

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL AS & A LEVEL

Islamic Studies 9488

Assessment Overview

Examinations 2027, 2028 and 2029

How the qualification is assessed

The table shows the papers and components described for this syllabus. AS candidates take the designated AS components; the full A Level includes the additional components shown. A component's raw mark is the total available on that assessment; its weighting is the share of the qualification result, which may differ from its share of raw marks.

Paper or component	Duration	Raw marks	Weighting	Question or task structure
1: Islamic Beliefs and Practices	1 h 30 min	50	AS 50%; A 25%	Compulsory passage question and one of two further questions
2: Islamic law (shariah) and its application	1 h 30 min	50	AS 50%; A 25%	One question from each of two sections
3: Heritage of Islam	1 h 30 min	50	A 25%	One question from each of two sections
4: Islam in the Modern World	1 h 30 min	50	A 25%	Two of three essays

Read the weighting against your qualification route. A longer paper or a larger raw-mark total does not automatically mean a greater final weighting. Prepare for every component that applies to you, including practical, oral or coursework requirements where specified.

What each component requires

Each paper lasts ninety minutes, carries fifty marks and contributes twenty-five per cent of the full A Level.

For AS Level, Paper 1 contains one compulsory question based on prescribed Qur'anic or Hadith passages and one additional question chosen from two.

Paper 2 has two sections. In each section, you answer one question from a choice of two - one on Islamic jurisprudence and its application, and one on diversity among schools of thought. Papers 1 and 2 each contribute fifty per cent of AS Level.

Full A Level candidates also take Papers 3 and 4.

Paper 3 contains two sections. You choose one structured question on the Umayyad and Abbasid heritage and one on literature, philosophy, architecture or design. Part of the first section uses a printed source stimulus, which may be an image or short text.

Paper 4 contains three extended essay questions covering Islam in the modern world. You answer two. Strong responses combine relevant Islamic teachings and examples with comparison, analysis and a well-supported conclusion.

AS Level may be taken as a standalone qualification, carried forward through the staged route, or completed with Papers 3 and 4 in one examination series.

AS Level is graded from lower-case a to e, while the full A Level is graded from A star to E.

Preparing the right kind of response

Select religious material that answers the question and explain its significance. Distinguish a statement of belief from an analysis of how it affects people's lives. Where comparison or evaluation is required, support the argument with relevant teachings and examples, while respecting diversity within traditions.

The assessment objectives are visible in the response itself: relevant knowledge, appropriate use of the stimulus or task, a clear method or explanation, and a conclusion where requested. The command word and mark allocation help show the depth required. An answer should respond to the actual question, not reproduce a memorised passage that only partly fits.

Timing and examination arrangements

Begin preparation with accurate, untimed work, then move towards the duration and conditions of your required component. Use mark allocations to guide pacing while allowing time to read instructions and check the response. Any practice pacing advice is study guidance, not a new Cambridge time rule.

Examinations are available only in the November series. The syllabus is not offered in every administrative zone, so candidates must confirm availability before registering. Private candidates may enter.

An approved examination centre confirms entries, available component options, deadlines and any practical or speaking arrangements. Preparation-course access does not itself constitute an examination entry.

Key pointers: Know your required components, follow question choices precisely and practise the relevant response formats. **Next:** Open **Learning Resources** to see which materials support this preparation.