

Cambridge International AS & A Level

ISLAMIC STUDIES**9488/32**

Paper 3 Heritage of Islam

October/November 2025

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

This document consists of **14** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

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
N/A	Highlighting areas of text
N/A	Allows comments to be entered in speech bubbles on the candidate response.
N/A	Allows comments to be entered at the bottom of the RM marking window and then displayed when the associated question item is navigated to.
TV	Too vague
L1	Level one
L2	Level two
L3	Level three
L4	Level four
L5	Level five
NAQ	Not answered question
SEEN	Indicates that the point has been noted, but no credit has been given.
EVAL	Evaluation

Generic levels of response descriptors

These level descriptors address assessment objectives (AOs) 1 and 2, and should be used in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Assessment objectives**AO1 Knowledge and understanding**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings, texts, beliefs and practices including their relevance for individual Muslims and communities.

AO2 Analysis and evaluation

Analyse, evaluate and discuss evidence, points of view and issues in Islam.

Generic marking principles

- (a) Examiners should use the performance summary statements at the top of the descriptors to help to identify a level which matches the candidate's response. However, the final decision on the band and the mark within the band should be made on the basis of all the descriptors in the level and not primarily using the performance summary statement.
- (b) Examiners should start at the lowest level, if the answer meets all the criteria they should then move to the next level and so on. The Examiner should repeat this process until there is a match between the overall answer and the level descriptor. Examiners should use a best-fit approach when deciding upon the level, it is possible for a different level to be chosen for each AO.
- (c) If the Examiner identifies all aspects of the level descriptor within the answer, then the highest mark for the level should be given. Examiners should also make reference to the indicative content when deciding on the mark within a level to ensure that there is sufficient relevant content evident within the answer for the level and mark. Examiners should be prepared to credit material in answers which is not contained in the indicative content.
- (d) The Examiner may need to make a judgement within a level or 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:
 - Where the candidate's work convincingly meets the level statement, you should award the highest mark.
 - Where the candidate's work adequately meets the level statement, you should award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range.
 - Where the candidate's work just meets the level statement, you should award the lowest mark.

AO1 Knowledge and understanding grid
(For Questions 1(a), 2(a), 3(a) and 4(a))

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 4	Detailed accurate knowledge with good understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant. 	9–10
Level 3	Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a developed response. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	6–8
Level 2	Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Attempts to address the question. • Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant. 	3–5
Level 1	Limited knowledge and basic understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant. 	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

AO2 Analysis and evaluation
(For Questions 1(b), 2(b), 3(b) and 4(b))

Level	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	Marks
Level 5	<p>Alternative conclusions with analysis of points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view in detail. Uses accurate evidence to support a coherent and well-structured discussion. Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions. 	13–15
Level 4	<p>Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses different points of view in some detail. Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view. 	10–12
Level 3	<p>Clear conclusion with different points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail. Uses accurate evidence to support discussion. Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view. 	7–9
Level 2	<p>Basic conclusion with a supported point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses one point of view. Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant points. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. Attempted conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view. 	4–6
Level 1	<p>Limited interpretation with a point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> States a point of view. Little or no supporting evidence. Attempted interpretation which may not directly address the question. 	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p>Explain the nature and purpose of the minaret.</p> <p>You should refer to Fig. 1.1 and your own knowledge in your answer.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Fig 1.1 – Minaret of the Bride, Damascus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minaret is a tower from where a Muslim, known as the caller, gives the call to prayer to announce the prayer times five times a day. This helps Muslims get ready and come to the mosque so they can fulfil their devotions on time and satisfy the requirements of the Pillars of Islam. • According to local tradition, the ‘bride’ was the daughter of a local merchant who saved to pay for the construction of the minaret as she was so devoted to the call to prayer that she wanted to contribute her life’s work to it. It is called the Arus Minaret in Arabic, meaning Minaret of the Bride, and is located in Damascus. • This was the first minaret built here by the Umayyads and symbolises the nature of the structure as a place from which the call to prayer could be given. • This tall tower enabled the voice of the caller to be projected across the whole city. It was a means of projecting the religion of Islam and encouraging the people of the city to take on Islam as their faith and come to the mosque to pray. • The source clearly shows pre-Islamic remains, as this minaret was built on the site of a former Roman temple, and symbolises that the minaret has come to encourage people to leave behind their old ways and turn to monotheism. • Minarets in general are elevated structures, possibly following the style of an Arabic lighthouse at the time, symbolising the turn towards light and inspiration: guidance for people to the straight path and avoiding hitting the rocks just like a ship is guided through the sea. 	10

Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	<p>Contrast pre-Islamic art with art of the Umayyad period.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation</p> <p>Mark according to the AO2 -15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation.</p> <p>Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.</p> <p>Definitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Islamic art refers to that produced by the pagan Arabs and those of other traditions, including monotheistic, before Muhammad (pbuh) gave his message. Umayyad art refers to the artefacts, building decoration and texts produced under the hundred years of their rule. <p>Pre-Islamic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figurative statues of pagan gods were widely produced, including facial features, and used as the focus for religious devotions, prayers, poems and offerings, especially in the Ka'ba and hung on its walls. Pre-Islamic art used both form and abstract as items of focus and devotion, ranging from statues to rocks. The art itself contained the focus, as an item of devotion. Pre-Islamic blended traditions including some monotheistic traditions alongside polytheistic ones, which contrasts with the exclusive monotheism demanded by the Umayyads. <p>Umayyad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figurative items were removed where previous religious buildings were re-used, such as in the Great Mosque of Damascus, part of which was a Roman temple and church. Calligraphy beautifying the word of God in Arabic, as revealed in the Qur'an, was added such as in the walls of al-Aqsa in Jerusalem to great effect. The word of God became the most highly regarded feature of Umayyad art. Art overall was seen as a reflection and a means to inspire, but not an end in itself, as the artistic features were created only as a means to inspire and not to be worshipped. <p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusions might focus on the main differences, particularly figurative art, but also note that there were some elements of continuity. 	15

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	<p>Explain ways in which the 'Abbasids promoted Qur'anic teachings.</p> <p>You should refer to Fig. 2.1 and your own knowledge in your answer.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Fig. 2.1 Shows an early 'Abbasid Qur'an.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Abbasids promoted Qur'anic teachings by spreading the Qur'an and developing clear styles of writing which helped people to read it. This was particularly important as the Caliphate spread to new lands where people did not know Arabic. • Beautification of the text both in books and in calligraphy adorning walls of mosques helped people to think about key verses of the Qur'an and therefore adopt them in their practice of Islam in everyday life. • The source shows clear early 'Abbasid style writing, making the Qur'an accessible to new readers, as well as a beautified title piece at the top of the page, helping to inspire the reader. • The pattern is geometrical, conveying the concept of order and unity in the created world as a sign of the order given by the creator God. • The 'Abbasids spread the teachings of the Qur'an by example, such as by the Caliphs leading the annual pilgrimage (<i>Hajj</i>) procession, giving lectures about the Qur'an and inspiring followers who joined them on the journey to Mecca along the way. • The 'Abbasids funded and promoted learning including religious knowledge and the development of schools of jurisprudence (<i>fiqh</i>) took place under the 'Abbasids. This allowed religious scholars to interpret and spread the teachings of the Qur'an and discuss them with the people. • Responses might mention the ways in which individual Caliphs promoted Qur'anic teachings, such as Harun-al Rashid and his sponsorship of learning, or any other examples from the long period of 'Abbasid rule. 	10

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	<p>To what extent did the ‘Abbasids promote Qur’anic teachings more than the Umayyads? Give reasons for your answer.</p> <p>AO2 – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Mark according to the AO2 -15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation.</p> <p>Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.</p> <p>Definitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qur’anic teachings might be promoted through the written word; through sponsorship of scholarship and learning; through the personal examples of the Caliphs and through other religious policies such as support for the poor by implementing almsgiving (<i>zakat</i>). The extent to which each Caliphate promoted them is in question. <p>Extent of promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umar II commissioned translations of the Qur'an and sent messengers far and wide, even as far as China, to spread Qur’anic teachings. This suggests the Umayyads promoted more. • Different Umayyad Caliphs followed different policies. Umar II was proactive at promoting Islamic teachings and was one of the most religious Caliphs, whereas some others did not always follow Qur’anic teachings on alcohol themselves. This suggests a mixed picture. • The ‘Abbasids promoted scholarship and interpretation of the Qur'an. This had begun in Medina under the Umayyads but was used more extensively by the ‘Abbasids. • The ‘Abbasids promoted translation and making the Qur'an accessible to other cultures, especially non-Arabs. This contrasted with Umayyad Arabic favouritism. • Different ‘Abbasids followed different policies. Al-Ma'mun tried to enforce his interpretations whereas others allowed Islamic scholars freedom to interpret the teachings, an approach which eventually prevailed. • Qur'an 16.90 about justice was referred to in sermons. Some Caliphs from both Caliphates put fairness into practice, so generalisations cannot be made. <p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall judgements might opt for one Caliphate or the other; both or neither; with justification. 	15

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	<p>Explain limitations on the use of logic in Islamic philosophy (<i>falsafah</i>).</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning or logic may be defined as reasoned deduction and was used to great effect by ancient Greek rational thinkers and philosophers, which influenced learning in the ancient world and whose works were translated and read by Islamic scholars. • Nevertheless, Islamic scholars were bound by the revelations in the Qur'an, regardless of what logical deductions they made. If anyone deduced something which was not in accordance with orthodox interpretation of the revealed word, this was considered heretical and unacceptable. • Despite this, wide ranging use of reasoning (<i>falsafah</i>) was employed by several Islamic scholars. The extent to which logic could be employed varied according to scholar, time and place. • Reasoning was sometimes employed in specific debates, such as about the creation of the universe. Ibn Sina said that logically there must have been a first cause, and Ibn Rushd said that the movement of the planets must have been a reasoned continuation of the initial force which propelled them to move. Both followed suggestions in the Qur'an that God brought the planets together and split them asunder, so using revelation and logic in harmony. • Logical reasoning could include observation and speculation. Observation was widely used by scientists who tried to define natural laws based on what they saw. These were regarded as logical interpretations of what God had created and the discovery of more details about God's pre-ordained world. • Speculation was used by Islamic scholars Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Al-Kindi. This pushed the limits of the use of logic, but they did not employ speculation to the extent of the ancient Greeks because speculation of anything not in accordance with the revealed Qur'an was off-limits. • The Mu'tazilah regarded the use of reasoning and philosophy as acceptable because they saw humankind as completely separate from God and the Qur'an as human in written form, so therefore humans could engage in speculative philosophy. • However, the Mu'tazilah were not accepted as mainstream and in time al-Ghazali and other scholars steered Islam towards a more conservative approach with further limits on the use of logic. 	10

Question	Answer	Marks
3(b)	<p>'Muslim use of logic was totally different from Greek use of logic.' Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation</p> <p>Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation.</p> <p>Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.</p> <p>Definitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasoning/logic is a process of rational argument and leading on one step to the next using evidence and reasoning. It was used by ancient Greek scholars and arguably by Muslims under the 'Abbasids. <p>Agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasoning for Muslims is totally dependent on the pre-destined will of God, so if this seems different from what is logically derived, then God's revealed word always comes first and cannot be questioned. The process of discussion and use of logical reasoning in the centres of learning of 'Abbasid Baghdad was mostly centred around religious scholarship and interpretation of religious texts, specifically the Qur'an and Hadith. Greek use of logical reasoning had no such bounds and was organised around public forums where people openly debated topics. The differences can be seen in questions such as the creation of the universe, which was bound by a creator God for Muslims, but could be more widely discussed by the Greeks, including options that there was no single creator at all and that the universe had an infinite past, whereas to Muslims the universe must have been created at a point by God who was infinite and beyond the universe. <p>Disagree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process of defining a question and then looking for proof was pioneered by the Ancient Greek Aristotle, in his use of logic. This was also developed by Ibn Sina and was important for Islamic scientists who could use this approach to test theories. Muslims translated and discussed works by Aristotle and other ancient Greeks, and these influenced the terms of debate and discussion, suggesting that even if there were some differences of approach, they were not totally different, and the use of logic was common in the houses of discussion in Baghdad. Ibn al-Haytham wrote about the use of logic and questioning in the search for truth, which he saw as a religious duty, and so used some of the language and processes of ancient Greek logic, even if his desire to do so was to gain further knowledge about God, an anathema for Greek logic. <p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It might be concluded that the use of logical reasoning was different due to the bounds of belief in God, but that some aspects in the process of logical argument were common to both – the extent of difference and similarity could be discussed. 	15

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	<p>Explain how Islamic art reflects cultural diversity. Give examples to illustrate your answer.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islamic art includes calligraphy, styles of writing the Qur'an, styles of geometrical tile work decorating the walls of mosques, the use of colour in mosque decoration, the use of domes and shape, as well as the use of plants, water and shape in gardens. • There have been many different Islamic Empires and Caliphates, each with different styles of art which may be referred to as cultural diversity. These included the Ottoman Turkish Caliphate; the Mughals in India; the Safavid Shi'i rulers in Persia/ Iran; various different styles exhibited in mosques in Africa and China, and throughout the Islamic world. • The Qur'an refers to diversity, and this may be interpreted as justification that Muslims should embrace differences as long as they are within the framework of Islamic beliefs. The Qur'an 30.22 states: • 'And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know.' • Examples of cultural diversity include the very tall, thin minarets in Ottoman mosques, compared to the rounded, dome topped minarets, often in sandstone and with open sides for ventilation in the heat of the summer, provided by the Indian Mughals. The mosque in Djenne, Africa, is constantly being renewed with its sand base in an annual festival, making it a living piece of culture. Xian Mosque in China represents local style with its pagodas which form minarets and the prayer hall. • Calligraphy may be with straight, bold kufic lines; or rounded, flowing naskh, and various other subcategories often reflecting the learning and style of the calligrapher. These may support the cultural styles of a society and help to making the Qur'an more accessible to readers in different parts of the world. • Specific decorations such as colourful tiles have been developed, mastered by central Asian Muslims, with colourful blues and greens representing peaceful and calming colours to help focus the mind of the Muslim on their faith. 	10

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	<p>Discuss the extent to which Muslims should invent new styles of art to reflect life in the modern world.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation</p> <p>Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation.</p> <p>Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.</p> <p>Definitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art may include calligraphy, styles of shape and architecture, beauty and aspects of expressing the word of God from the Qur'an and its meaning in geometrical shape. <p>To a greater extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To a great extent, Muslims may invent as was done in the past. Umayyads, Ottomans and other empires, invented their own styles, so there is no reason why Muslims should not create new styles to represent the present. Modern Muslim cities and countries have sponsored new styles, such as in Qatar with the 'spaceship' minimalist mosque representing modern art style, and including bold, simple lines of calligraphy. Therefore, modern, minimalist art can be applied to Islamic architecture to create new styles. If a new style of art and architecture can inspire a Muslim to take up more interest in the practice of their faith and develop a sense of awe, such as by looking at calligraphy and thinking about the beauty of God's word; then such new styles of art are a good thing to be encouraged. <p>To a lesser extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Qur'an can be beatified and Muhammad's directions applied in decoration of mosques appropriate to their function. This has always been the focus of Muslims, and many would argue there is no need to change style to do this. Islam has a great heritage and this could be valued and celebrated. The younger generations can learn much from learning about the past and appreciating the hard work Muslim artists and calligraphers have put in whilst dedicating their lives to beautifying Islam, not inventing things new. To create something new might possibly lead Muslims to innovation (<i>bid'ah</i>), a sin. Therefore, any new feature in art should be carefully checked to ensure that it does not transgress Islamic prohibitions in representing figures of humans or animals. <p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balanced conclusions should refer back to the terms of the question and come to a personal decision about how far this should be considered appropriate for Muslims in the modern age. 	15