

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL AS & A LEVEL

Islamic Studies 9488

Syllabus Overview

Examinations 2027, 2028 and 2029

Understanding the whole syllabus

The subject connects religious teachings and sources with beliefs, practices, history and lived experience. Accurate knowledge supports an explanation of meaning and significance. Where the syllabus requires evaluation, different views need fair treatment and evidence rather than unsupported assertion.

For Islamic Studies 9488, the content map below follows the approved subject briefing and the official syllabus. Labels group related areas for orientation; the detailed syllabus remains the authority for individual learning requirements.

Content map

Syllabus area or component	What the area covers
Paper 1: Qur'an and Sunnah	At AS Level, Paper 1 introduces the Qur'an and Sunnah through the life and character of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, together with prescribed Qur'anic and Hadith texts. It also examines central beliefs, purification, intention, worship, community life and the relationship between faith and action.
Paper 2: Shariah and schools of thought	Paper 2 focuses on Islamic law, or Shariah, and the development of jurisprudence, or fiqh. You will examine worship, family life, finance and employment, the sources of Islamic law and how different schools apply them. You will also compare perspectives on divine unity, religious leadership, judgement and the afterlife.
Paper 3: Heritage of Islam	At A Level, Paper 3 investigates the heritage of the Umayyads and Abbasids, including their leadership and contributions to education, science and culture. It also explores Islamic literature, philosophy, architecture and artistic expression.
Paper 4: Islam in the modern world	Paper 4 connects Islamic teachings with modern debates concerning women, religious pluralism and leadership within Muslim communities.
Knowledge and interpretation	Across all four papers, you must demonstrate accurate knowledge while analysing different interpretations and reaching conclusions supported by evidence.

These areas should be read as a connected course. Begin with the foundational knowledge identified in the first part of the map, then build towards the applications and explanations that depend on it. Link each teaching or text to its meaning, context and relevant practice. Keep knowledge and explanation distinct in revision, and develop supported evaluation only where the assessment requires it. Where a row describes a choice of topics or components, study the selection required by your agreed route rather than treating all alternatives as compulsory.

Qualification and component choices

Qualification route	Components	Meaning
AS Level only	1 and 2	Standalone AS qualification, graded a-e
Staged A Level	1 and 2 first; then 3 and 4	Carry forward eligible AS marks within Cambridge rules and time limits
Full A Level in one series	1, 2, 3, 4	All required components; A Level graded A*-E

AS and A Level percentages refer to different qualification totals. A component can therefore have one weighting at AS and a different weighting in the full A Level. Confirm the entry option and any carry-forward arrangements with the centre.

The assessed skills

Assessment objectives describe the abilities Cambridge looks for across the qualification. The following explanations paraphrase the syllabus objectives; they are not additional topics or separate orientation tasks.

Assessment objective	Meaning for the learner
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Select accurate subject knowledge, terminology and examples that answer the question, and explain their meaning.
AO2 Analysis and evaluation	Weigh evidence, explanations or methods, explain limitations and reach a justified judgement.

These abilities work together in an answer. Accurate knowledge supports application, while a clear explanation shows how the evidence or method leads to a conclusion. The balance varies by component, so the next lesson connects these abilities with the actual assessment formats.

Key pointers: Follow the stated examination-year syllabus, cover the required areas for your route and develop skills alongside knowledge. **Next:** Open **Assessment Overview**.