

Cambridge International AS & A Level

ISLAMIC STUDIES**9488/42**

Paper 4 Islam in the Modern World

May/June 2026**MARK SCHEME**Maximum Mark: 50

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

This document consists of **12** printed pages.

General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: - the specific content defined in the mark scheme - the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions - the standard of response required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award whole marks (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks positively . This means that: - marks are not deducted for errors or omissions - marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for other valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate - the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged only when the mark scheme indicates that these features are specifically assessed in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must consistently apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and must not award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Correct point
N/A	Highlighting areas of text
N/A	Allows comments to be entered in speech bubbles on the candidate response.
N/A	Allows comments to be entered at the bottom of the RM marking window and then displayed when the associated question item is navigated to.
	Too vague
	Level one
	Level two
	Level three
	Level four
	Level five
	Not answered question
	Indicates that the point has been noted, but no credit has been given.
	Evaluation

Generic levels of response descriptors

These level descriptors address assessment objectives (AOs) 1 and 2 and should be used in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Assessment objectives**AO1 Knowledge and understanding**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings, texts, beliefs and practices including their relevance for individual Muslims and communities.

AO2 Analysis and evaluation

Analyse, evaluate and discuss evidence, points of view and issues in Islam.

Generic marking principles

- (a) Examiners should use the performance summary statements at the top of the descriptors to help to identify a level which matches the candidate's response. However, the final decision on the band and the mark within the band should be made on the basis of all the descriptors in the level and not primarily using the performance summary statement.
- (b) Examiners should start at the lowest level, if the answer meets all the criteria, they should then move to the next level and so on. The Examiner should repeat this process until there is a match between the overall answer and the level descriptor. Examiners should use a best-fit approach when deciding upon the level, it is possible for a different level to be chosen for each AO.
- (c) If the Examiner identifies all aspects of the level descriptor within the answer, then the highest mark for the level should be given. Examiners should also make reference to the indicative content when deciding on the mark within a level to ensure that there is sufficient relevant content evident within the answer for the level and mark. Examiners should be prepared to credit material in answers which is not contained in the indicative content.
- (d) The Examiner may need to make a judgement within a level or between two or more level statements. Once a 'best-fit' level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:
 - Where the candidate's work convincingly meets the level statement, you should award the highest mark.
 - Where the candidate's work adequately meets the level statement, you should award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range.
 - Where the candidate's work just meets the level statement, you should award the lowest mark.

AO1 Knowledge and understanding grid

For questions 1, 2 and 3.

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 4	Detailed accurate knowledge with good understanding • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.	9–10
Level 3	Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding • Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a developed response. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant.	6–8
Level 2	Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Attempts to address the question. • Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant.	3–5
Level 1	Limited knowledge and basic understanding • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

AO2 Analysis and evaluation

For questions 1, 2 and 3.

Level	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	Marks
Level 5	Alternative conclusions with analysis of points of view - Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view in detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support a coherent and well-structured discussion. - Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions.	13–15
Level 4	Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view - Discusses different points of view in some detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. - Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.	10–12
Level 3	Clear conclusion with different points of view - Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support discussion. - Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.	7–9
Level 2	Basic conclusion with a supported point of view - Discusses one point of view. - Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant points. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. - Attempted conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.	4–6
Level 1	Limited interpretation with a point of view - States a point of view. - Little or no supporting evidence. - Attempted interpretation which may not directly address the question.	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks
1	To what extent do Muslims today treat non-Muslims in the same way as Muslims did at the start of Islam? 10 marks AO1 – Knowledge and understanding 15 marks AO2 – Analysis and evaluation Mark according to the levels of response marking grids for AO1 and AO2. Answers may refer to any Islamic religious theory or teaching. Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited. Introduction Candidates could define/explain what treatment to non-Muslims means, whether it is having friendship with them, being courteous and civil or engaging with them in different spheres of life. • Qur'an 60.08 shows that there is no objection in Islam to deal in a good way with non-Muslims: 'God forbids you not, With regard to those who Fight you not for (your) Faith Nor drive you out Of your homes, From dealing kindly and justly With them: For God loveth Those who are just.' • Lots of stress have been put on the good treatment of non-Muslims, since the beginning of Islam. When non-Muslims persecuted and tortured the early Muslims in Mecca, none of them retaliated or acted violently. The Prophet (pbuh) kept on calling to Islam the very people who were opposing him. • On his arrival in Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) instituted the Charter of Medina in which Muslims and non-Muslims were given religious freedom and the freedom to follow their own laws to facilitate harmonious social cohesion. • The Charter was intended to end inter-tribal conflicts and maintain peace and cooperation among the people of Medina, whatever be their faiths. The Jews in Medina were allowed to follow the laws of the Torah and had the freedom to conduct their religious rituals and to preserve their religious places. • This course of action was carried on even through the caliphate of Umar, who gave the inhabitants of Jerusalem an assurance of safety for their lives, property and church when he conquered Jerusalem. He also gave stipends and allowances to needy non-Muslims. • Muslims were taught to treat non-Muslims in a good way. Qur'an 31.15 advise Muslims to treat their non-Muslim parents with consideration. The Prophet (pbuh) also advised Asma to keep good ties and be civil to her mother, an idolater, who wanted to visit her. • The Prophet (pbuh) would advise his wives to share food with their neighbours who were Jews and he himself had a non-Muslim as business partner.	25

Question	Answer	Marks
1	• In the modern world, more and more Muslims are dealing with non-Muslims whether they live in Muslim countries or countries where Muslims are in minority. The behaviour of these Muslims is most of the time civil and courteous. In countries like the USA, Canada and the UK, where Muslims are in minority, the Muslims not only participate actively at social level, but they also engage in different spheres such as politics and economics. Respect and friendship are shown in most cases to those of different faiths. • In Muslim countries as well, people of different faiths are treated by the leaders in a fair and just manner, such as in Malaysia and Indonesia. • However, there are also some Muslim countries where the laws are stricter for people of other faiths or where the non-Muslims do not feel safe living in the midst of a Muslim majority. Conclusion An overall conclusion should refer to how closely Muslims today follow in the footsteps of earlier Muslims in the way they treat the non-Muslims.	

Question	Answer	Marks
2	Discuss the issue of head-covering (<i>hijab</i>) as a protection for Muslim women today. You should refer to different points of view in your answer. 10 marks AO1 – Knowledge and understanding 15 marks AO2 – Analysis and evaluation Mark according to the levels of response marking grids for AO1 and AO2. Answers may refer to any Islamic religious theory or teaching. Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited. Introduction Candidates could define/explain head-covering (<i>hijab</i>) is the covering or scarf that some Muslim women wear in the presence of males that they are allowed to marry (non-Mahram). For others, it is to do with modesty including modest behaviour and not only the clothing of a Muslim woman. Agree • Candidates could agree that head-covering (<i>hijab</i>) is a protection for Muslim women, either from being seen by non-Mahram men or from physical attacks. • The verse in the Qur'an that explores head covering is as follows: 'And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons...(Qur'an 24.31). In this context, hijab can prevent non-Mahram males from looking at the woman and seeing parts of their body or beautification that is allowed to be seen only by their Mahram. • Also, head-covering (<i>hijab</i>) is for the protection from physical and verbal attacks as is shown from the following verse: 'O Prophet! Tell Thy wives and daughters, And the believing women, That they should cast Their outer garments over Their persons (when abroad): That is most convenient, That they should be known (as such) and not molested. And God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' Qur'an 33.59 • According to some Qur'an commentary (<i>tafsir</i>) this verse was revealed because free Muslim women were being harassed by the hypocrites in Medina, confusing them with slave-girls and the verse asked them to cover themselves so that they are recognised as free women and will not therefore be harassed. • Qur'an 33.53 is about wearing a face veil, which according to some scholars, was meant for the wives of the Prophet, where the veil worn was meant to protect both them and the people around them.	25

Question	Answer	Marks
2	Disagree - Some may argue that it does not matter if a woman wears head-cover (<i>hijab</i>) or not, as it is up to the males to lower their gaze in Islam, as shown in Qur'an 24.30: 'Say to the believing men That they should lower Their gaze and guard Their modesty: that will make For greater purity for them: and God is well acquainted With all that they do.' - Some people confuse 'modesty' with 'safety'. It is not the role of head-cover (<i>hijab</i>) to protect a woman. It may be a side effect of it that it decreases the sexual attentions of some men to her, sometimes. The real idea of head-cover (<i>hijab</i>) is that covering up is a tool that helps a human being be more focused and to feel more modest. Just like you wear a business suit to feel professional, you dress modestly to increase your feeling of modesty. - The head-cover (<i>hijab</i>) is not an assuredness against harassment. Many modestly dressed women have been victims of sexual harassment and violence, as these crimes are not a reflection of the victim's behaviour but rather the perpetrators. - The head-cover (<i>hijab</i>) being something visible might make the Muslim women an easier target to racism and Islamophobia and there have been many cases of Muslim women being harassed because of their wearing the head-cover (<i>hijab</i>) in some countries. - Some governments have passed out laws banning Muslim women from wearing the head-cover (<i>hijab</i>), and thus the head-cover (<i>hijab</i>) makes them more subject to discriminatory laws instead of protecting their rights. Conclusion A concluding paragraph should draw together the argument, concluding, on balance, whether the head-cover (<i>hijab</i>) can act as protection for the Muslim woman or not.	

Question	Answer	Marks
3	Discuss different approaches taken by Muslim leaders towards those of other faiths, by referring to policies of <u>either</u> the Mughal Emperors <u>or</u> those during Muslim rule in Spain. 10 marks AO1 – Knowledge and understanding 15 marks AO2 – Analysis and evaluation Mark according to the levels of response marking grids for AO1 and AO2. Answers may refer to any Islamic religious theory or teaching. Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited. Candidates could write about the Mughal emperors and discuss their different approaches towards those who had different beliefs from them. • The Mughal court and empire were a blend of Persian, Islamic, and Indian cultures. Different Mughal rulers had different views when it comes to tolerance towards non-Muslims, some were very tolerant, whereas others took drastic measures against people of other faiths. • Those who were tolerant encouraged non-Muslims in Mughal services. They promoted Hindi Sanskrit literature and music, art and culture. They adopted their dresses and many festivals and ceremonies. Some, like Akbar, married Hindu Rajput women and gave them full freedom to live their lives according to their faith. Most of the Indo-Muslim rulers had counted Hindus as dhimmis, a protected class under Islamic law, since the eighth century, and Hindus were thus entitled to rights and state defences. They were never oppressed, forced to conversion, or persecuted for different religious beliefs. Akbar was one of the first regents in the world to lend his support to regular state-sponsored inter-faith public dialogue, which brought together learned men from across the religious spectrum – Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Parsees, Jains, and atheists from across the realm were invited to participate. He even abolished the Jizya tax on the non-Muslims and went as far as to finance houses of worship for other religions. • Jahangir, Akbar's successor, was tolerant towards all religions but Sikhism. Shah Jahan continued Akbar's religious tolerance policies, was not prejudiced towards almost any Muslim sect with the exception of Sufis, to which he was more hostile. In the event of other religious followers, he was not oppressive but did not allow new Hindu temples to be built, though he did have the Portuguese executed for not embracing Islam.	25

Question	Answer	Marks
3	- On the other hand, Aurangzeb, who was a strict Sunni, reversed the religious tolerance policy of his predecessors. Since he hated heretical Muslims as well as other religious practitioners he began making their lives a living nightmare. Aurangzeb was against everyone who did not follow the Sunni sect of Islam and was just as cruel and restrictive on Shi'ites as he was non-Muslims. He reinstated the non-Muslim poll tax and imposed Islamic law (<i>shariah</i>) on everyone in the kingdom, regardless of their faith. Not only did Aurangzeb start destroying Hindu temples, but he also began building mosques on the sites of demolished Hindu temples and banned any repair to the temples. His religious intolerance even targeted the Shi'ite Muslims, whose celebrations honouring Husain were restricted. He arrested, tried, and executed Muslims who abandoned Islam. In dealings with Shi'ites, Aurangzeb treated them just as he would a non-Muslim. - Those choosing to write on Muslim rule in Spain might bring out similar themes. For example, periods of tolerance of Jews and Christians, known as the <i>Dhimmi</i> in which they could take on government roles and write philosophical works, e.g. Jewish philosopher Maimonides. There were other periods of difference between Muslim and Christian groups, when Church bells could not be rung openly. Responses might refer to Caliph Hakim or other Caliphs in the Fatimid and Umayyad period. Conclusion An overall assessment should complete the essay, making a judgement on whether all the Mughal emperors shared the same policies when it came to their approaches towards those of other faiths.	