CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge O Level

ISLAMIC STUDIES **2068/22**

Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs and Observances **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: • the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme • the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions • the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that: • marks are not deducted for errors or omissions • marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate • the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

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Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
✓	Correct point

Using the mark levels

Marking of work should be positive, rewarding achievement where possible, but clearly differentiating across the whole range of marks, where appropriate.

The marker should look at the work and then make a judgement about which level statement is the best fit. In practice, work does not always match one level statement precisely so a judgement may need to be made between two or more level statements.

Once a best-fit level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:

- If the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, award the highest mark.
- If the candidate's work **adequately** meets the level statement, award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range (where middle marks are available).
- If the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, award the lowest mark.

Generic levels of response grids

Table A – AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Use this marking grid for **questions 1–4** part (b) and **questions 5** and **6** part (a).

Level	Marks		Description
	Q1–4 part (b)	**Q5**, **Q6** part (a)	
4	9–10	10–12	• Answers most aspects of the question, using a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Effective use of relevant examples or sources to support points made. • Demonstrates understanding through clear and well-developed explanations.
3	6–8	7–9	• Addresses many aspects of the question, using accurate and relevant knowledge. • Use of some examples or sources to support points made. • Demonstrates understanding through clear explanation, which covers the main points.
2	3–5	4–6	• Partially answers the question, using elements of accurate and relevant knowledge. • Minimal use of examples or sources. • Demonstrates some understanding which covers a few of the main points.
1	1–2	1–3	• An attempt to answer the question, using limited relevant knowledge. • Responses are unsupported by examples or use of sources. • Demonstrates a basic understanding.
0	0	0	• No creditable response.

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Table B – AO2 Evaluation

Use this marking grid for **questions 1–4** part (c) and **questions 5** and **6** part (b).

Level	Marks		Description
	Q1–4 part (c)	**Q5, Q6** part (b)	
3	5–6	6–8	• Evaluates the question showing awareness of various viewpoints. • Discusses the issues in a reflective way, with clear understanding. • Effectively shows the significance of belief and practice in the lives of Muslims. • Refers to relevant examples or sources to support points made.
2	3–4	3–5	• Includes some evaluation, may show awareness of one or more viewpoints. • There is discussion of one or more issues. • Shows some understanding of the significance of belief and practice in the lives of Muslims. • One or two examples or references to sources may be given.
1	1–2	1–2	• Answer is mainly descriptive, there may be an awareness of a single viewpoint. • Shows limited understanding of belief and practice in the lives of Muslims. • There is limited or no reference to examples/sources.
0	0	0	• No creditable response.

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	**Give <u>four</u> ways in which Abu Bakr was humble.** Award **one** mark for each valid response up to a maximum of four marks. Responses might include **four** of the following: • Abu Bakr suffered persecution without complaining. • He gave all his wealth in the cause of Islam, e.g. Tabuk. • When he was appointed Caliph, Abu Bakr made a speech asking people to correct him if he was wrong. • He bought the freedom of slaves. • Lived a simple personal life with his family. Accept any other valid points.	**4**
1(b)	**Explain how Abu Bakr improved social facilities during his rule.** Use Table A levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • Abu Bakr protected those of different tribes and religious backgrounds. He extended social security to those of different backgrounds, religions etc. • He gave rights to Muslims and non-Muslims across the caliphate and allowed those who were not satisfied to complain. • Abu Bakr made sure zakah was paid, which helped those who had fewer social facilities. Zakah was paid to help widows, orphans, the old, the ill and students as well as those who fought for Islam. • The Banu Asad, Banu Ghatafan, Banu ʿAbs and Banu Murrah tribes refused to pay zakah. To deal with them Abu Bakr sent in an army of eleven battalions. He overcame all opposition within a year. Khalid bin Walid was harsh in his treatment of dissent, but Abu Bakr forgave/supported him. • Abu Bakr made helping Muslims who were weak and vulnerable a priority. He said that he aimed to protect them at the start of his reign. • Abu Bakr was compassionate towards people, and established rights to peace and security for Muslims and non-Muslims. Women and children were not to be harmed in battle. He promoted moral values and self-respect amongst the community. • He organised cantonments and took care of everyone under his reign, regardless of faith or tribe. All had access to the same social facilities.	**10**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	**Discuss different ways in which Abu Bakr might inspire Muslims today.** Use Table B levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • Abu Bakr went through suffering in Makkah on accounts of Islam, yet stayed loyal and steadfast to the faith even though it cost him dearly in his business interests. Therefore, Muslims today might be inspired to hold true to the faith even when things gets tough. • Abu Bakr found a distressed community trying to make sense of Muhammad's death. He led the way, staying true to the sunnah. Muslims today might be inspired to take on leadership positions even if they are in difficult times. • Abu Bakr told his people to correct him. This humility might inspire Muslims today to accept correction and be humble in their lives. This may include in their moral conduct, in their recitation in prayer, or in any action. They can see this as beneficial in staying true to the sunnah.	**6**

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	**Outline <u>two</u> events of ʿAli's childhood.** Award **one** mark for identifying each example and **one** mark for further description of each. • ʿAli lived in poverty at age 5 and due to this went to live with the Prophet (pbuh) and his family. • ʿAli became one of the first to accept the faith after the Prophet (pbuh) received revelation. ʿAli was around 10 years old at the time. • ʿAli's father accepted ʿAli's decision, because he could see that Muhammad (pbuh) was leading ʿAli towards good things. • ʿAli's father said: "Since he [Muhammad (pbuh)] leads you only to righteousness, follow him and keep close to him." • God told Muhammad (pbuh) in the Qurʾan 26:214 to warn his closest relatives about accepting the faith. ʿAli was there and, despite this, said: "I will be your helper." Accept any other valid points.	**4**

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	**Explain how ʿAli managed other leaders in the organisation of his caliphate.** Use Table A levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • ʿAli appointed new provincial governors to support his position at the start of his reign, especially as some supporters of ʿUthman were restless about his murder. • Leaders had different views over ʿUthman's death, so ʿAli dealt with them all gently in Madinah. • ʿAli forbade corruption and taking favours in administrative affairs for governors. • Muʿawiyah was a powerful leader and governor of Syria. He was distrustful of ʿAli over the follow up of ʿUthman's murderers. There was some discussion amongst the people of Madinah about Muʿawiyah and his opinion about ʿAli, especially when Talha and Zubayr passed through Madinah on pilgrimage. This raised tensions. • ʿAli dealt with the disloyalty of Muʿawiyah by moving his capital city to Kufa where he had more support, which was further from Muʿawiyah's power base in Syria. • ʿAli faced some rebels but always tried to negotiate. He asked for obedience from the rebels and defeated them at the Battle of Camel. Muʿawiyah rebelled which led to the Battle of Siffin, which was settled through arbitration. • Mistrust built up between ʿAli and his supporters and those of Talha, Aisha and Zubayr, who were prominent companions of the Prophet (pbuh) and so were leaders of standing. • Aisha, Talha and Zubayr rebelled and went north to get support. Some tribes of Basra tried to negotiate between the two sides and ʿAli met Talha and Zubayr, and it was thought they agreed a truce. • Despite ʿAli's wish for negotiations, fighting broke out and the Battle of Camel (*Jamal*) took place.	**10**

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	**To what extent was ʿAli's strength the most significant aspect of his leadership? Give reasons to support your answer.** Use Table B levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include one or more of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • ʿAli was known for being strong and not giving in to the rebels. He used different methods, including negotiation, but never actually changed his views or his position. Therefore, strength could be seen as a significant feature. • However, negotiation suggests compromise which is not the same as strength. ʿAli's use of negotiation to try and save fighting between Muslims was a well-known and distinctive feature of his reign. • What is significant could be determined by what his legacy was after his reign ended. In that sense it could be argued that continuing the legacy of the Four Pious Caliphs by staying true to the sunnah was the most significant aspect.	**6**

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	**Give <u>four</u> occasions when Muslims say the statement of faith (*shahadah*).** Award **one** mark for each valid response up to a maximum of four marks. Responses might include **four** of the following: • When a baby is born • Before death • When facing danger • When converting to Islam • During the call to prayer (*adhan*) • During daily prayers • In special services in remembrance of God (*zikr*). Accept any other valid points.	**4**

Question	Answer	Marks
3(b)	**Explain how saying the statement of faith (*shahadah*) is based on Muhammad's teachings.** Use Table A levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • The statement of faith (*shahadah*) is the reciting of a statement of belief. The beliefs contained within it link to the Articles of Faith, because they mention the belief in one God and the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh). • The Prophet (pbuh) said, recorded in several Hadiths, that: "Islam is raised on five (pillars), testifying (the fact) that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is his messenger." • Muhammad (pbuh) taught this based on the Qurʾan, especially Surah 112, in which God revealed to Muhammad (pbuh) the basis of the belief in the oneness of God (*tawhid*). • In a hadith, Gabriel (Jibril) came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked about what Islam is, and he responded that Islam is Five Pillars, the first of which is the statement of faith (*shahadah*). • The statement can be analysed in parts: no God, but God. This was explained by Muhammad (pbuh) in terms of teaching about God to the pagans. He was explaining that all of the pagan images and idols, referred to as their gods, were in fact not gods at all. They should not be considered God. Only the one God, the one unseen Allah, was God. • This happened in a heated atmosphere, first with his own family, and then under persecution from the tribal chiefs of Makkah. Many questioned Muhammad's authority. Here, the second part of the statement comes in. Muhammad (pbuh) made clear that these were not his own words, but that his authority came from his appointment by God. • This shows how the Articles of Faith were distinct from Pagan beliefs and were essential to the saying of the statement of faith (*shahadah*).	**10**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	**To what extent does the statement of faith (*shahadah*) unite Muslim communities? Give reasons to support your answer.** Use Table B levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • The statement of faith defines who is and who is not a Muslim when it is publicly declared. This helps to unite communities. A community can all hear the testimony of a convert and welcome them into the one world-wide community of believers (*ummah*). • Saying the statement as part of the call to prayer (*adhan*) can help unite communities at prayer time, as it draws everyone together publicly at the mosque, especially on Fridays. • However, it could be argued that the statement is very much a matter of personal belief, and the purpose is to become obedient to God. That can only be done as an individual.	**6**

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	**Give <u>four</u> ways Muslims treat the Qur'an with respect.** Award **one** mark for each valid response up to a maximum of four marks. Responses might include **four** of the following: • Keeping it wrapped in a cloth • On a stand • Or a high shelf • Above other books • Washing (*wudu*) before reading • Listening carefully • Taking care to recite precisely. Accept any other valid points.	**4**

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	**Explain how the Qurʾan details the belief in the oneness of God (*tawhid*).** Use Table A levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • The Qurʾan details the belief in Surah 112, thought of as equal to a third of the Qurʾan: Say: He is God, The One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him. • This is the basis of Islamic monotheism and was used to explain the belief to the pagan Arabs and others. There could be no idols or images or anything alongside God. God was unseen. This also meant there could be no sons of God and God was unborn, negating the Christian belief in the Trinity. • Other verses from the Qurʾan further explain the belief in the oneness of God (*tawhid*). Some were in the context of explaining it to the Makkan pagans and others to new Muslims who converted in Madinah. It was a condition for entry into eternal life in Paradise. • The Qurʾan 6:102-103 explains how God is the sole creator and no vision can grasp God, God is unseen. • This is further explained in Qurʾan 39.38, which tells listeners that no trust should be put in any other beings as they have no power to create or to harm. • The Qurʾan further explains words for the attributes of God, including the all-powerful and all-merciful, to help believers understand that God controls everything and will act as their judge after they die. • Candidates may refer to Surah Fatiha and Ayat al-Kursi, and how these passages detail the belief in the oneness of God (*tawhid*).	

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	**To what extent is reciting the Qurʾan the best way to develop awareness of God? Give reasons to support your answer.** Use Table B levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • The Qurʾan is the word of God, so logically it is the best way to develop awareness of God. Reciting it brings those words onto the tongue and into the mind, therefore raising awareness without any other distractions. • Reciting the Qurʾan also links to the five daily prayers, and these including reciting Surah Fatiha in every unit (*rakat*). This helps remember God five times a day, bringing awareness at all times. • However, many other ways help a Muslim to remember God. For example, attending the Hajj pilgrimage and begging for mercy may bring God very much into mind. • Not every Muslim has the skills to recite the Qurʾan well but can still manage enough for prayers. Others may have particular duties they need to attend to in their lives. It might be argued there is no one best way to develop awareness of God, it is whatever is best for the individual.	**6**

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Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)	**Explain how rituals of Hajj help Muslims prepare for ʿId al-Adha.** Use Table A levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • There are many rituals of Hajj. First, pilgrims put on two white sheets which symbolise equality. This helps prepare for the equality of ʿId prayer when all stand in line together and greet each other after as equals, regardless of income, so that all can feel part of the festival. • Circumambulation (*tawaf*) of the Kaʿba is when the pilgrims rotate the Kaʿba cube seven times anti-clockwise. This helps prepare Muslims for ʿId as a world-wide festival, drawing in all from across the world just as all are united in *tawaf*. It helps Muslims think of the needs of others and pay money ready for 'Id so that the less fortunate can also prepare for and enjoy the festival. • Running between the hills helps pilgrims remember Hagar's frantic search for water. This helps prepare Muslims and reminds them of their history. This same story is frequently explained by the Imam at the ʿId sermon. It helps prepare a sense of gratefulness in the minds of Muslims for God's mercy. • Praying, fasting and beginning forgiveness at Arafat, and by Muslims around the world at this time, helps Muslims think of God and make a fresh dedication to follow Islam. Their sins are forgiven on this day so that helps prepare the mind for celebration and to be thankful during ʿId festivities. • Pilgrims go to Mina to camp the night before stoning the devil at the stone pillars. This helps prepare for ʿId by putting aside temptation to spend on other pleasures or focus on materialism, which is part of the devil's temptation nowadays. This ritual helps Muslims stay focused on their religion including the upcoming festival of ʿId. • There are other rituals and preparations which may be credited as relevant, or the Hajj may be taken as a whole rather than as individual stages. It is the quality of the explanation which is most important.	**12**

Question	Answer	Marks
5(b)	**To what extent is fasting on the day of ʿArafat the most important preparation for ʿId al-Adha? Give reasons to support your answer.** Use Table B levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • It could be argued that fasting on the day of ʿArafat is not the most important preparation. It is a separate day and the fasting completes on that day. Many would see it as a specific ritual which has finished so that Muslims can go on to celebrate, in a different, celebratory mood rather than a serious one. Therefore, ʿArafat is not the best preparation. • Furthermore, there are many practical preparations for the feast of ʿId which are pressing and needed to bring people together, fulfil the duty of hospitality, enable the animal sacrifice, prepare for the prayers and so on. All of these might be said to be better preparation. • On the other hand, it could be argued that it must be remembered that fasting provides spiritual renewal. It is a way of connecting to God and asking forgiveness. It could be argued that this inner connection to God is more important than anything else, and fasting on the day of ʿArafat is the best time to do it, so it is, after all, the best preparation.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
6(a)	**Explain <u>three</u> different roles of mosques in local communities.** Use Table A levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • **Place of prayer**. First and foremost, a mosque is a place of prostration (*masjid*), which enables members of the community to practise their requirement to pray five times a day. Prayer times and appropriate prayer space, facing Makkah, with mats and washing facilities for ablution (*wudu*) are all provided, making prayer possible. • **Place for Friday prayers** (*Jumʿah*). Local mosques provide a place of congregational prayer (*jamaat*) and Friday prayer (*Jumʿah*) which must be prayed as a congregation. This must be held by an Imam well versed in Arabic who can also deliver a sermon (*khutbah*). It is considered necessary to 'establish congregation' (*jamaat*) in lands where Muslims live permanently so it is an important feature of a Muslim community. • **Educational schools** (*Madrasah*). These are additional schools which help children learn how to pray in Arabic so they can complete their daily prayers (*salah*). This is a specialist education which needs to be completed correctly, otherwise the meaning can be wrong. Therefore it is very helpful for parents who may not be able or have time to do so, to provide this service by professionals for the community. • **Marriage arrangement and guidance**. Muslims may wish to go to a service for suggestions of marriage partners without having to go to dating sites which they might consider inappropriate. Guidance might also be provided about the process of marriage and how to prepare. • **Counselling and support**. Mosque attendees might be able to support people and offer help as well as counselling in times of need, helping to support their Muslim brothers and sisters like one family (*ummah*). • **Funeral services** (*janazah*). Death presents a need in that the body needs to be buried quickly and a service arranged according to Islamic tradition. This can be provided by Islamic funeral services attached to mosques which make the process much easier for people especially at the time when it can be upsetting and there is much to organise. • **Interfaith dialogue**. Mosques can help make links with churches and other faith organisations to support each other and build cordial relations, helping community cohesion.	**12**

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Question	Answer	Marks
6(b)	**Discuss which service provided by mosques is most important for local communities.** Use Table B levels of response grid to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. • Candidates might choose any feature. The focus of their answer is to discuss reasons why this feature is most important. In doing so, some measure of comparison might be expected or at least consideration of other features and why the one chosen is most beneficial. • It might be said that prayer is an essential part of the Five Pillars, so this is the most important role of mosques. Praying five times a day at set times and in a prescribed unit (*rakat*) is something Muslims are expected to do, and the completion of which may affect their afterlife after judgement, so this may be seen as most important. • Providing education, especially to teach children how to say prayers, might be seen as more important as this will teach them the skill for the rest of their lives. It will help continue the faith for generations to come. • Interfaith dialogue and building good community relations might alternatively be seen as vital, especially in modern times, helping bring peace to neighbourhoods and a peaceful environment in which Muslims can practice their faith.	**8**

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