ISLAMIC STUDIES   **9488/42**

Paper 4 Islam in the Modern World   **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 **12** 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**, **2** and **3**.

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 4	**Detailed accurate knowledge with good understanding** • 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** • 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** • 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** • 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, 2 and 3.

Level	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	Marks
Level 5	**Alternative conclusions with analysis of points of view** • 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	**Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view** • 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	**Clear conclusion with different points of view** • 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	**Basic conclusion with a supported point of view** • 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	**Limited interpretation with a point of view** • 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	**'It is more challenging for a Muslim woman to practise her religion today than in the past.' Discuss by referring to one or more women you have studied in your answer.**	25
	10 marks AO1 – Knowledge and understanding	
	15 marks AO2 – Analysis and evaluation	
	Mark according to the levels of response marking grids for AO1 and AO2. 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.	
	Candidates could refer to any woman that they have studied whether from modern ones or a woman from the past in their answer or can compare one from each period.	
	Definition	
	Challenges could be barriers or struggles women face in their day-to-day life in abiding by the teachings of Islam.	
	Agree	
	• Women today face more challenges than women in the past. With new technology developing and new trends/ideas, it is becoming more and more difficult for them to keep to their religious beliefs and practices.	
	• Cultural push towards sexual freedom in actions and clothing can pressure a Muslim woman away from her modesty.	
	• Temptations are more common and widely accepted nowadays, and therefore it is harder for any Muslim (not just women) to abide by the Islamic teachings.	
	• The rise of xenophobia has made it harder for any woman to practice her religion, but as Muslim women tend to be more religiously identifiable, for example through wearing headscarf (*hijab*) they are more likely to be targeted.	
	• Rise in immigration in the past century has led to more Muslims living in non-Muslim countries where they have to follow non-Muslim laws, and in some countries, there are increasing restrictions on Muslim women, for example the banning of Burqa in some Western countries.	
	• Rise of capitalism and materialism have pushed Muslim women towards having careers together with being homemakers, thus they are more likely to neglect their religious duties.	
	Disagree	
	• The situation of women with regards to their religion was always challenging, for example even at the time of the first Muslims in Mecca, the women were not treated well and had a harder life compared to their counterparts in that patriarchal society.	

Question	Answer	Marks
1	• At the beginning of Islam, torturing Muslim women for practicing their religion was common, and the first martyr of Islam was a woman, named Sumayya. Nowadays non-Muslim countries have become generally more tolerant of Muslims as multifaith nations are more normalised. • The greater spread of information due to the internet means Muslim women have more access to information and therefore it is easier for them to learn about their religion. • Cultural push towards more women in jobs does not mean women are less likely to fulfil their duty as Muslims rather that their role as Muslims has changed, as they are more proactive with the society they live in. **Conclusion** A judgement based on their argument, should be summed up at the end as to whether they agree with the fact that is it is harder for women to practise their religion now than before or not.	

Question	Answer	Marks
2	**'The qualities and characteristics required from Muslim leaders are the same today as in the past.' Do you agree?**	**25**
	10 marks AO1 – Knowledge and understanding	
	15 marks AO2 – Analysis and evaluation	
	Mark according to the levels of response marking grids for AO1 and AO2. 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.	
	Introduction	
	As a leader there are some qualities and characteristics that a Muslim needs to have to be able to rule over others in an effective way. Candidates could explain who the Muslim leaders are, whether those in power or religious leaders.	
	Agree	
	• All leaders need to have a set of skills, otherwise they would not be able to govern those under their care well. These include qualities such as charisma, authority, mercy and care for those they are governing.	
	• The people who are being governed should be treated in the same way whatever the time. Their needs have to be fulfilled, law and order should prevail, they should live in a society with harmony and peace.	
	• The Qur'an mentions some of the qualities of leaders. Qur'an 3.159 states that leaders should pardon their followers, ask God to forgive them, and consult with them. They should also encourage their followers to trust in God.	
	• In all times the role of the leader should cover three main areas, financial, political and social; and this has not changed over time.	
	• In everything that Muslims do, they should try to emulate the Prophet (pbuh), who is the model par excellence of different spheres of life, as mentioned in Qur'an 33.21: 'Ye have indeed In the Apostle of God A beautiful pattern (of conduct) For anyone whose hope is In God and the Final Day, And who engages much In the praise of God.' So it is for leadership as well, the Prophet (pbuh) has set an example on how leaders should lead their people and what qualities they should embody.	
	Disagree	
	• The world in which leaders today live in is more complex and advanced, therefore while wanting to keep to the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh), there are other qualities that they need to have in order to be effective in achieving their organisational goals and objectives and realising the aspirations of their societies.	
	• With the advancement in technology, leaders of today need to have some skills that leaders in the past did not need to have, for example how to make the most of internet or social media.	

Question	Answer	Marks
2	• It was easier to rule in the past as the geo-politics were not as complex as they are nowadays, with new borders delimiting countries. • Also, the financial area of the governance is more complex, as the field of finance has evolved so much, with new banking systems, and more cooperation between different countries. Muslim leaders nowadays should be aware of how the conventional banking system works as well as the Islamic banking system, which does not allow the paying and taking of interest. • A leader is great because of their followers. Nobody can be a great leader without great followers. Therefore, we can say that at the time of the first generation, the leaders were great because the people they were leading were great Muslims, and unfortunately this is not the case today with the rise of individualism and materialism. Therefore, leaders today have to be more skilled than leaders of the past. **Conclusion** Candidates should come to a judgement in conclusion particularly focusing on the key word in the statement: same. The extent to which they agree that the same qualities are required from leaders in all time, based on their argument, should be summed up at the end.	

Question	Answer	Marks
3	**To what extent does Islam support religious pluralism?** **10 marks AO1** – Knowledge and understanding **15 marks AO2** – Analysis and evaluation Mark according to the levels of response marking grids for AO1 and AO2. 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. **Definition** Religious pluralism is when people from different faiths live harmoniously in a society where they have rights, freedoms, and safety to worship. • The teaching of Islam promotes and fosters a peaceful relationship and harmony among the existing. • religions. There is no coercion in religion (Qur'an 2.256), showing that Islam supports pluralism in the context of relative tolerance. • Even at the time of the Prophet (pbuh) there were different faiths living in the same society, the small community of Muslims were living among the polytheists of Mecca, and they never caused harm to them, nor retaliated even when subjected to torture. The only reason they left Mecca was because the Quraish made their life intolerable, not because they did not want to live amidst the pagans. • The Charter of Medina drafted by the Prophet (pbuh) when he became leader in Medina is a great example of how Muslim rulers should deal with other faiths living in a society. The other faiths were given freedom to practise their religion and to live their life how they wished. There was a practice of mutual co-existence among Muslims and the people of the books, the Jews and Christians. • Islam teaches its followers to be tolerant and courteous to other religions, because for Muslims religious pluralism is God's desire. "O mankind! We created You from a single (pair) Of a male and a female, And made you into Nations and tribes, that Ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise Each other)." Qur'an 49:13 means that a sense of tolerance is a form of a minimum requisite for Muslims. • The Pact of Umar is a treaty between the Muslims and the non-Muslim inhabitants of either Levant (Syria and Lebanon), Mesopotamia (Iraq) or Jerusalem, contributed to laying down the foundations of peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims. • Another historic feature of Islamic pluralism is the internal diversity of religious opinions within the Sunni tradition with the continued existence of four major schools of jurisprudence and their recognition of acceptable differences (*ikhtilaf*). Though this is more an example of intrareligious diversity rather than interreligious diversity.	25

Question	Answer	Marks
3	• There were times when religious tolerance was put on hold, like times of war. For instance, when the Prophet (pbuh) went to war he gave the opposing sides three options: surrender, convert or fight. There was no option for religious tolerance. • Even the four Rightly guided Caliphs went to war against the other powers of that time, namely the Persians and the Byzantines. However, war was not instigated for religious reasons but to safeguard the security of the Muslim nation. **Conclusion** Conclusions are likely to focus on what is considered religious pluralism and how far it is something promoted by Islam and Muslims in different time period.	