

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 2058/11

Paper 1

General comments

These comments apply to Paper 2058/11 and 12.

Generally speaking, candidates were prepared for this examination in that they were able to answer the four required questions in the time allocated. Only a small number did not finish their answers or missed out a complete question.

Overall Examiners noted that the performance of the candidates was average for this session with there being very few candidates writing exceptional answers. Candidates seemed to have knowledge on the topics that came up in the questions, but the main issue picked out by Examiners was that the candidates did not use the knowledge they had to answer the questions being asked; they gave general answers that could apply to a number of questions that had been set in the past. Candidates need not only to remember facts and events, but to be able to adapt the information they have to answer the specific questions that have been set. This can often be done by a few selective words or phrases that will link the answer to the question.

Candidates should be as specific and detailed as possible in their answers. The mark scheme is written in general terms, as a guide to Examiners, but specific detail will be credited if relevant to the question.

It is important for candidates to read the question set as each year there will be subtle differences from the questions that have come up before. Candidates should then try to relate their answers back to the question as it is set.

Since this syllabus was revised, part **(b)** of **question 1** (this question is compulsory and has always been worded the same) has caused some confusion and so it has been agreed to amend this question. From June 2012 the question will be 'briefly explain the importance of these themes in a Muslim's life today', which refers to the themes stated in answer to part **(a)**. This change is intended to improve the question, to clear the confusion and to aid candidates in understanding and applying verses from the Qur'an in a modern day setting.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Some themes were identified in all suras. It does seem that candidates are not entirely clear as to how they should answer this question. Some candidates answered parts **(a)** and **(b)** together without differentiating them, and so did not follow the rubric, and some gave answers to all three suras. Many candidates repeated a lot of the same themes in their answer.

(a) For part **(a)** good answers would have been able to pick out key themes from two passages. Most candidates picked out the themes of God as creator and teacher, giving knowledge to humankind.

Few candidates linked this with God's power to control things in nature that benefit mankind, and few talked about His oneness (*tawhid*) with many candidates just mentioning it in passing.

Most candidates gave general answers to the two passages they had chosen. Candidates should try to pick out as many themes from the passage as possible and enhance their answers by giving a short explanation of that theme.

- (b) Here, good answers would have been able to say how these themes are presented specifically in these suras. Most answers for this part were average, with many candidates replicating what they had written in part (a).

Better answers were able to reflect on the passages and show the significance of God using these verses to highlight His oneness, power, knowledge or His link with humankind. These answers also quoted other suras that were similar but more importantly, were able to give details of why they were similar.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates did not answer this part of the question. Most candidates treated the question as the reason for the compilation of the Qur'an, and they focused their answers on the compilation during the time of the Caliphs Abu Bakr and 'Uthman. The question is in fact asking candidates to write about how the Qur'an was developed into the form of a book, as it was not given to the Prophet in this form.

Some key points are: the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet and preserved on bones and leaves, etc., and then later collated; the suras were put in the current order as told to the Prophet by Jibril; the original suhuf was a collection of loose sheets of paper; the compilation during 'Uthman's time (e.g. he had the Qur'an written in the Quraysh dialect and standardised into book format with the suras and chapters in order); the last part of the compilation which was the adding of the dots by Abul Aswad ad-Duali.

For this reason most answers did not achieve the higher levels, as most focused on giving information about the battle of Yamamah, 'Umar trying to persuade Abu Bakr, and Zaid's efforts to collect and collate the verses.

- (b) In part (b) most candidates wrote about the general significance of the Qur'an for a Muslim instead of writing of the significance of the Qur'an in the form of a book. For this reason there was not much evaluation offered as to the benefit of having the Qur'an in the form of a book. Candidates need to tailor their answers to the requirement of the question.

Question 3

- (a) This part was well answered by most candidates. Many candidates understood that they needed to write about the Prophet's character but from the viewpoint of the Quraysh. Many wrote about the major events before prophethood for e.g. the flooding of the Ka'ba and how the resolving of the dispute highlighted the Quraysh's respect for the Prophet's decision making. Many candidates also wrote that the relation altered after prophethood, detailing the persecution he faced and continued to highlight the nobility of the Prophet's character by mentioning he was still entrusted with the Quraysh's goods.

Some candidates were able to mention the events before and after prophethood, but without details. Some answers focused on the question being about persecution or the Prophet's character being *al-sadiq* or *al-amin*, which it was not. Some candidates narrated the childhood and life of the Prophet; others made general comments re the Prophet's interaction before the revelation of the Qur'an without reference to specific events.

- (b) Part (b) was generally well answered by candidates, with most being able to write about the main reasons the Quraysh rejected the Prophet's message; not wanting to renounce their religion, losing the economic benefit of Ka'ba as a house of polytheism, not being able to give up their un-Islamic way of life and not accepting power from one lower in status than them.

Good answers wrote and reflected upon these points.

