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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ISLAMIYAT

GCE Ordinary Level

Papers 2058/01 and 2058/02

Paper 1 and Paper 2

General comments

These comments apply to both Paper 2058/01 and Paper 2058/02.

In general, candidates seemed well prepared to answer all the questions set in this examination, and showed a thorough grasp of the basic facts required. Nearly all candidates were able to complete the papers, indicating that they had managed the time allowed well. A few candidates answered all the questions in the paper rather than choosing the options allowed in each paper, but these were very much in a minority.

Previous reports have identified a number of recurring mistakes in candidates' performances. Among these has often been the failure to answer the questions as set in the papers. As teachers will know, questions are designed to test candidates' ability to present facts clearly and also to evaluate the importance of these facts. Questions never ask for a general account of a whole topic (e.g. the life of the Prophet, or the Pillars of Islam), but indicate as precisely as possible particular aspects of a topic (for example, the persecutions suffered by the Muslims while the Prophet was in Makka, the relations between the Prophet and the Jewish tribes of Madina, the distinctive elements of Friday congregational prayers, the major observances of the annual pilgrimage). And they nearly always ask for evaluative comments about the aspects already described.

This makes it extremely important for candidates to read the questions closely and to work out what exactly they are asking, which might well mean that candidates have to read a question a number of times in order to understand its wording. After they have done this, they should spend some time deciding what elements to include in the descriptive part and what to include in the evaluative part.

Teachers would be advised to spend time explaining the structure of the questions to their candidates in order to alert them to exactly how they can detect these different elements, and answer them properly. It might also help if teachers explained to candidates what is intended by terms that often appear in questions such as 'Give an account of' and 'Give brief descriptions of', on the one hand, and, on the other hand, 'Explain the importance of' and 'Explain the significance of'. 'Account', 'description' and 'outline' all indicate that the question is asking for a *factual* answer, which should be concise and accurate; 'importance' and 'significance' indicate that the question is asking for some *evaluation*. Candidates often lose marks by not showing they are aware of this distinction. For example, in this season's Paper 2058/01 **Question 2**, some said nothing about Waraqa in answering part (a), and then in (b) *described* the part he played rather than explaining his *significance* in the events asked for.

It was clear from many scripts in this examination that candidates who had been taught these simple techniques performed best.

Teachers should be aware of the following recent publications:

- David R Thomas and Mustafa Draper, *Islamiyat, a core text for O Level*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN 0-19-597783-1, a textbook intended for candidates.
- David R Thomas and Mustafa Draper, *Islamiyat, a core text for O Level, Teacher's Guide*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN 0-19-597784-X, a handbook intended for teachers who use the textbook.
- *Islamiyat 2058 General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level, Standards Booklet*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge International Examinations, 2004, a handbook containing comments on answers to questions set in recent examinations.

Teachers should also know about the on-line Discussion Group, hosted by David Thomas, which provides an opportunity to discuss ways of teaching the syllabus and problems encountered in doing this. To join the Group go to www.cie.org.uk click on Syllabuses then on Islamiyat and follow the instructions.

Comments on specific questions**Paper 1****Question 1**

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

The best way to answer this question is to identify the main teaching or teachings (there may be more than one) that each passage contains. The question was not asking for a commentary on each verse or for a paraphrase of the passage, but for statements about the main Qur'anic themes within them.

Teachers should note that comments about the Sura 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) Here, a good answer would have referred to the majesty of God, and also to the help that God gives to those who ask.
- (b) Here, a good answer would have included some comments about the probable context of the passage (remember that while the context of passages is not explicitly asked about, some passages can only be understood properly by referring to their context), and the fact that it referred to the experiences of the Prophet Muhammad.

Some excellent answers started by explaining how the passage was intended to comfort and encourage the Prophet, and went on to show how its message can be made general for all believers. This kind of approach is very much to be encouraged.

- (c) Here, a good answer would have referred to the power of God as a refuge from all the harm and evil that people might encounter.

Some excellent answers gave a number of identifications for the 'evil whisperer', though many seemed uncertain about who or what may be meant by this.

Question 2

- (a) This part was answered very well by many candidates, though some answers were fuller than others. The fullest detailed the triple crushing of the Prophet, quoted the verses revealed to him, referred to his second vision of the angel after leaving the cave, his comforting by Khadija and his visit to Waraqa. In descriptive questions, the Examiners look for accuracy and completeness, and candidates often lose marks by getting basic facts wrong or leaving them out altogether. The need for planning answers is paramount.

There were some surprising interpretations in a few answers. One was that the angel did not crush the Prophet but held him in order to reassure him, and another was that the angel first visited the Prophet six months before coming to him in the cave with the first revelation. If any teachers know an authentic source for such interpretations, they are asked to share them in the Discussion Group (see above). The Hadith preserved by al-Bukhari is generally taken as the most reliable source; this is quoted in full in the *Islamiyat* textbook, pages 10-12 (see above).

- (b) There were some good answers to this part, though many candidates were unable to say why the two characters of the angel and Waraqa were important. The best answers explained that the angel who appeared was God's messenger to all Prophets, and was the first to inform the Prophet Muhammad of this new career that had been chosen for him, and that Waraqa helped him to understand what this new career was, who the angel was, and the difficulties that lay ahead.

Question 3

This was by far the more popular of the two optional questions.

- (a) As said above, in descriptive answers candidates should be accurate and complete. It is very easy to lose marks by leaving out a basic fact or putting something wrongly. Here, many candidates scored highly, but a noticeable minority lost marks by, for example, failing to say in which month fasting occurs or what is the basic rate of zakat. Others gave less space to describing the observance itself than to secondary details such as who is exempt from fasting, what are the penalties for missing a fast, and the varying rates of zakat on different possessions. The question asks about the ways in which these two observances are carried out, and so details of this kind should either not be included or given only a minor reference.
- (b) This part proved less easy than (a) because it asked for some evaluation. While some candidates gave excellent explanations of, for example, how fasting gives the rich sympathy for the poor, and how zakat shares wealth in society, many candidates appeared not to notice what the question was asking. Its purpose was to encourage candidates to think about the social dimensions of these two observances, but many ignored this and listed the ways in which they thought the observances helped individual Muslims rather than communities. Such answers provide a good example of candidates who did not appear to have read the question closely or to have thought about the best way to answer it.

Question 4

- (a) Most of the relatively few candidates who attempted this question did not answer this part very well. The question asks for two specific examples of the use of Qur'an and Hadith in making law, but most answers explained in general terms the relationship between the two instead of getting down to specific examples.

The best answers identified specific Hadiths and Qur'an verses, quoted them, explained the point they had in common, and then showed how the Hadiths expanded upon the teaching in the Qur'an. What was required here was steady and methodical thinking, but not many candidates demonstrated it.

- (b) The mark scheme allowed one mark in each case for identifying the two terms given in the question, and reserved the remaining marks for explanations of their importance in the process of authenticating Hadiths. A surprising number of candidates were not able to identify them, and few seemed able to discuss their importance. Teachers might be advised to ensure they cover this part of the syllabus thoroughly.

Paper 2**Question 1**

In each answer to this question, candidates are asked to make two points, one about the meaning of the words underlined (not their English translation, but who or what might be referred to, or who might be speaking), and the other about the importance of what is said here (what wider significance may be involved).

The great majority of candidates gave full and accurate answers, and on average this was a high-scoring question. But there were a few common mistakes:

- Some thought that in (1), (3) and (4) the speaker was the Prophet Muhammad.
- A few were unable in (5) to give any of the generally accepted identifications of 'abundance', or in (6) to identify 'the one who hates you'.
- Many of the best answers were less than half a side long, but in that short space they had given their answers accurately and concisely.

Question 2

In this question candidates are asked to identify teachings on 1. belief and 2. action in the seven Hadiths. Good answers will consist of brief remarks outlining these two features, rather than of general accounts of what a Hadith might mean. This is another case of where careful planning is important.

The Examiners were alerted to look out for a range of acceptable answers, and were very pleased to see the result of clear thinking from many candidates about the two features of their chosen Hadiths. There were no common errors, and this was generally a high-scoring question.

Question 3

As usual, this question requires more reflection than many others. Few candidates did very well, probably because it cannot be prepared for simply by memorising facts.

- (a) This part asked for three examples that show relations between the early Muslim state and other states. A little thinking would lead candidates to see that this means they should choose examples from the time when there was a Muslim state, after the Hijra, and not before.

The best answers identified each example, and went on to describe it in detail. Many chose the Treaty of Hudaibiya, the wars between the Caliph Abu Bakr and the false prophets, and the treaty between the Caliph 'Umar and the people of Jerusalem. These were excellent choices since they enabled the candidates to describe at some length all that was involved.

- (b) This part proved challenging for most candidates, though some were able to make links between early times and present-day situations, such as Kashmir or Iraq, often making insightful comments on the conduct of relations in the light of their chosen examples.

Answers to questions such as this cannot easily be prepared in advance: they depend on thorough knowledge of facts about Islam and Islamic history that candidates acquire in studying other parts of the syllabus, and also on sufficient mental agility to use this knowledge to make new links between what the candidates learn and their everyday lives.

Question 4

- (a) This part seemed surprisingly difficult for many candidates. In each case they had to give sufficient relevant facts about the two Caliphs to earn six marks. But what many did not notice is that the question asked them to cover the whole life of their chosen figures, including their period as caliph, and not just the lifetime of the Prophet. After all, this was signalled in the wording of the question itself, where it mentions them not by name but by the title of Caliph.

Good answers gave a few facts about the chosen figures' activities with the Prophet, and then went on to outline the major events of their caliphates.

- (b) Here, candidates were not asked to give factual accounts, but to discuss the significance of one of the chosen Caliphs during his time as Caliph. In their answers, they were thus invited to build upon what they had written in part (a). Good answers explained how the activities of the Caliph contributed to the development of Islam as a faith (for example, the part played by Abu Bakr and 'Uthman in collecting the Qur'an), or as an empire (the conquests under 'Umar).

It is interesting to note that some candidates seemed hesitant to discuss the expansion of the Islamic empire in terms of conquest, but instead explained it as defensive responses to attacks from outside. This is a departure from the early Islamic historical sources, which speak quite straightforwardly about conquest.

Question 5

- (a) This straightforward part of the question earned full marks for most candidates who attempted the question. Some, however, named the Prophet's daughters Umm Kulthum and Fatima among his wives.
- (b) This, again, was a relatively straightforward question, though it did not ask for factual accounts but for explanations of the two wives' importance. While many candidates answered it well, some described the main events of the figures' lives, including long and intricate details of Khadija's marriages and families prior to her meeting the Prophet, and 'A'isha's childhood and marriage to the Prophet.

Their significance lies in the way that Khadija supported the Prophet in the early years of his mission, and in the part that 'A'isha played during the reigns of the first Caliphs. The best answers focused on these aspects.