

FAQs for Islamiyat (2058)

Is Islamiyat available to candidates in any country?

Yes, candidates anywhere can sit the examinations.

What are the differences between O Level Islamiyat (2058) and O Level Islamic Religion and Culture (2056)?

There are slight differences in the content but these are minimal, the main difference comes in the examination. The best way to see is by looking at the syllabus and past papers. There is no difference in the qualification so it basically comes down to which one you prefer. Islamic Religion and Culture is only available in November each year whereas Islamiyat is available both November and June.

What is the duration of the exam?

2058/01: 1 hour 30 minutes; 2058/02: 1 hour 30 minutes.

Which themes and passages from the Qur'an do we study for Paper 1?

The Qur'an as a whole contains a number of major themes. The revised syllabus focuses on **three** of them:

- 1) Allah in himself
- 2) Allah's relationship with the created world
- 3) Allah's messengers.

The syllabus lists **15** Qur'an passages, **5** under each of these **3** major themes. It is these themes that Question 1 asks about.

The passages collected under each major theme will all contain something significant about the theme, and that is what students should be taught to think about. In the examination these 15 passages are tested in Paper 1, Question 1, where **3** passages are set and candidates have to choose any **2**.

Will the three Qur'anic passages in Paper 1 be on the same theme?

They could each be from **any** of the three themes.

What is the difference between part (a) and part (b) of Question 1 in Paper 1?

The instruction to candidates reads as follows:

1. Choose any two of the following passages from the Qur'an, and:

- (a) briefly describe the main theme(s) in each passage [4]
- (b) briefly explain how each passage presents its theme(s) in a distinctive way. [4]

Part (a) asks about the general theme contained in the passage, the theme that the passage may share with many other passages in the Qur'an.

And part (b) asks about the way in which this passage talks about the theme in its own particular manner. Almost every passage in the Qur'an contains one of the major themes of the Qur'an, and it often contains it in language and ideas that are unique to itself. For example, the stories of Noah, Abraham and Moses all talk about the theme of **messengers** and how God guides them and protects them. But each of these stories expresses the teaching about protection in its own way: Abraham being protected from his community when they try to finish him, Moses being protected from Pharaoh's army by the waters of the sea.

The two parts of the question ask about these two features of the passages: (a) how they present a theme(s) found throughout the Qur'an, and (b) how they explain or illustrate the theme(s) in particular ways.

Could you give an example of what is expected in Question 1 part (a) and part (b) of Paper 1?

In part (a), the question asks candidates to describe the major theme they can detect in the passage they have chosen. Thus, if they were asked about Sura 112, which the syllabus lists under the major theme (1) Allah in himself, they would write about the theme of the oneness of God (though in more detail).

In different parts of the Qur'an, these themes are talked about slightly differently - thus, while Sura 112 talks about the oneness of God in one way, Sura 2.255 talks about it in a slightly different way, using different language and creating different pictures in the mind. In part (b), therefore, the question asks candidates to explain the particular features of the description in the chosen passage. They may refer to the concepts included in Sura 112 - e.g. not begetting and not being begotten, as opposed to Sura 2.255, e.g. not being comprehended by human thought, never sleeping and being seated on the throne. So the question as a whole tests candidates' knowledge of (a) the main teaching in a passage, and also (b) their understanding of the way in which that particular passage conveys the teaching.

How will marks be awarded for Question 1 in Paper 1?

The method of marking asks examiners not to look for individual points but for the overall quality of an answer. That is the difference between levels and points marking. So the candidate should not think of making 4 points in order to gain 4 marks, but of showing deep knowledge and understanding about the passage, firstly concerning the main theme it contains, and secondly concerning the special way it expresses that theme.

The allocation of marks in Paper 2058/01 Question 1 is as follows: part (a) 4 marks, part (b) 4 marks. Candidates have to comment on two passages, both in part a) and in part b). Does this mean the marks allocated for each part are 2+2?

No, the approach to marking Paper 2058/1 Question 1 is to read both answers to part (a) of the two chosen passages, and then both answers to part (b). Examiners will then give a **single** mark out of a maximum of 4 for the two answers to (a) and a second **single** mark out of a maximum of 4 for the two parts (b). In this way the examiners will be judging the overall performance of the candidate in showing knowledge (AO1 in the syllabus), and also in showing understanding (AO2 in the syllabus).

In Paper 1, Question 1, part (b), where candidates are asked to explain how each passage they have chosen presents its theme or themes in a distinctive way, are candidates supposed to compare the two passages chosen - i.e. give their similarities and differences - or present their answers separately?

Candidates should explain each of the chosen passages **independently** as two **separate** answers – the question does **not** ask them to compare the two chosen passages in a single answer.

In Paper 1, Question 1, part (b), where candidates are asked to explain how each passage they have chosen presents its theme or themes in a distinctive way, if candidates want to show how a passage differs to other passages on the same theme, should they contrast it with one of the passages listed in the syllabus only?

Candidates can refer to Qur'anic passages on the syllabus or to other Qur'anic passages not on the syllabus as long as they are **relevant** to the theme. For example, if they attempt Sura 112, for example, they could say how this passage differs from Sura 2.255, which is also on the same theme and also listed in the syllabus, or they could say how it differs with another passage which refers to the same theme (of oneness and greatness of God) that is not in the syllabus. By referring to **relevant** passages that are not listed in the syllabus, they will show wider knowledge of the Qur'an.

In the specimen paper, for an essay question, the marks distribution is 10 and 4 marks. Is this how essays will always be, or could there be different mark distributions?

As in the syllabus (which contains the generic marking criteria), all the ESSAY questions will be 10 (AO1 knowledge) and 4 marks (AO2 understanding).

It appears from the syllabus that moral matters – such as modesty, self respect, respect for women, finance, relations with non-Muslims, and Islam in community life – are no longer separate topics but have been merged with topics such as the biography of the Prophet. Is this correct?

Yes, it is true that in the syllabus there is no separate topic on 'moral' matters, as these have been merged with other topics. If you look closely at the syllabus, you will see that issues of morality are now linked with study of the Qur'an, the Hadiths, the Prophet and the Caliphs. Even in the old syllabus, questions on morality - Question 3 in 2058/02 - have nearly always been worded as 'Describe three examples from the life of the Prophet that show how he treated his wives', or something similar. The intention has been to get candidates to link the example of the Prophet or the teaching of the Qur'an or the example of the Caliphs with issues of morality. So the revised syllabus simply makes this link explicit.

Can Islamiyat be offered in Urdu?

University of Cambridge International Examinations is an international examinations board which offers examinations in the medium of English (except for language syllabuses). As such it would not be possible to offer Islamiyat in Urdu or any other language. Islamiyat is not only taken by candidates in Pakistan and so to offer it in Urdu would limit those who could study the course.

When questions about the compilation of the Hadith are asked will candidates be expected to answer from a Sunni or a Shi'i perspective or from both?

Candidates are able to answer the question according to what they know and what is relevant to the question, whether this be Sunni or Shi'i.

How can I find out more?

See the syllabus, specimen question papers and mark schemes, past question papers and mark schemes and Principal Examiner Reports on the CIE public website:

www.cie.org.uk

Join the Islamiyat email discussion group via the CIE teacher support website:

<http://teachers.cie.org.uk>