

OxfordAQA

International GCSE

Islamiat (9237)

Switching guide

Switching from Pearson Edexcel International or Cambridge International Examinations to Oxford International AQA Examinations

For this new International GCSE Islamiat specification, OxfordAQA have incorporated new approaches to learning to make it more appropriate for international schools.

Teachers will find the specification an ideal vehicle to make GCSE Islamiat enjoyable and provide the right level of challenge. It allows a freedom to teach GCSE Islamiat in a variety of ways and incorporates key themes and concepts throughout the specification.

It has been put together following consultation with teachers who will see this as the ideal choice for students who want to study and excel in GCSE Islamiat and beyond.

Topic by topic comparison

| OxfordAQA Exams specification (9237) | Pearson Edexcel International specification Oxford (4IS1) | Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) specification (0493) |
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| Assessment structure | | |
| <p>Two papers – 1 hour 30 minutes each</p> <p>Each paper is broken in to two sections. Each section follows a set question structure.</p> <p>Each section contains 25 marks. Sections A and B have a common structure of short long answer questions and an extended response question worth 12 marks. The 12 mark question will be related to a given passage from the Qur'an or Hadith. Students are given a range of Qur'an and Hadith o study in order to link textual sources to the assessment design.</p> <p>Question structure: 1,2,4,6 and 12 marks.</p> | <p>One paper that last 2 hours 30 minutes.</p> <p>Three separate section within this paper with options within each section. Section A & B provide optionality with section C being compulsory.</p> <p>Each section begins with short-answer questions, then an explanation question worth 6 marks, and finally a longer-response question worth 12 marks, related to a given passage from the Qur'an or Hadith. Students will be expected to use their own or others' views to support their answer to the 12 mark question.</p> <p>Question structure: 2,3,6 and 12 marks.</p> | <p>Two papers that 1 hour 30 mins each.</p> <p>Each paper contains five questions of which candidates must answer Question 1, Question 2 and two others.</p> <p>Paper 2 contains five questions of which candidates must answer Question 1, Question 2 and two others.</p> <p>Some compulsory questions, with options within each question and the passage for study included in the 4 mark questions.</p> <p>Question structure: 4,4, 10 and 4 marks.</p> |

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| Assessment objectives (including weightings) | | |
| <p>AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, beliefs and practices, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of beliefs, practices, and sources of authority (Qur’an and Hadith) • the key events in the history of Islam • their influence and impact on individuals, communities, and society. • the similarities and differences in beliefs and practices, including how they are observed. <p>AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of religious belief and practices, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their significance and implications • interpreting and applying of learning from set texts • constructing well-structured reasoned arguments and judgements. | <p>AO1: Recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding of relevant facts from the faith and history of Islam.</p> <p>AO2: Demonstrate understanding of key concepts and themes in relation to the faith, history and teachings of Islam.</p> <p>AO3: Analyse and interpret key questions and issues and their significance in the teachings of Islam and the lives of Muslims.</p> | <p>AO1: Recall, select and present relevant facts from the main elements of the faith and history of Islam</p> <p>AO2: Demonstrate understanding of their significance in the teachings of Islam and in the lives of Muslims.</p> |

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| Assessment objectives weightings | | |
| <p>AO1: 72% AO2: 28% Overall weighting of components: 50%</p> <p>Paper 2 AO1: 72% AO2: 28% Overall weighting of components: 50%</p> <p>Greater focus on knowledge within the Oxford AQA specification</p> | <p>AO1: 33* AO2: 40 AO3: 27</p> <p>*A total of 10 marks will assess recall of knowledge.</p> | <p>AO1: 68% AO2: 32%</p> |
| Course content | | |
| <p>Paper 1</p> <p>Living the Muslim Life</p> <p>Section A</p> <p>Islam: Beliefs and teachings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The oneness of God (Tawhid) • Nature of belief in Allah • Key beliefs • Belief in Angels • Belief in Predestination (Al-Qadir) • Belief in life after death • Prophethood (Nabuat) and Holy Books in Islam • The early leadership of the Muslim community | <p>Paper 1</p> <p>Section A: The life, teachings and achievements of the Prophet Muhammad</p> <p>1.1 Personal aspects of the Prophet’s life</p> <p>1.2 The Revelation of the Qur’an</p> <p>1.3 The Prophethood of Muhammad</p> <p>1.4 Opposition and Hijrah</p> <p>1.5 The Sunnah of the Prophet</p> | <p>Paper 1</p> <p>1. Major themes of the Qur’an</p> <p>Three groups of passages are set for close study. These relate to the themes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God in himself • God’s relationship with the created world • God’s Messengers. • the major theme or themes of the Qur’an that appear in each passage, and • the importance of these themes in the lives of Muslims today |

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| <p>Section B</p> <p>Islam: Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key practices in Islam • Shahadah • Salah • Sawm • Zakah • Hajj • Jihad • Festivals and Commemorations in Islam | <p>1.6 Teachings and example of the Prophet on specific issues of justice and equality</p> <p>1.7 The Prophet as leader</p> <p>1.8 Battles fought by the Prophet</p> <p>1.9 The Prophet’s final acts and his achievements</p> <p>Section B: The key, beliefs, practices and features of the early Muslim community founded by the Prophet</p> <p>2.1 The nature of belief in Allah</p> <p>2.2 Risalah</p> <p>2.3 The holy books of Islam</p> <p>2.4 al-Qadr</p> <p>2.5 Akhirah</p> <p>2.6 Malaikah</p> <p>2.7 Shari’ah</p> <p>2.8 Islamic etiquette, attitude and manners</p> | <p>2. The history and importance of the Qur’an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the revelation of the Qur’an to the Prophet (pbuh) between the years 610 and 632 • the account of the compilation of the Qur’an under the Rightly Guided Caliphs • the major themes of the Qur’an as contained both in the passages set for special study and in other similar passages • the use of the Qur’an in legal thinking, and its relationship with the Hadiths, consensus (ijma’) and analogy (qiyas) • its significance as the basis of all thought and action in Islam. <p>3. The life and importance of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the main events of the Prophet’s life from his birth to his call to prophethood • the main events of his activities in Makka and his experiences with his opponents • the main events of his activities in Madina, his leadership of the community |

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| | <p>2.9 The early leaders of the Muslim community</p> <p>Section C: Living the Muslim life today</p> <p>3.1 Shahadah</p> <p>3.2 Salah</p> <p>3.3 Sawm</p> <p>3.4 Zakah and Khums</p> <p>3.5 Hajj</p> <p>3.6 Jihad</p> <p>3.7 Islamic festivals</p> <p>3.8 Marriage and the family</p> <p>3.9 Muslim citizenship and religious and political leadership</p> | <p>there and his conflicts with the Makkans and others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his actions and character • the importance of his actions as examples for Muslim individuals in their personal conduct and relations with others including women and non-Muslims • the importance of his actions as examples for Muslim communities in their relations with other states • his significance as Seal of the Prophets and last Messenger of God. <p>4. The first Islamic community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Prophet’s wives • his descendants, including his children, grandchildren and the direct line recognised among Shi’a Muslims as Imams • his leading Companions, including the Ten Blessed Companions, his Scribes, the major characters who surrounded him in his ministry, the Emigrants and Helpers, and the four Rightly Guided Caliphs during his lifetime. |

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| <p><u>Paper 2</u></p> <p>The life of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ and sources of authority in Islam</p> <p>Section A</p> <p>Life and teachings of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Islamic Arabia • Early Life of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ • The call to Prophethood (Nabuat) • Early preaching of Islam • Opposition to Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ • The Ascension of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ • The Hijrah and early life in Madinah • Supporters of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ • The battles fought by Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ • The legacy and lessons of Hazrat Muhammad's ﷺ life. | | <p><u>Paper 2</u></p> <p>1. Major teachings in the Hadiths of the Prophet</p> <p>Two groups of passages are set for close study. These relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual conduct • life in the community. <p>2. The history and importance of the Hadiths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the history of the compilation of the Hadiths • the earliest collections • the main musnad and musannaf collections • the main compilers and their activities • the methods based on examination of the chain of transmitters (isnad) and the text (matn) of a Hadith to test the reliability of the Hadith • the main features of the six collections of Sunni Hadiths and the four collections of Shi'a Hadiths • the major themes of the Hadiths as these are contained both in the passages set for |

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| <p>Section B</p> <p>Sources of authority in Islam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revelation and compilation of the Qur’an. • The features and use of the Qu’ran as a source of authority • The Hadith and Sunnah as a source of Shariah. • The compilation and categorisation of Hadith. • The different schools of thought in Islam • Ijma and Qiyas as a source of Shariah. • The use of Shariah in everyday life. | | <p>special study and in other similar passages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their use in legal thinking, and their relationship with the Qur’an, consensus (ijma’) and analogy (qiyas) • their significance in thought and action in Islam. <p>3. The period of rule of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and their importance as Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the main events of the rules of the four Caliphs • their policies in maintaining and expanding the state • their approaches to leading the community • their main achievements • the main difficulties they encountered • their significance as examples of leadership • the importance of their rules as models for government today • their importance as examples for Muslim communities in their relations with other states |

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| | | <p>4. The Articles of Faith and the Pillars of Islam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Six Articles of Faith: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – God, including what Muslims believe about him – angels, their nature and duties – books, their contents and purpose – prophets, their character and function – God’s predestination and decree, its meaning and significance – Resurrection and the last day, the main events and its significance. • Jihad in its range of meanings, physical, mental and spiritual. • the Five Pillars of Islam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the declaration of faith, shahada, including the significance of what it contains – prayer, salat, including preparations, its performance and importance, congregational prayers on Fridays and festivals, times of prayer, the place of prayer, private prayer, delayed prayer – alms-giving, zakat, how it is performed and its significance in the community – fasting, sawm, including the way it is observed, its significance and those exempted |

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| | | – pilgrimage, hajj, including the main observances involved and their significance. |
| Topic by topic differences | | |
| Spec reference and title | Description of differences | Description of differences |
| 3.1.1.1 The Oneness of God | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.1.2 Nature of belief in Allah | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.1.3 Key beliefs | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.1.4 Belief in Angels | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.1.5 Belief in Predestination (Al-Qadr) | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.1.6 Belief in life after death | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.1.7 Prophethood (Nabuat) and Holy Books in Islam | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.1.8 The early leadership of the Muslim community | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.2.1 The key practices in Islam | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.2.2 Shahadah | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |

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| 3.1.2.3 Salah | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.2.4 Sawm | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.2.5 Zakah | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.2.6 Hajj | <p>The OxfordAQA specification gives precise details of what students need to study. For example: Ihram, Meeqat and the actions pilgrims perform at sites including the Ka'aba, Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah.</p> <p>It also includes a detailed look at umrah which may be considered more relevant to students at 16.</p> | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.1.2.7 Jihad | Similar content coverage. | <p>OxfordAQA specification breaks this down into the different types of jihad, the CIE one is very broad and says: Jihad in its range of meanings, physical, mental and spiritual. The Oxford AQA clearly stipulates what is to be studied: The meaning and importance of greater and lesser Jihad, including the conditions for lesser Jihad and the rules for conducting armed Warfare (Kitaal).</p> |
| 3.1.2.8 Festivals and Commemorations in Islam | Similar content coverage. | <p>The festival of Eid, which is a key celebration for all Muslims is not an area of study in this specification. The Oxford AQA one includes a range of festivals including Ashura, Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha</p> |

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| Paper 2: 2 The life of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ and sources of authority in Islam | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.1.1 Pre-Islamic Arabia | Focus here is on the prophet specifically, the OxfordAQA specification also looks at the social and political environment during the early life of the prophet and the issues faced by the people of Mecca. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.1.2 Early Life of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ | Students also study: The private and public preaching and Muhammad's صلى الله عليه وسلم early message, including the first converts to Islam, his call to Tawhid and rejection of idol worshiping. The early teachings of Islam, including the rights for women, the outlawing of alcohol and gambling. | Students are required to study the wives of the prophet. The Oxford AQA specification looks specifically at the role of Khadija (RA) |
| 3.2.1.3 The call to Prophethood (Nabuat) | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.1.4 Early preaching of Islam | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.1.5 Opposition to Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.1.6 The Ascension of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ | Similar content coverage. | Not an area of study |
| 3.2.1.7 The Hijrah and early life in Madinah | Similar content coverage. | Not an area of study |
| 3.2.1.8 Supporters of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ | Similar content coverage. | Students must study all 10 blessed companions in this spec. For the AQA |

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| | | specification this has been narrowed down to 2 so students can look at them in depth and gain a deeper understanding. |
| 3.2.1.9 The battles fought by Hazrat Muhammad's ﷺ life | Students study the treaty of Hdaybiyah and conquest of Makkah | The main events of his activities in Madina, his leadership of the community there and his conflicts with the Makkans and others are covered but the specification does not specify battles. The AQA specification has been designed to allow students to study key battles in details and learn key lessons from them. |
| 3.2.1.10 The legacy and lessons of Hazrat Muhammad's ﷺ life | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.2.1 The revelation and compilation of the Qur'an. | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.2.2 The features and use of the Qur'an as a source of authority | Similar content coverage. | The AQA specification allows students to examine Makki and Madani surahs and the key themes that emerge from them. |
| 3.2.2.3 The Hadith and Sunnah as a source of Shariah. | Similar content coverage. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.2.4 The compilation and categorisation of Hadith. | Not included in the Pearson specification. | Students are required to examine the 6 authentic hadith in the CIE syllabus the Oxford AQA one has been designed to allow students to look at the 2 most authentic |

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| | | Hadith compilations namely; Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. |
| 3.2.2.5 The different schools of thought in Islam | Not included in the Pearson specification. This is an important aspect of the course as it allows students to develop a broader understanding of Islam and the diverse interpretations that exist within the religion. | Not included in the CIE specification. This is an important aspect of the course as it allows students to develop a broader understanding of Islam and the diverse interpretations that exist within the religion. |
| 3.2.2.6 Ijma and Qiyas as a source of Shariah. | Not included in the Pearson specification. Students only study Qur'an and Sunnah. | Similar content coverage. |
| 3.2.2.7 The use of Shariah in everyday life | Similar content coverage. | Not included in the CIE specification. |