

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES WJEC

Newsletter - January 2025

New subject officer

A new subject officer has been appointed for Eduqas GCSE Religious Studies, Victoria Murphy, who is also currently working as the subject adviser for WJEC GCSE Religious Studies.

Summer Series 2024

The GCSE Religious Studies examination papers were completed in May and June and the qualifications were awarded in late August. Examination papers were completed across all options, except for the Sikhism option, where there was no candidate entry in either units 1 or 2.

Principal Examiners' initial comments on how each question in each paper performed were available on the WJEC website early September, along with a more detailed report on each paper subsequently released late September. These reports are an invaluable source of information for helping to improve the performance of students. There are also copies of past papers and mark schemes available on the WJEC web site.

Minor Specification Updates

Reminder, some minor updates were made to the GCSE Religious Studies specification from September 2023. In the specification on page 50, the Jewish charity Tzedek referred to in the specification no longer exists as a working charity. In the specification on pages 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 - 'Humanists for a Better World' and the British Humanist Association no longer exist under these names. There has been a change of name of both organisations:

Humanists for a Better World are now re-named as Humanist Climate Action.

The British Humanist Association has now been re-named 'Humanists UK'.

Professional Learning

In autumn 2024, the GCSE Religious Studies professional learning was only available as on-line events, reviewing the previous summer series. Materials from the PL events are available online from the WJEC secure website:

<https://portal.wjec.co.uk>.

Resources

A reminder to explore the Digital Resources Site available on the WJEC web site to find helpful resources, often student-centred and highly interactive. There are a wide range of resources to support the GCSE Religious Studies available on the WJEC website: <https://resources.wjec.co.uk>.

Humanists UK

The resource, '*One life, live it well*' animation is now available in the medium of Welsh. The short animation about the humanist approach to life addresses the importance humanists place on freedom, responsibility, and connections. There are also a significant number of educational resources available on the Humanists UK website: <https://humanists.uk/education>

New GCSE Religious Studies

Qualification Wales has approved the new GCSE Religious Studies specification, which is now available on the WJEC website.

There are a series of PL events in the Spring term to launch the new GCSE Religious Studies qualification, details of dates are available on the WJEC website: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/made-for-wales-gcses-professional-learning>.

Schools in Wales within clusters of Local Authorities and CYDAG affiliated schools will close for INSET delivered by WJEC on a designated day between February and April 2025. There will be 12 Professional Learning events at school venues across Wales, allowing GCSE Religious Studies teachers to receive specialist guidance on delivering the new Qualification.

As part of the launch of the new qualification, detailed 'Guidance for Teachers' and SAMs will be provided to support teachers, with further blended learning resources available on the WJEC website. The new blended learning materials will be editable in order for centres to adapt the resources.

An important focus of the training for Religious Studies teachers will include the new NEA elements of the specification.

There is no requirement for individual teachers to book places on the Spring PL events as this will be completed by headteachers in centres.