



**Cambridge Assessment
International Education**

Syllabus

Cambridge O Level Islamic Studies 2068

Use this syllabus for exams in 2023.

Exams are available in the June and November series.



Version 2

Please check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel to see if this syllabus is available in your administrative zone.

**Cambridge
Pathway** 

Changes to the syllabus for 2023

The latest syllabus is version 2, published June 2021.

Changes to availability

In 2023, this syllabus is available in the June and November series.

Changes to syllabus version 1, published September 2020

There were no significant changes which affected teaching.

You are strongly advised to read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why choose Cambridge International?

Cambridge International prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn – with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for students to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge learners from 10000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

Cambridge learners

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are:

- **confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- **responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
- **reflective** as learners, developing their ability to learn
- **innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
- **engaged** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.

Recognition

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world.

Cambridge O Level is internationally recognised by schools, universities and employers as equivalent in demand to Cambridge IGCSE™ (International General Certificate of Secondary Education). There are over 600000 entries a year in over 50 countries. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition



Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.

Support for teachers

A wide range of materials and resources is available to support teachers and learners in Cambridge schools. Resources suit a variety of teaching methods in different international contexts. Through subject discussion forums and training, teachers can access the expert advice they need for teaching our qualifications. More details can be found in Section 2 of this syllabus and at www.cambridgeinternational.org/teachers

Support for exams officers

Exams officers can trust in reliable, efficient administration of exams entries and excellent personal support from our customer services. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Quality management

Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001

1.2 Why choose Cambridge O Level?

Cambridge O Level is typically for 14 to 16 year olds and is an internationally recognised qualification. It has been designed especially for an international market and is sensitive to the needs of different countries. Cambridge O Level is designed for learners whose first language may not be English, and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

Our aim is to balance knowledge, understanding and skills in our programmes and qualifications to enable students to become effective learners and to provide a solid foundation for their continuing educational journey.

Through our professional development courses and our support materials for Cambridge O Levels, we provide the tools to enable teachers to prepare students to the best of their ability and work with us in the pursuit of excellence in education.

Cambridge O Levels are considered to be an excellent preparation for Cambridge International AS & A Levels, the Cambridge AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) Diploma, Cambridge Pre-U, and other education programmes, such as the US Advanced Placement program and the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme. Learn more about Cambridge O Levels at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel

Guided learning hours

Cambridge O Level syllabuses are designed on the assumption that learners have about 130 guided learning hours per subject over the duration of the course, but this is for guidance only. The number of hours required to gain the qualification may vary according to local curricular practice and the students' prior experience of the subject.

1.3 Why choose Cambridge O Level Islamic Studies?

- Learners are encouraged to develop an interest and enthusiasm for the study of Islam.
- Learners are provided with an introduction to the basic teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith. It provides them with knowledge of Arabia in the Pre-Islamic period, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the Caliphate period, and the four pious Caliphs.
- It encourages learners to identify and explore the religious and ethical issues raised in the Qur'an, and by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), while also gaining an understanding of the effect of Islam on its believers.
- Candidates are encouraged to apply historical and other relevant knowledge, for example, in exploring the development of Islam and its beliefs, practices and traditions.

Prior learning

Candidates beginning this course are not expected to have previously studied Islam.

Progression

Candidates who are awarded grades A* to C in Cambridge O Level Islamic Studies are well prepared to follow courses leading to Cambridge International AS and A Level Islamic Studies, or the equivalent.

1.4 How can I find out more?

If you are already a Cambridge school

You can make entries for this qualification through your usual channels. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@cambridgeinternational.org

If you are not yet a Cambridge school

Learn about the benefits of becoming a Cambridge school at www.cambridgeinternational.org/startcambridge

Email us at info@cambridgeinternational.org to find out how your organisation can register to become a Cambridge school.

2. Teacher support

2.1 Support materials

You can go to our public website at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel to download current and future syllabuses together with specimen papers or past question papers, examiner reports and grade threshold tables from one series.

For teachers at registered Cambridge schools a range of additional support materials for specific syllabuses is available online from the School Support Hub. Go to www.cambridgeinternational.org/support (username and password required). If you do not have access, speak to the School Support coordinator at your school.

2.2 Endorsed resources

We work with publishers who provide a range of resources for our syllabuses including print and digital materials. Resources endorsed by Cambridge International go through a detailed quality assurance process to make sure they provide a high level of support for teachers and learners.

You can find resources to support this syllabus by clicking the Published resources link on the syllabus page www.cambridgeinternational.org/2068

2.3 Training

We offer a range of support activities for teachers to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to deliver our qualifications. See www.cambridgeinternational.org/events for further information.

3. Syllabus content at a glance

In this syllabus, learners will study the history and culture of Islam and key figures in the faith. They will also study and reflect upon different extracts of religious texts and have the opportunity to think about how texts relate to how Muslims think and act in everyday life today.

The content on the papers is organised in six sections in the syllabus to reflect the focus in the assessment. However, learners will be looking at Islam from a historical, cultural and literary viewpoint and taking the opportunity to discuss, reflect and weigh up the impact of the texts in different scenarios.

Learners will need experience of:

- The key knowledge of the key figures and events in Islam
- Essential knowledge and understanding of the prescribed texts
- How to reflect upon teachings and principles contained in prescribed texts
- A broader understanding of the importance and impact of key figures and events in Islam and how they changed and developed the faith over time
- How to discuss different points of view when looking at a key figure, event or text
- How to evaluate the impact or importance of a teaching overall
- How to relate a teaching to Muslim life today.

The content includes:

- Pre-Islamic society in Arabia
- The early life and character of Muhammad (pbuh)
- The development of Islam
- The main events of the Prophet's life and his significance in Muslim beliefs
- Reflection on the example of the Prophet (pbuh) – as a role model for the early Muslims and for individuals and communities today
- Knowledge and understanding of the prescribed Suras and Hadith
- The importance, application and significance of texts in the lives of Muslims today
- The lives of four prophets, as recounted in the Qur'an
- Teachings, implications and examples that might be drawn from these stories today
- The Caliphate period and the Four Pious Caliphs
- The significance of the Caliphate period for the development of Islam and as a model for Muslim society
- The structure and history of the Qur'an
- The classification and use of Hadith
- Use, application and significance of Qur'an and Hadith, including to Muslim life today
- Articles of faith and The Five Pillars
- Jihad - in its range of meanings
- Id festivals and rites of passage – birth, marriage and funeral rites
- The contribution and benefits of beliefs and observances to the faith and actions of individuals and communities.

4. Assessment at a glance

Candidates take two papers.

Component	Weighting of papers
<p>Paper 1 History and Scriptures 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>This paper has three sections: Section A: Arabia in the Pre-Islamic period Section B: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Section C: Texts from the Holy Qur'an and Hadith</p> <p>Candidates choose one question from each section.</p> <p>Externally assessed. 60 marks</p>	50%
<p>Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs and Observances 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>This paper has three sections: Section A: The Caliphate period/The Four Pious Caliphs Section B: The history and the importance of the Qur'an and Hadith Section C: Beliefs, practices and rituals</p> <p>Candidates choose one question from each section.</p> <p>Externally assessed. 60 marks</p>	50%

Availability

This syllabus is examined in the June and November series.

This syllabus is available to private candidates.

Detailed timetables are available from www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones. To find out about availability check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel

Combining this with other syllabuses

Candidates can combine this syllabus in an examination series with any other Cambridge International syllabus, except:

- Cambridge IGCSE Religious Studies (0490)
- Cambridge IGCSE Islamiyat (0493)
- Cambridge O Level Islamiyat (2058)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Please note that Cambridge O Level, Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) syllabuses are at the same level.

5. Syllabus aims and assessment objectives

5.1 Syllabus aims

The aims of the syllabus are to enable candidates to:

- develop their interest and enthusiasm for the study of Islam
- develop in-depth understanding and knowledge of Islam
- acquire a knowledge of the primary sources of Islam, its main beliefs and its early history
- develop an enquiring approach to the study of Islam
- identify and explore the religious, historical and moral questions raised in the material they study
- be encouraged to reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in light of their learning
- demonstrate the relevance of Islamic history to modern day affairs.

5.2 Assessment objectives

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Show knowledge and understanding of the relevant facts from the faith and history of Islam.

AO2 Evaluation

Evaluate the significance of teachings, beliefs and practices in the lives of Muslims, using evidence, reasoned argument, personal responses and different viewpoints.

5.3 Relationship between assessment objectives and components

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Component	AO1	AO2	Weighting of component in overall qualification
Paper 1	67%	33%	50%
Paper 2	67%	33%	50%
Weighting of AO in overall qualification	67%	33%	

6. Syllabus content

6.1 Paper 1 History and Scriptures

Section A: Arabia in the Pre-Islamic period

- (a) Tribal and political organisations, including the Bedouin (nomadic desert Arabs) and the Quraish (polytheistic city dwellers and traders).
- (b) Social conditions and economic system including trade at Mecca, the pilgrim trade, slavery and infanticide.
- (c) Religious groups who were present at the time (including polytheists and hanifs), their beliefs and their practices.
- (d) Those who follow the religion of Prophet Ibrahim.
- (e) The significance of the Ka'ba in Mecca as a central point of pilgrimage and worship.
- (f) The main events of the Prophet Muhammad's early life from his birth to the call to prophethood (including the revelation in the cave Hira).

Candidates should demonstrate knowledge of these areas of Pre-Islamic society and show understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of cultural and religious practices. Candidates should be able to evaluate the effect on society of the radical changes proposed by the Prophet (pbuh) and the advent of Islam, and which aspects were, in fact, advantageous to the development of Islam.

Section B: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

- (a) The main events of the life of the Prophet (pbuh) **after** the experience in the cave Hira until his death.
- (b) The problems he faced in Mecca and his experiences with his opponents. The reasons for the opposition to his message.
- (c) The success and achievements in Medina; his leadership of the community there. His relationship with other religious groups such as the Jews.
- (d) Causes, descriptions and consequences of the following battles fought during the Medinan period: Badr, Uhud and Trench.
- (e) Conquest of Mecca and the farewell address; the message and significance for relationships between Muslims and other groups.
- (f) The importance of his actions as examples for Muslim individuals in their personal conduct and relations with others including women and non-Muslims.
- (g) The importance of his actions as examples for Muslim communities in their relations with other states.
- (h) His significance as the Seal of the Prophets and final messenger of God.

Candidates should be able to give accounts of the main events of the Prophet's life (after the call to prophethood) and his significance in Muslim beliefs. They should show understanding of the importance of his actions and experiences in the history and development of Islam. They should know and understand the importance of the example he provided, as a role model and as a leader and evaluate what this means for present-day individuals and for communities.

Section C: Texts from the Holy Qur'an and Hadith

(a) Candidates are expected to have knowledge and understanding of the following Suras and the context in which they were revealed:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| (i) Fateha – Opening Chapter | Chapter 1 verses 1 to 7 |
| (ii) Alaq – Clot of Blood | Chapter 96 verses 1 to 5 |
| (iii) Quraish – Custodians of the Ka'ba | Chapter 106 verses 1 to 4 |
| (iv) Kauthar – Abundance | Chapter 108 verses 1 to 3 |
| (v) Ikhlas – Purity (of Faith) | Chapter 112 verses 1 to 4 |
| (vi) An Naas – Mankind | Chapter 114 verses 1 to 6 |

Specified text: A Yusuf Ali; *An English interpretation of the Holy Qur'an with full Arabic Text*; Muhammed Ashraf Publisher and Bookseller; 1982; <http://tanzil.net>

(b) Candidates are expected to have knowledge of the following Hadith and their context as teachings of the Prophet (pbuh):

- No 11 Doubt
- No 13 Love
- No 15 Generosity
- No 16 Tolerance
- No 18 Piety
- No 27 Obedience and good character.

Specified text: Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (translators); *An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith*; The Holy Koran Publishing House (1976); Islamic Texts Society (1997); ISBN 0946621659

Candidates should be able to explain the importance of the principles and values contained in these teachings and their application and significance in the lives of Muslims today.

There will be **one** question set on the prescribed Suras and **one** question set on the prescribed Hadith. Candidates choose **either** the Sura **or** the Hadith question. The Sura and Hadith passages will be printed on the question paper, in translation into English.

The passages printed on the question paper will be taken from the version of the specified texts prescribed in this syllabus. If centres wish to use other versions of the translated texts, they are welcome to do so, but teachers should make candidates aware that there may be differences with the texts that appear on the question papers.

6.2 Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs and Observances

Section A: The Caliphate period/The Four Pious Caliphs

- (a) The way in which the Caliphs were elected.
- (b) The main events of the rules of the Four Caliphs.
- (c) Their policies in maintaining and expanding the state.
- (d) Their approaches to leading their community.
- (e) The conquests and achievements of the Caliphs.
- (f) The main difficulties they encountered and how they handled them.
- (g) Their significance as examples of leadership.
- (h) The importance of their rules as models for government today.
- (i) Their importance as examples for Muslim communities in relations with other states.

Candidates should know the circumstances of the election of each of the Caliphs and the main events of their rule. They should explore the significance of these events for the early and later history of Islam, and why the years of their rule in Medina are seen as the model for Muslim society.

Section B: The history and importance of the Qur'an and Hadith

- (a) The structure: preservation, transmission and compilation of the Qur'an
 - (i) the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet (pbuh) beginning with the first revelation in 610 CE (in the cave Hira) and ending with the last revelation in 632 CE
 - (ii) the account of the compilation of the Qur'an under the Four Pious Caliphs
 - (iii) its significance as the basis of all thought and action in Islam.
- (b) The importance of Hadith in Islam, including:
 - (i) the meaning of Hadith
 - (ii) the methods to test the reliability of Hadith, including the examination of the chain of transmitters (*isnad*) and the text (*matn*)
 - (iii) the classification of Hadith: *sahih* (very sound), *hassan* (good), *daif* (weak), *mauzu* (suspect/false)
 - (iv) the relations between the Qur'an and Hadith, including how they are used together as primary sources to make Islamic law

In demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the significance of Hadith, candidates should be aware of the role of Hadith as a primary/secondary source that does not contradict the authority of the Qur'an. Candidates should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of how the Qur'an and Hadith can be applied in Muslims' lives today.

(c) The following Qur'anic stories are to be studied:

- (i) Prophet Adam (AS)
- (ii) Prophet Musa (AS)
- (iii) Prophet Yusuf (AS)
- (iv) Prophet Isa (AS).

Candidates should know the main events in the life of these prophets, as recounted in the Qur'an, and demonstrate understanding of the nature of Muslim belief in *risalah* (prophets) and the teachings that might be drawn from these stories for Muslims today.

Section C: Beliefs, practices and rituals

The following beliefs, practices and rituals are to be studied:

(a) Articles of faith:

- (i) God
- (ii) angels (including their nature and duties)
- (iii) books (including their content and purpose)
- (iv) prophets (including their character and function)
- (v) predestination and decree (including meaning and significance)
- (vi) resurrection and the Last Day (including the main events and significance).

Including the relationship between the articles of faith and the Five Pillars in a Muslim's life.

(b) The Five Pillars:

- (i) *Shahada*, the declaration of faith (including the significance of what it contains)
- (ii) *Salat*, prayer (including preparations, performance and importance, and different forms of prayer)
- (iii) *Zakat*, alms-giving (including how it is performed and its significance in the community)
- (iv) *Sawm*, fasting (including its observance and significance)
- (v) *Hajj*, pilgrimage (including observances and significance).

Including their importance in the life and worship of Muslims.

(c) *Jihad* – in its range of meanings, physical, mental and spiritual

(d) Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Adha

(e) Rites of passage: birth, marriage and funeral rites.

Candidates should have knowledge of each of these beliefs and observances. They should be aware of their significance in the faith and action of individual Muslims, including the benefits and the contribution they make to Muslim communities today.

Candidates only need to show knowledge of those transliterated terms which are given in the syllabus.

7. Description of components

7.1 Assessment structure for Papers 1 and 2

Questions in Papers 1 and 2 assess knowledge and understanding from the prescribed syllabus content. Candidates are also required to evaluate and discuss, providing reasons to support their arguments.

For both Papers 1 and 2 candidates answer **three** questions. They choose **one** question (from a choice of two) from each section.

Sections A and B

In Sections A and B, each question has three parts.

Part (a) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the prescribed syllabus content (4 marks).

Part (b) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the prescribed syllabus content (10 marks).

Part (c) questions require candidates to evaluate and discuss. Candidates are required to provide reasons to support their arguments (6 marks).

Parts (b) and (c) will be marked using levels of response marking grids. Part (b) is marked using the AO1 Knowledge and understanding marking grid and Part (c) is marked using the AO2 Evaluation marking grid.

Section C

In Section C, each question has two parts.

Part (a) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the prescribed syllabus content (12 marks).

Part (b) questions require candidates to evaluate and discuss. Candidates are required to provide reasons to support their arguments (8 marks).

Parts (a) and (b) will be marked using levels of response marking grids. Part (a) is marked using the AO1 Knowledge and understanding marking grid and Part (b) is marked using the AO2 Evaluation marking grid.

You will find the levels of response marking grids in the specimen papers to accompany the revised syllabus. These are available on our public website and our secure online support for Cambridge teachers at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

8. Other information

Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care in the preparation of this syllabus and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind. In our effort to comply with the UK Equality Act (2010), we have taken all reasonable steps to avoid direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present barriers for candidates with impairments. Where a candidate is eligible, we may be able to make arrangements to enable that candidate to access assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. We do not agree access arrangements if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed.

Candidates who are unable to access the assessment of any component may be eligible to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

Information on access arrangements is in the *Cambridge Handbook* at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Language

This syllabus and the associated assessment materials are available in English only.

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as 'administrative zones'. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. This is a linear qualification so candidates cannot re-sit individual components.

Grading and reporting

Cambridge O Level results are shown by one of the grades A*, A, B, C, D or E, indicating the standard achieved, A* being the highest and E the lowest. 'Ungraded' indicates that the candidate's performance fell short of the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' will be reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. The letters Q (pending) and X (no result) may also appear on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge O Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement

The assessment:

- confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.

- to show likely future success

The outcomes:

- help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
- help students choose the most suitable course or career.

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