

O Level Islamiyat (2058)

When is the revised syllabus examined for the first time?

The first examination for the revised syllabus is in June 2003.

How is the revised syllabus different from the old one?

The differences are not major. They include:

- **2 papers instead of 1**

The examination has been divided into two examination papers. Instead of one paper (two hours 30 mins), there are now two papers:

paper 1: one hour 15 mins – 40 marks

paper 2: one hour 30 mins – 60 marks

- **clearer assessment objectives**

1. knowledge and understanding of the main elements of Islamic faith and history (studied mainly in English but with some familiarity with passages from the Qur'an and Hadith in Arabic)
2. the ability to evaluate the meaning and importance of these elements in the lives and thought of Muslims

These will enable the very good candidates to demonstrate their ability.

- **Arabic passages 'translated' into English**

In the question papers, English 'translations' of the passages from the Qur'an and the Hadith will be given alongside the Arabic. Translations in the question papers follow the translation by Yusuf 'Ali A'bdullah in *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, but are modernised slightly. Candidates are NOT required to translate the passages into English. However, examiners will be looking for understanding of the original Arabic.

- **no separate Sunni/Shi'a sections**

At the suggestion of many teachers, there are no longer separate Sunni and Shi'a sections in the exam paper. However, some questions may have either/or parts that will be relevant to Sunnis and Shi'as respectively. Also, candidates may, when answering a common question, give a Sunni or Shi'a perspective; examiners will be sensitive to differing understandings and beliefs.

Why has it been changed?

Partly in response to requests from teachers, partly because it is better for assessment purposes to have more than one paper.

Is there a change to the syllabus content?

The 2003/2004/2005 syllabus content is broadly the same as the old (2002) syllabus. Please refer to your syllabus for a detailed list of topics.

Please note that, as mentioned in the 2003 syllabus:

- Sura 24.35 will be omitted
- Sura 17.1 and Sura 113 will be added.

Will the questions be different?

The questions in the revised syllabus are very similar to the questions in the old syllabus...

- **New compared to old – at a glance**

<i>Old paper</i>	<i>New paper 1</i>	<i>New paper 2</i>	<i>Syllabus content</i>
Q1 compulsory	Q1 compulsory		Main teachings in passages from Qur'an
Q2 compulsory		Q1 compulsory	Meaning/importance of phrases from Qur'an
Q3 compulsory		Q2 compulsory	Main teachings in the Prophet's Hadith
Q4 compulsory	Q2 compulsory		Life & significance of the Prophet
Q5 compulsory		Q3 compulsory	Muslims in their relations with others
Q6 choose 2 of Qs 6-8		Q4/5 choice	History of the early Muslim community
Q7 choose 2 of Qs 6-8	Q3 choose Q3/4		Articles of Faith, Five Pillars
Q8 choose 2 of Qs 6-8	Q4 choose Q3/4		Sources of religious and legal authority

- **Same number of questions, increased choice**

In total, candidates will still have to answer 7 questions (3 in Paper 1 + 4 in Paper 2), but with increased choice (with a choice of 9 instead of 8 questions).

- **More focused instructions for commentary questions**

As seen below, the wording of some of the questions has changed and is clearer.

New Paper 1, Question 1

Note that the new instruction is:

'Comment on the main teachings in two of the following passages from the Qur'an.'

(old instruction: 'Comment on the context of one of the following passages from the Qur'an and the main teachings contained in it.').

New Paper 2, Question 1

Note that the new instruction is 'Comment on the meaning and importance of seven of the words or phrases underlined in the following passages.'

(old instruction: 'Comment on the religious meaning and significance of any five of the phrases underlined in the following passages.')

New Paper 2, Question 2

Note that the new instruction is 'Comment on the teachings in seven of the following Hadith about what Muslims should believe and how they should act'

(old instruction 'Comment on the religious and ethical significance of five of the following Hadith.')

- **More passages to comment on**

As seen below, within 3 of the questions, there are extra passages to comment on.

New Paper 1, Question 1: an extra passage from the Qur'an to comment on

Candidates will need to comment on the main teachings of 2 (not 1) passages from the Qur'an from a choice of 3 (not 2).

Marks for this question will be $2 \times 4 = 8$ (old paper is $1 \times 6 = 6$).

New Paper 2, Question 1: an extra 2 underlined phrases from the Qur'an to comment on

Candidates will need to comment on the meaning and importance of 7 (not 5) underlined words/phrases from the Qur'an, from a choice of 10 (not 8).

Marks for this question will be $7 \times 2 = 14$ (old paper is $5 \times 3 = 15$).

New Paper 2, Question 2: an extra 2 Hadith to comment on

Candidates will need to comment on the teachings in 7 (not 5) Hadith from a choice of 10 (not 8).

Marks for this question will be $7 \times 2 = 14$ (old paper is $5 \times 3 = 15$).

What are examiners looking for?

- **Relevance not length**

Encourage students to answer the questions by:

- reading the questions with care, as the wording contains clues about what is wanted in the answer
- thinking about what is being asked – knowledge or evaluation?
- planning a relevant answer.

Remember that sheer quantity will not gain points. Candidates should give relevant detail and examples in their answers in order to demonstrate their awareness of the main point of the question.

- **Both factual knowledge and evaluative ability**

Questions are intended to test two aspects of the candidates' learning about Islam:

- their knowledge and understanding of facts
- their ability to evaluate.

In many questions, marks are divided into 75% knowledge and understanding, and 25% ability to evaluate.

Teachers are advised to prepare candidates thoroughly – both in the facts they should know and understand within the syllabus, and in explaining the meaning and importance of these facts in the lives and thoughts of Muslims.

- **Comment on passages, don't translate or paraphrase**

Comments on passages should be brief and relevant yet full enough to cover the main points in the passage. Passages/phrases will appear on the paper in both Arabic and English and so translation is not required.

No marks will be given for translations or paraphrases. However, examiners will be looking for knowledge and understanding of the original Arabic.

Where can I get further information?

- **Syllabus**

The syllabus gives further details of the syllabus content and notes for guidance. The 2004 and 2005 syllabuses are the same as the 2003 syllabus. The 2003 syllabus also provides specimen papers.

- **Website**

www.cie.org.uk

- **Textbooks**

At the moment, teachers are using their own selected resources. Our consultants at Cambridge International Examinations are currently writing a textbook soon to be published by Oxford University Press (Karachi).

- **An opportunity to join CIE's e-mail discussion group for Islamiyat teachers**

If you are a teacher of CIE's Islamiyat O level, have access to e-mail and would like to share ideas and find out more, then please e-mail: international@ucles.org.uk