

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11
Paper 1

Key messages

To ensure best performance, candidates must provide extensive responses in continuous prose and distinct paragraphs. In **(a)** parts of the questions they must give details of different events and aspects of the main topic. In parts **(b)**, strong argument supported by evidence are required to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the questions' demands.

Answers must be written legibly; questions should be labelled properly and where the response does not fit into the space provided, extra sheets must be used ensuring the answers are properly labelled.

General comments

In knowledge-based questions, lack of details, inaccuracies and selection of irrelevant facts were the primary causes of lower marks. In questions assessing understanding, failure to comprehend the question's demand, presenting weak, flawed or incoherent argument were the main features of responses securing lower marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** The requirement of the question is to describe the main themes presented in the passages. Candidates should discuss at least three themes and elaborate on them briefly. A common mistake candidate made was giving details of the first revelation for Sura Iqra or going into unnecessary details about the names of the Suras, their number, meaning of the name etc. Such details not only take up most of the candidates' valuable time but also do not add anything creditworthy to the response.

A large number of candidates relied on paraphrasing, and thus obtained only half of the marks available. Some were able to pick themes such as God's omniscience, His power of creation and the humbleness of human origin for passage **(i)**. For the next two passages, different themes related to prophethood in Islam and the relationship between God and His prophets, such as the support offered by God, God's being the ultimate source of all powers, miracles and knowledge were also highlighted. Such responses were able to secure higher marks.

- (b)** Better answers were able to explore different points of significance for the passages selected. For example, in passage **(i)** the importance of education and showing gratitude was highlighted. In response to passage **(ii)**, candidates talked about how the passage strengthens the belief in an important article of faith as well as in God's immense powers, further elaborating different positive impacts it has on Muslims' lives. Finally, in the last passage, ideas such as trust in God's assistance and support in times of hardships were explored. A large number of candidates however, relied solely on giving simplistic suggestions about Muslim behaviour in light of the ideas discussed in the passages under discussion.

Question 2

- (a) Responses at level four were able to recall most themes from the three passages given in the question and clearly commented on how God describes Himself in those passages. The main highlight included God 's unique nature and His oneness in Sura Anam, His creation in Sura Fussilat and His greatness along with His mercy in Sura Shura. Other noteworthy ideas included His sublime nature, His knowledge, and the fact that He is the most deserving of worship.

A large numbers of candidates, however, could only recall some of the themes, sometimes conflating themes from different passages or giving a long list of themes without clearly referencing the suras or offering any evaluation.

The responses that showed very little or no knowledge of the passages under discussion and provided very brief responses scored low marks.

- (b) Some insightful answers talked about how God's different characteristics, such as His knowledge, gives confidence to those undergoing hardships by providing peace of mind that the Lord is aware of their struggles. Others mentioned that God's mercy ensures He will not let His slaves suffer unnecessarily. Some even talked about How God's justice offers them comfort and hope for justice in the next life.

In contrast, responses which merely commented that learning about God's nature would help people to deal with ordeals in their lives, but without specifying how, scored lower marks.

Question 3

- (a) This question differentiated well. Responses at the top levels were able to select the most important events and the details from within all the different events that highlighted the growth of Islam in Makkah. These including the preaching process, expansion of Islam and the opposition and restrictions faced by Muslims in Makkah. These responses specifically mentioned events such as the different stages of preaching, the acceptance of Islam by different individuals with profound impact and the reactions of the main oppressors of Islam. On the other hand, those responses which did not reach such high levels chose different events from the Makkan life of the Prophet (pbuh) without considering which were most important, and then described them without connecting them to the growth of Islam.

- (b) The lessons for today's Muslims which responses mentioned most commonly included staying patient, having a strong trust in God, not letting go of their faith.

Most responses offered similar suggestions. Those which offered more nuanced lessons such as migrating when it becomes impossible to endure persecution, or keeping faith a secret under extreme circumstances, achieved higher marks.

Question 4

- (a) Most responses seemed familiar with the major events covering the miraculous journey of the Prophet (pbuh), it was therefore, the depth, the accuracy and the balance of the information in the response which elevated some answers to the highest levels.

Better answers provided a brief background, recalled the events related to isra, specifically mentioning Jibril's role in the night journey as well as ascension, buraq's description and the Prophet's meeting with different prophets. Details of miraj were profound, including the bait ul mamour, lote tree and the visit of the heaven and hell. This was followed by description of what happened when the Prophet (pbuh) met his Lord and the reactions he faced on his way back.

Those responses which lacked balance – going into too much detail about one event while missing others altogether – were awarded fewer marks.

- (b) Some responses kept a tight focus on the question and discussed different aspects of the journey, explaining how they helped Muslims to get connected to God. Some of the points brought out included the prayers granted in this journey which connect Muslims to their Lord. Other ideas included God taking His beloved Prophet on the journey to uplift his spirit, indicating that Muslims can also look forward to His support in their own lives, thus strengthening their connection with

God. The description of heaven was highlighted as another aspect, compelling Muslims to connect with God through complete submission to Him.

Responses which did not specify a particular aspect of the journey that could bring Muslims closer to God, or which did not explain how the journey helps Muslims to achieve this connection, received lower marks.

Question 5

- (a) Almost all the candidates attempting the question had a general idea about how the four personalities accepted Islam. Those responses which secured higher marks, provided specific details surrounding the conversion of the four companions with high accuracy and precision.

Those responses which achieved lower marks were those which lacked detail, had inaccuracies or included information about the general lives of the four companions or the roles played by them as caliphs rather than focussing on specifics.

- (b) Animosity and persecutions faced by the early converts were some points discussed by large numbers of responses. Those responses which went beyond the most obvious points on persecution and raised more sensitive, specific points such as facing opposition from one's own kith and kin, social isolation, difficulties in adopting new practices and abandoning old ones, were the responses which earned higher marks.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12
Paper 1

Key messages

Candidates must provide extensive responses in continuous prose, with distinctive paragraphs, giving details of different events and aspects of the main topic in **(a)** parts of the questions. For the **(b)** parts, good understanding of the questions' demands can be presented through nuanced and substantive arguments.

Answers must be written legibly; questions must be labelled properly. If the response does not fit into the space provided, extra sheets must be used and properly labelled. Candidates must write only on the lines provided, not in the margin or the empty space at the top and the bottom of the page.

General comments

The overall quality of the answers varied. Most responses displayed good information in knowledge-based questions. Questions requiring understanding to be shown however, need further improvement. Many responses misunderstood the demands of the question or presented incoherent or weak arguments to support their points. Additionally, many responses were overly descriptive, giving extensive detail of the events mentioned in the questions whereas AO2 questions are intended for candidates to display their evaluative and analytical skills through quality arguments and exemplification.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** Ayat ul Qursi and Sura Nas were the popular choices in this question. Responses at the top of the mark range were able to select a few themes such as God's omniscience, His omnipotence and the uniqueness of His nature and demonstrated how these themes were presented in passage (i). Similarly, for Sura Nas ideas such as God's protection, His power and control over His creations were explored. Passage (iii) was not very popular, but those attempting it discussed God's power of creation, His omniscience, Satan's treachery and God's merciful nature.

Most candidates relied on paraphrasing and rewriting the ideas from the translation in their own words which only earned them mid-range marks.

- (b)** The use of Ayat ul qursi and Sura Nas as the passages/sura of protection were the main features of the most responses. Responses which achieved higher marks explored other aspects such as Ayat ul qursi creating a clear concept of God, developing awe and wonder in humans and making them obedient slaves who are fearful of all-powerful God. A large number of responses, however, relied solely on giving simplistic suggestions about Muslim behaviour in light of the ideas considered in the passages under discussion and consequently scored mid-range marks.

Question 2

- (a) There were several strong answers, and the subject matter was thoroughly known and understood. Almost all responses were aware of the core idea such as the suggestion of compilation of the Quran coming from Omer, Abu Bakr appointing Ziad ibn Thabit. They knew about the meticulous approach followed by Ziad and the later issues in Uthman's era including how he standardised the Quran. Responses which presented finer details such as quotes from the historical accounts of this event, minute details of the compilation process, names of important personalities other than the three caliphs and Ziad, achieved the highest marks.

In some responses, there was a lack of balance overall. Some omitted the actions of Uthman, while others were not able to provide finer details of the standardisation process. These responses tended to score lower marks.

- (b) Most candidates tried to show the significance of the written Quran with ease of memorisation and preservation being the most commonly mentioned points. Those answers which presented varied and more complex reasoning, such as written Quran helping to develop diacritical marks, further serving to preserve the Qureshi dialect, achieved higher marks. Similarly, where responses discussed concepts such as the written Quran ensuring possibility of soft copies, translation into other languages or even into braille, high marks were attained.

Some responses were not able to grasp the question properly and talked about the general significance of the Quran itself, scoring low marks.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates found this question challenging.

The responses which were awarded top marks were those which provided a brief background of the event and the reasons for the Prophet (pbuh) diverting his attention to areas outside Makkah for preaching Islam. Description of the three visits and the details of the two pledges were highly accurate and precise. Quotes from the historical accounts were also presented quoting the conversations between the prophet (pbuh), his uncle and the Yathribite delegates.

Mid-range to lower marks were achieved where the response conflated the details of the three meeting or the pledges. The actual pledges were not well-known and were often confused, as were the different visits. Often the first visit was omitted, or the first pledge only vaguely associated with it. In the second pledge, only the protection of the Prophet (pbuh) was mentioned, although Abbas' intervention was recounted, and migration was indicated but there was no need for a detailed account of this. Inaccuracies and lack of details and development were the other reason for the lower marks in this question.

- (b) Some really thoughtful answers discussed the importance of making the newcomers feel part of the community and not discriminating against them. Other ideas included helping newcomers to get to know the new locality and learn about the amenities in the area. Many responses though, could only score two marks as they were talking about showing kindness, generosity and care but could not expand on how to do so in a practical way.

Another significant observation was that some candidates confused the question and instead of talking about new arrivals, discussed how to treat new Muslims.

Question 4

- (a) This was a popular choice. Most candidates were aware of the reasons for this battle, Salman's suggestion and the siege by the Makkans. Details about Nuaym's role and the storm forcing the Makkans to retreat, helped responses achieve marks at level 3. Those responses which were awarded higher marks still, were those which mentioned details of the trench digging, miracles observed at that time, role of Bani Qurayza and the hypocrites, and some references from the Quran about the battle of Ahzab.

Low marks were attained when responses missed details or had too many inaccuracies.

- (b)** The most common observations and suggestions focused on participation and consultation as well as reliance on God.

The most insightful responses though, explored more complex ideas such as leaders showing determination and perseverance in the face of adversities or employing diverse and effective techniques to tackle challenges.

Those responses which scored low marks were mainly descriptive and focused on what the Prophet (pbuh) did, without showing what lessons present Muslim leadership can learn from his example.

Question 5

- (a)** This was the least attempted of all the questions. Attention was given to lineage and conversion and conduct in battles. Selection of the figures varied and there was a wide balance in the choices made however, Umar, Talhah and Zubayr were the more popular ones with Omer being the most well known one.
- (b)** A need to be steadfast was mentioned but without stating how or in what circumstances. Most answers consisted of some simple suggestions about being firm, patient and having strong faith in God.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21
Paper 2

Key messages

Candidates must read and answer questions fully to get to the higher levels or the higher marks within the levels. Good answers require a detailed and well-developed response, the space provided for the answer is a good indication of how much needs to be written for each answer. Good relevancy, accuracy and detail with supporting quotes where applicable add to answers and enable candidates to get higher marks.

General comments

The paper was accessible to all students and the majority understood the demands and needs of the set questions and were able to answer them. **Question 3** was perhaps slightly less popular than **Question 4** and **5** but was still attempted by a good number of candidates. Excellent answers were well presented with an introduction, sound development and a good conclusion showing knowledge for Part **(a)** answers and good understanding in Part **(b)** responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

When giving the teachings of the Hadiths, many responses paraphrased. The focus should not be on writing a complex response but simply stating what the Prophet (pbuh) is instructing Muslims to do in terms of their individual and communal conduct with reference to the content of the Hadith being answered.

For example, Hadith 1 in this paper states *'if you are merciful to others Allah will be merciful to you'* but responses could have said that the Hadith stresses the need to be merciful and drawing comparisons with how Allah shows mercy to His creation, wanting humankind to be kind and merciful to all His creation. Responses could then suggest that to earn Allah's mercy, we should practice mercy in our daily lives.

Most responses talking about Hadith 2 gave very general responses, not focusing on kind treatment for the needy especially widows and orphans. Responses should have aimed to mention that good and kind treatment of others is an act of immense virtue for which the reward is comparable to worshipping Allah.

Hadith 3 was fairly answered but for the set Hadith 4 the difference between charity (*sadaqa*) and zakat must be emphasised as Hadith 4's teaching is not referring to the fulfilment of the Pillar of zakat but rather doing acts of charity other than zakat payment.

Part (b) answers should give practical examples of how the teachings given in the selected Hadiths need to be acted on. Answers need to be based on practical examples and not be descriptive for this Part answers. For example for Hadith 1, candidates could have referred to the mercy shown by the Prophet (pbuh) forgiving the people of Taif when they abused him and showed mercy towards them by praying for them or they could give examples from their own lives of forgiving a friend who may have wronged them, or putting water out for birds and stray cats on a hot day as an act of mercy. All Hadiths in **Part (b)** must be answered with practical examples.

Question 2

Most responses knew the two components of Hadiths and were able to give a good account of them and many developed the answer by giving a chain of narrators to develop the isnad part of the answer and gave a Hadith to show that they understood that it was referring to the content of the Hadith. Checks made on isnad and matn were also given. Developed responses gave details of the schools of Hadith established for the verification of genuine Hadiths, as well as examples of how Hadith compilers went about collecting Hadiths as well as stating how isnad and matn help in the classification of Hadiths. Whilst some answers were less detailed, many were well developed answers for which they were rewarded with higher levels.

Part (b) question was clearly understood and generally well answered.

Question 3

As said above this question was slightly less popular but those who did attempt it did well in it. They were able to give several administrative policies introduced in the caliphate of 'Umar which made the Muslim empire well administered and strong. Some listed the administrative policies but did not develop them by writing about their impact. This answer needed to focus on the administrative policies alone and not 'Umar's military expansion. A few responses did include Umar's military achievements. Students should be urged to focus on the needs and demands of what the question is asking specifically, and development must be relevant to the core question.

Part (b) was again well answered. Most candidates focused on the military expansion.

Question 4

A very popular and generally well answered question. The responses which were less well awarded were those which confused the battle with that of Siffin altogether. Some answers got personalities and events of Battles of Camel and Siffin mixed up. Overall, the question was well answered.

Please note in battle questions date, names of key commanders, cause of battle, events of battle and outcome are key elements to cover.

Part (b) was generally well answered. Again, for this **Part (b)** answer candidates were successfully able to explain the impact of this battle on Ali's caliphate and say how it led to its weakening and to future battles and eventually his martyrdom.

Question 5

This was also a popular question and was relatively straight forward. A lot could have been written on belief in prophets. However, answers which did not carry as much detail and development and candidates lost the opportunity of getting Level 4 marks which were very possible to achieve in this answer.

Part (b) a thoughtful answer stating the importance of belief in all prophets in Islam was needed here. This was perhaps the one **Part (b)** answer in which the responses given were descriptive and repetitive of what had already been stated in **Part (a)**.

Conclusion

The candidates in general did rather well this year on this paper. The set questions were understood and answered well. The well-prepared responses which developed the relevant points, backing them with quotes where necessary and detail got to the higher levels and marks.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22
Paper 2

Key messages

Candidates must read and answer questions fully to get to the higher levels or the higher marks within the levels. Good answers require a detailed and well-developed response, the space provided for the answer is a good indication of how much needs to be written for each answer. Good relevancy, accuracy and detail with supporting quotes where applicable add to answers and enable candidates to get higher marks.

General comments

The Paper was accessible to all students and the majority understood the demands and needs of the set questions and were able to answer them. The most popular questions from amongst the optional three questions were **Question 3** and **5**. Excellent answers were well presented with an introduction, sound development and a good conclusion showing knowledge for Part **(a)** answers and good understanding in Part **(b)** responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The most popular from the four set Hadiths was Hadith **(i)** which most candidates chose. Many opted for Hadith **(ii)** as their second choice. There was an even split between Hadith **(iii)** and **(iv)** as the second choice.

- (a)** When writing about the teachings given in Hadith **(i)** quite a few candidates focussed on halal foods and eating with one's right hand rather than the importance of halal earning. Many however, did show a good understanding about how the teaching of the Hadith stressed on not relying on others, earning for oneself and the dignity of work. Hadith **(ii)** was generally well answered, and candidates understood the teachings and expressed the importance of showing kindness in all transactions to others. Hadith **(iii)** was addressed narrowly, and many restricted the teaching of this Hadith to refer to armed warfare only. Hadith **(iv)** was paraphrased to an extent; however, some candidates did reference Umar's just rule.
- (b)** answers needed to focus on how the Hadiths teachings can be put into action. At times candidates confused this Part **(b)** answer with the Part **(b)** of **Question 1** of Paper 12 and wrote about the importance of the Hadith they had selected in Part **(a)**. By so doing they repeated themselves by writing about the teachings given in the Hadith they had selected whereas they should have written about how the teachings they had written about in Part **(a)** could be acted upon.

Question 2

- (a)** This compulsory question was answered well. There were three parts to this question that needed to be addressed to get to Level 4 marks. A description of qiyas, how it was used in law making and an example of qiyas. Many candidates were able to give detailed accounts of qiyas and how and when it should be used. They were able to mention and explain the elements used in the practice of qiyas but only the very good ones broke down the example they used into the separate elements thus showing they really understood the practice in action. Most common example of qiyas given was that of the ruling on nail polish and the second one was on activities prohibited at Jummah time.

The Prophet's use of qiyas – his conversation with Mu'adh ibn Jabal- was read as development of the answer establishing the authority of qiyas. Many, in fact a large majority, gave multiple examples of the use of qiyas, rather than just one example as required by the question. Most common example of qiyas given was that of the ruling on application of nail colour making wudu invalid.

Some candidates mixed qiyas up with ijma, this error in turn impacted their part **(b)** response.

- (b)** Most candidates were able to answer this question comprehensively showing very good understanding of the importance of having genuine Hadiths and how useful they are for Muslims to live their lives according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh), in understanding the Qur'an and law making etc.

Question 3

- (a)** This was a very popular question answered by most candidates. For Part **(a)** of this question candidates had to write about all four false prophets that emerged in Arabia towards the end of the Prophet's life and after his death and how Abu Bakr dealt with them. Sometimes names and information was confused in the answers seen. Many were able to give a full account of Musailimah and the Battle of Yamama.
- (b)** Some candidates simply focussed on the importance of zakat and how it was a Pillar of Islam. They did not go on to give the reasons for why Abu Bakr was determined to uphold this Pillar which was important to show understanding of not just the importance of zakat but the significance of Abu Bakr's determination to not give anyone an exemption from its payment if zakat became due on them. As not doing so would have created divisions in the community and could have led to others asking from exemptions from the fulfilment of other Pillars etc.

Question 4

- (a)** Most candidates did give the background of the two battles asked about in the question. Some however confused the Battle of the Bridge with the Battle of Buwayb. Common errors in this answer were to do with the names of the commanders, size of the army on both sides. A few confused the Persians with the Romans. Some well-prepared candidates were able to give an account of all the days in the Battle of Qadisiya.
- (b)** Answers to part b needed to focus on Umar's character based on his actions following the conquest of Jerusalem. Quite a few candidates recounted his journey to Jerusalem and his actions there without saying how his actions reflected his noble qualities of simplicity, humbleness and religious tolerance etc.

Question 5

- (a)** This was a two-part answer and the candidates had to write about qada (delayed) prayer and the importance of prayer. The majority gave a sketchy account of qada prayer and went on to write about the conditions of prayer etc which was not relevant to the answer. Having said that candidates who attempted this question could and did manage to get good marks on the strength of their response to the importance of prayers. The mark was not equally divided between the two parts and a global mark was given on the strength of the answer as a whole.
- (b)** The responses to this part question tended to be rather generalised, even though it was straightforward. Little reasoning as to why so much importance is given to wudu was given. Most answers simply stated that it was compulsory for prayer to be accepted and it purified Muslims both physically and spiritually.

Conclusion

Reading and understanding the requirement of the question and developing the relevant points, backing them with quotes were necessary and detail is an important exam skill that candidates need to develop and be trained for.