

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 2058/01

Paper 1

General comments

On the whole, candidates were well prepared for this examination compared with previous years in the November session, and they managed to present the basic facts required to gain good marks. Most candidates showed they managed the time allocated for the paper well, as there were very few who were not able to answer the three required questions. Some candidates answered all four questions, or **Questions 1, 3 and 4**, missing out **Question 2**, which is a compulsory question, but these were very much a minority.

In past reports, there has been an emphasis on candidates being taught not just the facts, but how to evaluate these facts to show that they understand key elements of the syllabus and their significance, particularly in relation to the world today. It was encouraging that many more candidates were attempting thoughtful and insightful answers and it was clear that this was being encouraged through their teaching. This is reflected in the fact that many candidates scored high marks in this paper. There were some candidates, though, who spent more time trying to evaluate the facts rather than presenting them, thus losing marks, as the factual parts of the questions are generally worth more marks than the evaluative parts. In this paper, it affected **Questions 2 (a)** and **3 (a)**, where these candidates wrote more for part **(b)**. So, for example, even if they scored 3 or 4 marks in part **Question 2 (b)**, they may have lost the same number of marks, or more, in part **(a)** as they skimmed over key points, or presented the facts in part **(b)**. So although candidates should look to evaluate the facts that they have learnt in the syllabus and express their understanding of them in the exam paper, they should not do this at the expense of factual knowledge required by the questions. Facts *and* evaluation are looked for, not one or the other.

Familiar errors were present again in this session, although they did not seem to be as widespread as previous years. Amongst them was the tendency to write pages of prose, whether it was relevant to the questions or not. It is expected that candidates should be able to write concisely and keep their answers relevant to the question that is being asked. So, for example, in **Question 2 (a)**, candidates should write answers specifically about the experiences in Caves Hira and Thawr, and not the story of the Prophet when he was a child or the events leading up to the migration.

Candidates should also be careful that they keep to answers directly related to the question being asked and not get distracted. For example, some candidates when answering **Question 3 (a)** began by writing about the revealed books but focused their answer on the Qur'an, which was not what the question asked.

Teachers should encourage their candidates to come to the exam expecting to approach each question on its own merit without comparing it to previous questions/answers they may have learnt; they should read the question paper carefully to ensure they know what is being asked of them; and they should plan their answer to correspond to the question being asked, and not a general topic. Related to this, candidates should know that although mark schemes from previous examinations are published by CIE, it is not advisable to memorise and reproduce the information from them directly into the exam paper. First of all, candidates who have reproduced bullet points from the mark scheme will be penalised, as the syllabus and question paper state that they should write in prose, and they should use their own words. Secondly, essay questions on similar topics are likely to have a different slant/focus from one session to another so simply reproducing points could affect the relevance of the answer.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was generally answered well, with the best answers giving the overall theme or themes contained in the passages chosen as well as being written in continuous prose.

Teachers should note that comments about the Surah and verse numbers and whether the passage was revealed in Makka or Madina are irrelevant (the question paper actually identifies the passage). Candidates who write about these are wasting time.

- (a) In this part, a good answer would have referred to God's attributes of supremacy and being the sole creator, that believers should only look to Him for guidance and support, and that He is the only one who can save believers from going astray and leaving the path of guidance.

The better answers were careful to avoid paraphrasing of the translation which is already given.

- (b) Here, a good answer would have talked about the reassurance God was giving to the Prophet and how He had always brought him out of difficulty, giving examples of how the Prophet had been helped in the past. There should also be reference to the fact that the Prophet was told to continue his mission despite his hardships.

Many candidates were able to answer this well, although they did not apply the teachings of the Surah to all Muslims. Excellent answers were able to link the fact that despite the hardships faced by the Prophet, it is reassuring for Muslims in general that God's mercy will follow any hardships.

- (c) For this Surah, a good answer would have mentioned it was the night of the first revelation, that prayers are especially effective on this night, and that heaven is closely linked to earth with the angels coming down from heaven.

The majority of candidates scored well here.

Question 2

- (a) This part was answered well by many candidates, although there was more weight given to the Prophet's experience in Mount Hira over Mount Thawr. In this question, good answers focused on the significant events in these two caves. The best answers began their narration from the Prophet's first visit in Mount Hira at the age of 40 by the angel Jibra'il, an account of the conversation between them, and the Prophet returning home to his wife shaken and asking to be covered, without giving details about his life before prophethood or what happened after he returned home. Then the answers would continue with the story of the Prophet leaving his house with Abu Bakr for Madinah, staying in Mount Thawr to escape their enemies, and the relationship between the Prophet and his companion in the cave.

Candidates should be careful in these answers not to present too much information that is not related to the question, and Examiners also look for accuracy of facts. Some candidates were confusing the names of the two caves, or giving the wrong names completely, and some gave the name of Abu Bakr's daughter who brought them food as Ai'shah. Candidates again should read the question carefully, as it asks for the Prophet's experience in caves (plural), but a few candidates only related an account of one cave.

- (b) There were some good answers to this part, but generally answers were vague or repetitive. Here, candidates were expected to show how these events were important, not just the time they happened, but in later years. The experience at Mount Hira was important because not only was the Qur'an first sent down, but it was the beginning of God's final guidance. It also changed the way the people of the time were living and its teachings were also important for future generations.

The experience at Mount Thawr was important because if the Prophet had not left his home in Makkah, he may have been killed and Islam would not have spread and flourished. He also had to put a lot of trust in God and his followers which is a significant lesson for building future communities.

Question 3

Of the two optional questions, this was the most popular amongst candidates.

- (a) As mentioned above, in descriptive answers candidates should be accurate and complete. It is very easy to lose marks by leaving out a basic fact or spending too much time on facts that are not relevant to the question. Here, many candidates scored highly, but some lost marks through repetition, or by spending more time explaining why the Qur'an is protected and that it is the last revealed book.

Overall, however, this section was answered well.

- (b) Both parts (i) and (ii) were answered reasonably well, although a significant number gave more of a descriptive account of the prayer and zakat. For part (i) excellent answers avoided repetition and rephrasing the same point more than once, as well as explaining *how* meeting in congregation, standing as one behind the imam, and performing the same actions, were key factors in the community feeling united. Good answers in part (ii) expressed how the rich do not forget the poor and that they both feel they have a share in each other's wealth.

Question 4

Very few candidates answered this question as a whole.

- (a) This was generally well answered, and good answers were able to mention the three authorities whose agreement is looked for.
- (b) Most candidates who chose this question gained most of their marks here, with good answers distinguishing between the primary and secondary sources, showing where consensus is allowed and giving supporting quotations. However, there were a significant number of candidates who gave a brief description here, generally repeating what they had already written in part (a).
- (c) This part was not answered well, although many candidates did try to evaluate the examples they had given. Some of the better answers mentioned how the issues of suicide bombings, or smoking, had not been issues at the time of the Prophet and so these were issues now requiring *ijma'*. They also gave the consensus jurists had come to, as well as using Qur'anic verses or hadith to support how these rulings were made.

Most candidates gave very brief answers, and a high number used examples from the life of the Prophet. It is important that candidates do not confuse *shura* with *ijma'*.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 2058/02

Paper 2

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was variable, with some very high marks as well as some very low marks. Many of the 'general comments' for Paper 1 also apply to Paper 2 – for example, the memorisation and reproduction of bullet points from published mark schemes. Centres are advised to provide candidates with a rounded education on all the areas of the syllabus and to discourage learning merely by rote.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates answered this question quite well. There were some instances of candidates commenting on more than the required number of Qur'anic phrases. In many cases, the extra time used for the unnecessary answer could have been used to strengthen the other answers.

- (a) In this section, only some candidates were able to obtain both marks available for the first and the third phrase. For the second phrase, most candidates gave details of the attributes of God after mentioning the concept of Tawhid.
- (b) This section was adequately answered by most students with some candidates giving interesting examples. Candidates who attempted these phrases were able to reflect on the meaning and importance of the phrases.
- (c) The first two phrases in this section were well attempted but most of those candidates who attempted the third phrase missed the relevant points.

Question 2

As in previous examinations, many candidates managed to obtain one of the two marks available for each chosen Hadith quite easily, but they were not all able to make the second point. Certain individual Hadiths were generally well answered, while others were misinterpreted. Some of the candidates who did not do so well in this question tended to simply paraphrase the Hadiths and gave no explanations. This issue of paraphrasing is a recurring one and attention must be drawn to this as a matter of urgency. Merely paraphrasing the Hadith or the expression provided in the question does not earn a passing mark.

Question 3

This question proved to be a challenging one for many candidates, even though it should have been a fairly straightforward one. It appears candidates either did not read the question properly or just did not understand the question. The question was about the rights of women as "wives", "mothers" and "daughters" and not the responsibilities of husbands and fathers. Quite a number of candidates wrote a lot about the historical background and then proceeded to enumerate the responsibilities of both husbands and wives or mothers. However, there were certain Centres where the candidates answered this question very well. Part (a) was generally better answered than the part (b), with most of the candidates talking just about "equality". Hardly any judgements were made, as part of the question required.

Question 4

Very few candidates attempted this question. Of those who attempted it, many managed to give an acceptable answer for part **(a)**, but struggled with part **(b)**, especially in relation to Hafsa. Candidates should have been able to explain how Hafsa's keeping of the early compilation of the Qur'an helped enormously in the final standardisation under Uthman. This personal evaluation is always necessary in order for candidates to express themselves intelligently and be able to relate the historical accounts to contemporary relevance.

Question 5

This proved to be a more popular question than **Question 4** with many candidates scoring very high marks. Unfortunately, some candidates combined two companions in part **(a)**, thereby losing marks. The question specifically asked for two companions and hence candidates were expected to write distinctly about these two. In general, however, there were plenty of options available in the mark scheme and candidates utilised these and secured good marks.

In part **(b)**, the question specifically asked about their significance "during the lifetime of the Prophet". However, some candidates gave information outside this historical boundary, making their answer irrelevant.