

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/12
Paper 1 History and Scriptures

Key messages

- It is important that candidates read each question carefully before answering it.
- Candidates need to make themselves familiar with the rubric, so they know how many questions to answer and from which sections.
- While **Sections A** and **B** saw some good answers, some candidates could improve their knowledge and understanding of the topics.

General comments

There was a low number on entries on this paper, so some questions were not answered at all, with candidates favouring one question over the other in **Section A**.

Overall, candidates made a good attempt to answer the questions they selected. Some candidates demonstrated knowledge of the topic they were answering but needed to provide more details.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) There were not enough answers to be able to comment on this question.
- (b) There were not enough answers to be able to comment on this question.
- (c) There were not enough answers to be able to comment on this question.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify a few reasons why Halima cared for the Prophet (pbuh). Answers could be improved by acknowledging that his parents had died and the traditions of sending babies to the desert, rather than mentioning one or the other.
- (b) There were a few good answers, and generally responses were satisfactory. Answers to this question tended to focus on the miracles seen in the Prophet's youth that were signs pointing to prophethood. Candidates could improve their answers by mentioning more about his qualities or character traits.
- (c) A fair number of candidates answered this well, with most of the answers focusing on the support of Abu Talib and Abdul Muttalib. For fuller answers, candidates could have added the support the Prophet (pbuh) received by Halima and Khadija.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates received two marks for this question, and some attempted **Question 3** but did not attempt **part (a)**.

- (b) Those who attempted this question did not give enough details about the relationship between Abu Bakr and the Prophet (pbuh). Most gave general points about being friends, being loyal, fighting in battles, and making the hijra journey together. To gain higher level marks, more details are required and a range of events could be mentioned.
- (c) Most answers were general points about support giving the Prophet (pbuh) motivation, but very few elaborated on the kind of support that was given to the Prophet (pbuh).

Question 4

- (a) This was well answered with many candidates scoring four marks.
- (b) Answers to this part were generally good with most candidates able to state the terms of the Treaty. Few candidates wrote about the reaction of the Muslims to the signing of the Treaty which prevented them going to the highest level marks.
- (c) Most answers to this question were good, with candidates focusing on leaders putting peace before war and some saying that good leaders should be able to see the bigger picture and be able to see that things can be a success that do not initially seem to be.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) This was the least popular question in **Section C**. It was reasonably well answered with candidates being able to explain the main message of the Sura. To get higher level answers, candidates could have given more details about the background of the Sura.
- (b) There was a mixed response to this question, with the average being satisfactory answers. Most were able to give general answers about the Qur'an containing everything that is needed for Muslims, and some went further and said that the Hadith also provided solutions for Muslims by providing more details.

Question 6

- (a) This was a more popular choice to answer in this section and candidates gave good answers. Candidates were able to provide teachings for this Hadith, but they could have gained more marks by giving clearer examples of how the teachings could be put into practice, e.g. to not make decisions when angry.
- (b) This was generally well answered with candidates providing good evaluation to this question. Many focused on the topic of Islamophobia and that it can be hard to tackle it and not get angry when your faith or your family is insulted.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/13
Paper 1 History and Scriptures

Key messages

- It is important that candidates read each question carefully before answering it.
- Candidates need to make themselves familiar with the rubric, so they know how many questions to answer and from which sections.
- While **Sections A** and **B** saw some good answers, some candidates could improve their knowledge and understanding of the topics.

General comments

Overall, candidates made a good attempt at answering the questions they chose on this paper, with very few not following the rubric.

Some candidates either did not understand the question, or they understood it but provided very little information or details.

There seemed to be an almost equal spread of answers between the different levels, especially for **part (a)** and **(b)** questions in **Sections A** and **B**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) This was well answered with most candidates providing a range of answers about the economic system.
- (b) This was generally well answered, with most candidates understanding the question and being able to write something about each group. Most answers included more about women than about slaves or infant girls.
- (c) This was well answered with candidates providing examples of different ways Khadija supported the Prophet (pbuh). Where responses did not get higher level marks it was because they did not elaborate on the examples they gave. Weaker answers were more descriptive.

Question 2

- (a) This had mixed responses with some excellent answers, and others being very generic by saying that they traded goods or that feuding was common.
- (b) Most answers for this question were good, with candidates writing about a variety of reasons the Ka'ba was important. Many candidates got good marks but needed to provide more details for the answers they gave in order to reach the higher levels. To gain Level 4 marks, responses should be expanded on the points that they make.
- (c) Generally, this question saw a lot of satisfactory answers. Many candidates gave a description of the event of the placing of the Black Stone and made general comments about the Prophet (pbuh)

being known for being trustworthy. Better answers focused on the way Muslims can imitate the Prophet's behaviour and character in their own lives.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Most answers were at the lower end of the marks as they did not include much more than the fact that 'Ali was close to the Prophet (pbuh) or that he was one of the first converts.
- (b) This was not a popular choice to answer in **Section B** and answers were generally vague and therefore at the lower end of the marks. Most candidates focused on 'Ali being in the Prophet's bed when he left for the hijra, with very few points being made about him living with the Prophet (pbuh), his conversion to Islam or his support in the battles.
- (c) There were some general answers about helping others in your community, but overall it was not well answered.

Question 4

- (a) **Question 4** was a more popular choice in **Section B** and was well answered with many candidates able to score four marks for **part (a)**.
- (b) This was well answered with many candidates providing details of the battle, the names of the people involved and the outcome of the battle. Weaker answers focused on the events surrounding the archers and did not give many details of who was involved.
- (c) Most answers to this question were good by making valid points and elaborate on them. Most candidates said that it was important to be obedient to the Prophet (pbuh), with some being able to expand on it by saying that the Qur'an commands Muslims to follow the Prophet (pbuh) and so his teachings should be followed.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates received good marks for this question as they knew the teachings of the Sura well and were able to explain the teachings present in each verse. They could have improved their answers by adding more information about why Muslims need to be aware of these teachings, e.g. by saying that they would help Muslims be cautious about their actions and those that might lead them to give in to temptations or lead them astray.
- (b) There was a mixed response to this question, with some only saying that the Qur'an contains all the information that Muslims need, whilst others were able to engage with the question and say that there is a need to read and understand the Qur'an which can be done by learning from scholars. Many also said that the Hadith also help know about God's message as they elaborate on the teachings in the Qur'an.

Question 6

- (a) This was the least popular choice in this section, with mainly satisfactory answers. Most candidates either discussed ways in which doubtful things should be avoided in general, or they went straight to giving examples. The example of avoiding food in restaurants when on holiday if you do not know it is halal was the most common example. Few candidates provided two examples as required by the question.
- (b) Most answers to this question were good, with the focus being on learning knowledge from teachers/scholars to remove doubts a person may have and to refer to the Qur'an and Sunna.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/22

**Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs
and Observances**

Key messages

- The full range of responses was seen. Knowledge was consistent with previous years and the improvement seen in AO2 evaluation questions continued.
- All of the questions were chosen by candidates and the most popular choices were **Questions 2, 4 and 6**. Nearly all candidates followed the rubric and answered the right number of questions, one from each section. A few candidates missed out parts and are encouraged to attempt at least a basic answer to all parts as this might improve their overall mark.
- It is advised to study all of the topics from the syllabus and to practice addressing key words from the questions.

General comments

Knowledge on the topic of the Hadith seemed weaker here. Knowledge of funeral rights and the Shahadah can also be improved. The questions about Abu Bakr, 'Umar and Yusuf (AS) were well answered, and candidates had good subject knowledge.

The longer AO1 questions can be improved by the use of more detail and the occasional quote. Candidates are advised to ensure they specifically address the words set in the question. Many did, but some could improve their answers by being more focused. AO2 questions saw an improvement showing good discussion and evaluation.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a popular choice of question and well answered.

- (a) Any events were acceptable here, and many candidates answered this question well. Answers included conquering Oman; meeting the majlis; defeating Muslima (a false prophet); collecting the Qur'an; making provinces and many others. Only one mark is available for each response and there is no need here to explain or go into more detail: identifying each event with just two or three words is acceptable and enabled many candidates to achieve four marks.
- (b) Better answers to this question gave details about the situation faced when Muhammad (pbuh) died, and how the companions and other groups met to decide what to do. Some background information about why Abu Bakr was considered suitable at the time, such as because of his leadership of prayer and close loyalty to Muhammad (pbuh) was also credit worthy. The strongest answers gave an account of what happened in detail and in the correct order of events, writing clearly without confusion. Weaker responses gave a general overview or were limited in the details, missing some key information.
- (c) This was very much an open question because it allowed candidates to choose any of the four Caliphs they had studied. In response, different candidates chose different Caliphs. Almost all candidates were able to identify some features of the rule of their chosen Caliph which were good. This was developed in stronger responses to make the link to governments today more explicit.

The relevance of the chosen examples needed to be explained in terms of today's world. This was successfully achieved by many. Examples chosen included the model of the consultation shuras made by Abu Bakr, which could help Muslim governments today better listen to their people. The provision of religious facilities by 'Umar shows how Muslims today might put religion at the centre of their society and achieve greater humility that way. Some responses explored the example of 'Uthman in providing for the poor might help Muslim governments today take care of the less well off. Others looked at the example of 'Ali in pursuing peace in times of division and difficulty might be a model for Muslims today when they face arguments.

Question 2

- (a) This was quite well answered, and most candidates were able to identify some of the facilities, such as mosques, ablution facilities, facilities for travellers/pilgrims; roads; public lighting at night; schools and so on. The question required candidates to 'state', so explanation was not necessary. Note that the question was about facilities and not 'Umar himself; a few candidates wrote about the personality and humility of 'Umar which was not relevant here.
- (b) Many candidates wrote about the qualities of 'Umar, his piety and humbleness. This partly answered the question because it strengthened the moral standing of the Caliph and the respect people had for him. However, stronger answers included a wider range of detail, including practical steps 'Umar took such as appointing provincial governors; asking them to report at the time of Hajj; establishing tax and fairly controlling money for the good of all. Responses also talked about his military actions, with 'Umar organising bases at strategic points, as well as strengthening the religious side of the Caliphate with improved facilities. Candidates who referred to a broad range of ways in which 'Umar strengthened the Caliphate, such as these, were generally able to achieve well in this question.
- (c) This question was well answered. Candidates identified many of 'Umar's achievements and were able to say which they thought contributed most to success. The best answers went further and focused specifically on 'pious society', as in the words of the statement. This means a society focused on piety, prayer, religion and so forth. Some argued that 'Umar's personal piety was his greatest achievement because he shunned personal wealth and power, set a good example, and this helped inspire his people to follow. Others argued that the provisions for pilgrims and washing facilities and mosques, or chose one of those, was a material way in which 'Umar helped people to follow the rituals of Islam.

Section B

Question 3

Few candidates chose this question.

- (a) Some responses named narrators, and a few seemed to have confused what was meant by a narrator with a Hadith collector, such as Bukhari. Hadith narrators included companions such as 'Ali, 'Umar and the Prophet's wife Ayesha and his daughter Fatima, among others.
- (b) Some of the responses to this question were not successful and some candidates thought that categories referred to strong or weak Hadith, or perhaps narrators Bukhari or Muslim. The categories referred to the established categories: Sahih, Hasan, Daif an Maudu/Mauzu. It is recommended to candidates to ensure they are aware of these words and their meaning. A few candidates did know and were able to describe in detail, and they were able to achieve high marks.
- (c) This question was well answered. Some discussed what to do if there were no other Hadith available on a particular topic. Another point made was that Muslims should seek help from a scholar to check the Hadith and ensure they understood it properly. This question led candidates to talk about the use of the Hadith together with other sources, such as the Qur'an and Islamic scholars, and most made a good response by considering at least two points and discussing them in detail.

Question 4

This was a popular question and well answered.

- (a) Candidates could choose any four members and all they were required to do was name them. Almost all candidates knew that his father was called Yaqoob (AS) and some mentioned his grandfather Ishaq (AS) and great uncle Ishmail (AS), as well as great grandfather Ibrahim (AS). A few named Yusuf's older brother Benjamin and oldest son Yahuda, or mother Rachel.
- (b) This required candidates to show knowledge which many did in great detail. Note that the question asks candidates to explain how Musa (AS) became imprisoned, so details of his life after that point were not relevant – some candidates told his whole life story in great detail. The episode with Zulaika was particularly important and the strongest answers explained this in detail.
- (c) Candidates responded well to this question, showing evidence of good discussion, and addressing AO2. Stronger responses drew out some details from the forgiveness Yusuf (AS) gave to his brothers, despite how they had treated him, and drew lessons from this about the importance for Muslims to give to others today. Some even gave personal answers, relating to their own circumstances and people they had forgiven, however difficult, and how this helped them move on in their lives. Weaker answers retold the story of Yusuf (AS) in detail but needed to give further evaluation to answer the question fully.

Section C

Question 5

Few candidates chose this question.

- (a) Responses to this question gave a variety of examples. Comprehensive answers tended to describe a range of occasions in detail. Weaker responses only thought of two occasions and needed to go into much more detail. Some of the occasions identified included: during prayer; during conversion to Islam; before death; on the occasion of a birth and when challenged about faith. The question also required comment about the significance. Most candidates understood that the Shahadah was the focus of belief, and some developed this by explaining that it helped Muslims develop a sense of God-consciousness behind all of their actions.
- (b) Responses to this question made fair attempts here but could have further improved by pointing out the links more clearly. Salat specifically includes saying the words of the Shahada at the point of sitting after prostration. All of the pillars require a Muslim to have the right intention, and the intention focus on the worship of God, following the Sunnah of Muhammad (pbuh). The strongest responses showed an understanding that the Shahada helps Muslims gain strength in the knowledge of the purpose behind their actions in fulfilling all of the Five Pillars.

Question 6

- (a) This was the most popular question in **Section C**. Candidates correctly identified features of the Janaza funeral service. Stronger responses gave more details, such as preparing the body first with ritual washing (ghusul); dressing in a plain cloth; the service held outdoors, standing without prostration; takbirs praising God; placing the body facing Mecca; and family gatherings of respect. The question asked for explanation, so to gain Levels 3 and 4 understanding needed to be more clearly shown. Stronger responses achieved this by explaining why the rituals are held and how they link to Islamic belief in God and the afterlife.
- (b) Most candidates were able to write something about the importance of funeral rites but not all linked this to the importance for Muslim communities. Funeral rites for communities help the community to provide support for the grieving and show community solidarity. Various aspects of community support were discussed by different candidates, such as the emotional expression of loss which helps everyone get over the time of upset; the importance of support and strengthening of faith through sharing rituals together, such as community attendance at funeral services. Stronger answers maintained the focus on the community and discussed some of these aspects.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/23

Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs
and Observances

Key messages

- The full range of responses was seen. Knowledge was consistent with previous years and the improvement seen in AO2 evaluation questions continued. Many responses were good or excellent.
- All of the questions were chosen by candidates and the most popular choices were **Questions 2, 4 and 5**. Nearly all candidates followed the rubric and answered the right number of questions, one from each section. A few candidates missed out parts and are encouraged to attempt at least a basic answer to all parts as this might improve their overall mark.
- Candidates can improve particularly at the mid-range, where answers could add a bit more detail to their AO1 responses and possibly a quote to reach the next level of response.
- Some excellent responses were seen for AO2 questions, and the improvement seen in recent years continued. Generally, answers to AO2 questions were stronger than answers to AO1 questions for the same candidates.

General comments

Many responses showed that candidates need to improve on the topic of 'Ali. The question about the story of Adam (AS) saw the strongest responses.

It should be noted that in **Section C** the marks are different from **Sections A** and **B**, and the length of candidate answers should reflect this. Many candidates wrote the same length, whereas it would be appropriate to write a little more in **Section C** for each part, as there are only two parts to **Questions 5 and 6**.

AO2 questions saw an improvement showing good discussion and evaluation. Many candidates achieved this by specifically addressing words in the question and commenting on them.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Very few candidates chose this question.

- (a) This was a well answered question with many responses achieving good marks. All candidates were required to do was list four regions, such as Yemen, Oman, Iraq, Iran or other. They could use modern names or older names to refer to areas held by 'Ali.
- (b) Candidates took this question in different ways but provided they showed evidence of knowledge and understanding, they could achieve well. This means that details about 'Ali's actions needed to be given to support general points about 'Ali's approach. For example, 'Ali as a negotiator could be supported by reference to his acts facing hostilities and battles. The more detailed answers gained higher marks.
- (c) Of the few who answered this question there were some good responses. Some argued that 'Ali provided a good model because he tried to achieve peace through compromise despite division and difficult circumstances, which were not his fault. The best responses went on to link this to the problems Muslim governments face today to show how divisions still occur and need resolving

peacefully. Some argued that 'Ali did not provide a good model, but it was not his fault it was down to circumstances; or that Muhammad (pbuh) left a model not 'Ali and 'Ali followed Muhammad's model as should Muslims nowadays.

Question 2

This question was very popular.

- (a) Most candidates achieved full marks for **part (a)**. Responses commonly referred to Muhammad (pbuh) having not appointed a successor; there was confusion; mourning first took place; discussion was needed; Abu Bakr had not thought about becoming Caliph and there were alternative suggestions from the Ansar and Muhajirun. It was not necessary to add more description in this part. Some candidates reached full marks in the first couple of lines of their answer and continued writing for half a page but could not gain any more marks for this and would be better advised to use this time on **part (b)**.
- (b) This question was generally well answered. Candidates mentioned problems including the False Prophets; those who refused to pay Zakat; the loss of the huffaz and generally the need to establish the Caliphate and its territory. The strongest answers named False Prophets and gave details. The question was focused on Abu Bakr's response so candidates were required to state what he did to address these issues, not simply state what they were, as was done in weaker responses.
- (c) Many candidates took one or two examples from one or two Caliphs and explained how they were important for Muslims today. The collection of the Qur'an in authorised, written form begun under Abu Bakr and completed under Uthman was referred to by most as vital for Muslims to retain an authentic version which is still used today. The explanation of the relevance and importance for Muslims today was important for candidates to achieve levels three and four.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Candidates mentioned from the angel Jibril; whilst lying down; whilst hearing a bell; during dreams; at times needing guidance; before the Battle of Badr; on camel back and so on. Note that this was about the Medinan period so responses that referenced to the Night of Power or early Meccan period were not creditworthy.
- (b) Many responses gave only a broad overview or were rather short. Stronger responses went into greater detail in their descriptions. This included details such as that Abu Bakr and 'Umar were amongst the scribes who wrote down sections on fragments of bone and cloth when the Prophet (pbuh) received them; 'Umar suggested to Abu Bakr that they should then make a written copy, and despite Abu Bakr's initial reluctance – because the Prophet (pbuh) had not produced a written Qur'an – he agreed that it would benefit the Muslims; Abu Bakr asked Zaid bin Thabit to make the collection, and 'Umar and other companions helped Zaid in this task; 'Umar used to sit at the entrance to the Prophet's Mosque with Zaid and collected all the written verses; They checked them with two witnesses and those who had memorised the Qur'an by heart; The contents of the Qur'an were arranged by Surah and verse according to the script conventions of the people of the Medina. When Abu Bakr passed away, 'Umar kept the collection safe with Hafsa.
- (c) For this question, responses could argue that the actions of Abu Bakr and 'Umar were very important in ensuring the Qur'an was written down so that Muslims in the future could read a written copy and have confidence that it was genuine. Other responses argued that others too played important roles, including 'Uthman, who ensured that one authoritative version was spread across the Muslim world and any other unauthorised versions were destroyed. The best responses discussed the extent to which each of these people contributed to the preservation of the collection.

Question 4

- (a) This question was very well answered. Candidates mentioned that Iblis was made of fire; his characteristics included jealousy; arrogance; disobedience; slyness and deviousness.

- (b) This was very well answered, and much detail was given by the majority of candidates. Relevant to this answer was the story of the temptation by Iblis in the garden of paradise; the eating of the forbidden fruit; the fall to earth; repentance; living life on Earth; their descendants Cain and Able and Adam's reaction to their fall out. Some candidates might improve their responses with a little more detail or perhaps a relevant quotation.
- (c) This question was well answered. The strongest responses chose two or three examples and developed them by explaining a situation in which a Muslim today might feel the stress of temptation and then how they might overcome this. One way was to recite the Qur'an; to ensure a Muslim prayed on time throughout the day; to read a special Du'a prayer and a point often mentioned was to keep morally upright friends who did not veer off the straight path. Candidates demonstrated that they had given considerable thought to this and showed evidence of wider knowledge in their answers.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) Candidates might learn more detail about the different categories of people who may receive Zakat: the poor; Muslim travellers; widows; students; soldiers; Muslim converts; the mentally ill; debtors and families of prisoners. Explanations of why each should receive it were relevant, such as a widow to make up for income lost after the death of her husband to fulfil her daily needs. Many candidates answered from a general point of view: to promote equality and help those in need. The more specific answers were the strongest.
- (b) Candidates answered this reasonably well although some appeared to be running out of time here, so their answers were short. Good responses mentioned promoting equality; helping the needy; promoting a sense of caring; developing Ummah; purifying people's selfish thoughts and so on. It was appropriate to identify two or three points and explain them specifically in terms of the community, not just general advantages of Zakat, in response to this question.

Question 6

- (a) The best responses here included detail and Id prayers: ghusul before; wearing white or clean clothes; gathering outside or in a large congregation in a mosque; attending early after sunrise; making several takbirs praising God; listening to the sermon from the Imam and greeting other Muslims with Id Mubarak at the end of the prayers. Weaker responses mentioned prayers without much detail, whereas stronger ones gave detailed descriptions. Family celebrations were well covered by most candidates. Animal sacrifices and sharing of meat were also mentioned by nearly all candidates. This question was about the observance of Id-ul-Adha so although Hajj and the story of Ibrahim (AS) provided some background, they were not the main focus of the question.
- (b) This was well answered, and candidates understood well the importance of the word 'mainly' in the statement. A variety of arguments were made, some claiming no, it was not because the main focus was on worship at Id prayers, and others yes, as this is one of the most important days of the year which brings families together. Good answers explained points made in detail and considered a variety of views before reaching an overall conclusion.