



# Examiners' Report

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In Islamic Studies (4IS1) Paper 01

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## **Principal Examiner Report 4IS1**

The paper itself was divided into three sections with the first two sections offering a choice of question, while in the third section both questions must be answered. The first section is Section A – The life, teachings and achievements of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The second section is Section B – The key beliefs, practices and features of the early Muslim community founded by the Prophet. The third section is Section C – Living the Muslim life today.

- In a) questions most candidates were able to provide two points that gained full marks demonstrating good knowledge of subject matter. Similarly for question 5 and 6 where only one point is needed and one mark is awarded for each a) question here.
- In b) questions, candidates who gave a series of simple reasons in answer to the question were unable to get more than 1 mark as they did not show any development. Candidates who developed points often attained 3 marks showing good understanding and knowledge.
- In c) questions, candidates are asked to evaluate a question based on a good explanation. They are asked to show good development and demonstrate good knowledge and understanding. Candidates often moved beyond Level 1 when developing their answers and best candidates did this in a way that showed high evaluation skills attaining Level 3 in doing so.
- In d) questions candidates are asked to develop a balanced discussion of the topic raised by the question, and to show a comprehensive understanding of the implications raised. Centres are reminded that all d) questions have the following requirements:

In your answer you should include:

- reference to text provided
- another point of view
- your opinion/point of view using reasoned arguments
- a balanced conclusion

This year saw the highest numbers of candidates able to provide a full and balanced discussion, with reference to the text, and so were able to access marks at Level 3. However, a number of candidates either provided a simple discussion, without development, or a one-sided argument, or failed to refer to the text provided. This limited their ability to gain marks above Level 2, a maximum of eight out of the twelve marks available.

**In Section A** – The life, teachings, and achievements of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Question 1 proved a more popular question over question 2 with almost twice as many students opting for this question.

**Question 1**

(a) Identify two problems the Prophet and his followers faced in Makkah before the Hijrah.

This was well answered with many candidates focusing on the boycott and mark scheme reasons for correct information.

(b) Describe the Prophet's relationship with people of other religions

This was well answered by candidates who focused on the Prophet's kindness to other faiths and the treaties agreed which enabled communities to live peacefully together. Most marks were dropped by candidates not developing their answer.

(c) Explain the importance of the Prophet's relationship with his wives and children

Many candidates answered this well focusing on the positive relationships formed with his wives and children. How the Prophet acted in these relationships then highlighted the importance of him as a role model whose actions should be emulated in maintaining, and developing, positive relationships between husband, wives and children.

d) 'Without the events of the Hijrah, Islam would not have succeeded in spreading the message of Allah.'

This was well answered as candidates were able to identify the importance of the Hijrah in enabling Islam to spread as a global faith. They were able to identify different key aspects of the Hijrah to reinforce their point. This saw many candidates move beyond a level one. The best candidates were then able to develop an alternative opinion and refer to the text. Popular as the alternative was 'Allah would have found another way' and developing this which enabled candidates to move beyond level 2 into level 3. Only including one point of view or not including reference to the text meant candidates then could not go beyond Level 2. Best answers saw a balanced argument with a good conclusion.

**Question 2**

(a) Identify two ways Ali Ibn Talib supported Muhammad (pbuh).

Well answered question with many pupils gaining two marks in relating Ali Ibn Talib as someone who protected the Prophet in battles and supported him in the spread of Islam.

(b) Describe the events of the battle of Khyber

This was a well answered question when candidates described the events of the battle of Khyber. Some candidates mixed battles up and most often with the battle of Trench so then dropped marks.

(c) Explain Muslim beliefs about the nature of society.

Best candidates were able to relate the understanding of society as something that should be moral and treats all people fairly. They referred to an inclusive society that saw the rights of all respected and the duty of society to allow all to flourish and be cared for. They also highlighted the importance of the removal of poverty through the principal of Zakah. Candidates who only focused on the religious aspects of society, such as Salat, limited their marks through lack of development.

(d) 'The Night of Power is the most important event in Islam.'

Assess this statement.

This was well answered by many candidates as they understood the importance of the 'Night of Power' and how this was central to Islamic belief. Some candidates only described what occurred on the Night of Power and so dropped marks. Many developed this in relation to it being the most important event in Islam gaining marks. The best candidates were able then to offer an alternative viewpoint, such as the Hijrah, with clear reference to the text and so moved into level 3. Best answers saw a balanced argument with good conclusion.

**SECTION B** – The key beliefs, practices and features of the early Muslim community founded by the Prophet. Question 4 proved a more popular question over question 3 with almost twice as many students opting for this question.

### Question 3

(a) Identify two roles performed by the angel Mikail.

Well answered with majority of candidates getting 2 marks though some mixed Mikail up with other angels so dropped marks.

(b) Describe the role of Isma'il as a prophet in Islam.

Many candidates understood who Isma'il was answered this question well. They developed his teaching of Tawhid with the building of the Ka'ba and picked up 3 marks. Candidates who failed

to understand what his role was only mentioned him as the son of Ibrahim and so dropped marks.

c) Explain the importance of qiyas to Shari'ah Law.

Many candidates were able to recognise the importance of qiyas to understanding Islamic teaching on a number of modern issues. They recognised the importance of this for Shariah Law existing in a changing modern world. Those who only referred to Shari'ah Law dropped marks. Best candidates were those candidates who highlighted the importance of qiyas as a method of recognising new beliefs and practices on the basis of analogy with past practices and beliefs.

d) 'Being merciful and just are the most important attributes of Allah.'  
Assess this statement.

A well answered question with many candidates clearly arguing in two parts the importance of merciful and just being the most important attributes of Allah and reference to the text to support this understanding. Candidates moved to level 3 quoting the importance of Tawhid from the text provided as an alternative point of view. Best answers saw a balanced argument with good conclusion.

#### **Question 4**

(a) Identify two acts considered mandub (recommended).

This was well answered with the majority of candidates able to identify two acts that are considered mandub.

(b) Describe what the Injil teaches according to the Qur'an.

Well answered question by candidates who were able to explain that Isa taught in the Injil of Tawhid, moral understandings and worshipping God. Points highlighted were well developed.

(c) Explain the importance of belief in predestination for Muslims.

This was well answered by most candidates. They understood what predestination was and how this related to how they should live their lives. Better candidates were able to develop this further highlighting how this impacts on life after death, and the acceptance of the will of Allah in all things, thus attaining level 3.

(d) 'Belief in Akhirah is what motivates Muslims to live good lives.'

Assess this statement.

This was well answered by most candidates who recognised how the importance of belief in Akhirah impacts on what should motivate Muslims. They referred to the text to back up this point when referring to the fear of hell as 'fire, intensely hot' and judgement day as the 'striking calamity'. This enabled most candidates to move into level 2. A number of candidates however dropped marks by referring to an aspect of belief in Akhirah, such as fear of judgement day or hell, as an alternative viewpoint and so couldn't move beyond level 2. Best answers saw a balanced argument with good conclusion.

### **SECTION C – Living the Muslim life today**

#### **Question 5**

(a) Give one reason Muslims give to charity

Well answered with most candidates correctly giving one reason Muslims give to charity.

(b) Describe how Muslims perform Salah.

This was a well answered question with most candidates gaining full marks by being able to identify what Salah was and then describe how Muslims pray through prayer movements and direction of prayer.

(c) Explain the importance of the greater (inner) jihad in the life of Muslims.

Most candidates were able to identify what inner jihad was and so focus correctly and solely on the question. These candidates then were able to move beyond level 1. Some sought to describe lesser jihad as part of the answer and so dropped marks. Candidates who developed answers in line with focusing on the struggle of the nafs, helping in spirituality, improving society and developing a deeper relationship with Allah moved into Level 3.

(d) 'Marriage and procreation are the most important ways of strengthening the Ummah.'

Assess this statement.

Candidates were able to demonstrate how marriage and procreation were important as ways to strengthen the Ummah. Answers that were more descriptive dropped marks. Answers that developed points in line with question moved to higher level 2 responses. Reference to the text was often displayed well and another point of view included, such as Imams teaching about Islam in mosques, and so moved into level 3. Best answers focused on the importance of marriage as a

secure place that allows parents to bring up children in the faith along with reference to text and alternative opinion, with a balanced argument with good conclusion.

### **Question 6**

(a) Give one feature of Hajj.

Almost all candidates answered this correctly.

(b) Describe the challenges faced by Islamic leaders in the modern world.

This was well answered mostly by candidates with a focus on a changing modern world developed by Muslim leaders having to deal with issues of Islamophobia and trade with non-Muslim countries. Some answers lacked development so dropped marks.

(c) Explain the importance of Islamic festivals for Muslims.

This was well answered by candidates with most being able to move into level 2. Candidates who only described what the festivals were dropped marks due to lack of development. Candidates who described what the festivals were, along with how and why they were important, moved into level 3.

(d) 'All Muslims should observe the fast during Ramadan.'

Assess this statement.

This was well answered by candidates as the text itself supported references from both sides of the argument giving reasons why Muslims should fast and occasions when Muslims do not have to fast. This enabled level 3 to be quite accessible to many candidates who developed the reasons for this in their answer. Best answers saw a balanced argument with good conclusion.

Based on their responses to this paper, candidates are offered the following advice to improve performance:

- It is essential for candidates to read the questions carefully, so when answering the question there is a clear correlation that enables candidates to score higher marks.
- In a) questions it is important to give two clear reasons (1 in section 3) to get full marks
- In b) questions candidates need to show development to move beyond level one.
- In c) questions comprehensive development in relation to the question showing comprehensive knowledge and understanding are essential to attain Level 3.
- d) questions require a number of elements, and candidates need to make an effort to meet all of them – specifically they need to attempt to look at the issue from more than one



point of view, and ideas should always be developed, and supported with religious teachings.

- A further requirement in d) questions, for those aiming to score marks in Levels 3, is for there to be depth to the discussion. Simple reasons gain marks of course, but the higher levels are gained by those who can show they have a comprehensive understanding of the issue raised and how it relates to the text provided.
- Because c) and d) questions are marked using a level rather than a points based mark scheme, candidates need to be aware that a series of simple points will rarely allow them to gain more than half the available marks. They should focus on showing depth rather than just breadth of knowledge and understanding.

