

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11
Paper 1

Key messages

Candidates should label answers correctly and clearly, stating whether it is a part **(a)** answer or part **(b)** answer.

Candidates should read questions carefully and ensure they answer the question (and not misinterpret what is being asked of them).

Candidates should move away from descriptive answers for part **(b)** questions.

Answers should contain detail and depth related to the question asked, and not just general outlines of the main points.

General comments

Overall it was very positive to see candidates able to answer the required questions. There were only a small number of candidates who attempted all questions, and an even smaller number who missed the compulsory questions and only answered the optional ones.

There was a marked tendency, for a significant majority of candidates, to write broadly around the question rather than focussing on what had been asked. This meant that many answers were general summaries of the topic area, containing a lot of irrelevant information which had to be ignored, or they did not elaborate on the relevant points they had made, resulting in many short, lower-end answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a)** This was generally well answered when candidates were able to draw out themes without simply copying out the passages on the paper. There were a good number of candidates who were able to draw out a range of themes to get the highest marks.

For Sura Alaq, candidates were able to bring out the themes of God as Creator of everything from nothing and placed emphasis on the knowledge He gave to humankind, which made seeking knowledge of utmost importance. For Sura Baqara, candidates were able to bring out themes of God as Creator of humans, angels and jinns, that all knowledge lies with Him, and that forgiveness is an important message from this passage. For Sura Anam, candidates could bring out the theme of God as Creator again, this time mentioning how He created the sun and the moon and the way that they rise and set, as well as the guidance given to prophets. To improve candidates need to ensure they don't simply repeat and paraphrase of the sura they are writing about.

- (b)** When answering this part candidate's need to ensure they are not simply repeating what they had written in **part (a)** or continuing with more descriptive material, rather than explanation. Those candidates who were able to move into any solid application of the themes in a Muslim's life today were awarded marks.

Examples of the better answers were that God is all-forgiving and so when a person knows they have done wrong they should not hesitate to turn to God for help or that because God is the giver of all knowledge, human beings should use that knowledge to please God, by praying and doing good.

Question 2

- (a) This was a reasonably well answered question, with most candidates being able to write something about the authority of the Qur'an and the way that the Sunna expands on the Qur'an and is used alongside it in Islamic Law.

Where it was well answered, candidates gave a range of situations that are mentioned in brief in the Qur'an and expanded on them in detail, as well as things that are not mentioned in the Qur'an but are mentioned in the Sunna. Where it was not answered well, candidates gave a general answer about the Sunna expanding on the Qur'an, without giving any details or examples as to how this happens. Most candidates mentioned Salah and Zakat when giving examples of how the Sunna expands on the Qur'an. Candidates need to say something about the use of Qur'an exclusively for law making, and its authority being the main source to gain marks.

- (b) Most candidates were able to answer this reasonably well by being able to say that *ijma* and *qiyas* are used because with the passage of time and advances in technology, some questions were not clearly answered in the Qur'an and so these sources allowed scholars to give answers for the new situations. Better answers gave examples of current situations where *ijma* and *qiyas* have been used, with details of the way the sources are used. Candidates can improve by being specific and not writing in general terms about what *ijma* and *qiyas* are.

Question 3

- (a) This was a popular question, with a large majority of candidates choosing it. Almost all who attempted it produced creditable responses. Candidates were able to give at least three events from the Prophet's life and write about how he was patient in those situations.

Good answers included detailed responses and linked the question to how it the Prophet demonstrated self-restraint or patience. Others wrote about events from the Prophet's life after migration, and not in Makka as the question asked.

- (b) Most responses to this part were creditable, but they tended to write that Muslims should be patient like the Prophet, rather than giving examples of how they could be patient.

Candidates referenced how Muslims could show self-restraint by fasting and being obedient to God, when Muslims are being bullied by the media they should show patience, and that when being called names like 'terrorist' they should not retaliate but have patience and self-restraint.

Question 4

- (a) This was a popular questions and was generally well answered.

Candidates were able to give the background as to why the Prophet was going to migrate, the actual migration and the stay in the cave, as well as the arrival in Quba and then Madina.

The best answers wrote in detail about the migration, giving names and quotations. Candidates needed to ensure their answers gave details and not simply general information. Good responses included details about the journey and its key events.

- (b) Most candidates were able to give their opinion on whether they thought the Prophet's migration was like that of current migrations. The vast majority said that it was similar because the Prophet migrated to escape persecution and that is what people from Syria or Bangladesh etc. are doing now. They also said that they are fleeing to countries that are welcoming them. Some candidates said that it was not like current migrations because not all countries welcomed the migrants and they had to live as refugees in poor conditions.

Others said it was not like current migrations because now people migrate for other reasons such as economic benefits and that modern modes of transport make migration easier. Candidates could improve their answer by not simply giving a description of the Prophet's journey but including information about his hardships and giving their opinion about the event.

Question 5

- (a) Those who answered this question well provided details about each companion in the question. Many good to excellent responses included appropriate and accurate detail. Other candidates needed to develop their answers by providing information about more than one or two of the figures and then only vaguely touching on the third.
- (b) Most answers to this question were general, referring to having slaves or servants at home and treating them well. There were only a few answers that were able to say that it showed the Prophet put more emphasis on allowing slaves to be free, or that being a former slave did not mean a person could not have a high position within their community, as both these personalities were well respected by the Prophet and the early Muslims.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12
Paper 1

Key messages

Candidates should label answers correctly and clearly, stating whether it is a part (a) answer or part (b) answer.

Candidates should read questions carefully and answer the question being asked.

Candidates should move away from descriptive answers for part (b) questions.

For higher marks, answers should contain detail and depth related to the question asked, and not just general outlines of the main points.

Rubric errors (such as attempting all three optional questions, or not attempting a compulsory one) were rare.

General comments

Overall, candidates were able to answer the required questions and understood what was being asked of them.

There were a small minority of candidates who did not answer one or more of the questions correctly, mainly, it was observed, because they had not read the question carefully; this was mainly noticed about part (b) answers where candidates took an element of the question to write about without reading and understanding the purpose of the question. An example is **Question 3(b)** where candidates gave answers saying that Muslims should be forgiving, without giving an opinion on whether they thought it was possible to be as forgiving as the Prophet.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) This was reasonably well answered, with the best responses drawing out a range of themes to get the highest level. Candidates who gave good answers in one sura tended to not do so well on their second sura. Where answers were good, candidates brought out themes of the passage and gave examples of how these themes were described in the passage. For example, saying God shows His Oneness in sura 1 by saying He is the one who controls the worlds and will be the Master of the Day of Judgment. Candidates who were able to add depth were able to extract the teachings of the sura did well.
- (b) For this answers candidates did well if they extracted the themes of the sura and were able to apply these themes to a Muslim's life today. Candidates can improve by ensuring they don't simply reiterate what they have already written in **Question 1(a)**. There were more answers focussing on the lessons learnt from the teachings rather than any concrete application in their lives, e.g. 'from Sura Fateha we learn that Allah will judge us on the Day of Qayamah', without expanding on it by saying that knowing this encourages Muslims to do good in their lives, to pray and worship God, etc.

Question 2

- (a) This question was well answered, with most candidates giving good answers. Candidates knew the different stages of the compilation starting from the life of the Prophet, through the caliphate of Abu Bakr and finally Uthman's caliphate. The best answers gave most of the relevant details and the names of the main Sahabas involved. However, many responses gave vague descriptions of the process of the compilation itself, especially during the time of Abu Bakr which could not be awarded many marks.

A small number of candidates wrote only on the compilation of the Qur'an at the time of Abu Bakr, and so did not have the range and depth for the highest level marks.

- (b) Most candidates understood the question and answered by saying that the written format of the Qur'an was more important than the oral tradition. There were a good variety of answers given, and the best answers offered a range of responses e.g., saying that the written format makes it easy to carry and to learn from, that not all Muslims are able to memorise the Qur'an so the written format means they can still access it, that because Islam has now spread and there are Muslims in all parts of the world, not just in Muslim countries, it makes it easier for everyone to benefit from it in the written format. Many candidates wrote that people now are not able to memorise as well as previous generations.

There were some answers that said that the oral tradition was more important as this is how the Qur'an was originally learnt and spread and this way the Qur'an will always continue to be passed down and remain authentic. There were only a few answers that said that both the written format and the oral tradition are equally as important.

Question 3

- (a) This question was answered well. Candidates knew about the background to the event and the main reasons why the Prophet went to preach at Ta'if. However, despite the main outline of the events being presented, candidates could improve their answer by finer details, especially relating to events when the Prophet took shelter in the orchard.

Most candidates knew that this visit was a result of the persecution of the Muslims by the Quraysh and their rejection of the Prophet's message, as well as the death of Abu Talib.

The visit was generally well described, and the better answers gave detailed descriptions of the Prophet's shelter in the orchard, the meeting with the servant Addas and the conversation with Jibril. Candidates did well if they referred to Jibril coming to crush the people of Ta'if and that the Prophet asked him not to destroy them.

- (b) For many candidates they could have improved their answers by offering evaluation of whether it was possible for Muslims now to emulate the Prophet's forgiveness.

Most candidates said the Prophet forgave the people of Ta'if so Muslims should do it too. Better answers were able to say e.g. that it is possible for Muslims to be forgiving like the Prophet as he was sent as a guide and role model and so if he is able to do it, then Muslims can follow his example.

Question 4

- (a) This was generally well answered with most candidates who answered it provided a good description of the main events of the battle. Where it was really well answered candidates outlined the main events and wrote about the interactions between the Quraysh and the tribes of Madina, the deception the Prophet placed in the two camps, the non-Muslims who managed to cross the trench, as well as the bad weather and its consequences.

- (b) There were a variety of good and average answers to this part of the question. Good candidates could explain that it had to do with equality among Muslims and the humility of the Prophet as leader joining in the work with his subjects. Many focussed on lessons for leaders, rather than for any Muslim. The fact that the Prophet consulted the companions and followed the advice of Salman was also seen as a good example for leaders to emulate.

Question 5

- (a) This was a popular question and was generally well answered. Most answers were good, and candidates were able to write about a range of significant events in the life of Khadija without making the answer about the life of the Prophet. Most narrated in detail the episode when the Prophet was sent as a trader by Khadija and the consequent marriage between them, her support after his first encounter with Jibril in Cave Hira, her subsequent support in the preaching of Islam, and the persecutions that she endured until her death.

Very good candidates mentioned the hadith about Aisha's jealousy and the Prophet's reply that she was there when he needed support the most. Only a few mentioned the verses about God and Jibril sending peace and blessings to her.

- (b) There were some good answers for this part, with most candidates writing that Islam has given rights for women to work outside the home.

Better candidates could explain that women can have positions of leadership, that there is no shame for men to work under the authority of a woman; Islam has not forbidden it or else the Prophet would not have taken the job, and that it is possible for women to work as well as maintaining their responsibilities at home. Some even suggested specifically encouraging the education of women for them to be able to be assets to their society.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21
Paper 2

Key messages

Candidates should label answers correctly and clearly, stating whether it is a part **(a)** answer or part **(b)** answer

Candidates should read questions carefully and ensure they answer the question (and not misinterpret what is being asked of them)

Candidates should move away from descriptive answers for part **(b)** questions.

General comments

There was some good work particularly in response to **Questions 2** and **3**. Some less successful responses did not read questions carefully enough and therefore their responses were less relevant and could not score highly. When attempting **Question 4**, many wrote about the rites of hajj which the question was not asking about therefore it would be advantageous for candidates to look through (and practise) past papers. Candidates need to ensure that they take their time to read the question and not simply respond to an answer they assume is asking them to write about something. Many candidates also misunderstood **Question 5** and went on to write a comprehensive answer on tawhid instead of God's divine decree and human responsibility. Therefore it is critical that the students read and understand the question before beginning to write a response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

A fair response was given to both parts of the question. Answers could have been improved by making the distinction between teaching and action, which would make responses to both parts more focused.

Question 2

Here the question was asking candidates to use at least four Hadiths of the Prophet to discuss the importance they taught of unity in the community. Therefore candidates needed to refer to at least four Hadiths and those answer which did not follow the instruction in the Hadith and only referred to one or two Hadiths could not gain full marks. These responses could not go beyond a satisfactory response level. Other responses quoted the four Hadiths promoting unity and discussed them, whilst there were some candidates who, without quoting the Hadiths, discussed them clearly. Both approaches were valid. Some candidates were clearly making up Hadiths and offering a poor discussion on them which meant answers could not be credited. Had responses simply stated how looking after the vulnerable improves society by spreading goodwill, they could have earned some marks as it would have been seen as referencing the Prophet's Hadith. On the whole, it could be said that the majority of candidates did well with this question.

In part **(b)** a range of responses were given. Some answers were relevant with good answers acknowledging the importance of community within Islam and that everyone in that community is looked after. Other responses were not so relevant with little acknowledgement or discussion about the idea of community. In these answers that were unable to gain high marks the focus was more on the structure of Hadiths and how they were compiled rather than why it was significant to how they created unity.

Question 3

This was a very popular question attempted by the majority of the students. The answers given were good. Candidates could improve their answers by writing about the compilation of the Qur'an in the period of both Abu Bakr and Uthman. In many answers candidates wrote about how the Qur'an was written during the Prophet's time, though not compiled as a book, and this was seen as development of the answer. Responses which built up this information to explain how, in the time of the caliphs, they were able to put together an authentic compilation gained marks. Those responses who acknowledged the importance of the Qur'an being written in the *Quraysh* dialect so that the entire *umma* could read the Qur'an identically and would therefore lead to create unity amongst the Muslims gained marks.

Part (b) again for this answer was very well evaluated by the candidates. Good responses acknowledged that if the Qur'an had not been compiled many Muslims today may not have had access to it. Strong answers were able to include the idea of oral tradition.

Question 4

In part (a) candidates needed to write about the various kinds of tawaf, when they were performed during hajj and what the conditions for performing them were. Good answers contained thorough details of both the different kinds of tawaf and the conditions of the tawaf. Less successful answers were about the various rites of hajj, with a brief reference to the kinds of tawaf performed during the annual hajj. In some answers the names of the tawaf were mixed up. Candidates could improve by ensuring their answers weren't simply brief description or and sketchy accounts of tawaf. It must be noted that, often answers did not answer both parts of the question. Again it would be beneficial for candidates to practise these types of questions and familiarise themselves with the format they are presented in.

For part (b) it must be noted that the key word in the question was 'desirable'. Good answers were able to acknowledge the word here and respond accordingly. Candidates need to pick up on leading words in the question and build their answer from there. However, there were also some very thoughtful and well written responses.

Question 5

Part (a) demonstrated some excellent thoughtful answers. Candidates were able to give thorough answers. Some excellent answers were written on tawhid, but the question was not on tawhid but God's divine decree and human responsibility. Responses may have included the idea that God is wise and loving and that he has recorded everything that will occur until the Day of Judgment. Some candidates went on to write about humans being responsible for their actions and that you will receive merited punishment or reward depending on whether you violate or observe that said law.

Those who got part (a) right were able to get the better marks in part (b) as well. Some did reasonably well in part (b) even though they did not get part (a) right. Responses needed to point out that Belief in divine decree strengthens one's belief in God. Some responses pointed out that to have belief in God's divine decree resulted in an inner peace.

ISLAMIYAT

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Paper 2

Key messages

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For higher marks, answers should contain detail and depth related to the question asked, and not just general outlines of the main points.

General comments

Overall, candidates were able to answer the required questions and understood what was being asked of them.

Many candidates were successful in their answers and the overall performance of this paper. Both the compulsory and optional questions were effectively attempted by most of the candidates. Some candidates would have improved their performance by reading the question more carefully and answering it precisely. It is suggested that candidates look over past papers and their questions so as to appreciate what is being examined rather than simply assume and therefore answer a question that is not actually being asked.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Both parts of the question were well answered. Hadiths **(i)** and **(iii)** were the most popular with the candidates. In Hadith **(ii)** candidates lacked clarity as to who was considered a martyr. Here the teaching is that any believer who lives righteously and is God conscious can achieve the status of a martyr if death comes to him /her whilst he is striving in the way of Allah.

Question 2

In part **(a)** of this question the candidate needed to write about the relationship between the Qur'an and Hadith and say how they are the primary sources of law, how one compliments the other, never contradicts the other, and how the Hadiths are an interpretation/tafseer of the Qur'an. The use of appropriate examples gave the answer substance and helped achieve a higher mark. Most candidates managed to give a competent response to this part of the answer. The second part asked candidates to say what the difference between Hadith Qudsi and Nabawi was. Those candidates who could have improved on their responses should have included what the Hadith Qudsi was and said. Many responses seemed to be guessing and therefore did not obtain the highest marks. To get to the top levels both parts of the question had to be addressed. Those who did were duly rewarded. Examples of both types of Hadith also helped to develop the answer and gain marks.

For part **(b)** good evaluative responses were seen. Most candidates were able to state that the Prophet gave permission to his companions to write down his traditions so that they could be recorded for future generations of Muslims. Other responses rightly went on to point out that the Prophet wanted his message to be passed on to those who had not heard him speak, yet another opinion could be that he was setting precedents in his rulings and conduct with other states etc. and he wanted Muslims to follow in his footsteps and do the right thing.

Question 3

In part (a) of this question candidates needed to write about the election and administration of Hazrat Abu Bakr. Some candidates over-simplified the answer and said that Hazrat Umar nominated him, and a few confused Hazrat Abu Bakr's election with Hazrat Uthman's. However, there were some very good and detailed accounts of Hazrat Abu Bakr's election. When writing about the administration of the first caliph it was important to focus on how the caliphate was divided into provinces under governors, the creation of the Majlis e Shura and the Bait ul Maal etc. The events of Abu Bakr's caliphate were not relevant here. However, when candidates focussed on events such as making the tribes pay zakat or defeating the false prophets, and linked the events to how he administered the caliphate according to the teachings of Islam, marks were credited.

In part (b) many responses wrote about the compilation of the Qur'an being his greatest service and went on to say why it was important to have a written copy of the Qur'an. Defeating the false prophets and the consequences of not doing so were also discussed. Good evaluation was seen in part (b) answers.

Question 4

In part (a) of this question, candidates needed to write about the characteristics of the caliphates of the Rightly Guided caliphs which made them role models for present day Muslim rulers. Candidates approached this question in different ways. Some wrote about each individual caliph and said how he was an example of leadership. Other candidates wrote about all four together e.g. saying that they all consulted the sura, and the justice in the time of the caliphs was given to all. The best answers gave examples backing up their statements. When candidates simply wrote about the individual events in each caliph's term without any links to the question, they could not be credited. Also, it was important that characteristics of all four caliphs were written about to get to the higher levels.

In part (b) there were some very good evaluative responses, answering the question. Responses included that religious tolerance practised and encouraged by the caliphs was their greatest quality or the implementation of justice, or the enforcement of the pillars of Islam or the democratic way in which they were elected. Candidates who ignored what the question was asking them to do, which was to choose one characteristic they felt would, if adopted by present day rulers, change the lives of ordinary people.

Question 5

Part (a) was about how a Muslim prepares for prayer. Most answers wrote in great detail about wudu and made a reference to the body being covered and the place of prayer being clean. Development of points made, such as when ghusal becomes necessary, when wudu is enough, tayammum, what sattu constitutes etc. were needed to get to higher levels. Some candidates gave a detailed account of the prayer itself, which was not relevant to the question. It is important to read the question carefully and answers keeping in mind the needs of the question. Those responses which were able to use accurate quotes from the Qur'an to support the need to perform wudu gained marks. *Moreover* candidates could quote hadiths like '*Allah does not accept any prayer that was not performed while in a state of purity*'.

Part (b) asked why dua was recommended immediately after prayer. The question was not about the importance of prayer, and some less successful candidates had omitted to read the question carefully, which is always very important.