in embryo research thus is does not cultivate virtue nor satisfy the golden mean.

Islam would support the idea of not taking genetic engineering to excess as 'God loves not the wasters' (C7). Yet at a fundamental level they have different motives for genetic engineering such as designer babies being wrong. Virtue ethics labels this as wrong as if traits can be manufactured in inhibits praxis (moral conduct) and our individual development of virtues. However, Muslims would reference this as wrong as it would constitute shirk to take on God's attributes as al khaliq –creator- in order to 'better' his creation. Also the fact that they see waste in embryo research as wrong due to it violating the sanctity of life that 'a soul cannot die except by Allah's leave' (3) reaffirms their different motives as Islam renders genetic engineering wrong if it violates the infallible command of Allah. However, the purpose of virtue ethicists is not submission to God but Eudaimonia (flourishing) thus although they both agree it is sometimes wrong, the basis of this is fundamentally different.

To conclude, Islam and virtue ethics sometimes support genetic engineering on the basis of science. Yet their motivation is different as virtue ethics is secular for example Elizabeth Anscombe rejected God under the impression that 'A law without a law giver is incoherent', yet a Muslim's motive is to submit to Allah. Therefore they agree that it is at times wrong but for contrasting motives and purposes. They also disagree on a basic level as to why the nature of genetic engineering is wrong as Muslims would suggest it is due to the act itself (deontological) but Aristotle would suggest it is wrong if it inhibits development of virtue (person centred). Ultimately, Islam and virtue ethics do not take an absolute stance on genetic engineering as wrong yet in my view the stance of Islam is more appropriate as it provides a concrete motive for muslims regarding genetic engineering and the importance of niyyah (intention) allows it to not label genetic engineering as always wrong.

This is a very impressive answer that shows an excellent understanding of views from both areas. Unusually, it integrates its treatment of Islam and Virtue Ethics, other answers tended to deal with each separately. The approach taken here allows specific comparisons /contrasts between the two systems to be explored.

The first paragraph shows the approach taken to the question and the structure of the answer. This is effective here as a way of planning the response although the points its makes are repeated in what follows, so it could have been a rough 'plan' rather than part of the answer.

The information base is excellent under examination conditions, **AO1 = 10 marks, AO2 = 15 marks.**

Other answers might have included more evidence in support of the claim that Islam can support genetic engineering, but the claim that both reject it as wrong is clearly dealt with, and there is perceptive discussion of different views.

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E: religiousstudies@aqa.org.uk

T: 0161 957 3881