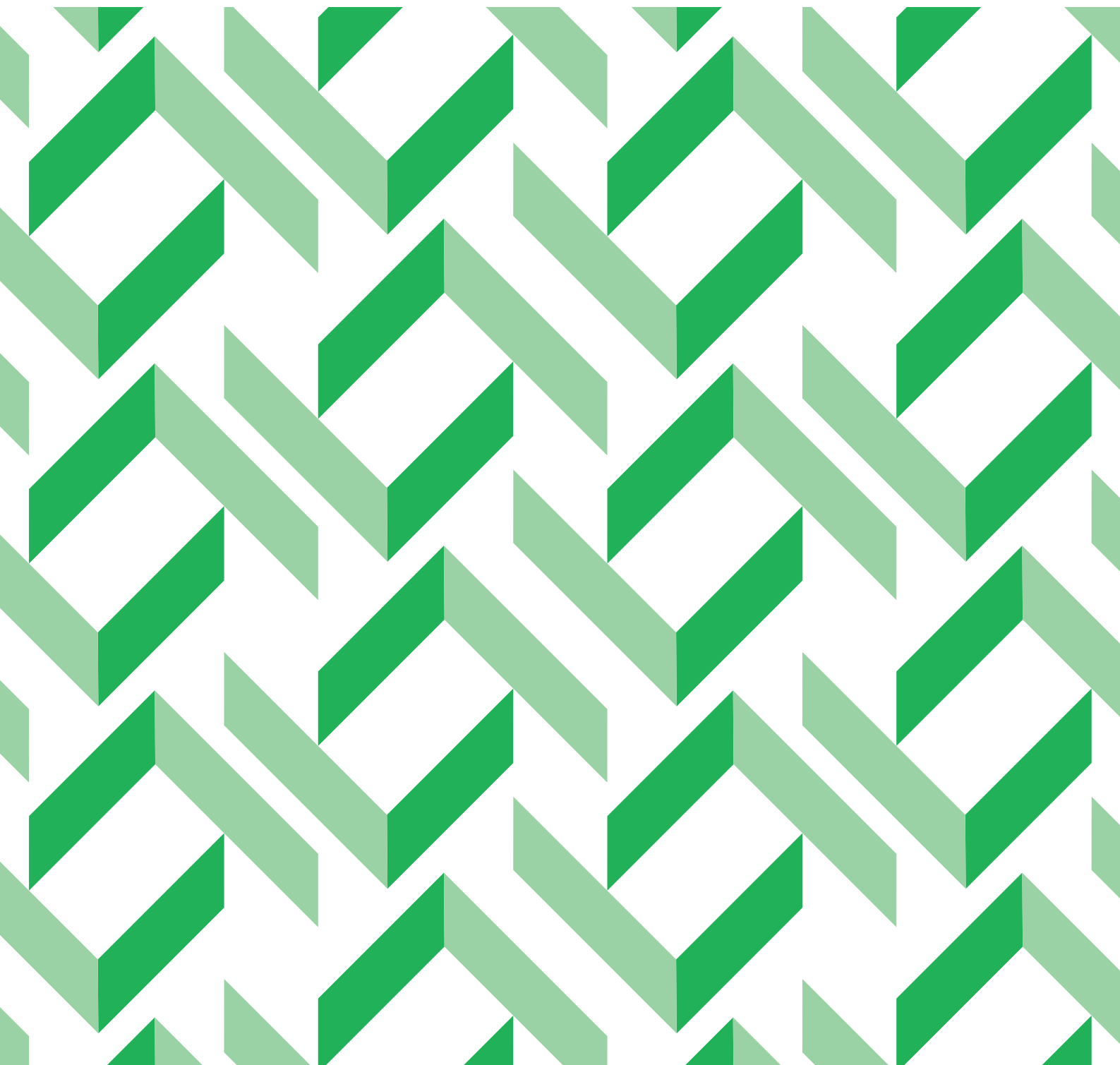




GCSE

Specifications for teaching from 2009

Religious Studies
Specification B
(Full & Short Course)



Contents

WJEC GCSE in RELIGIOUS STUDIES

(Full and Short Course)

SPECIFICATION B

For Teaching from 2009
For Short Course Award from 2010
For Full Course Award from 2011

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES SPECIFICATION B SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

EITHER (Short Course)

Written Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes 100% 96 marks (100 UMS)
Four structured questions consisting of visual stimuli used as a basis for a series of paragraph and extended writing answers testing AO1 and AO2.

OR (Full Course)

1st Written Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% 96 marks (100 UMS)
Four structured questions consisting of visual stimuli used as a basis for a series of paragraph and extended writing answers testing AO1 and AO2.
2nd Written Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% 96 marks (100 UMS)
Four structured questions consisting of visual stimuli used as a basis for a series of paragraph and extended writing answers testing AO1 and AO2.

AVAILABILITY OF ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

	Entry Code		June 2010	June 2011 and each year thereafter
	Subject	Option*		
Religion and Life Issues	4451	01 or W1	✓	✓
Religion and Human Experience	4452	01 or W1	✓	✓
Short Course Award	4459	SC or CB	✓	✓
Full Course Award	4450	SA or GU		✓

* Option Codes

English Medium 01, Welsh Medium W1 - for units
English Medium SC, Welsh Medium CB - for short course award
English Medium SA, Welsh Medium GU - for full course award

N.B. First certification of Short Course: Summer 2010

First certification of Full Course: Summer 2011

Qualification Accreditation Number: 500/4586/6 (Short), 500/4585/4 (Full)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

This specification provides opportunity for candidates to obtain a qualification in

- either: GCSE Religious Studies (Full Course)
- or: GCSE Religious Studies (Short Course)

The specification is consistent with the requirements of the non-statutory *National Exemplar Programme of Study for Religious Education* in Wales and the non-statutory *National Framework for Religious Education* (England) and should assist schools in both countries to meet their legal obligations for the provision of Religious Education at Key Stage 4 as required in section 375(3) of the 1996 Education Act and section 28 of the 1944 Education Act for England and Wales; and article 13 of the Education Reform Order 1989 for Northern Ireland.

The aims and assessment objectives are compatible with the aims and attainment targets of the local authority agreed syllabuses currently operating in Wales and with many of those in England. Schools that intend to use this specification to meet all or part of their statutory obligation to provide religious education will need to check whether there are local agreed syllabus requirements that the specification does not meet.

It provides opportunities for candidates to follow a course that is coherent and that balances the breadth of religion(s) and/or belief(s) studied with the depth of understanding.

It provides opportunity for a course of study that:

- **either** reflects the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (without requiring more than two principal religions in addition to Christianity)
- **or** supports the study of Christianity and/or one or two other principal religions only.

Its distinctive feature is that it involves a thematic study of some central questions and issues in human life and experience and explores the relevance of religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions to these questions and issues. It provides continuity for centres that have used the WJEC's GCSE Religious Studies course since its introduction in 1996.

The specification is designed to meet the need for certification of:

- statutory religious education where an agreed syllabus requires the study of Christianity and one other religion at Key Stage 4;
- statutory religious education where an agreed syllabus requires the study of Christianity and one other religion in post-16 education (Key Stage 5);
- religious education at Key Stage 4 or in post-16 education (Key Stage 5) in voluntary aided schools, including Roman Catholic schools;
- a course of further study of religion in schools which meet the statutory requirements for religious education in other ways;
- a course of study for independent schools and further education institutions.

Where candidates take one short course unit at Key Stage 4 and another in post-16 education there is need for an indication to be given that the two courses are different in content.

The short course content has been selected to ensure it is capable of being taught in 5% of curriculum time (60-70 hours). The full course content has been selected to ensure it is capable of being taught in 10% of curriculum time (120-140 hours). The GCSE course reflects the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of other principal religions represented in Great Britain. The GCSE course and the agreed syllabus both seek to engage the student in reflecting upon and responding to human experience and the issues raised by being human. Both seek to develop in each student a knowledge and understanding of how religions have responded to these experiences and issues through the beliefs, values, practices and traditions which help to shape and give meaning to the lives of their followers. In religious education students learn about religion and from religion in their quest to make sense of and find meaning in their own experience of life. In this process students need to be developing those skills and critical faculties which are embodied in the aims and assessment objectives of this specification and locally agreed syllabuses.

The subject content is appropriate to the subject in terms of its concepts, topics, criteria, structure and manageability in terms of time available to candidates for its study. The content is sufficient to enable the assessment objectives to be attained. It is also of sufficient depth and breadth to permit authentic knowledge and understanding of the areas of study and to facilitate the development of Key Skills, especially those of written communication. Marks awarded will take into account the candidates' skills in written communication either in English or in Welsh.

Coherence is achieved not only by adherence to the required skills and assessment objectives in all units but also by each area of study making a positive contribution to the understanding and illumination of religion and of religious perspectives on aspects of life.

1.2 Aims and Learning Outcomes

The aim of this Specification in Religious Studies is that it should encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, satisfying and worthwhile course of study that challenges students and equips them to lead constructive lives in the modern world.

It should enable learners to:

- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion
- explore religions and beliefs, reflect on fundamental questions, engage with them intellectually and respond personally
- enhance their spiritual and moral development, and contribute to their health and wellbeing
- enhance their personal, social and cultural development, their understanding of different cultures locally, nationally and in the wider world, and to contribute to social and community cohesion
- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for the study of religion, and relate it to the wider world
- reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in light of their learning.

It provides students with the opportunity to:

- develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of religion by exploring the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning
- express their personal responses and informed insights on fundamental questions and issues about identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments.

1.3 Prior Learning and Progression

Although there is no specific requirement for prior learning, this specification builds upon the Key Stages 1-3 programmes of study for religious education in agreed syllabuses, the *National Exemplar Programme of Study* (Wales) the *National Framework* (England) and the Curriculum Guidance document published by the Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Faith and Science, Church and State, Religious Diversity and Dialogue*

This specification may be followed by any candidate, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or cultural background. It emphasises the educational basis for a study of religion and is accessible to students of any religious persuasion or of none. The specification is not age-specific and, as such, it provides opportunities for candidates to extend their life-long learning.

The specification provides a suitable foundation for study of Religious Studies or related courses at AS and Advanced Level.

1.4 Equality and Fair Assessment

GCSEs often require assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised GCSE qualification and subject criteria have been reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people. In the case of GCSE Religious Studies no potential barriers were identified in the subject criteria and this specification has been reviewed to ensure that no additional barriers have been included.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are eligible for Adjustments in Examinations*. This document is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

Candidates who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all of the competences have been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in future.

1.5 Classification Codes

Every specification is assigned a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs. The classification code for this specification is 4610.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCSE qualification with the same classification code will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

Centres may wish to advise candidates that, if they take two specifications with the same classification code, schools and colleges are very likely to take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same view may be taken if candidates take two GCSE specifications that have different classification codes but have significant overlap of content. Candidates who have any doubts about their subject combinations should check with the institution to which they wish to progress before embarking on their programmes.

2

SPECIFICATION CONTENT

2.1 Number and Combination of Religions to be Studied

For each topic of the specification questions will be set requiring candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, practices, values and traditions of:

- either** (i) Christianity and one other principal religion
or (ii) a Christian tradition within the broader context of Christianity.

In alternative (i) while Christianity is a necessary element of study in each topic, centres can determine which non-Christian principal religion is studied for that topic. The non-Christian principal religion studied in each topic may, but need not, be the same one studied across all four topics. For the course as a whole, study should be limited to the study of Christianity and no more than **two** other principal religions.

The specification gives students opportunities to acquire and develop an understanding of the beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning associated with one or more religions. Students will have opportunities to express their personal responses and informed insights on fundamental questions and issues about identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments.

In alternative (ii) candidates will be expected to study one Christian tradition throughout all four topics and be able to place the tradition within the broad context of the Christian faith so that the study is balanced in terms of breadth and depth. **They will be required to answer questions on each topic which will anticipate a knowledge and understanding of two Christian traditions.**

Coherence, breadth and depth in both units will be achieved through coverage of the three key areas:

- Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions
- Human experiences and issues
- Key concepts

2.2 UNIT 1 - RELIGION AND LIFE ISSUES

The division of the content into topics is intended only to indicate the parameters of the specification for examination purposes. It is not suggested that the topics should be studied in this order, nor is any priority of importance implied. Each question will have both AO1 and AO2 elements examined in it.

Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious terms used in the specification.

Topic 1	Relationships	Issues of love, marriage and divorce
Topic 2	Is it Fair?	Issues of justice and equality
Topic 3	Looking for Meaning	Issues about God, life and death
Topic 4	Our World	Exploring creation and our place in the world

TOPIC 1: RELATIONSHIPS Issues of love, marriage and divorce		
Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions	Human experiences and issues	Key concepts
Religious practices and teachings about:	What is love? What commitments do we have to others? What responsibilities do we have towards each other?	chastity
Adultery and extra marital sex Sex before marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-marital relationships • Contraception • celibacy • Sexual activity and commitment • Sex as a gift from God 	What is the role and purpose of sex? Whose decision is it concerning the use of contraception?	commitment conflict
Cohabitation	Is marriage out of date? How important is the family?	
Marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtship • Religious marriage ceremonies • marriage vows and meaning of marriage 	Is it necessary to marry in a place of worship?	love
Divorce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separation and divorce 	Why do some marriages succeed and other fail?	reconciliation
Remarriage	Should people be allowed to remarry? Should it be in a religious building?	
Same sex relationships	Should same sex marriages be allowed in a place of worship?	responsibilities

Further details of AO1 and AO2 can be found in the Teachers Handbook.

TOPIC 2: IS IT FAIR? Issues of justice and equality		
Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions	Human experiences and issues	Key concepts
Religious practices and teachings about:	What do we want?	authority
Human dignity	Why do people treat others differently?	discrimination
Equality	Is equality possible?	
Use of wealth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity 	What should be people's attitudes towards wealth? What do we need?	equality
Social responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion and the media 	How should we treat others? How does the media influence attitudes?	identity
Religious commitments to promote justice Racial, social and gender divisions Example of a person or a religious organisation who have worked for justice	Why are people prejudiced?	injustice
Religious responses to injustice	What is fair? What is unfair?	prejudice

Further details of AO1 and AO2 can be found in the Teachers Handbook.

TOPIC 3: LOOKING FOR MEANING Issues about God, life and death		
Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions	Human experiences and issues	Key concepts
Religious practices and teachings about:	Why do some people believe in God? Why do some people not believe in a God? What is the value of religion in a secular society?	afterlife awe
The nature of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of God or Ultimate Being 	How do people experience God?	community
The existence of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • symbolism and imagery • ideas about God 	Why do some people use symbols? What influences peoples' understanding of God?	God
Responses to God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vocation • Acts of worship 	How do people respond to God? How do religious believers respond to God through vocation? How do religious believers respond to God through worship? How important is worship?	Revelation symbolism
Religious teachings on death and the afterlife	How important is a belief in the afterlife?	
Religious funeral and mourning rites	How important are funeral rites?	

Further details of AO1 and AO2 can be found in the Teachers Handbook.

TOPIC 4: OUR WORLD Exploring creation and our place in the world		
Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions	Human experiences and issues	Key concepts
Religious practices and teachings about:		creation
Creation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation stories and their meaning 	How did the universe begin?	
Using talents	How can we use our talents? Why should we use our talents?	dominion
Place of humankind in the world	Why are we here? What makes us human?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of humankind in the world • Stewardship issues in terms of current exploitation of the planet. 	How should we use natural resources?	environment humanity
Animal rights	How should animals be treated?	soul
Care for the world and the environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of a religious individual or community using talents for care of the planet 	Why should we care for the world?	stewardship

Further details of AO1 and AO2 can be found in the Teacher Handbook.

2.3 UNIT 2 - RELIGION AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE

The division of the content into topics is intended only to indicate the parameters of the specification for examination purposes. It is not suggested that the topics should be studied in this order, nor is any priority of importance implied. Each question will have both AO1 and AO2 elements examined in it.

Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious terms used in the specification.

Topic 1	Religion and Conflict	Issues of peace, forgiveness and conflict
Topic 2	Religion and Medicine	Issues of medical ethics and the sanctity of life
Topic 3	Religious Expression	Issues of expressing one's faith
Topic 4	Authority—Religion & State	Issues of law and order in religion and society

TOPIC 1: RELIGION AND CONFLICT Issues of peace, forgiveness and conflict		
Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions	Human experiences and issues	Key concepts
Religious practices and teachings about:		conflict
Peace	How can peace be made and kept? How can good relationships be developed between people? How can communities work together? How can different religions support peace by talking to each other?	interfaith dialogue just war
Suffering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the nature of suffering purpose of suffering support for those suffering 	Why do the innocent suffer? How can those suffering be helped?	non-violent protest
Forgiveness and Reconciliation An individual or community working for peace	Is forgiveness possible? How important is forgiveness? How important is it to forgive? How do people learn to forgive?	pacifism
Attitudes to conflict and war <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just War and equivalents in other religions 	Is it ever right to fight? How can war/conflict be avoided? Can a war ever be 'just'?	reconciliation
Attitudes to non-violent protest	How can non-violent protest be used?	

Further details of AO1 and AO2 can be found in the Teachers Handbook.

TOPIC 2: RELIGION AND MEDICINE Issues of medical ethics and the sanctity of life		
Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions	Human experiences and issues	Key concepts
Religious practices and teachings about:		conscience
Sanctity of life	Why is life so special? Should people have free will to make life/death decisions? What are the moral issues a couple must consider in life and death decisions?	free will
Medical ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support in making decisions about medical ethics 	How do doctors make ethical decisions? What are the dilemmas faced by scientific advancements? How does a religion help or hinder people making decisions? Does the decision depend on the situation?	Hippocratic Oath Medical ethics
Abortion	What are the rights of the unborn child? Whose choice should it be concerning the issue of abortion?	quality of life
Euthanasia	Whose life is it anyway? Is it ever right to end someone's life?	sanctity of life
IVF	Is it right to spend so much money on IVF when people are starving in the world?	

Further details of AO1 and AO2 can be found in the Teachers Handbook.

TOPIC 3: RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION Issues of expressing one's faith		
Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions	Human experiences and issues	Key concepts
Expressing faith through actions:		community
The work of a religious charity or organisation.	Can a religion give a purpose in life? Why do people support others? How can a belief drive actions?	evangelism
Expressing faith through what is worn	Do religious believers need to make their faith explicit? How can faith be expressed through what people wear?	faith
Expressing faith through symbols in a place of worship • Purpose and place of symbolism in places of worship	How can art express one's faith? Why worship in special buildings? What makes a place conducive to worship?	identity pilgrimage
Expressing faith through pilgrimage • Attitudes to pilgrimage	What makes a journey special? Can pilgrimage help a person's spiritual growth? Is pilgrimage out of date?	sacred
Expressing faith through sharing faith with others	Is there a purpose or value to Inter-faith dialogue? Is it right for people to share their faith with others? How should the media be used for religious purposes?	

Further details of AO1 and AO2 can be found in the Teachers Handbook.

TOPIC 4: AUTHORITY—RELIGION & STATE Issues of law and order in religion and society		
Religious beliefs, practices, values and traditions	Human experiences and issues	Key concepts
Religious practices and teachings about:		authority
Human rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an example of a religious believer who has worked for human rights 	How can human rights be maintained? Should everyone have the same human rights? How can people get justice for others? What makes people try to get justice for others?	duty
Duty	How do we know our duties?	justice
Punishment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aims and purpose of punishment 	How should we deal with offenders?	
Capital punishment	Is it ever right to take a life?	human rights
The role of sacred texts in individuals' lives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Texts/sacred books as a source of authority 	What influence can sacred texts have? How far should people follow authority of the written word?	personal conviction
Examples of conflict between personal conviction and authority (religious, state and social)	Why should we obey authority? What if the authority is wrong? What if the law conflicts with religious beliefs?	punishment

Further details of AO1 and AO2 can be found in the Teachers Handbook.

3

ASSESSMENT

3.1 Scheme of Assessment

Assessment for GCSE Religious Studies is untiered, i.e. all units cater for the full range of ability and allow access to grades A*-G for the subject award.

The specification content is prescribed in two units.

Candidates for the GCSE (Full Course) will be required to study **both** of the units listed below.

Candidates for the GCSE (Short Course) will be required to study **one** of the units listed below, either Unit 1 or Unit 2.

The units are:

- Unit 1: Religion and Life Issues
- Unit 2: Religion and Human Experience

Candidates who have already received a short course award in Unit 1 may enter for a second Short Course award in Unit 2.

Candidates who have already received a short course award in Unit 2 may enter for a second Short Course award in Unit 1.

Each unit comprises a written paper as follows:

Written Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes 100%

Four structured questions consisting of visual stimuli used as a basis for a series of paragraph and extended writing answers, testing AO1 and AO2.

The full course may be entered either by end-of-course assessment or by the entering for one short course first and then by sitting a second short course (usually at the end of Years 10 and 11 respectively). The assessment will be by means of a second short course if the second unit is taken at a different examination sitting from the first. The short course units may be taken in either order.

3.2 Assessment Objectives

Candidates will be required to demonstrate their ability to:

AO1	Describe, explain and analyse, using knowledge and understanding	Weighting: 50%
AO2	Use evidence and reasoned argument to express and evaluate personal responses, informed insights and differing viewpoints	Weighting: 50%

AO1 and AO2 are interrelated and connections must be made.

The weighting of assessment objectives across examination components is as follows:

	AO1	AO2	Total
Paper 1	25%	25%	50%
Paper 2	25%	25%	50%
Total Weighting	50%	50%	100%

3.3 Quality of Written Communication

In all components in questions involving extended writing (Question 1(e), 2(e), 3(e) and 4(e)) candidates will be assessed on the quality of their written communication within the overall assessment of that component.

Mark schemes for all written papers include the following specific criteria for the assessment of written communication:

- legibility of text; accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar; clarity of meaning;
- selection of a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complexity of subject matter;
- organisation of information clearly and coherently; use of specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

4 AWARDING, REPORTING AND RE-SITTING

GCSE qualifications are reported on an eight point scale from A* to G, where A* is the highest grade. The attainment of students who do not succeed in reaching the lowest possible standard to achieve a grade is recorded as U (unclassified) and they do not receive a certificate.

This is a unitised specification which allows for an element of staged assessment. Any unit may be taken in this way and may be re-taken once only (with the better result counting) before aggregation for the subject award. Results for a unit have a shelf-life limited only by the shelf-life of the specification.

An award will not be made until both units have been completed or until both units have been retaken, whichever is the sooner. A candidate may retake the whole qualification more than once. Each unit result, prior to certification for a qualification, has a shelf life limited only by the shelf life of the qualification.

Individual unit results are reported on a uniform mark scale (UMS) with the following grade equivalences:

GRADE	MAX.	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Units	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Short Course Qualification	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20
Full Course Qualification	200	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40

5 GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade A

Candidates demonstrate detailed knowledge and thorough understanding of religion to describe, explain and analyse the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning. They interpret, draw out and explain the meaning and importance of the beliefs and practices of the religion(s) and/or beliefs studied, and assess the impact of these on the lives of believers. They explain, where appropriate, how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. They understand and use accurately and appropriately a range of specialist vocabulary.

They use reasoned argument supported by a range of evidence to respond to religious beliefs, moral issues and ultimate questions, recognising the complexity of issues. They demonstrate informed insight in evaluating different points of view to reach evidenced judgements about these beliefs, issues and questions.

Grade C

Candidates demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of religion to describe and explain the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning. They show awareness of the meaning and importance of the beliefs and practices of the religion(s) and/or beliefs studied, and can describe the impact of these on the lives of believers. They recognise how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. They communicate their ideas using specialist vocabulary appropriately.

They use argument supported by relevant evidence to express and evaluate different responses to issues studied. They refer to different points of view in making judgements about these issues.

Grade F

Candidates demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of religion to describe, with some reasons, the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning. They show some awareness of the meaning and importance of the religion(s) and/or beliefs studied, sometimes recognising and making simple connections between religion and people's lives. They communicate their ideas using everyday language.

They present reasons in support of an opinion about the issues studied, and show some understanding of the complexity of the issues by describing different points of view.

6

THE WIDER CURRICULUM

Key Skills

Key Skills are integral to the study of GCSE Religious Studies and may be assessed through the course content and the related scheme of assessment as defined in the specification. The following key skills can be developed through this specification at levels 1 and 2:

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Information and Communication Technology
- Working with Others
- Improving Own Learning and Performance

Mapping of opportunities for the development of these skills against Key Skills evidence requirement is provided in 'Exemplification of Key Skills for Religious Studies', available on WJEC website

Opportunities for use of technology

The specification provides opportunities for candidates to make effective use of ICT, particularly in the preparation and presentation of class work. Candidates may be encouraged to use the internet as a source of information and resources. For exemplification, see Section 6: Key Skills.

Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and Cultural Issues

The various units provide ample scope for studies that might contribute to candidates' **spiritual development**. All units directly address subject matter that is concerned with:

- the quest for meaning in life, truth and ultimate values;
- awareness of aspects of human life other than the physical and material;
- human experiences of transcendence, awe, wonder and mystery;
- the exploration of religious beliefs;

and provide a stimulus for candidates to:

- explore their own beliefs, creative abilities, insights, self-identity, and self-worth
- recognise and value the world and others.

In like manner, the units offer extensive scope for contributing to an understanding of **moral, ethical, social and cultural issues**. All provide opportunities to:

- study relationships between religion and culture;
- consider moral values and attitudes of individuals, faith communities or contemporary society;
- develop skill in reasoning on matters concerning values, attitudes and actions;
- develop the ability to make responsible judgements on significant moral teaching and issues;
- develop a sense of identity and belonging, preparing pupils for life as citizens in a plural society;
- foster pupils' awareness and understanding of a range of beliefs, practices and values in their own society and in the wider world through exploration of issues within and between faiths, developing their understanding of the cultural contexts within which they live.

Citizenship

The specification deals with religious and moral beliefs and values that underpin personal choices and behaviour (e.g. relationships, identity and belonging) and a variety of issues concerning lifestyle and social practices (e.g. issues in medical ethics). It looks at the voluntary and charitable activities that help to make up a healthy society and provide opportunities for the development of active citizenship and involvement in society.

Beliefs about the nature of humanity and the world influence how people organise themselves and relate to others locally, nationally and globally. Issues explored in this specification therefore contribute to social and political awareness (e.g. attitudes towards war, poverty, racial divisions).

The specification also contributes to students' understanding of Europe and the world. Religious and moral issues in Religious Studies are considered in worldwide perspectives. It is not possible to understand the nature and significance of European identity without studying religion.

The specification promotes the values and attitudes needed for citizenship in a democratic society by helping students to understand and respect people of different beliefs, practices, races and cultures. Similarities and differences in commitment, self-understanding and the search for truth and meaning can be recognised, respected and valued for the common good.

Contribution to community cohesion

The promotion of community cohesion lies at the heart of the new specification through explicit specification content and potential learning opportunities.

Specification content.

Both units are designed to develop pupils' awareness of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising and appreciating different religions, beliefs, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Students are required to explore issues of justice, human rights, belonging, identity, interfaith dialogue and discrimination within local, national and global contexts.

The requirement to respond from two traditions requires pupils to acknowledge diversity of opinion and practices and to understand others.

Learning Opportunities

The specification content and assessment criteria require students to develop skills of participation and to make informed evaluations concerning contemporary issues both nationally and globally.

Learning will be naturally enriched through fieldwork, visits to places of different worship and interaction with members of different beliefs and communities.

Environmental Issues

This specification provides opportunities for candidates to consider environmental issues in: Unit A. 'Is it Fair'? and throughout Unit B.

Health and Safety Consideration

At all times, teachers and candidates should consider Health and Safety issues arising from work undertaken both within and outside school.

The European Dimension

The specification is designed particularly, but not exclusively, to meet the needs of schools in Wales and will be examined both in English and in Welsh. It is compatible with the agreed syllabuses for religious education in Wales and England. In studying Christianity and the other religions included in the specification teachers are encouraged to look for local illustrations and examples and candidates will receive credit for appropriate and relevant reference to them. This approach conforms with the aspirations expressed in the 1988 Resolutions of the Council of the European Community and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council, concerning the European dimension in education and environmental education, particularly those intended at the level of member states.