

CCEA GCE Specification in Religious Studies

For first teaching from September 2008

For first award of AS Level in Summer 2009

For first award of A Level in Summer 2010

Subject Code: 4610

religious studies

Foreword

This booklet contains CCEA's Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced GCE Religious Studies specification for first teaching from September 2008.

The AS is the first part of the full advanced GCE course and will be assessed at a standard appropriate for candidates who have completed the first half of the full Advanced GCE course.

The full Advanced GCE comprises the AS and the second half of the Advanced GCE course referred to as A2. However, the AS can be taken as a “stand-alone” qualification without progression to A2.

The A2 will be assessed at a standard appropriate for candidates who have completed a full advanced GCE course and will include synoptic assessment and an element of stretch and challenge.

The Advanced GCE award will be based on aggregation of the marks from the AS (50%) and the A2 (50%).

An A* will be awarded to the candidates who attain an overall grade A in the qualification and an aggregate of at least 90% of the uniform marks across the A2 units.

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1 Introduction

This specification sets out the content and assessment details for CCEA's Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced Level (A Level) courses in Religious Studies. It is for first teaching from September 2008. This specification builds on the broad objectives of the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum and is also relevant to key curriculum concerns in England and Wales. It adheres to the 2006 Subject Criteria for AS and Advanced GCE Religious Studies. The latest version of this specification can be viewed and downloaded from the CCEA website at www.ccea.org.uk.

The AS course can be taken as a final qualification or as the first half of the A Level qualification. If candidates wish to obtain a full A Level qualification, they must also complete the second half of the course referred to as A2. The first AS award for this specification will be made in 2009. The first A Level award will be made in 2010.

The study of religion makes a particular contribution to candidates' understanding of spiritual, moral and cultural issues by encouraging them to reflect upon their own attitudes, and those of others, to the topics under consideration.

It provides candidates with the opportunity to learn about, discuss, evaluate and learn from religious beliefs, practices and values. It allows opportunities for candidates to engage with challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, peoples place in society and the world around them.

This specification draws its content from a range of textual studies, religious traditions, and religious beliefs and from a philosophical and ethical approach to religion. Specific units offer opportunities for a rigorous study of religion, as well as encouraging candidates to make connections with other aspects of human experience. Through their study of human experience, candidates will have the opportunity to shed light upon the viewpoint and practices of others. They will challenge and be challenged by differing and competing claims and have something to say about global changes and developments in the light of religious teachings.

Thus, Religious Studies provides candidates with a tool kit of concepts and ideas to allow them to critically investigate issues and problems. It allows them to evaluate information and evidence and arrive at reasoned conclusions and judgements.

Religious Studies opens up a wide range of opportunities for further and higher education and interesting and rewarding careers. Candidates engage with great debates and are, thus, provided with the opportunity to hone their skills in 'arguing a case on the basis of evidence' – a skill which is absolutely central to progress in the world of work.

The aims of the specification are set out below.

1.1 Aims

Candidates should be encouraged to:

- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for a rigorous study of religion and relate it to the wider world;
- treat the subject as an academic discipline by developing knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to a specialist study of religion;
- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion; and
- reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their learning.

1.2 Key features

The key features of the specification are listed below:

- a range of options to explore various areas of study in religion;
- a reduction of the assessment burden. The specification has changed from a six-unit examination to a four-unit examination;
- synoptic assessment forms part of the two A2 assessment units;
- stretch and challenge for A2 candidates providing a sound foundation for higher education and a range of interesting careers;
- assessment contains sufficient demand at A2 to allow recognition of performance above A grade;
- aims to promote continuity, coherence and progression within the study of religion; and
- support for candidates and teachers. These will include schemes of work, specimen examination papers and mark schemes for each unit.

1.3 Prior attainment

No prior attainment is required for candidates following the AS or A Level courses in Religious Studies. AS and A level Religious Studies courses require candidates to produce clear and coherent writing. Before taking the course, candidates should therefore ensure that they have adequate levels of literacy.

1.4 Prohibited combinations

In any one series of examinations a candidate may not take examinations on this specification together with examinations on another specification of the same title.

The classification code for this subject is 4610.

2 Specification at a Glance

The structures of the AS and A2 courses are summarised in the table below.

There are eight units at AS. Candidates must study two units from AS 1-8. The units offered are named in the table below. Each AS examination paper will have two sections: A and B. Candidates must answer two questions: one from Section A and one from Section B. In Section B, part B of each of the two questions will examine the wider human experience element of the assessment objectives (see 4.2).

At A2 candidates must study two units from A2 1-8. These units must be the same units that are studied at AS Level. The units offered are outlined in the table overleaf. Each A2 examination paper will have two sections: A and B. In Section A, candidates answer two questions from a choice of four. In Section B, there will be a compulsory question assessing the synoptic strand based on a pre-released theme.

AS units

Unit	A choice of two from:	Assessment	Weighting	Availability
AS 1	An Introduction to the Gospel of Luke	Two 1 hour 20 minutes externally assessed written papers	Each paper worth 50% of AS	January and Summer
AS 2	An Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles		25% of A Level	
AS 3	An Introduction to Old Testament Covenant and Prophecy			
AS 4	The Christian Church in the Roman Empire: Beginnings, Expansion and External Pressure			
AS 5	The Origins of the Celtic Church in Ireland and the beginnings of its missionary outreach			
AS 6	Religious Ethics: Foundations, Principles and Practice			
AS 7	An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion			
AS 8	An Introduction to the Study of Islam			

A2 Units

Unit	A Choice of two from:	Assessment	Weighting	Availability
A2 1	The Theology of the Gospel of Luke	Two 2 hour externally assessed written papers	Each paper worth 50% of A2	Summer only
A2 2	A Study of Acts, Galatians and 1 Corinthians		25% of A Level	
A2 3	The Covenant Community: Prophecy and Renewal			
A2 4	The Continued Development of the Christian Church in the Roman Empire to AD 325			
A2 5	A Study of the Development and Impact of the Celtic Church in the 5 th , 6 th and 7 th Centuries			
A2 6	Ethics and Society			
A2 7	Religious Belief and Competing Claims			
A2 8	Islam: Law, Tradition and Practice			

3 Subject Content

The AS Religious Studies course is divided into eight units. These units are AS 1-AS 8. Candidates must study two of these units at AS Level. Candidates following the A Level course must study two further units from A2 1-A2 8. The content of each of these units is set out on the following pages. Any version of the Bible can be used for study purposes. However, where quotations are used in assessment unit questions, these will be taken from the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

3.1 Knowledge, Understanding and Skills

Both the AS and the A2 specification require candidates to:

(a) acquire knowledge and understanding of:

- the key concepts within the chosen area(s) of study, (eg religious beliefs, teachings, doctrines, principles, ideas and theories) and how these are expressed in texts, writings and/or practices;
- the contribution of significant people, traditions or movements to the area(s) studied;
- religious language and terminology;
- major issues and questions arising from the chosen area(s) of study; and
- the relationship between the chosen area(s) of study and other human experience; and

(b) develop the following skills:

- reflect on, select and deploy specified knowledge;
- identify, investigate and analyse questions and issues arising from the course of study;
- use appropriate language and terminology in context;
- interpret and evaluate religious concepts, issues, ideas, the relevance of arguments and the views of scholars;
- communicate, using reasoned arguments substantiated by evidence; and
- make connections between the area(s) of study chosen and other aspects of human experience.

3.2 Human Experience

Candidates will be required to reflect on the relationship between their units of study and **other aspects of human experience at AS and A2 Level**. These **other aspects of human experience** fall into two categories:

- alternative religious, spiritual and moral teachings, values, beliefs and practices - either historical or contemporary; and
- cultural, social, political, environmental, business, scientific and artistic issues, representing practices and viewpoints - either historical or contemporary.

Candidates will have an opportunity to consider how Religious Studies may:

- shed light upon the viewpoint and practices of others;
- challenge and be challenged by differing and competing claims; and
- have something to say about global changes and developments in the light of religious teachings.

3.3 AS Units

Unit AS 1: An Introduction to the Gospel of Luke

This unit explores the content of the Gospel of Luke beginning with the background to the Gospel and tracing the ministry and journey of Jesus and its main characters through selective narratives and the words and deeds of Jesus. The list of references is not exhaustive and candidates may refer to other material in Luke in their assessment responses. In addition, candidates are required to explore the relationship of the Gospel of Luke with other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Religious and political background	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the beliefs, practices and traditions of the Pharisees and the Sadducees and their presentation in Luke's Gospel; andHerod and Pilate in Luke's Gospel.
Introduction to the Gospel of Luke	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">date, authorship, sources;purpose, characteristics; andLuke as historian.
Selective narratives in Luke's Gospel	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the Infancy Narrative (1:5-2:52);the Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:44);the Passion Narrative (22-23); andthe Resurrection Narrative (24).
The words (parables) of Jesus	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">meaning, types, purpose; andreference to the parables of God's mercy: (10:25-37), (14:12-24), (15:11-32), (16:19-31), (18:9-14).
The deeds (miracles) of Jesus	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">types, purpose, characteristics; anda study of the following: (7:1-10), (8:22-25), (9:10-17), (13:10-17), (17:11-19), (18:35-43).

Unit AS 2: An Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles

This unit explores the beginnings of the Church of the New Testament, tracing the journey of the gospel. The list of references is not exhaustive and candidates may refer to other material in Acts in their assessment responses. In addition, candidates are required to explore the relationship of Acts with other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Background to Acts	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• date, authorship, sources;• purpose, characteristics; and• the historical accuracy of Acts.
The beginnings of the Church	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jesus' initiation of the Church's mission (1:1-11);• Pentecost event (2:1-13); and• the first preaching of the Gospel (2:14-42).
Growth and expansion of the Church	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peter as leader, miracle worker, evangelist and disciplinarian (1:12-26), (3:1-26), (4:1-5:42), (9:32-43), (10:1-48), (11:1-18), (12:1-20);• Stephen's speech and martyrdom (6:1-7), (6:8-8:1); and• the evangelising activity of Philip (6:1-7), (8:4-25), (8:26-40), (21:8-9).
Paul the Apostle	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paul's conversion (9:1-19); and• the main features of Paul's missionary activity (11:19-30), (13:1-14:28), (15:36-18:22), (18:23-21:17).
Faith, work and witness in Acts	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the role of the Holy Spirit in Acts;• the role of miracles in aiding the spread of the Gospel (3:1-9), (4:23-31), (5:12-16), (16:16-37); and• Church life and organisation (2:43-47), (4:23-37), (6:1-7).

Unit AS 3: An Introduction to Old Testament Covenant and Prophecy

This unit introduces early Israel as the covenant society, divinely elected to serve Yahweh's saving purpose in history. It examines the concept of ethical monotheism and explores the role of the prophets as spokesmen for Yahweh, recalling the people to the ethical demands of Sinai. The list of references is not exhaustive and candidates may refer to other material in their assessment responses. In addition, candidates are required to explore the relationship of this unit with other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
The origins of early Israel, the covenant society	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-9), (17:1-22); the Mosaic covenant on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19-24); and the breaking of the covenant (Ex. 32).
The reign of David	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:1-17); covenant disobedience (2 Sam. 11-12); and the kingship of David (1 Sam. 17:1-18:16, 2 Sam. 5:17-8:1, 2 Sam. 13:1-33).
Beginnings of prophecy	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> origins and development of prophecy; the narratives of Elijah (1 Kings:17-19, 21); and prophetic call (Amos 7, Isaiah 6).
Prophecy in the Northern Kingdom	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the religious and ethical teachings and insights of Amos (Amos 1-9); and the religious and ethical teachings and insights of Hosea (Hosea 1-14).
Prophecy in the Southern Kingdom	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the religious and ethical teachings and insights of Micah (Micah 1-7); and the religious and ethical teachings and insights of Isaiah of Jerusalem (Isaiah 1-12).

Unit AS 4: The Christian Church in the Roman Empire: Beginnings, Expansion and External Pressure

This unit explores the beginnings of the Christian Church in the first three centuries, focusing in particular on its spread, expansion, persecution and the development of early Christian thought. In addition, at AS Level candidates are required to explore the relationship of this unit with other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Expansion of Christianity	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">numerical, geographical and social expansion;political and religious factors; andmartyrdom and its impact with particular reference to Justin, Polycarp and Blandina.
Church government	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">New Testament origins;monarchical episcopacy;apostolic succession; andthe primacy of the Bishop of Rome.
Persecution	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the causes of persecution;persecution in the first four centuries: Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Decius, Valerian and Diocletian; andthe problem of the lapsed.
Constantine	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">life and rise to power;conversion; andreligious policy.
Early Christian thought	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Apostolic Fathers: Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch; andJustin Martyr, Apologist.

Unit AS 5: The Origins of the Celtic Church in Ireland and the Beginnings of its Missionary Outreach

This unit explores the origins of the Celtic Church in Ireland from pagan roots, the arrival of Christianity and pre-Patrician Ireland to the mission and writings of Patrick and the introduction of monasticism. In addition, at AS Level candidates are required to explore the relationship of this unit with other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Background to the mission of Patrick	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> social, political and religious background to the arrival of Patrick; arrival and presence of Christianity in Ireland before Patrick: Palladius; and historical sources for Christianity in Ireland before Patrick.
The work of Patrick	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contents, themes and purpose of Patrick's Confessio and Letter to Coroticus; the portrait of Patrick which emerges from these writings; and early life, ministry, achievements and challenges.
The beginnings of monasticism in Ireland	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> origins of monasticism; monastic founders: Finnian, Ciaran, Enda, Brendan, Brigit and Comgall; and role, nature and distinctive features of Celtic monasticism.
The Penitentials	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> features of Celtic Penitential practice with reference to the writings of Finnian, Columbanus and Cummean; impact of the Penitentials on the Church and society in Ireland and elsewhere; and value of the Penitentials as historical sources for the period.
Missionary outreach in Britain	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> career of Colmcille (Columba); Colmcille's contribution to the development of the Celtic Church in Ireland and elsewhere; and peregrini in Britain and their impact with reference to Comgall, Blaan, Canice, and Aidan.

Unit AS 6: Religious Ethics: Foundations, Principles and Practice

This unit explores a number of themes and principles that are foundational to religious ethics: foundations, natural law, situation ethics, bioethics, sexuality and life and death issues. In addition, at AS Level candidates are required to explore the relationship of this unit with other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Foundations of Christian ethics	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Old Testament ethics: the Decalogue;• Jesus' teaching: the Sermon on the Mount; and• Pauline ethics.
Ethical theories	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• natural moral law;• utilitarianism; and• situation ethics.
Bio-ethics	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sanctity of life, personhood;• abortion; and• human infertility, new reproductive technologies, surrogacy.
Sexual ethics	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• marriage and divorce;• sex and relationships, issues of sexual identity; and• contraception.
Life and death issues	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• euthanasia; and• suicide.

Unit AS 7: An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

This unit explores a number of introductory themes in the philosophy of religion: arguments for and against the existence of God, religious claims to revelation, and the nature of religious experience and the support it gives to religion. In addition, at AS Level candidates are required to explore the relationship of this unit with other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
The existence of God	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">cosmological argument;teleological argument; andontological argument.
The existence of evil	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">natural evil, moral evil, suffering;evil as a problem for the religious believer; andresolving the problem: the theodices of Augustine and Irenaeus.
Miracles	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">miracles and religious belief; andDavid Hume's critique of miracle.
Religious experience	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">nature and types of religious experience;mysticism in the religious tradition; andlife and teaching of Teresa of Avila, Martin Buber, Thomas Merton.
The afterlife	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">conceptions of the afterlife; andimmortality of the soul, resurrection of the body.

Unit AS 8: An Introduction to the Study of Islam

This unit explores the origins of Islam, focusing on the life and career of the prophet Muhammad and his teachings. This includes the life of Muhammad, the Qur'an, creeds, belief, worship and festivals. In addition, at AS Level candidates are required to explore the relationship of this unit with other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Historical background	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural, historical, geographical background to the life of the prophet Muhammad; • role of Mecca as a trading and pilgrimage centre; • religious beliefs of the Meccans prior to the ministry of Muhammad; and • spread of Islam and geographical expansion in the first two centuries.
Life and prophetic career of Muhammad	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early life of Muhammad: influences on thinking and career; • Muhammad's call and reactions to it; • Muhammad and Medina; and • Muhammad: prophet, preacher, leader.
Book of the Qur'an	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • origins, process of compilation, structure and language; • major themes; and • Sunnah and Hadith.
Creeds and beliefs	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pillars of Islam: shahada; salat; zakat; sawm; hajj; and • concepts of religious duty, motivation, ibadah (worship).
Worship and festivals	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • festivals of Islam: Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha; • features of worship in Islam and the role of the Imam; and • mosque: features, design, architecture and significance.

3.4 A2 Units

Unit A2 1: The Theology of the Gospel of Luke

This unit explores the theology of the Gospel of Luke beginning with Biblical criticism and a study of the religious and political background at the time as well as an understanding of salvation history. The unit focuses on the main themes and the theological understanding of the words and deeds of Jesus. The list of references is not exhaustive and candidates may refer to other material in their assessment responses. In addition, at A2 Level candidates are required to explore the relationship of the theology of the Gospel of Luke with another area of study and other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
The function and role of Biblical criticism	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, narrative criticism; andthe contribution of biblical criticism for an understanding of Luke's Gospel.
Lukan Christology	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the background to the Christological titles and their use by Luke;Jesus as Saviour, Christ and Messiah; andJesus as Son of God and Son of Man.
Religious themes	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">universalism;discipleship; andwomen.
The theological significance of the words and deeds of Jesus	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the Sermon on the Plain (6:17-49);how the Parables of the Kingdom and Parables of Crisis, illustrate aspects of Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God; andhow miracles illustrate aspects of Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God.
Interpreting Luke	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Luke's portrayal of Jesus; andLuke's presentation of salvation history.

Unit A2 2: A Study of Acts, Galatians and 1 Corinthians

This unit explores Paul's work as pastor and preacher (through a study of relevant chapters from the book of Acts, Galatians and 1 Corinthians) and traces Paul's journey to Rome. The list of references is not exhaustive and candidates may refer to other material in their assessment responses. In addition, at A2 Level candidates are required to explore the relationship of Acts, Galatians and 1 Corinthians with another area of study and other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Paul in captivity	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jerusalem (21:15-23:22), Caesarea (23:23-26:32);• journey to and stay in Rome (27:1-28:31); and• the ending of Acts.
The theology of Acts	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Council of Jerusalem (15:1-35); and• Paul's speeches at Pisidian Antioch (13:13-43), Athens (17:22-34) and Miletus (20:17-36).
Paul's letter to the Galatians	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• purpose, characteristics and main themes of Galatians;• the defence of Paul's authority (1-2);• Paul's teaching on law and grace, justification by faith (3-4); and• life in the Spirit and Christian freedom (5-6).
Paul's 1 st letter to the Corinthians	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• purpose, characteristics and main themes of 1 Corinthians;• issues raised by Paul: unity (1-4), immorality (5-6), lawsuits (6); and• issues raised by the Corinthians: marriage (7), worship and Lord's Supper (11); spiritual gifts (12-14).
Paul in Acts and Letters	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the personality of Paul: the Paul of Acts, the Paul of Letters; and• Paul on the Resurrection.

Unit A2 3: The Covenant Community: Prophecy and Renewal

This unit examines the criteria for true and false prophecy. It analyses the role of specific prophets within the historical (political, social and religious) contexts in which they exercised their ministries. It explores the nature and emphasis of the prophetic message in the pre-exilic and exilic periods. It also examines the divine promise of salvation, renewal and restoration in post-exilic times. The list of references is not exhaustive and candidates may refer to other material in their assessment responses. In addition, candidates are required to explore connections in this unit with another area of study and other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
The Prophet Jeremiah (1:1-32; 15)	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • message and life; • confessions, repentance, enacted prophecy; and • new covenant/message of hope.
The Prophet Ezekiel (1-7, 33-48)	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • message and life; • judgement, watchman of Israel, vision of the temple; and • renewal and hope.
Deutro-Isaiah (40-55)	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theme of new Exodus; • sovereignty of Yahweh; and • songs of the Suffering Servant.
The work of the Chronicler (Neh 1-12, Ezra 1-10)	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezra the Architect of Judaism, Nehemiah Governor of Judah; • return from exile, restoration and reform; and • renewal of the covenant.
Covenant and prophecy	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • characteristics of true and false prophecy (Amos 7:10-17), (1 Kings 22:1-40); • the rediscovery of the Torah and Josiah's reform programme (2 Kings 22-23); and • the role of the prophet in times of distress.

Unit A2 4: The Continued Development of the Christian Church in the Roman Empire to AD 325

This unit takes a more in-depth look at the life of the early Christian Church in the first three centuries, focusing in particular on worship, doctrine, heresy and early Christian literature. In addition, candidates are required to explore connections in this unit with another area of study and other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Church life and worship	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• general features of worship;• doctrine and practice of Baptism with reference to the Didache, Justin, Hippolytus, Tertullian and Cyprian;• doctrine and practice of the Eucharist with reference to the Didache, Justin, Hippolytus, Tertullian and Cyprian; and• sin and repentance with reference to Hippolytus and Tertullian.
Heresy and schism	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gnosticism;• Marcionism; and• Montanism.
Defining the faith	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• emergence and development of Creeds/Rule of Faith;• the Canon of Scripture; and• Irenaeus' polemic against heresy.
Christian writers	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tertullian: teachings, life, impact; and• Origen: teachings, life, impact.
Council of Nicaea	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Arian Controversy; and• Constantine and the Council of Nicaea.

Unit A2 5: A Study of the Development and Impact of the Celtic Church in the 5th, 6th and 7th Centuries

This unit explores, in more detail, the development of the Celtic Church in Ireland and critically examines the impact of that development on the Church in Ireland, Britain and the Continent. It also critically examines a range of issues arising from the study of that development and missionary outreach. In addition, candidates are required to explore connections in this unit with another area of study and other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
The historical Patrick	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dating of Patrick's mission; • problems in determining the geography in Patrick's writings; • authorship and historical value of texts attributed to Patrick: the First Synod of Patrick, the Three Sayings of Patrick (Dicta Patricii); and • the Two-Patrick's controversy.
Development of Celtic monasticism	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature of episcopacy, change from episcopal to monastic structure; • monastic spirituality and its impact; and • characteristics of the Celtic Church of this period.
Celtic hagiography	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • features of hagiographical writing; • content and purpose: Muirchu's Life of Patrick, Adomnan's Life of Colmcille, Cogitosus' Life of Brigit; and • historical reliability of these writings.
Aspects of missionary outreach	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • career and contribution of Columbanus to the development of Christianity; • the two Rules of Columbanus; and • career and contribution of the Pereginni to Christianity: Gall, Killian, Burgh Castle group.
Issues of controversy	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celtic and Roman Christianity: the Paschal controversy, the Synod of Whitby; and • claims of Armagh to primacy.

Unit A2 6: Ethics and Society

This unit explores the contrasts and similarities between religious and non-religious ethics across a range of issues: human rights, environmental ethics, war and peace issues and the ethics of punishment. In addition, candidates are required to explore connections in this unit with another area of study and other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Ethical decision making	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• virtue ethics;• conscience and moral duty; and• ethical relativism and the religious response.
Human rights	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nature of human rights;• Christian and secular perspectives on human rights; and• human rights and practice with special reference to women and minority groups.
Environmental ethics	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• poverty and the just distribution of the world's resources;• the ecological debate including the religious contribution; and• religious and secular views on the welfare and rights of animals.
War and peace	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• just war tradition in Christianity;• ethics of contemporary warfare; and• pacifism.
Ethics of justice and punishment	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• methods and purpose of punishment: the ethical debate;• ethical and religious perspectives on punishment; and• capital punishment.

Unit A2 7: Religious Belief and Competing Claims

This unit explores a number of critical philosophical issues that are relevant to a philosophical assessment of religious belief. In addition, candidates are required to explore connections in this unit with another area of study and other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Religion and science	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">religious and scientific world views;revelation in Religion: types, role; andCreationism, Evolution and Intelligent Design.
Religion and psychology	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the Freudian interpretation;the Jungian interpretation; andnature of the religious quest, psychology and religious understanding.
Religion and competing ideologies	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Marxist critique of religion;Humanist critique of religion; andExistentialism: Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus; Søren Kierkegaard.
Religion and morality	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">relationship between religion and morality: religious and secular perspectives;moral integrity in political life; andmoral integrity in social life: honesty, truth and responsibility.
Relationships between religions	Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">interpretations: exclusionism, inclusivism, pluralism; andthe dilemma of competing truth claims.

Unit A2 8: Islam: Law, Tradition and Practice

This unit explores the early history, teachings and beliefs of Islam including the origins of the split between Sunnis and Shi'ites and the rise of Sufism. In addition, candidates are required to explore connections in this unit with another area of study and other aspects of human experience.

Themes	Learning Outcomes
Teachings of the Qur'an (with reference to relevant Surahs)	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qur'anic teaching on marriage and divorce; • Qur'anic teaching on the role and status of women; and • Qur'anic teaching on war.
Sharia	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sources of Sharia; • law schools; • Sharia and contemporary issues: abortion, suicide, euthanasia and capital punishment; and • Sharia in different contexts in the contemporary world.
Articles of faith	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God (Tawhid), Angels and Prophets (Risalah); • Holy books (Qur'an); • Last days and afterlife (Akirah), Predestination (Al Quad'r); and • challenge of Islamic faith in the contemporary world.
Rites of passage	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • birth rituals; • marriage rituals; • rituals of death and burial; and • rituals and duties: role and impact.
Islam in history	<p>Knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rightly-guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali; • Sunni and Shia split: causes and differences; • origins of Sufism and key practices; and • impact of division on the Islamic community.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Assessment opportunities

Candidates can choose to be assessed in stages during their AS course. At A2, assessment will be at the end of the course. The availability of assessment units is shown in Section 2 of the specification.

Candidates can choose to resit AS and A2 assessment units. The best result for each assessment unit will count towards the AS and A Level qualifications.

Results for each assessment unit can continue to contribute to an AS or A Level qualification while the specification is offered.

4.2 Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives of the specification are listed below:

- select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study (AO1);
- in addition, for synoptic assessment, A Level candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the connections between different elements of their course of study (AO1);
- critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument (AO2); and
- in addition, for synoptic assessment, A Level candidates should relate elements of their course of study to their broader context and to aspects of human experience (AO2).

4.3 Assessment objective weightings

The assessment objective weightings for each assessment unit and the overall AS, A2 and A Level qualifications are set out in the table below.

Assessment Objective	Assessment Units Weightings				Overall Weightings		
	AS 1	AS 2	A2 1	A2 2	AS	A2	A Level award
AO1	70%	70%	60%	60%	70%	60%	65%
AO2	30%	30%	40%	40%	30%	40%	35%

4.4 Quality of written communication

Assessment in AS and A Level qualifications in Religious Studies requires candidates to demonstrate their quality of written communication. The requirement to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through both assessment objectives. In particular, candidates are required to:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear;
- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter; and
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Candidates' quality of written communication is assessed qualitatively as an integral part of those questions or tasks requiring responses in extended written form.

4.5 Synoptic assessment

The A2 assessment units include an element of synoptic assessment. This allows candidates to demonstrate expertise in the essential knowledge, understanding and skills of Religious Studies.

In Religious Studies synoptic assessment requires that candidates demonstrate that they can:

- reflect on, select and deploy specified knowledge and identify, investigate and analyse questions arising;
- interpret and evaluate religious concepts, issues, ideas, the relevance of arguments and the views of scholars;
- use appropriate language and terminology in context;
- draw together knowledge, understanding and skills learned throughout the course to tackle an issue that is new to them; and
- communicate with reasoned arguments substantiated by evidence.

In the A2 examination, the synoptic element will be assessed in Section B of each examination paper. A different theme for each A2 unit of study will be pre-released at the start of the course. Each synoptic question will assess the candidate's ability to make links between the two areas of study, the key learning outcomes, human experience and the set theme. Candidates will therefore study two different themes at A2 Level.

The possible themes that could be examined are listed below:

Faith, hope, discipleship, leadership, mission, authority, sin, suffering, afterlife, moral living, reconciliation, nature of true worship, inspiration, discipline, forgiveness, religious controversy, alienation, belief, religious and ethical living, religion and state, autonomy, duty, religion and the secular, orthodoxy, spirituality and holiness.

More information on the synoptic assessment can be found in the support materials that accompany this specification.

4.6 Stretch and challenge

The AS and A2 assessment units will include opportunities for stretch and challenge. This will be achieved by:

- a greater emphasis on analysis and evaluation;
- a variety of question stems and open-ended questions;
- candidates having to relate knowledge and understanding of their two areas of study to other aspects of human experience; and
- the use of a variety of command words.

4.7 Reporting and grading

The results of individual assessment units are reported on a uniform mark scale that reflects the assessment weighting of each unit.

AS qualifications are awarded on a five grade scale from A to E with A being the highest. A Level qualifications are awarded on a six grade scale from A* to E with A* being the highest. We determine the AS and A Level grades awarded by aggregating the uniform marks obtained on individual assessment units. To be awarded an A*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on their full A level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of their A2 units. For students who fail to attain a grade E, we report their results as unclassified (U).

The grades we award match the performance descriptions published by the regulatory authorities (See Section 5.4).

5 Links

5.1 Support materials

CCEA currently provides the following materials to support this specification:

- specimen papers and mark schemes;
- past papers and mark schemes;
- resource list;
- Chief Examiner's reports; and
- guidance for teachers.

Access to these materials can be obtained from the CCEA website (www.ccea.org.uk) or in printed form from the CCEA Distribution Section.

CCEA will expand its range of support materials to include the following:

- exemplar schemes of work;
- study and revision guidance for candidates; and
- support days for AS and A2.

Details of CCEA's Annual Support Programme of events and materials for Religious Studies can be found on the CCEA website (www.ccea.org.uk).

5.2 Curriculum objectives

This specification addresses and builds upon the broad curriculum objectives for Northern Ireland, England and Wales. In particular, it allows candidates to:

- develop an understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, and cultural issues through the study of other aspects of human experience, either historical and/or contemporary at AS and A2;
- develop an awareness of equality issues through the study of human kind in Biblical times and in modern times;
- develop an understanding of environmental issues through the study of environmental ethics and stewardship;
- explore global concerns through their study of contemporary human experience; and
- develop skills and dispositions that will enhance their employability: communication, the ability to evaluate information and evidence and arrive at reasoned conclusions, and teamwork.

5.3 Key skills

AS and A Level specifications in Religious Studies provide opportunities for candidates to develop and generate evidence for assessing relevant Key Skills from the list below. Where appropriate, these opportunities should be directly cross-referenced, at specified level(s) to the Key Skills standards which may be found on the QCA website (www.qca.org.uk).

All units of this specification provide opportunities for the development of the following nationally recognised Key Skills at Level 3.

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

5.4 Performance descriptions

The performance descriptions aim to describe learning outcomes and levels of attainment likely to be shown by a representative candidate performing at the A/B and E/U boundaries for AS and A2. These can be found overleaf.

AS Performance Descriptions - Religious Studies

		Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2
<p>The performance descriptions for AS indicate the level of attainment characteristic of A/B and E/U boundary candidates. They should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. They give a general indication of the learning outcomes and levels of attainment likely to be shown by a representative candidate performing at each boundary. In practice most candidates will show uneven profiles across the attainments listed, with strengths in some areas compensating in the award process for weaknesses or omissions elsewhere.</p> <p>The requirement for all AS and A Level specifications to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through both assessment objectives.</p>	Assessment Objectives	<p>Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.</p>	<p>Critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument.</p>
	A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) select accurate and relevant material; (b) explain clearly relevant features or key ideas, supported by examples and/or sources of evidence; (c) use accurately a range of technical language and terminology; and (d) show evidence of being familiar with issues raised by relevant scholars, or a variety of views, where appropriate. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) construct a coherent and well-organised argument supported by examples and/or sources of evidence; (b) identify strengths and weaknesses of the argument; and (c) use accurate and fluent expression.
	E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) select limited but relevant material; (b) show basic understanding of relevant features or key ideas, supported by occasional examples and/or sources of evidence; and (c) show limited accurate use of technical language and terminology. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) demonstrate minimal organisation and/or limited coherence; (b) offer mainly descriptive answers with little argument, justification or evaluation; and (c) use language and expression which lack precision.

A2 Performance Descriptions - Religious Studies

		Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2
<p>The performance descriptions for A2 indicate the level of attainment characteristic of A/B and E/U boundary candidates. They should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. They give a general indication of the learning outcomes and levels of attainment likely to be shown by a representative candidate performing at each boundary. In practice most candidates will show uneven profiles across the attainments listed, with strengths in some areas compensating in the award process for weaknesses or omissions elsewhere.</p> <p>The requirement for all AS and A Level specifications to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through both assessment objectives.</p>	Assessment Objectives	<p>Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.</p> <p>In addition, for synoptic assessment, A Level candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the connections between different elements of their course of study.</p>	<p>Critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument.</p> <p>In addition, for synoptic assessment, A Level candidates should relate elements of their course of study to their broader context and to aspects of human experience.</p>
	A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) address the question specifically and select relevant material; (b) deploy comprehensive and mostly accurate knowledge, expressed lucidly; (c) use accurately and consistently a range of technical language and terminology; and (d) competently explain appropriate examples and/or relevant sources/scholars. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment candidates perform at this level in relation to connections between different elements of their course of study.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) construct a coherent and well-organised evaluative argument; (b) demonstrate an informed viewpoint and evidence of own thinking within the context of understanding different arguments and views; and (c) use proficient, fluent and accurate language. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment candidates show competent analysis of the nature of connections between elements of their course of study and their broader context and aspects of human experience.</p>

A2 Performance Descriptions - Religious Studies contd.

		Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2
	E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) select limited but relevant material; (b) deploy limited knowledge, some of which is accurate; (c) show limited accurate or consistent use of technical terms; and (d) demonstrate basic understanding of key ideas, making occasional reference to examples and sources of evidence. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment candidates perform at this level in relation to connections between different elements of their course of study.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) demonstrate minimal organisation and/or limited coherence; (b) demonstrate few personal insights or little convincing argument or justification of a point of view with minimal evaluation; and (c) use language and expression that lack precision. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment candidates show limited analysis of the nature of connections between elements of their course of study and their broader context and aspects of human experience.</p>

5.5 Examination entries

The following entry codes apply to individual assessment units and the overall AS and A Level cash-ins in Religious Studies.

AS 1: AAR11
 AS 2: AAR12
 AS 3: AAR13
 AS 4: AAR14
 AS 5: AAR15
 AS 6: AAR16
 AS 7: AAR17
 AS 8: AAR18
 AS cash-in: S4612
 A2 1: AAR21
 A2 2: AAR22
 A2 3: AAR23
 A2 4: AAR24
 A2 5: AAR25
 A2 6: AAR26
 A2 7: AAR27
 A2 8: AAR28
 A Level cash-in: A4612

You can view details of how to make entries on our website. Alternatively, you can contact our Entries Team using the details provided in Section 5.8.

5.6 Students with particular requirements

We have designed this specification to minimise the need to adjust the assessment of students who have particular requirements. Details of the arrangements you can make for such students are available in the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Access Arrangements and Special Consideration: Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates Who Are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations*.

5.7 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

AS/A Levels 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 AS/A Level qualification and subject criteria were 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.

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 *Access Arrangements and Special Consideration: Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates Who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations*.

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 the future.*

5.8 Contact details

The following list provides contact details for relevant members of CCEA staff:

- Specification Support Officer: Arlene Ashfield
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2291, email: aashfield@ccea.org.uk)
- Officer with Subject Responsibility: Donna Finlay
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, email: dfinlay@ccea.org.uk)
- Examination Entries, Results and Certification: Nicola Laight
(telephone: (028) 9026 1262, email: nlaight@ccea.org.uk)
- Examiner Recruitment
(telephone: (028) 9026 1243, email: appointments@ccea.org.uk)
- Distribution (past papers and support materials)
(telephone: (028) 9026 1228, email: smurray@ccea.org.uk)

- Support Events Administration: Events Information Service
(telephone: (028) 9026 1401, email: events@ccea.org.uk)
- Information Section (including Freedom of Information requests)
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, email: info@ccea.org.uk)
- Business Assurance (appeals): Jeffrey Hamilton
(telephone: (028) 9026 1205, email: jhamilton@ccea.org.uk).

