

Islamic Studies syllabus

Every examinable topic area in WAEC Islamic Studies, in one place — with how the papers are structured and answers to common questions. Compiled by waeccbt.com; not an official WAEC document.

How the papers work: Two papers combined into one composite paper taken at one sitting. Paper 1: 50 multiple-choice questions answered in 50 minutes for 50 marks. Paper 2: six essay questions, one compulsory; candidates answer the compulsory question and any three of the optional ones in 2 hours for 100 marks. Islamic Studies may not be taken with Christian Religious Studies or West African Traditional Religion. The syllabus has four parts — Tarikh (historical development of Islam), Qur'an, Hadith, and Tawhid and Fiqh (theology and jurisprudence) — and assesses the historical and contemporary development of Islam, its spiritual, moral, socio-economic and intellectual roles, and the practical application of Islamic teachings in daily life.

1. Tarikh 1: The Jahiliyyah — Arabia before Islam

- Description and location of Arabia
- Social life: marriage, divorce and inheritance
- Religious life: idol worship and the names of the major idols
- Political life and system of government
- Economic life and sources of livelihood
- The reforms introduced by Islam on Jahiliyyah practices

2. Tarikh 2: The Life of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

- Birth and marriage
- Call to prophethood and his mission
- Hijrah: causes, course and significance
- Formation of the Ummah and the Madinan Constitution
- Leadership qualities of the Prophet
- The battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq: causes, courses and effects
- The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah: terms and outcomes
- Conquest of Makkah
- The Farewell Pilgrimage: description, sermon and its lessons
- Death of the Prophet

3. Tarikh 3: The Khulafa'ur-Rashidin

- Abu Bakr ibn Abi Quhafah, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and 'Ali ibn Abi Talib
- Their biographies
- Their contributions to Islam
- Lessons learnt from their lives

4. Tarikh 4: Islam in West Africa

- The advent of Islam and the roles of traders, teachers, murabitun, sufi orders, mujaddidun (reformers) and the Hajj in its spread
- The impact of Islam on the socio-political, economic and linguistic lives of the peoples of ancient Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Kanem-Borno

5. Qur'an 1: Revelation and Preservation

- Visits of the Prophet to Cave Hira; the first revelation and his reaction to it
- Modes of revelation and the piecemeal revelation of the Qur'an
- Preservation: arrangement, distinction between Makki and Madani suwar, recording, compilation and standardisation
- Roles played by the Companions in preserving the Qur'an
- Importance of the Qur'an as a source of guidance in social, political, spiritual and moral matters

6. Qur'an 2: Prescribed Suwar (reading, memorisation, meaning and lessons)

- Suratul-Fatihah (Q.1)
- Suratud-Duha (Q.93)
- Suratut-Tin (Q.95)
- Suratul-'Alaq (Q.96:1-5)
- Suratul-Qadr (Q.97)
- Suratul-Kafirun (Q.109)
- Suratun-Nasr (Q.110)
- Suratul-Ikhlās (Q.112)
- Suratul-Falaq (Q.113)
- Suratun-Nas (Q.114)
- Identification, explanation, interpretation and application of each surah

7. Qur'an 3: Moral Lessons from the Qur'an

- Attitudes to parents (Q.17:23-24; Q.31:13-15)
- Honesty in words and deeds (Q.2:42; Q.61:2-3; Q.17:35)
- Prohibition of gambling (Q.2:219; Q.5:90-91)

8. Hadith

- Definition of Hadith and Sunnah; their differences, similarities and importance
- Parts of a Hadith: isnad, matn and rawi
- Criteria for the authenticity of Hadith
- Classification: sahih, hasan and da'if
- The six sound collections (Sihah Sittah) and their compilers
- An-Nawawi's collection — Hadith 1, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 34 and 41: reading, memorisation, meaning and lessons

9. Tawhid 1: Iman (Faith)

- Meaning and significance of iman
- Belief in Allah with emphasis on Kalimatush-Shahadah; Islam and the concept of Trinity
- Belief in His angels
- Belief in His books
- Belief in His prophets with emphasis on the Ulul-'Azm: Ibrahim, Nuh, Musa, 'Isa and Muhammad
- The Day of Resurrection, Judgement and eternal life
- Destiny: qada' and qadar and the distinction between them

10. Tawhid 2: Shirk

- Worship of idols
- Ancestor and hero worship

11. Fiqh 1: Taharah (Purification)

- Importance of taharah
- Al-istinja'
- Al-wudu'
- At-tayammum
- Al-ghusl

12. Fiqh 2: Salat

- Meaning and importance of salat
- Acts that vitiate salat; joining a congregational salat; sujodus-sahwi
- Obligatory salat: Subh/Fajr, Zuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib and 'Isha'
- Non-obligatory salat: nawafil, Duha, witr
- Special prayers: Jum'ah, 'Idayn, Janazah, Istisqa', Tarawih, Kusufayn and Istikharah
- Salatus-safar (salat on a journey)

13. Fiqh 3: Sawm (Fasting)

- Definition and types of sawm (compulsory and voluntary)
- Compulsory fasts: Ramadan, kaffarah and nadhr
- Voluntary fasts: six days of Shawwal, 'Ashura' and Tasu'a, Mondays and Thursdays
- How fasting is observed; those exempted; things that vitiate the fast
- Benefits of sawm: spiritual, social and moral

14. Fiqh 4: Zakat

- Definitions of zakat and sadaqah and the difference between them
- Articles on which zakat is paid and the nisab
- Zakat on livestock, money and agricultural products
- The beneficiaries of zakat (Q.9:60)
- Zakatul-fitr
- Benefits of zakat: spiritual, socio-economic and moral

15. Fiqh 5: Hajj and 'Umrah

- Definition and origin of hajj and 'umrah; pre-requisites
- Performance of 'umrah and hajj; rites of hajj
- Acts that affect the validity of hajj
- Types of hajj: ifrad, tamattu' and qiran
- Significance: spiritual, socio-economic and moral

16. Fiqh 6: Shari'ah, Nikah and Talaq

- Shari'ah: definition, sources (Qur'an, Sunnah, ijma' and qiyas) and significance
- Nikah: concept, prohibited categories, conditions of validity, rights and duties of husband and wife, prohibition of ill-treatment of the wife (idrar)
- Talaq: Islam's attitude; kinds — talaq, khul', faskh, mubara'ah, zihar and li'an
- 'Iddatut-talaq: meaning, duration and implication

Frequently asked questions

How is the WAEC Islamic Studies exam structured?

It is one composite paper at one sitting. Paper 1 has 50 multiple-choice questions in 50 minutes for 50 marks. Paper 2 has six essay questions: one is compulsory and you answer it plus any three of the other five in 2 hours for 100 marks.

Can I take Islamic Studies with CRS?

No. Islamic Studies may not be combined with Christian Religious Studies or West African Traditional Religion in the same examination entry.

What are the four parts of the syllabus?

Tarikh (the historical development of Islam — Jahiliyyah, the Prophet's life, the rightly-guided caliphs, Islam in West Africa), Qur'an (revelation, preservation, prescribed suwar and moral lessons), Hadith (definitions, authenticity, classification, the six collections and an-Nawawi's selected ahadith) and Tawhid and Fiqh (faith, shirk, purification, salat, sawm, zakat, hajj, shari'ah, marriage and divorce).

Which suwar must I know by heart?

Al-Fatihah (1), ad-Duha (93), at-Tin (95), al-'Alaq (96:1-5), al-Qadr (97), al-Kafirun (109), an-Nasr (110), al-Ikhlās (112), al-Falaq (113) and an-Nas (114). Questions ask you to identify the surah, explain its meaning, interpret it and apply its lessons.

Which ahadith from an-Nawawi are prescribed?

Numbers 1, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 34 and 41 of an-Nawawi's Forty Hadith — on intention, innovation, sincere advice, avoiding what is forbidden, loving for your brother what you love for yourself, good speech and hospitality, not becoming angry, good conduct, changing evil with the hand, tongue or heart, and following the guidance the Prophet brought.

Will I be asked to calculate zakat?

Yes. Be ready to compute zakat on money (2.5 per cent of savings that have reached the nisab and been held for a lunar year), on crops (10 per cent for rain-fed land, 5 per cent for irrigated land) and on livestock using the standard thresholds. The bank includes computed examples.

How do I manage the essay paper?

You answer four essays in 2 hours, so give each about 30 minutes. Start with the compulsory question. Use headings for causes, course and effects (for battles), or list conditions and lessons clearly. Quote the meaning of a verse or hadith rather than struggling to reproduce Arabic.

Practise this syllabus free — timed CBT papers with instant marking:
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