

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11
Paper 1

Key messages

Candidates must follow the instructions given in the question and only include relevant material.

Extended answers require a detailed response; the space provided for an answer is a good indication of how much could be written for a response. Specific details include facts, figures, dates, personalities involved or any quotes from sources of authority to support the points made

Good relevancy, accuracy, and depth improve a response.

General comments

Good understanding of the information was demonstrated by presenting highly accurate responses containing sound and coherent reasoning.

Inadequate and inaccurate knowledge as well as the misunderstanding of a question's demands were the main reasons behind lower attainment.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) For Sura (i) good answers included information about God's absolute *tawhid* and His independent nature and unique personality. For Sura (ii) His mercy and forgiveness as well as His power to guide and hold humans accountable for their actions. For Sura (iii) God's special relationship with His prophets, in particular Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), formed the basis of the answer.

Weaker responses either confused the passages or merely paraphrased or tried to identify all the themes thus kept going from one to the other theme without any development or elaboration. Another common occurrence was discussing some general themes which are common to almost all the passages and making no attempt to point out and elaborate any specific theme.

- (b) Some of the best responses talked about the impact of the themes in the lives of Muslims affecting both their practical lives as well as the belief system. Comments included explanations about personality, attributes, and the power of God in the minds of Muslims, therefore making them obedient to their creator, implanting fear of Him resulting in compliance to His commands, creation of a sense of accountability as well as reliance on Him for guidance and in times of hardships.

Weaker responses relied on making simplistic suggestions about what Muslims should do, such as believe in God, not commit *shirk*, and worship only Him. A more focused approach, concentrating on specific themes, explaining how present-day Muslims can benefit from them, would help candidates succeed.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates used a wide range of passages from the syllabus to describe the duties of humans towards God and the created world. The best responses chose the passages that related to God in Himself and God and His created world. After describing the actual teachings of the passage, candidates discussed duties that were deduced from each passage such as duty to believe in,

worship and obey God, not associate any partners with Him, look after His created world, not be wasteful or ungrateful.

Weaker responses were characterised by comments on the duties to God and environment without referring to any particular passage while others outlined the general duties of a good Muslim including moral and social obligations.

- (b) Some very good answers were seen talking about what Muslims should think about as well as practical steps they should take to look after their environment. Considering the earth and its resources as God-given hence protecting them and not being wasteful, and several suggestions on how to care for the environment were some of the points discussed. Weaker answers resorted to making simple recommendations about looking after the environment while some candidates did not understand the question properly and merely talked about caring for society in general.

Question 3

- (a) The best responses included details of the delegates that met the Prophet (pbuh) on three separate occasions, the two pledges they took, and the conversations between the Prophet (pbuh), his uncle, and Yathribites. Even better responses gave accurate accounts of the numbers of delegates in each pledge, precise details of the undertakings as well as the names of the personalities involved. Weaker responses either had a very brief account or too many inaccuracies.
- (b) Taking examples from present times, candidates suggested ways in which Muslims could help accommodate newcomers in their societies. Excellent responses clearly mentioned that it could be applicable to someone moving into a new neighbourhood or migrants moving into another country. Such answers proceeded to elaborate on how Muslims could extend a helping hand in these different situations.

Weaker responses talked about being kind, generous, helpful, protective, or nice, but could not develop how to practically do that. A simple suggestion of a good behaviour was not enough to count as development.

Question 4

- (a) Most responses showed a knowledge of the basic facts about the cause of the Battle of Badr. They also include information about the numerical strength of the warring sides, the deployment of troops, the stages of war and casualties and treatment of Prisoners of War. Responses that achieved higher marks, had the most accurate information, giving details of how both the contingents moved towards the battleground and occupied key locations. The prayers made by the Prophet (pbuh) and God's reply, and the assistance offered, as mentioned in the Qur'an, were also quoted. Giving the precise names of participants of the initial duels and those captured or killed in the war also highlighted good development.

Weaker responses had a lack of detail, inaccuracies, or unclear accounts of the Battle of Badr with some confusing Badr with other battles fought at that time.

- (b) Resolute belief in God and His assistance in times of hardships was given as the main lesson by many candidates. Other lessons mentioned included displaying great discipline, following the leaders and obedience to the Prophet (pbuh). Better answers were able to relate the lessons to present-day Muslims by making some valid suggestions about behaviour based on lessons learned from this battle. Weaker answers made only simple suggestions about what a Muslim's conduct should be in a society.

Question 5

- (a) This was the least popular question. The main highlights were the suggestion of digging the trench in the Battle of Trench by Salman, migration to Abyssinia and the speech made by Ja'far in the court of the Negus and the refusal of Abd-al-Rahman to accept financial assistance offered by his Ansari brother. Candidates seemed to know very little about other facts of their lives and most of the responses were quite brief and imprecise.

- (b) There were many good answers that offered good quality evaluations seen. Some of the suggestions made were not overindulging in the materialistic world, avoid spending money on luxury brands, practicing a simple lifestyle, and helping the under-privileged.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12
Paper 1

Key messages

Candidates must follow the instructions given in the question and only include relevant material.

Extended answers require a detailed response; the space provided for an answer is a good indication of how much could be written for a response. Specific details include facts, figures, dates, personalities involved or any quotes from sources of authority to support the points made

Good relevancy, accuracy, and depth improve a response.

There were some common factors hindering good answers in **part (b)** questions:

- Misunderstanding the question.
- Placing emphasis on factual or descriptive information.
- Taking a stance or making a claim which was not substantiated by sound evidence.
- Making simple suggestions about a code of behaviour for present-day Muslims, in response to any question.

General comments

Good understanding of the information was demonstrated by presenting highly accurate responses containing sound and coherent reasoning.

Inadequate and inaccurate knowledge as well as the misunderstanding of a question's demands were the main reasons behind lower attainment.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Good answers were characterised by their precise selection of the main themes from each passage, their further elaboration, and the quotation of different verses from the Qur'an expounding similar themes. Sura (i) was the most popular choice – God's superior nature, His infinity and His superior knowledge were some of the themes explored. For Sura (ii), candidates talked about events of the Last Day quoting verses of Sura Qariah and depicting the horrors of the Day of Judgment. Good responses also included a comment on God's immense powers to destroy His own creation, His Justice and human's accountability. For Sura (iii), candidates spoke about the background of the Sura and further elucidated the themes of God's assistance, help and protection of His prophets, and special instructions to them of displaying higher moral character through helping the vulnerable of their communities.

Weaker responses relied heavily on paraphrasing or repeating the actual translation. Confusing themes of different passages such as mentioning themes of Sura Ikhlas and Sura Fatiha in response to Sura (i), and briefly discussing the themes without any elaboration were other characteristics of weaker responses.

- (b) Good responses explored the significance of the themes in a very mature way, they talked about how Sura (i) 'crystalizes the belief in *tawhid*', and 'brings Muslims closer to God as they realise His immense power'. Many candidates also discussed how the passage offers protection. For Sura (ii), candidates spoke about its impact, both on the beliefs Muslims hold, and on their practical lives.

They explained how it reiterates Muslim belief in an article of faith and motivates them to be cautious of their acts and deeds and creates a sense of accountability. For Sura (iii), reliance and trust in God's assistance in times of trial and tribulation was quoted as one of the main points of significance.

Weaker responses were undeveloped and although relevant themes were written about, such as, believing in only one God, worshipping Him alone, doing good deeds and helping the poor and the needy, these were not made important to a Muslim's life today.

Question 2

- (a) A large majority answered this question well. There were different approaches that gave a full account of the ways in which, both the Qur'an and Sunna are primary sources of Islamic law. One approach successfully addressed the Qur'an, first with examples of laws laid down in its content, then with how Sunna complements these. Another combined the parallel sources together, which tended to be a better approach.

Many responses started with a definition of the two sources then proceeded to describe where the authority to use them, as sources of law, came from and finally gave several examples to show how Islamic shariah is formed using the two sources together. Excellent responses also threw light on different characteristics of these two sources, mentioning how the Qur'an is unchangeable and unchallengeable and how following Sunna is imperative to practice the religion. Such responses also gave precise examples of their uses in law making related to certain prohibitions, punishment of different offences and matters of inheritance, not restricting their responses to issues concerning basic pillars only.

Weaker responses were characterised by their lack of information or a loss of precise focus. Statements were made about moral and ethical teachings in the Qur'an and Sunna rather than imploring them as sources of legal authority.

- (b) Good responses presented precise examples and showed the significance of using *ijma'* or *qiyas* today. For example, the prohibition of modern drugs and new types of alcoholic drinks, using *qiyas*, and how it is significant for Muslims saying, 'it's helped to cope with the fast-developing world where new methods of evil deeds are rearing their ugly head'.

Weaker responses gave several examples, rather than select one for explanation. While other similar responses gave extensive notes on *ijma'* and *qiyas*, discussing their significance at length. The answer required a single, precise example showing significance for Muslims today and these answers did not have that.

Question 3

- (a) This was a popular question. It was answered well with great knowledge shown allowing for a good level of detail in answers. Candidates were also aware of historical sources of information and presented these in their answers. Finer details in some responses included aspects of the experience and description of the places visited and personalities met. Many quotes from the Qur'an and Hadith were presented by candidates to corroborate the points made.

Weaker responses gave a very brief account of the night journey and ascension.

- (b) Good answers referenced the hardships faced by the Prophet (pbuh) at that time and proceeded to say how different aspects of this journey gave him consolation and encouragement. Other answers referred to him getting reassurance through meeting with the Lord or leading prayers of all the prophets, showing knowledge about his elevated status and prestige, giving him encouragement and inspiration.

Weak responses omitted how hope was evoked through the night journey and ascension. They included information about the hardships the Prophet (pbuh) went through at that time, without explaining how hope ensued because of this event. Despite being thoughtfully written the 'in what way' part was neglected. Furthermore, greater emphasis was put on the year leading to it or following from this event making the response very descriptive.

Question 4

- (a) This was another popular choice. Excellent responses recorded exact numbers of immigrants in both migrations. Candidates displayed a good understanding of the flow of events, and speeches were quoted with names attributed. The difference between the first and second migration was explained well with a detailed description of events that happened in-between. The best answers also narrated two separate occasions of appearances before the king of Abyssinia, quoting the actual conversation that took place between the parties involved.

Inaccuracies, lack of particulars, irrelevant facts, unnecessary details of events that happened prior to the migration (such as atrocities faced by the early Muslims), were some of the reasons for weaker answers.

- (b) Many responses showed a good use of evaluative skills to say what lessons could be learned from the good treatment of Muslims in Abyssinia. Some of the lessons that were shared included, those who are oppressed and persecuted should be helped, that the religious beliefs of someone should not be a hindrance in extending a helping hand to them, that minorities living in Muslim countries should be given freedom of religion, and that rulers should be just and honest and decisions should be made after listening to all the parties involved in a dispute.

The best responses deduced some rules of behaviour from the treatment of Muslims in Abyssinia and were able to suggest a code of conduct for present day Muslims, based on that treatment.

Many, once again, did not fully address the question but instead chose to focus on migration itself concluding that it provides an example for Muslims to migrate when conditions are unbearable. Others wrote lengthy notes on the advantages of migration to Muslims.

Question 5

- (a) This question was the least popular. Good responses stated the background of both companions, information about their tribe, their pre-Islamic life, their conversions, their services to Islam on and off the battlefields, and their personal relationship with the Prophet (pbuh).

Weaker responses were imbalanced. One companion was usually better known than the other and this led to an uneven response. A few dwelt on 'Umar's conversion and 'Uthman's marriage to the daughters of the Prophet (pbuh) primarily but not much else.

- (b) 'Uthman's generosity remained the main focal point in most responses. Some quite cleverly mentioned looking after one's ailing partner, referring to 'Uthman tending to his sick wife during the Battle of Badr.

The steadfast endurance of his character was not fully drawn out, even though reference had been made to surrendering for his faith and his family and the bereavement sustained in the loss of his wives in **part (a)**. Similarly, his spirit of sacrifice, demonstrated by migrating twice for the sake of religion, could have been further expounded.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21
Paper 2

Key messages

Read the question carefully to understand what it is asking.

Select precise information with which to answer the question. Do not write everything you know about a topic but stay focused on what is being asked.

Use detail and examples to develop answers where relevant.

General comments

Candidates who performed well on **Question 1** focused on the key teachings from the Hadiths and were able to describe their teaching and explain how they can be put into action. Due to the subject of the teachings in three of the Hadiths there was some repetition of content in the **part (a)** answers. This hindered some candidates reaching the higher level.

Good answers to **Question 2** were characterised by close reference to the set Hadiths in the syllabus and a good discussion to show how, by understanding their significance and acting upon the teachings, the community benefits.

Question 3 was the least attempted question. Successful candidates showed confidence in their knowledge of 'Uthman's election.

Questions 4 and **5** were evenly chosen by candidates. The selection and clarity of relevant detail is key to successful answers here, along with good development of points made.

Responses to **part (b)** questions highlight an increase in candidates' ability to give reasons for their points of view.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates showed a good understanding of the teachings given in the set Hadiths. Three of them had subject content that candidates saw as similar: caring for orphans; showing mercy to humankind; and looking after the needs of the vulnerable in society. Candidates who chose these three Hadiths tended to have an overlap in the content of their answers.

Stronger responses focused on the key teachings from each Hadith and discussed them independently. For example, the teaching given in the first Hadith is to care for orphans, to show them compassion and to protect them. Great reward has been promised for showing care to orphans. In the second Hadith the rights of fellow beings are stressed upon by God Himself and to get His mercy believers must in turn be merciful to those around them. In the third Hadith care for others has been compared to *ibadah*, rewards for which are comparable to acts of worship.

- (b) The strongest responses were able to present a range of examples of how the teachings given in **part (a)** of the answer can be put into action. For example, providing clothing and shelter for orphans, forgiving those who wrong you, acting with concern for others and making good lifestyle choices. These candidates were confident in their knowledge for both answers in **Question 1**.

Question 2

- (a) Strong responses were able to refer to relevant Hadiths **and** show the benefits to the community. Candidates who were able to show the benefits to the community did well on this question. Weaker responses simply gave the teachings and action of the Hadith they were referring to and not the benefits to the community. For example, if Hadith 9 was used it teaches about earning from the labour of one's hard work but in turn helps create an honest community, where there will be no corruption or greed and one that is blessed by God. This type of link to community-benefits needed to be brought out in all the Hadiths given in the answer. Candidates could have chosen any of the set Hadiths from individual conduct or life in the community as there is a link between personal conduct and how that impacts the community. Some candidates used the Hadiths given in **Question 1** and successfully made the link between acting upon the teaching and the benefit to the community of doing so, this was critical for the answer.
- (b) Candidates were clear on why the example of the Prophet (pbuh) was important for Muslims today. Many were able to give a precise answer, for example, that the Prophet (pbuh) was the perfect role model, and that Muslims today should follow his example to create a fair and just society.

Question 3

- (a) This question had two parts and was the least popular one with the candidates. Candidates needed to write about the election of 'Uthman **and** his administration. Many answers stated that 'Umar set up a committee of six on his deathbed to appoint the next caliph, their names were given as well, however, only the strongest answers developed this by saying how Abdul Rahman put a question to the two shortlisted candidates and having heard their responses chose 'Uthman as caliph. Some answers also included Rahman's question.

The second part was straightforward and descriptive in nature. Here the candidates needed to write about how he administered the caliphate. Examples of what was included in this part were typically concerned with finances, administration, and public works. Strong responses were able to split 'Uthman's administration into two periods of six years and give reasons for this distinction.

- (b) Candidates had the option to agree or disagree with the statement given in the question and had to support their choice with reasons. Most agreed with the statement that the compilation of the Qur'an was indeed 'Uthman's greatest achievement, with the consensus being that without it, differences may have arisen that would have caused rifts amongst Muslims. However, there were some who disagreed and gave an alternative 'greatest achievement', such as 'Uthman's establishment of a Permanent Secretariat creating roles such as Inspector of Markets. This was important because this role ensured sharia law was adhered to in business life. Marks were credited whenever the choice of the candidate was backed by evaluation and reasoning.

Question 4

- (a) The books' names and which prophets received them were given in many answers seen. The most successful answers focused on the purpose and message of the divinely revealed books, also the uniqueness of the Qur'an was written about by some. Overall, weaker responses were characterised by a lack of development in the answer.
- (b) Good evaluative responses were seen. Candidates showed a good awareness of the requirements of **part (b)** answers and are now able to reason and give their views on the questions asked for in this part. In particular, many were able to argue that the Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic law on which all other sources (Hadith, *ijma* and *qiyas*) are based.

Question 5

- (a) The *Eid* prayer was written about in some detail. Some candidates addressed the part concerning how the *Eid* festival is celebrated after the *Eid salat*. These responses included detail about the festivities that take place on the day, within families and friends and the wider community, for example, families celebrate by having *Eid* meals together or by giving presents to the younger members of the family. This question allowed candidates to develop their answer by writing a general account of the two *Eids*.

- (b)** This question required reflection on the part of the candidates as to why it is important to celebrate religious festivals. Many candidates were able to write about the joy and happiness festivals bring to individuals, families, and communities or that festivals mark a point in time or the ending of an event.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22
Paper 2

Key messages

Read the question carefully to understand what it is asking.

Select precise information with which to answer the question. Do not write everything you know about a topic but stay focused on what is being asked.

Use detail and examples to develop answers where relevant.

General comments

Candidates who performed well on **Question 1** clearly distinguished between the needs of this question and **Question 1** on paper 1. There was evidence that some candidates wrote about the importance of the Hadiths (a paper 1-style question) rather than how a Muslim can put the teaching in the Hadiths into action. This caused some overlap and confusion between what should be in **parts (a)** and **(b)** on paper 2.

Question 3 The Battle of the Camel was confused with the Battle of Siffin at times. Candidates must understand there are different significant events in a period of history which may have a connection but that does not mean that the key players and outcome can be transposed from one event to another.

Question 5 The focus of this answer could be, and was, presented differently by the candidates and all valid responses were duly credited whatever aspects of *salat* the candidate focused upon.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Hadith 7 was a very popular choice. The words 'striving hard' given in the Hadith are key to understanding the broader teaching of this Hadith and the strongest responses understood it. For example, responses included that a believer could strive in the way of God by migrating for the sake of Islam, by preaching the word of God, by travelling to different parts of the world, by controlling one's *nafs*, or by taking part in armed warfare for the sake of Islam. Strong responses understood that the purpose of striving hard was to establish a just society that lives according to the rules of God. Weaker responses gave its teaching from a narrow viewpoint of fighting in the way of God and becoming a martyr.

Hadith 13 was also widely chosen by candidates and answered well. Here, strong responses focused on the importance of all Muslims reading the Qur'an and understanding its meaning. Some responses digressed and mentioned how sinful it was for a *huffaz* to forget the memorised Qur'an and how they should keep revising it.

Hadith 20 and 16 were the least popular Hadiths to answer. For Hadith 20 good responses typically made the distinction between what God has given you, and therefore not taken into account, and the sincerity of a Muslim's deeds, what God is actually taking into account. Finally, Hadith 16, saw good responses consider the nature of brotherhood in Islam.

- (b) The strongest candidates were able to present a range of examples of how the teachings given in **part (a)** of the answer can be put into action. For example, striving in God's way may mean a Muslim spends time in worship or does social work in the community. Hadith 13 could be put into action by reading and understanding the Qur'an or by teaching it to others. To exemplify Hadith 20 candidates said that a Muslim's every action should be based on seeking God's pleasure and examples were given to develop the answer. Finally, for Hadith 16 the best example of brotherhood was the one established by the Prophet (pbuh) between the Muhajireen and the Ansars. The Ansars were extremely generous and ready to share their possessions and families with their Muslim brothers. This example could be followed today by helping people in war-torn countries.

Question 2

- (a) Strong responses gave a comprehensive list of the rules of *isnad* and *matn*, and within the context of *isnad* and *matn* gave examples of the compilers going about collecting the Hadiths. For example, the story of Imam Bukhari travelling to hear a Hadith from a narrator but returning as he saw him tricking his animal with an empty food basket, was cited to show how honesty mattered in the personality of the narrator. The setting up of *Ilm ul Hadith* and its sub-branches like *Asma ul Rijaal* to check the *isnad* lines, were other ways in which answers were developed. Many responses stated that the *isnad* and *matn* rules helped in categorising the Hadiths as authentic, weak, and fabricated.
- (b) The strongest responses understood that this question was not only about the importance of preserving Hadiths but was asking why importance was given to collecting and preserving authentic Hadiths. Responses said that it was important to collect authentic Hadiths and preserve them so that future generations of Muslims would be able to access the Prophet's Sunna and live their lives following his example

Question 3

- (a) Solid responses gave an account of the Battle of the Camel. The best responses included detail such as, the date, names of key personalities, between who the battle is fought, the location of the battle, its main events and outcome. Some responses gave too much attention to the background of events that led to the battle, for example, the martyrdom of 'Uthman. This left little time to answer the question. There was also some confusion over where the battle was fought. It also must be remembered that though this was a civil war amongst Muslims both parties were the families and Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) so when we write about them, we have to give facts but with the due respect that they deserve.
- (b) Candidates had to consider what the most serious consequence of the battle was. The strongest responses did just that and gave reasons to support their answer. For example, it could be said that this was the first civil war fought amongst Muslims and broke the unity of the *umma*. Weaker responses gave a list of consequences, once again showing the importance of reading and understanding the question before writing an answer.

Question 4

- (a) A very popular question attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Most candidates gave a good account of the role played by 'Umar and 'Uthman in the preservation of the Qur'an. Strong responses considered the role of others, such as Zayd ibn Thabit, under their direction. There was some confusion over the role of Zayd and his small committee in the second preservation. Candidates were confused that his role was that of copyist rather than compiler and wrote as if the compilation had been done anew.
- (b) Most candidates' opinion was that both preservations were equally important and good reasoning was given. Some candidates chose to say one was more important than the other and also supported their choice with valid reasons.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates approached this answer in a variety of ways and developed different aspects. For example, some candidates named the five prayers, gave the timings and the *rakaats* in each and wrote about the conditions that had to be met before the performance of *salat* and then stated the benefits. Others gave names, timings and a detailed account of how *salat* is performed. Others wrote about when it becomes obligatory, the different types of *salat*, congregation prayer and Friday prayer. Development was different in each response and was marked on the basis of what was given. So here the Mark Scheme was not prescriptive but a guidance.
- (b) There were many good responses to this question. Candidates wrote that the reward was greater for praying *salat* in the mosque and then went on to write about brotherhood and equality, to name two examples.