

GCSE

Specification

Religious Studies A

**Full Course – for exams 2010 onwards
and certification June 2011 onwards**

**Short Course – for exams June 2010 onwards
and certification June 2010 onwards**



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1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA?

AQA is the UK's favourite exam board and more students receive their academic qualifications from AQA than from any other board. But why is AQA so popular?

AQA understands the different requirements of each subject by working in partnership with teachers. Our GCSEs:

- enable students to realise their full potential
- contain engaging content
- are manageable for schools and colleges
- are accessible to students of all levels of ability
- lead to accurate results, delivered on time
- are affordable and value for money.

AQA provides a comprehensive range of support services for teachers:

- access to subject departments
- training for teachers including practical teaching strategies and approaches that really work presented by senior examiners
- 24 hour support through our website and online Ask AQA
- past question papers and mark schemes
- comprehensive printed and electronic resources for teachers and students.

AQA is an educational charity focused on the needs of the learner. All our income goes towards operating and improving the quality of our specifications, examinations and support services. We don't aim to profit from education – we want you to.

If you are an existing customer then we thank you for your support. If you are thinking of moving to AQA then we look forward to welcoming you.

1.2 Why choose GCSE Religious Studies Specification A *Religious Beliefs and Lifestyles*?

- The Scheme of Assessment offers flexibility – it is modular and there are Short Course and Full Course options.
- There is no controlled assessment; the assessment comprises 100% external (written) papers.
- This Specification has been developed in consultation with teachers of Religious Studies.
- The Specification is distinctive in providing opportunity for the **systematic study** of the beliefs, sources of authority, practices and organisation of the major Christian denominations. For a Full Course it allows a depth study of Christianity, Islam or Judaism, or a study of two religions in which case Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism are also choices.
- This Specification is accessible to candidates of any religious persuasion or none.
- This AQA Religious Studies Specification encourages candidates to:
 - develop their interest in, and enthusiasm for, a study of religion and its relation to the wider world;
 - develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of religion by exploring the significance, impact of beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning;
 - express their personal responses and informed insights on fundamental questions about identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments.
- Many of the topics offered are based on AQA's previous GCSE Religious Studies Specifications A (*Christianity*) and C (*World Religions*), in order that teachers can continue to use their existing resources as far as possible. However, AQA has expanded the units available within this GCSE Religious Studies Specification to include exciting new topics of study. All topics meet the revised subject criteria.
- Candidates will have an opportunity to study aspects of one or more religions, including textual, historical, ethical and philosophical perspectives.
- This Specification offers a comprehensive range of options which enables teachers to design a course that reflects their specialism and that will engage candidates. A wide choice of topics is offered for study in the areas of: aspects of Christianity; aspects of Islam; aspects of Judaism; the six major world religions; ethics; and the philosophy of religion. The Specification is designed to be flexible and to allow teachers and candidates:

- either** to focus on the study of one religion, including some aspects of its beliefs, sources of authority, practices, organisation, scripture and ethics. The following are examples:
- a study of Christianity and St Mark's Gospel
 - a study of Christianity and Christianity: Ethics
 - a study of Roman Catholicism and Roman Catholicism: Ethics
 - a study of Islam and Islam: Ethics
 - a study of Judaism and Judaism: Ethics
 - a study of Christianity: Ethics and St Luke's Gospel,
- or** to undertake a broader study of religion through the selection of two more diverse options which complement each other. The following are examples:
- a study of Christianity and the Philosophy of Religion
 - a study of the Philosophy of Religion and Islam: Ethics
 - a study of Buddhism and Hinduism
 - a study of Roman Catholicism: Ethics and Judaism: Ethics
 - a study of Sikhism and the Philosophy of Religion.
- No prior learning or level of attainment is necessary for candidates to undertake a course of study based on this Religious Studies Specification. However, in the course of compiling the subject content of this Specification, consideration has been given to courses followed at Key Stage 3 within denominational Christian centres and within faith schools.
 - This Specification is consistent with the requirements of the non-statutory national framework for religious education (England), the national exemplar programme of study for religious education (Wales), and the revised core syllabus for religious education in Northern Ireland, and should assist schools in these 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 England and Wales. 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.
 - This Specification provides particular opportunity for Roman Catholic studies consistent with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in relation to Roman Catholic schools, and the approach taken by the Specification has the support of a wide range of faith groups, including the Bishops' Conference.
 - A study of AQA's GCSE Religious Studies Specification A *Religious Beliefs and Lifestyles* lays a good foundation for further study of Religious Studies at A Level and that will complement other related and popular A Level subjects including Philosophy, Law, History, History of Art, Government and Politics, Sociology and English Literature.
 - A study of AQA's GCSE Religious Studies Specification A *Religious Beliefs and Lifestyles* also provides a worthwhile course for candidates of various ages and from diverse backgrounds in terms of general education and lifelong learning.

AQA GCSE Religious Studies

- The two AQA GCSE Religious Studies Specifications address the statutory requirement for Religious Education to be delivered by centres right up to Key Stage 5;
- The development of the two GCSE Specifications has been informed by the latest agendas, including *Every Child Matters*. The five outcomes of the *Every Child Matters* agenda can be addressed through the delivery of this Specification;
- The two GCSE Religious Studies Specifications support the whole-school delivery of Citizenship and PSHE whilst at the same time enabling each school to focus on and deliver the content through its specialism;
- The Religious Studies Specifications help students to become aware of issues of local, national and global concern and placing them in spiritual and moral contexts. By understanding the beliefs and practices of religions and world views, students can make connections between belief and action. Through a consideration of the beliefs behind environmental action, the needs of refugees or the work of aid agencies, students can become aware of the connections between beliefs, lifestyles and ultimate questions. Understanding the right to hold different beliefs enables students to see diverse religions and beliefs as a significant part of the local, national and global community, and of human experience. They can develop as reflective and responsible citizens in a plural society and global community, with a strong awareness of religious and ethical diversity.

By evaluating ethical issues, and expressing views using reasoned arguments, students can enhance their capacity and desire to make a positive contribution to debates and decisions in society.

- The Specifications are designed to be both relevant to candidates' lives and enjoyable courses of study to follow. The wide range of topics available

for study provide an opportunity for personalised learning, enabling candidates to study units that support their individual strengths and interests. The Specifications also allow candidates to select units that fit into their post-16 programmes of study and both support the delivery and enhance study of subjects such as General Studies.

1.3 Meeting the Needs of Teachers and Students: Rationale for GCSE Religious Studies Specification A *Religious Beliefs and Lifestyles*

This Specification is one of two Specifications in Religious Studies provided by AQA. It is distinctive in providing opportunity for the **systematic study** of one or two religions, with an especially wide range of options in Christianity, reflecting the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian.

This Specification is designed to meet the needs of schools that are required or permitted to teach Christianity only, including denominational and independent schools. It allows for detailed study of the beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, and ways of life of the major Christian denominations, and/or for a study of Christian scriptures, and/or Christian ethics. It provides particular opportunity for Roman Catholic studies consistent with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in relation to Roman Catholic schools.

At the same time, this Specification takes account of other principal religions represented in Great Britain by providing scope for a systematic study of one of these either on its own (as a Short Course), or alongside a Christianity option (as a Full Course). The Specification also provides opportunity for a full GCSE in Christianity, or Islam, or Judaism, or in a combination of two religions, and provides a range of alternative courses of study of aspects of Christianity for centres that wish to provide further opportunities for Religious Studies in addition to their provision for statutory Religious Education.

1.4 How do I start using this specification?

Already using the existing AQA Religious Studies specification?

- Register to receive further information, such as mark schemes, past question papers, details of teacher support meetings, etc, at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php> Information will be available electronically or in print, for your convenience.
- Tell us that you intend to enter candidates. Then we can make sure that you receive all the material you need for the examinations. This is particularly important where examination material is issued before the final entry deadline. You can let us know by completing the appropriate *Intention to Enter* and *Estimated Entry* forms. We will send copies to your Exams Officer and they are also available on our website (http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_entries.php).

Not using the AQA specification currently?

- Almost all centres in England and Wales use AQA or have used AQA in the past and are approved AQA centres. A small minority is not. If your centre is new to AQA, please contact our centre approval team at centreapproval@aqa.org.uk

1.5 How can I find out more?

Ask AQA

You have 24-hour access to useful information and answers to the most commonly-asked questions at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>**

If the answer to your question is not available, you can submit a query for our team. Our target response time is one day.

Teacher Support

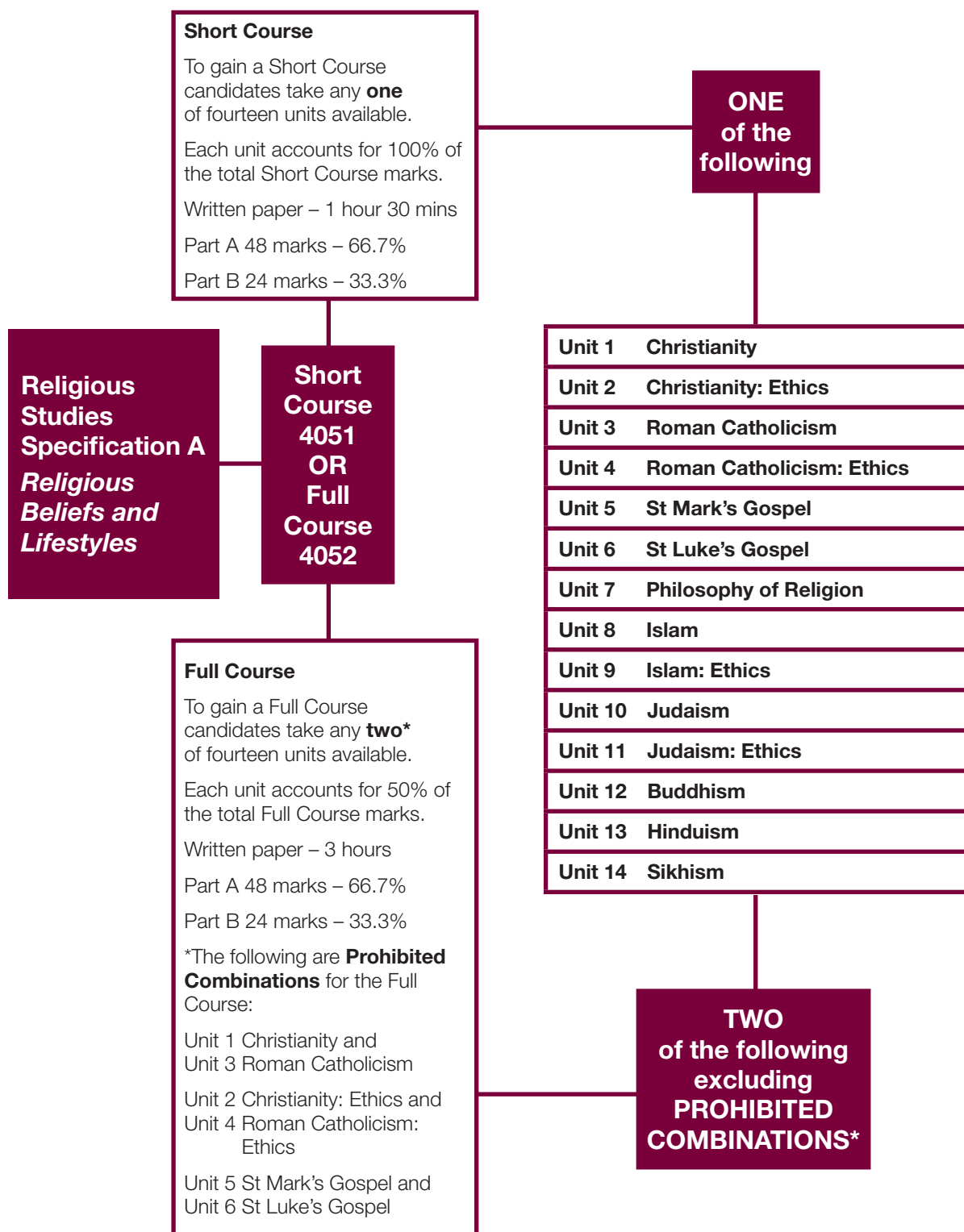
Details of the full range of current Teacher Support meetings are available on our website at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/support/teachers.php>**

There is also a link to our fast and convenient online booking system for Teacher Support meetings at **<http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>**

If you need to contact the Teacher Support team, you can call us on 01483 477860 or email us at **teachersupport@aqaa.org.uk**

2 Specification at a Glance

GCSE Religious Studies Specification A *Religious Beliefs and Lifestyles*



Modular Examinations

The scheme of assessment is modular, and therefore flexible.

The following possibilities are available.

- Both assessment units taken at the end of one year of study.
- Both assessment units taken at the end of two years of study.
- One assessment unit taken at the end of one year of study, and another assessment unit taken at the end of a second year of study.
- The facility to “top-up” a unit certificated as a Short Course to a Full Course, by taking a further assessment unit.
- Assessment units can be taken in any order.

Summary of Assessment

Structure of Units and Examination Papers

Units comprise six topics for study.

Each topic will feature on the examination paper for the unit, although the divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more of the topics.

Examination Papers

The question papers are divided into two parts.

Part A comprises four compulsory short-answer stimulus-response questions worth a total of 48 marks.

Part B comprises two optional extended response questions from which candidates choose and answer one question. Questions in Part B are worth a total of 24 marks.

Each question paper is worth a total of 72 marks.

Stimulus Material

Stimulus material **may** be used, as appropriate, in Part A questions. Stimulus material will be provided in colour, where appropriate.

Use of the Bible in Christianity Options

Candidates may use any version of the Bible in their study of these Units; they may quote from any version in their answers. Where a quotation appears on the paper, it will be taken from **one** of these versions: the Good News Bible (GNB), the New International Version (NIV) or the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

Candidates who have been prepared for the examination using a version of the Bible other than the three versions indicated, such as the Jerusalem Bible or the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), will not find the examination paper places them at any disadvantage on account of the versions used for quotations.

3 Subject Content

3.1 Unit 1 Christianity

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 1

Candidates studying this unit will be expected to be aware of the common ground that all Christians share, as well as to appreciate the variety of practices found in Christianity, as indicated in the subject content. They will be expected to know and understand the proper terms for aspects of Christian faith and practice which form part of the subject content.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. Beliefs and Sources of Authority

Within this topic, candidates should come to an understanding of the central beliefs of Christianity and the sources used to support these beliefs. They should appreciate the different views held by Christian groups on the nature and understanding of the Bible and the role of central figures within the community. They should also become aware of the role of hierarchical figures and of the inspirational role the individual has within differing denominations.

- the **Bible**
 - contrasting beliefs about the authority, inspiration and interpretation of the Bible including a study of the fundamentalist and liberal approaches;
 - the effect of these interpretations on believers and their lifestyles.

- the meaning of the following **beliefs** and the impact they have upon Christian lifestyle:
 - the oneness of God and the Trinity;
 - the incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God;
 - the meaning of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus;
 - the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the use of the gifts of the Spirit;
 - the Church as the Body of Christ;
 - sin and the means of salvation;
 - judgement and the world to come.
- **religious leaders**: bishops, priests, ministers, pastors, elders, members of the community;
- the role, impact and importance of different kinds of leadership.

2. Commitment and Membership

Within this topic, candidates should show an understanding of the different ways a person might become a Christian and what these different ways show about the role an individual plays within the Christian community.

- **ceremonies of commitment** – the structure, symbolism, purpose and significance of the following:
 - infant baptism;
 - dedication;
 - confirmation;
 - believers' baptism;
 - reception into membership;
 - how these ceremonies might affect the way of life of the believer.

3. Places of Worship

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how the places of worship reflect and affect the style of worship that takes place within them. They should also consider the role of pilgrimage in the Christian tradition.

- different **places** of worship: Orthodox, Anglican, Baptist;
- non-traditional venues, including worship in house groups, community halls and outdoor worship;
- how their interior features reflect and affect beliefs and practices, especially the type of worship used by the particular denomination;
- **pilgrimage**:
 - the reasons for pilgrimage;
 - the study of at least one place of Christian pilgrimage;
 - how pilgrimage can change the individual's life.

4. Worship

Within this topic, candidates should consider the different styles of worship that are available and the appeal each type of worship has to believers. They should consider how worship helps the believer to relate to God as an individual and as a part of the Church community.

- **public worship** – the impact worship has on the life of the believer and of the community;
- different **forms** of worship: liturgical, non-liturgical, including the structured, the charismatic and the spontaneous – the impact each form of worship has on the believers;
- the **Lord's Prayer** and its impact upon the individual and upon the community;
- the use of the Bible in public and private worship;
- **private worship** – prayer and meditation. The use of rosary, icon, and the Jesus Prayer. The impact these may have upon the individual believer's lifestyle.

5. Holy Communion

Within this topic, candidates should consider the different styles of eucharistic celebration that do and do not take place within Christian denominations and how these celebrations reflect the beliefs of that denomination.

- **Holy Communion** – alternative names: Eucharist, Mass, the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of Bread;
- the ways in which it is **celebrated** today in Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions and how these reflect differences of belief;
- the ways in which each different **understanding** of Holy Communion affects the overall structure of worship within that community;
- why Holy Communion is not celebrated in some traditions.

6. Festivals

Within this topic, candidates should understand the ways in which Christians celebrate the major events in the life of Jesus and of their faith. They should consider the different practices which are undertaken to help individual Christians become more fully engaged in their religion.

- **Sunday** – its significance. How the practices of Christians on a Sunday might reflect their attitude towards the special nature of Sunday and its observance, Sunday as celebration of the resurrection;
- the significance and practice of the following special days and festivals for Christians:
 - their relationship to events in the life of Jesus and the early Church;
 - specific Christian observances, customs and symbols connected with them;
 - their meaning to Christians today.

Study of the following festivals:

Advent	the use of the Advent candles to prepare for both the coming of Jesus at Christmas and the Second Coming in Judgement
Christmas and Epiphany	ways in which they are celebrated both in Church (including crib, carols, midnight mass, chringling) and at home (the religious dimensions of presents, family meal and decorations) and how the celebrations affect the whole community in which the believer lives
Lent	how the practices of fasting, prayer and works of charity follow the example of Jesus and help believers to prepare to celebrate Holy Week and Easter
Holy Week	the importance of the celebrations of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday
Easter	the impact of belief in the resurrection on the believer and how this belief is stressed in the church services at this time, including the Easter vigil
Pentecost	the importance of the coming of the Holy Spirit for believers.

3.2 Unit 2 Christianity: Ethics

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 2

For each of the issues in this unit, candidates should know and understand the reasons for differing opinions and practices among Christians, including the approaches of absolute and relative morality. There are no set biblical texts; questions will not therefore be set that test knowledge of particular passages. The texts suggested for study are intended only as guidance on general Christian principles with which candidates should be familiar. Teachers may use in their teaching any relevant biblical texts and/or Christian teaching. Candidates should also understand non-religious responses to these issues.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. The Right to Life

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Christian views on the sanctity and quality of life influence attitudes to abortion and euthanasia.

- **Abortion**
 - views on when life begins;
 - the status of the embryo/foetus;
 - pro-life and pro-choice arguments;
 - alternatives to abortion.
- **Euthanasia**
 - types of euthanasia – voluntary and non-voluntary;

- the distinction between active and passive euthanasia;
- views about the right to self-determination;
- the hospice movement.

2. The Use of Medical Technology

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Christian views on the sanctity of life, correction of nature and intervention in nature influence attitudes to the following: fertility and genetic treatments, cloning, and the appropriateness of embryonic research, including the question of hybrid embryos. They should also consider who, if anyone, should/should not have the right to such treatments and the implications for those involved in them and (where relevant) for resultant children.

- **Fertility Treatments**
 - artificial insemination – by husband (AIH) or donor (DI/AID);
 - in vitro fertilisation (IVF);
 - surrogacy (as an alternative to standard fertility treatments).
- **Gene Therapy and Genetic Engineering**
 - saviour siblings;
 - somatic cell therapy;
 - designer babies.
- **Cloning**
 - reproductive cloning;
 - stem cell (therapeutic) cloning.

3. Personal Responsibility

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Christian views on what it means to be human and on the importance of commitment and responsibility influence attitudes and personal lifestyle in relation to sexual relationships and the use of drugs.

- **Sexual Relationships**
 - human sexuality and sexual relationships (heterosexual and homosexual);
 - chastity and sexual relationships outside marriage, including adultery;
 - the legal age of consent for sexual intercourse;
 - contraception.
- **Drugs**
 - medically prescribed drugs;
 - socially accepted drugs: alcohol and tobacco;
 - illegal drugs;
 - reasons for taking legal and illegal drugs;
 - the effects on those who take them, and on others.

4. Social Responsibility

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Christian views on the importance of commitment, responsibility, equality and justice influence attitudes to marriage, and prejudice and discrimination.

- **Marriage**
 - religious and civil marriage ceremonies;
 - the nature and purposes of marriage;
 - alternatives to marriage, including cohabitation and civil partnerships;
 - reasons for marital breakdown and support for those experiencing this;
 - attitudes to divorce and remarriage;
 - the importance of family and the elderly.
- **Prejudice and Discrimination**
 - causes of prejudice and discrimination;
 - types of prejudice and discrimination, including colour, race, religion, gender and disability;
 - Christian responses to prejudice and discrimination, including the work of one well-known Christian.

5. Global Concerns

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Christian views on the world as God's creation, stewardship, justice and respect for life influence attitudes to the world and its inhabitants.

- **The Environment**
 - environmental problems, including pollution, destruction of natural habitats, use and abuse of natural resources, and climate change;

- individual, community, national and international responses, e.g. recycling, conservation projects and earth summits.

- **World Poverty**

- characteristics of Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) and causes of poverty;
- emergency and long term aid;
- the work of one of the following voluntary aid agencies: CAFOD, Christian Aid, Tearfund, Trocaire;
- ways in which individuals might respond to those in LEDCs, e.g. fair trade, campaigning for justice.

6. Conflict

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Christian views on justice, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace influence attitudes to war and peace, and to crime and punishment.

- **War and Peace**
 - causes of war;
 - the Just War theory;
 - pacifism;
 - terrorism;
 - nuclear warfare and proliferation.
- **Crime and Punishment**
 - the causes of crime;
 - aims of punishment, including deterrence, protection, reformation and retribution;
 - punishment and its impact on society and the individual, including fines, imprisonment, community service, and the death penalty (capital punishment).

Topics for Study	Suggested Biblical Texts
Abortion, euthanasia	Exodus 20 ¹³ , Psalm 139 ¹³⁻¹⁶ , 1 Corinthians 3 ¹⁶⁻¹⁷
Fertility treatments, gene therapy, genetic engineering, cloning	Genesis 1 ²⁶⁻²⁸ , Psalm 127 ³⁻⁵ , 1 Corinthians 10 ²³
Sexual relationships; drugs	Exodus 20 ¹⁴ , 1 Corinthians 6 ¹⁸⁻²⁰ , 1 Thessalonians 4 ³⁻⁶
Marriage and divorce; prejudice and discrimination	Mark 10 ²⁻¹² , Luke 10 ²⁵⁻³⁷ , Galatians 3 ²⁸
The environment; world poverty	Genesis 1 and 2, Matthew 25 ³¹⁻⁴⁶ , 1 John 3 ¹⁷⁻¹⁸
War and peace; crime and punishment	Matthew 5 ³⁸⁻⁴⁸ , Luke 15 ¹¹⁻³² , John 8 ²⁻¹¹

3.3 Unit 3 Roman Catholicism

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 3

Candidates studying this unit will be expected to be aware of the common ground that all Christians share, and of the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions, including the reasons for their distinctions. However, there will be an emphasis on **Roman Catholic belief and practice**. A specific study of the history of the Christian Church is not required. Candidates will be expected to know and understand the proper terms for aspects of Christian faith and practice which form part of the subject content.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. Beliefs and Sources of Authority

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the key beliefs and sources of authority that underpin the Roman Catholic way of life and influence their behaviour and attitudes.

- The **Bible**
contrasting beliefs about the authority, inspiration and interpretation of the Bible: fundamentalism (including literalism) and liberal views.
- The **Apostles' Creed** as representing a summary of Christian belief with reference to the following:
 - the oneness of God and the Trinity;
 - the incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God;
 - the meaning of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus;
 - the person and work of the Holy Spirit;
 - the Church as the Body of Christ;
 - the Communion of Saints;
 - sin and the means of salvation;

- judgment and the world to come.
- the impact of these beliefs upon Christian lifestyle.

• the teaching authority of the Church (the Magisterium)

- the role of Peter as successor to Jesus;
- the role of the Pope as successor to Peter, spiritual guide and head of the Roman Catholic Church;
- the teaching ministry of the Church and the combined authority of the Pope and the bishops;
- the impact of the Bible, Creed and Magisterium on the beliefs and lifestyle of Roman Catholics.

2. Sacraments of Initiation

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the process of initiation, whereby a person becomes a fully committed member of the Roman Catholic Church and the different practices of baptism within Christianity.

- The Sacraments as rites of passage;
- **Baptism**
 - the ceremony of Baptism in the Roman Catholic tradition;
 - the meaning, purpose and symbolism of Baptism;
 - the practice of infant baptism;
 - the impact of Baptism in the life of a Christian.
- **Believers' Baptism**
 - the ceremony of believers' baptism;
 - the reasons why some denominations prefer believers' baptism to infant baptism.
- **Confirmation**
 - the ceremony of Confirmation;
 - the symbolism, purpose and impact of the sacrament;
 - different Christian practice of the sacrament;
 - the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Roman Catholic tradition.

3. Places of Worship

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the features of different places of worship and pilgrimage with particular reference to the Roman Catholic tradition.

- **Places of worship**
 - how their interior and exterior features relate to beliefs and practices.
- **Pilgrimage**
 - the reasons for pilgrimage;
 - the study of at least **one** place of Christian pilgrimage;
 - how pilgrimage can change the individual's life.

4. Worship

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Roman Catholics practise their faith in both private and public worship and the importance of key people, prayers and aids to worship in the life of a believer.

- **Private Worship**
 - prayer and meditation; the use of the rosary, icons and statues;
 - the importance of private worship for the believer.
- **Public Worship**
 - different forms of worship: liturgical, non-liturgical including both the structured and the spontaneous;
 - the impact of public worship on the attitudes and lifestyle of Roman Catholics;
 - the use of the Bible in private and public worship.
- **The Our Father** and its impact upon the individual and the community.
- **The Role of Mary**
 - Mary as the Mother of God;
 - Mary's place in Roman Catholic belief as guide and role model, especially in prayer.

5. The Eucharist

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the centrality of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic and other Christian traditions and the impact of the Eucharist on the life of a believer.

- different names for the celebration: Holy Communion, Mass, the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of Bread;
- ways in which the Eucharist is celebrated today in the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions and how these reflect differences of belief and practice;
- reasons why the Eucharist is not celebrated in some traditions;
- the impact of receiving the Eucharist on the everyday life of a believer.

6. Festivals

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the key events in the liturgical year for Roman Catholics and how these influence their beliefs and lifestyle.

- the significance and practice of the special days and festivals listed below for Christians and their impact on the faith and attitudes of the believer;
- their relationship to events in the life of Jesus and the early Church;
- consideration of the observances, customs and symbols connected with them;
- their meaning for Christians today.
- Study of the following festivals:

Advent	including the use of the Advent wreath;
Christmas and Epiphany	including the midnight Mass and the use of the crib;
Ash Wednesday	including the distribution of ashes;
Lent	including observing the practices of prayer, fasting and works of mercy.

Holy Week including:

Palm Sunday	and the distribution and procession of palms;
Maundy Thursday	the timing of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the washing of the feet, the institution of the Eucharist, the procession to, and watching at, the Altar of Repose;
Good Friday	including the timing of the service, the reading of the Passion, the Adoration of the Cross, Communion, united services of witness and Stations of the Cross;
Easter	including the timing of the vigil, the lighting of the fire, the lighting and procession of the Pascal Candle, the blessing of baptismal water, the renewal of baptismal vows.
Ascension	the importance of the ascent of Jesus into heaven for believers;
Pentecost	the importance of the coming of the Holy Spirit for believers.

3.4 Unit 4 Roman Catholicism: Ethics

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 4

This unit will examine the effect of the Roman Catholic Tradition upon aspects of Christian lifestyle and behaviour. Candidates will need to be aware of the distinctive effect of the Roman Catholic tradition.

Candidates will be expected to make full use of their knowledge and understanding of the biblical passages specified below. Credit will be given for the relevant use of additional biblical material.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. Christian Values

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how key Biblical teachings influence the attitudes of Christians.

the Ten Commandments Exodus 20 ¹⁻¹⁷
the Beatitudes Matthew 5 ¹⁻¹²

the importance and relevance of the Commandments and the Beatitudes for Christians today.

2. Christian Marriage

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Roman Catholic views on marriage, sexuality and family life influence attitudes to the following issues.

- the Rite of Marriage, including the symbolism;
- the ideal of marriage: sacramental; permanent; exclusive; life-giving;
- Roman Catholic teaching with reference to sexual relationships outside marriage;

- responsible parenthood;
- adoption and fostering;
- causes of marital breakdown;
- divorce, remarriage and annulment;
- the impact of Roman Catholic teachings on the lifestyle and attitudes of the believer.

3. Christian Vocation

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the variety of ways in which Roman Catholics can live out their vocation and how these views about serving God and others influences their attitudes to a number of perennial issues.

- **Holy Orders (Ordination)**
 - the Rite of Ordination, including the symbolism;
 - the role of deacon and priest;
 - the sacramental and pastoral work of a priest and its impact on the Roman Catholic community.
- **Religious Vocation**
 - religious life in apostolic and contemplative orders;
 - religious vows: poverty, chastity and obedience;
 - ordination of women;
 - marriage for priests;
 - celibacy.
- **Lay Ministry**
 - the role and vocation of lay people (laity) in the Roman Catholic Church.

Biblical passages for study should include: the Parable of the Talents Matthew 25 ¹⁴⁻³⁰

4. Christian Reconciliation

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how and why Roman Catholics celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and how these beliefs influence their attitudes to important issues relating to reconciliation in society today.

- **The Sacrament of Reconciliation**
 - the Rite of Reconciliation, including the symbolism;
 - sin and forgiveness in the Roman Catholic Tradition;
 - the meaning, effects and impact of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- **Crime and Punishment**
 - causes of crime;
 - types of punishment;
 - the main aims of punishment: deterrence; protection; reformation; retribution;
 - the death penalty (capital punishment) with particular reference to Christian responses.

• **Prejudice and Discrimination**

Issues relating to prejudice and discrimination: colour; disability; gender; race and religion.

Biblical passages for study should include:

the Forgiving Father	Luke 15 ¹¹⁻³²
the Good Samaritan	Luke 10 ²⁵⁻³⁷
the Unmerciful Servant	Matthew 18 ²³⁻³⁵
All one in Christ	Galatians 3 ²⁸

5. Christian Healing

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of Roman Catholic beliefs and attitudes to the following issues relating to protecting, respecting and preserving human life.

- **The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick**
 - Christian attitudes to sickness and healing;
 - the Rite of the Anointing of the Sick, including the symbolism;
 - the purpose, effects and impact of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick on Roman Catholics.
- **Dying and the Afterlife**
 - attitudes to death and life after death;
 - death rites in the Roman Catholic tradition.
- **Respect for Human Life**
 - the sanctity of human life;
 - attitudes to contraception, abortion, euthanasia, in vitro fertilisation (IVF);
 - the impact upon the attitudes of believers of Christian teachings on these issues.

6. Christian Responses to Global Issues

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of Roman Catholic beliefs, attitudes and responses to the following global issues that challenge believers today.

• **Vocation in Action**

- responding to the needs of the poor overseas;
- causes of world poverty;
- differences between rich and poor countries;
- the work of CAFOD **or** Trocaire and its impact on the Roman Catholic Community;
- Fairtrade.

Biblical passages for study should include:

the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats Matthew 25 ³¹⁻⁴⁶

• **War and Peace**

- Christian views about:
- the 'Just War' theory;
- nuclear warfare and proliferation;
- terrorism;
- pacifism.

3.5 Unit 5 St Mark's Gospel

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 5

This unit gives candidates an opportunity to study, from Mark's Gospel, key events in the life of Jesus and key themes to be found in that gospel, and to consider their significance for Jesus, his disciples and for modern Christianity. Candidates should have knowledge and understanding of these themes, and also of the nature and purpose of Mark's Gospel and of its origins.

Assessment

Particular attention should be paid to the passages specified for each section. Questions will be set on the content and significance of them. Candidates should recognise that a number of the set passages are relevant to the study of more than one theme.

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

Versions of the Bible

Candidates may use any version of the Bible in their study of these Units; they may quote from any version in their answers. Where a quotation appears on the paper, it will be taken from **one** of these versions: the Good News Bible (GNB), the New International Version (NIV) or the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

Candidates who have been prepared for the examination using a version of the Bible other than the three versions indicated, such as the Jerusalem Bible or the New Revised Standard Version, will not find the examination paper places them at any disadvantage on account of the versions used for quotations.

1. Background to Mark's Gospel

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of the nature and purpose of Mark's Gospel, how and why it might have been written, and the significance of all this for Christians who read it today.

- **the writing of the gospel;**
 - traditional view of Mark writing in Rome;
 - possible sources behind Mark's Gospel;
 - possible reasons why Mark's Gospel was written.
- **its nature and purpose;**
 - significance of the term 'gospel' as good news;
 - Mark's Gospel as good news for persecuted Christians in the 1st and 2nd centuries;
 - the extent to which Mark's Gospel has continuing authority and relevance for Christians today.

introducing the Gospel: 1¹
the calming of the storm: 4³⁵⁻⁴¹

2. Jesus' Ministry

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of key narratives presented by Mark as 'watershed' events in the ministry of Jesus, and of their significance for Jesus, his disciples and Christians.

- the baptism and temptation: 1⁹⁻¹³
- Caesarea Philippi: 8²⁷⁻³³
- the transfiguration: 9²⁻⁸

3. Jesus' Suffering, Death and Resurrection

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of the significance of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, for Jesus, those personally involved at the time and for Christians. They should also show understanding of the debate relating to the ending of Mark's Gospel at 16⁸.

- the entry into Jerusalem: 11¹⁻¹¹
- the anointing at Bethany: 14¹⁻¹¹
- the Last Supper: 14¹²⁻²⁵
- Jesus in Gethsemane: 14³²⁻⁵²
- the trials before the Jewish council and Pilate: 14⁵³⁻⁶⁵, 15¹⁻²⁰
- the crucifixion and burial: 15²¹⁻⁴⁷
- the empty tomb: 16¹⁻⁸
- the resurrection appearances: 16⁹⁻²⁰

4. The Person of Jesus

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Mark's portrayal of Jesus in his account of Jesus' life and through his use of certain titles, together with the significance of this for Christians in their assessment of Jesus.

- **Jesus the teacher and miracle worker;**
- **titles for Jesus:**
Christ/Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God.

the baptism of Jesus: 1⁹⁻¹¹

the paralysed man: 2¹⁻¹²

the feeding of the 5000: 6³⁰⁻⁴⁴

Caesarea Philippi: 8²⁷⁻³³

5. Jesus' Relationships with Others

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of reasons for Jesus' disputes with the Jewish authorities, and of the significance of the conflict stories for Christian attitudes to religious and secular authority and the issue of violent and non-violent protest. They should also show understanding of the significance of Jesus' attitudes to the outcast for Christians today in relation to issues of justice, equality, prejudice and discrimination. Candidates should consider both the part played by faith in the healings of Jesus and modern debate relating to miracles and science.

- Jesus and the Jewish authorities;
- Jesus and the outcast;
- Jesus and the sick;
the man with leprosy: 1⁴⁰⁻⁴⁴
the call of Levi and eating with sinners: 2¹³⁻¹⁷
the man with the paralysed (withered) hand: 3¹⁻⁶
Jairus' daughter and the woman with a haemorrhage: 5²¹⁻⁴³
the Greek woman's daughter: 7²⁴⁻³⁰
blind Bartimaeus: 10⁴⁶⁻⁵²
the incident in the Temple court: 11¹⁵⁻¹⁸
payment of taxes to Caesar: 12¹³⁻¹⁷

6. Discipleship

In this topic, candidates should understand how Mark's portrayal of the disciples (particularly Peter) relates to the Twelve as disciples, leaders and role models, and assess the influence and function of modern leaders and celebrities as role models for Christians. They should understand the significance for Christians living in a materialist and secular world, of Jesus' teaching on the nature of the Kingdom of God and his expectations of his disciples. They should also demonstrate awareness of modern examples of self-sacrifice and service.

- the Twelve;
- the kingdom of God and the demands of discipleship;
 - the significance of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God;
 - the significance of Jesus' teaching on discipleship for Christians, including modern examples of self-sacrifice and service;
 - the impact on Christians of attitudes to wealth and possessions in today's society.

the call of the disciples: 1¹⁶⁻²⁰

parables of the kingdom: 4³⁻⁹, 14-20, 30-32

the mission of the Twelve: 6⁷⁻¹³

cost of discipleship: 8³⁴⁻³⁸

the rich man and wealth: 10¹⁷⁻³¹

teaching on service: 10⁴²⁻⁴⁵

the greatest commandments: 12²⁸⁻³⁴

the widow at the treasury: 12⁴¹⁻⁴⁴

Peter's promise and denials: 14^{26-31, 66-72}

the commission: 16¹⁴⁻¹⁸

3.6 Unit 6 St Luke's Gospel

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 6

This unit gives candidates an opportunity to study, from Luke's Gospel, key events in the life of Jesus and key themes to be found in that gospel, together with their significance for Jesus, his disciples and for modern Christianity. Candidates should have knowledge and understanding of these, and also of the nature and purpose of Luke's Gospel and of its origins.

Assessment

Particular attention should be paid to the passages specified for each section. Questions will be set on the content and significance of them. Candidates should recognise that a number of the set passages are relevant to the study of more than one theme.

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

Versions of the Bible

Candidates may use any version of the Bible in their study of these Units; they may quote from any version in their answers. Where a quotation appears on the paper, it will be taken from **one** of these versions: the Good News Bible (GNB), the New International Version (NIV) or the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

Candidates who have been prepared for the examination using a version of the Bible other than the three versions indicated, such as the Jerusalem Bible or the New Revised Standard Version, will not find the examination paper places them at any disadvantage on account of the versions used for quotations.

1. Background to Luke's Gospel

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of the nature and purpose of Luke's Gospel, how and why it might have been written, and the significance of all this for Christians.

• the writing of the gospel

- sources behind the gospel, e.g. Mark's Gospel, Q and L (eyewitness material, oral and written sources peculiar to this gospel);
- traditional view of authorship: Luke a Gentile doctor and companion of Paul.

• its nature and purpose

- Luke's Gospel as written for Gentile Christians;
- its nature as 'good news' and as 'salvation history';
- the importance of the gospel for Christians who are oppressed;
- the extent to which Luke's Gospel has continuing authority and relevance for Christians today.

introduction to the Gospel: 1¹⁻⁴

Jesus' preaching at Nazareth: 4¹⁶⁻²¹

2. Salvation

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Luke's portrayal of Jesus' birth and ministry as salvation history, and of the significance of this for Christians.

• the infancy narratives

the annunciation: 1²⁶⁻³⁸

the birth of Jesus and visit of the shepherds: 2¹⁻²⁰

the presentation in the Temple: 2²²⁻³⁵

• the rejection at Nazareth: 4¹⁶⁻³⁰

• faith leading to salvation

the sinful woman: 7³⁶⁻⁵⁰

Jairus' daughter and the woman with a

haemorrhage: 8⁴⁰⁻⁵⁶

3. The Authority of Jesus

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Luke's portrayal of Jesus as an authoritative figure through his emphasis on Jesus' empowerment by the Spirit and through the use of certain titles. They should also understand the significance of this for Christians in their assessment of Jesus.

• the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus

the baptism of Jesus: 3²¹⁻²²

the temptations: 4¹⁻¹³

• Titles for Jesus

Lord, Christ/Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God.

the healing of the paralysed man: 5¹⁷⁻²⁶

Peter's declaration: 9¹⁸⁻²³

the transfiguration: 9²⁸⁻³⁶

Martha and Mary: 10³⁸⁻⁴²

4. The Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Jesus

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of the significance of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, for Jesus, those personally involved at the time and for Christians.

- the Last Supper: 22⁷⁻²³
- Jesus on the Mount of Olives: 22³⁹⁻⁵³
- Jesus' trials before the Jewish council, Pilate and Herod: 22⁶⁶⁻⁷¹; 23¹⁻²⁵
- the crucifixion and burial: 23²⁶, 32-56
- the resurrection and resurrection appearances: 24¹⁻³⁵

5. Universalism

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of the significance for Christians of Jesus' attitude to those on the fringes of Jewish society in relation to issues of forgiveness and acceptance. They should also show understanding of the significance for Christians of Jesus' attitudes to non-Jews and to women in relation to issues of justice, equality, prejudice and discrimination.

- **Tax-collectors and sinners**
the significance of Jesus' attitude to those who were marginalised or despised for Christians today in relation to issues of forgiveness and acceptance.
- **Samaritans and Gentiles**
the significance of Jesus' attitude to non-Jews for Christians today in relation to issues of justice, equality, prejudice and discrimination.
- **Women**
the significance of Jesus' attitude to women for Christians today in relation to issues of justice, equality, prejudice and discrimination.

the centurion's servant: 7¹⁻¹⁰
the widow of Nain: 7¹¹⁻¹⁷
the Parable of the Good Samaritan: 10²⁵⁻³⁷
the Parable of the Lost Son (Forgiving Father): 15^{1-2, 11-32}
Zacchaeus: 19¹⁻¹⁰

6. Discipleship

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Luke's portrayal of the disciples relates to the Twelve as disciples, leaders and role models and assess the influence and

function of modern leaders and celebrities as role models for Christians. Candidates should understand the significance for Christians, living in a materialist and secular world, of Jesus' teaching on wealth, possessions and the demands of discipleship, together with an awareness of modern examples of commitment and service. Candidates should also demonstrate understanding of the centrality of prayer in Jesus' life and teaching and its importance for Christian discipleship.

• The Twelve

- Luke's portrayal of the disciples;
- the Twelve as disciples and leaders, and their suitability as role models for Christians;
- the influence and function of modern leaders and celebrities as role models for Christians.

the call of the first disciples: 5¹⁻¹¹

arrangements for the betrayal of Jesus: 22¹⁻⁶

the authority of the Twelve: 22²⁸⁻³⁰

Peter's denials: 22^{31-34, 54-62}

• Demands of discipleship

- Jesus' expectations of those seeking to become disciples and the significance of this for Christians, including modern examples of commitment and service;
- the relevance for Christians of Jesus' teaching on wealth and possessions in the light of their importance in modern society.

would-be disciples: 9⁵⁷⁻⁶²

the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus: 16¹⁹⁻³¹

the rich ruler: 18¹⁸⁻³⁰

• Prayer

the centrality of prayer in the life and teaching of Jesus and its importance for Christian discipleship.

the Lord's Prayer: 11¹⁻⁴

the Parable of the Persistent Neighbour: 11⁵⁻⁸

the Parable of the Pharisee and the

Tax-Collector: 18⁹⁻¹⁴

3.7 Unit 7 Philosophy of Religion

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 7

In this unit, candidates will study the philosophical arguments that relate to religion and to belief systems. Candidates will focus on ultimate questions and will be encouraged to think about how the different answers that are given in relation to a particular issue may challenge religious beliefs and practices.

This unit allows candidates to use examples from one **or more** of the six major world religions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set that span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. The Existence of God

Within this topic, candidates should examine some of the standard “proofs” for the existence of God and assess the validity of each of the “proofs”.

- the meaning of the words theist, atheist and agnostic;
- the difficulties of proving the existence of God;
- the First Cause (Cosmological) argument for the existence of God, its strengths and weaknesses;
- the Design (Teleological) argument for the existence of God, its strengths and weaknesses;
- the argument from religious experience for the existence of God, its strengths and weaknesses;
- arguments against the existence of God;
- the relationship between the proofs of the existence of God and faith.

2. The Characteristics of God

Within this topic, candidates should examine the type of language used about God and the acceptability of the different uses both from a cultural point of view and from what the language used might suggest about God.

- God in one or many forms;
- the type of language used about God, especially the words ‘Truth’, ‘Father’, ‘King’, ‘he’ and ‘The Eternal’ – what these words imply and why they are used about God;
- whether more inclusive terms, e.g. parent, ruler, would be more valid to be used about God;
- God as all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing, all-compassionate, all-merciful;
- God as transcendent and immanent, personal and impersonal.

3. Revelation and Enlightenment

Within this topic, candidates should examine the different ways in which believers claim that God can be known. The validity of each way should be examined as well as alternative explanations that can be offered to each way.

- general revelation: through nature, other people;
- special revelation: through sacred texts, prayer, worship, visions and dreams, enlightenment;
- how valid these revelations might be for the believer and for other people;
- other interpretations of these revelations;
- reality and illusion.

4. The Problem of Evil

Within this topic, candidates should examine how the existence of different types of evil makes some people question the existence and/or nature of God. Alternative explanations about the existence of evil as a positive element in life, with and without the existence of God, should be examined.

- the contradiction between an all-knowing, all-loving, powerful God and the existence of evil and suffering;
- the different forms of evil (natural and moral) and the questions they raise about the loving nature of God;
- the different ideas about the origins of evil;
- justification for the continued existence of evil and suffering, including the world as a place of preparation (soul-making);
- the Free-Will Defence as a theory about a loving God who accepts evil because it might lead to something better;
- the concept of karma as an explanation for evil in the world;
- the response of the believer to suffering.

5. The Compatibility of Science and Religion

Within this topic, candidates should examine how science and religion might give opposing and congruent answers to the existence and role of the world and of human life.

- the origins of the universe and the world;
 - the interpretations of the stories of creation (e.g. Genesis 1 and 2), including the fundamentalist approach to these stories;
 - the Big Bang and other scientific theories;
 - the role of God in creation according to these different views;
- evolution and the place of humanity in creation;
 - the Darwinian view of evolution;
 - the implications of the Darwinian view for understanding the place of humanity;
 - the contrasting view of the role of humanity as shown in Creation stories either in the Bible or from other religions;
- fundamentalist views on evolution.

6. The Afterlife

Within this topic, candidates should examine the arguments put forward for different forms of life after death and the validity of each of these arguments.

- evidence for and against the existence of an afterlife;
- eternal life – resurrection, heaven, paradise – arguments for and against these beliefs;
- reincarnation and rebirth – arguments for and against these beliefs;
- out of body and near death experiences;
- how the different beliefs in the afterlife affect the way believers live in this life.

3.8 Unit 8 Islam

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 8

In this unit, candidates will be expected to be aware of the common ground that Muslims share, and, where appropriate, significant differences of views and practices among Muslims. They will also be expected to know and understand the proper terms for aspects of the Muslim faith which form part of the subject content. They will also be expected to understand the significance of these aspects for the Muslim faith and how they may be applied to faith and lifestyles in the modern world.

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set that span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. Beliefs and Sources of Authority

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the key beliefs and sources of authority that underpin the Muslim way of life and influence their behaviour and attitudes.

- tawhid;
- risalah – prophethood;
- akhirah – Day of Judgment, paradise and hell;
- Qur'an – revelation, recitation, authority, compilation;
- hadith – sayings of the Prophet and their authority;
- sunnah – actions of the Prophet;
- Muhammad;
- the last of the prophets (Surah 33:21, 40) his call (Surah 96:1–5);
- the Hijrah;

- the prophet's work in Madinah (Medina) and Makkah (Mecca);
- Shari'ah;
- Sunni and Shi'ah (Shi'i): their differing views of authority.

2. The Five Pillars

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of Muslim attitudes to the following aspects of prayer.

The Five Pillars

- shahadah – containing the two basic concepts of the Oneness of God, and prophethood;
- salah – call to prayer, wudu, rak'ahs, Jum'ah (Friday prayer), du'a;
- zakah;
- sawm in the month of Ramadan;
- hajj – sites of pilgrimage – Makkah, Mina, Arafat, Muzdalifah; rituals/customs and their significance.

3. Worship

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how the mosque reflects and affects the style of worship that takes place within it. They should also consider the festivals in the Muslim tradition.

The Mosque

- design and functions;
- features and symbols – mihrab, qiblah, minbar and their significance;
- the use of aids to worship;
- the role of the Imam and the Mu'adhin (Muezzin);
- adhan – the call to prayer;
- the role of the Madrassah.

Festivals

- Eid ul Fitr;
- Eid ul Adha.

4. Personal Lifestyle

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the importance of attitudes to the following:

- diet – food preparation – halal and haram, prohibition of alcohol;
- dress – purdah; the concept of modesty; the hijab;
- shahadah;
- the concept of ummah – community, respect, religious duty, good actions.

5. Family Life

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of Muslim attitudes to the following aspects of life:

- marriage ceremonies and their significance;
- remarriage and divorce procedures;
- arranged marriages;
- polygamy;
- sexual relationships outside marriage – pre-marital sex, adultery;
- attitudes to homosexuality;
- worship in the home – including prayer and study of the Qur'an;
- contribution of the mosque to family life.

6. Justice and Equality

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Muslim views on equality, prejudice and discrimination.

- the role and status of women – the concept of equal worth;
- Muslim views on justice and equality;
- causes of prejudice and discrimination;
- types of prejudice, including race, religion and gender.

3.9 Unit 9 Islam: Ethics

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 9

In this unit, candidates will be expected to know and understand Muslim beliefs, teachings and attitudes in relation to the topics listed. Candidates will be expected to be aware of the common ground that Muslims share, and, where appropriate, significant differences of views and practices among Muslims. Candidates will be expected to study Islam as practised in the United Kingdom (UK) in the context of multi-faith communities.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set that span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

Background

Candidates should have an understanding of the basic principles of Shari'ah as a code of behaviour and a guide for life and how it relates to modern lifestyle.

1. Life and Death

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Muslim principles on the purpose and quality of life influence attitudes to the following:

- the sanctity of life (Surah 3:145);
- Muslim attitudes to abortion and euthanasia;
- Muslim attitudes to fertility issues – contraception;
- belief in life after death, resurrection and judgment.

Fertility Treatments

- the sanctity of life (Surah 3:145);
- Muslim attitudes to abortion and euthanasia;
- Muslim attitudes to fertility issues – contraception, in vitro fertilisation (IVF), artificial insemination by the husband (AIH) or donor (AID or DI);
- surrogacy (as an alternative to standard fertility treatments);
- reproductive cloning.

Gene Therapy and Genetic Engineering

- saviour siblings;
- somatic cell therapy;
- designer babies;
- stem cell (therapeutic) cloning.

2. Wealth and Poverty

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Muslim principles such as duty to care for the poor and the concept of community influence attitudes to the following:

- characteristics of Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) and the causes of poverty;
- emergency and long term aid;
- the work of Muslim organisations and agencies in world development and the relief of poverty;
- detailed knowledge and understanding of the work of Muslim Aid and the principles on which its work is based;
- ways in which Muslim communities in the UK work to relieve poverty and suffering, including an understanding of Sadaqah;
- Muslim attitudes to money and to giving to the poor and needy.

3. Conflict and Suffering

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Muslim views on purpose of life, justice, reconciliation and peace influence attitudes to the following:

- the concept of jihad – greater and lesser;
- Muslim views about war, including:
 - disarmament;
 - pacifism;
 - terrorism;
 - nuclear warfare and proliferation;
- protest – different ways of protesting and reasons for protest;
- reconciliation.

4. The Environment

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Muslim views on stewardship and the value of the natural world influence attitudes to the following:

- the created world – reasons why it is valued by Muslims;
- causes of pollution;
- Muslim attitudes to conservation;
- Individual, community, national and international responses, e.g. recycling, conservation projects and earth summits;
- animal rights – care of animals, using animals for experimentation in research;
- stewardship.

5. Crime and Punishment

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Muslim views of law, punishment and forgiveness influence attitudes to the following:

- the causes of crime;
- aims of punishment – deterrence, protection, reformation, retribution;
- punishment and its impact on society and the individual including fines, imprisonment, community service, the death penalty (capital punishment);

- attitudes to corporal punishment and the death penalty (capital punishment);
- the teaching of the Qur'an on punishment; final judgment before Allah;
- issues of justice (Surah 41:34);
- forgiveness.

6. Relationships and Lifestyle

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Muslim beliefs and law and the principles of commitment and responsibility influence attitudes to the following:

- importance of the family; children, role of parents, the elderly;
- human sexuality and sexual relationships (heterosexual and homosexual);
- the legal age of consent for sexual intercourse;
- attitudes to alcohol, tobacco, prescribed drugs and illegal drugs; effects and impacts on individuals and on others;
- attitudes to gambling;
- attitudes to usury;
- the role of Islamic schools.

3.10 Unit 10 Judaism

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 10

In this unit, candidates will be expected to know and understand the proper terms for aspects of the Jewish faith which form part of the subject content. They will also be expected to understand the significance of these aspects for Jewish faith and how they may be applied to faith and lifestyles in the modern world.

They should be aware of the common ground that all Jews share, and the significant differences between Orthodox and Progressive (Reform and Liberal) Jews.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set that span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. Beliefs and Sources of Authority

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the key beliefs and sources of authority that underpin the Jewish way of life and influence their behaviour and attitudes.

- Tenakh: Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim;
- Talmud: Mishnah and Gemara;
- halakah: ongoing interpretation and application to changing situations (responsa, Bet Din, yeshiva).
- Jewish concepts of God:
 - the unity of God; the Shema;
 - God as creator and sustainer;
 - God as law-giver and judge;
 - God as redeemer and sanctifier.
- the Covenant:
 - Israel as God's chosen people;
 - the Covenant and the land – Covenant with Abraham;
 - the centrality of the Torah (written and oral) to the Covenant;
 - the Messianic Age.

2. The Synagogue and Worship

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how the places of worship reflect and affect the style of worship that takes place within it.

- the leaders of the community with special reference to the rabbi and chazzan (cantor);
- design and function;
- features and symbols – bimah (reading platform), Aron hakodesh (ark), ner tamid (ever-burning light), menorah, Star of David;
- daily prayer;
- tallit and tefillin;
- minyan.

3. Festivals and Pilgrimage

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how the festivals celebrated in Judaism. They should also consider the role of pilgrimage in the Jewish tradition.

- Shabbat;
- Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur;
- Pesach;
- Western Wall;
- Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial).

4. Personal Lifestyle

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Jewish views on dietary laws and dress.

- dietary laws – kosher and trefah, separation of milk and meat;
- Shabbat observance;
- mezuzah;
- the work of the Bet Din;
- wearing the kippah, orthodox dress.

5. Family Life

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Jewish views on relationships and family life.

- ceremonies associated with birth and brit milah;
- bar/bat mitzvah and bat chayil;
- the importance of the family;
- contribution of the synagogue to family life;
- marriage ceremony and its significance;
- ceremonies associated with death and mourning.

6. Justice and Equality

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Jewish views on prejudice and discrimination, women, and suffering.

- the role and status of women – differences between Orthodox and Reform approaches;
- prejudice and discrimination with reference to race, religion and the Jewish experience of persecution;
- suffering – Jewish attitudes, the Holocaust.

3.11 Unit 11 Judaism: Ethics

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 11

In this unit, candidates will be expected to know and understand Jewish beliefs, teachings and attitudes in relation to the topics listed. Candidates will be expected to be aware of the common ground which Jews share and, where appropriate, they should understand the reasons why Jews may hold different opinions or adopt different attitudes.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set that span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

Background

Candidates will be expected to have knowledge and understanding of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20¹⁻¹⁷) and how the commandments relate to lifestyle. They should also understand the use of mitzvot, both judgments (mishpatim) and statutes (chukim) as a guide for life.

1. Life and Death

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Jewish principles on the purpose and quality of life influence attitudes to the following:

- the sanctity of life;
- Jewish attitudes to abortion and euthanasia;
- Jewish attitudes to fertility issues – contraception, in vitro fertilisation (IVF), artificial insemination by the husband (AIH) or donor (AID or DI);
- surrogacy (as an alternative to standard fertility treatments);
- bio-ethics – genetic engineering in designer babies, and saviour siblings;
- belief in immortality of the soul, resurrection and judgment.

2. Wealth and Poverty

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Jewish principles such as righteousness and the concept of community influence attitudes to the following:

- causes of poverty – emergency and long term aid;
- the work of Jewish organisations and agencies in world development and the relief of poverty;
- detailed knowledge and understanding of the work of World Jewish Relief and the principles on which its work is based;
- ways in which Jewish communities in the UK work to relieve poverty and suffering;
- practice of tzedaka (giving to charity) and kindness.

3. Conflict and Suffering

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Jewish views on purpose of life, justice, reconciliation and peace influence attitudes to the following:

- Jewish understanding of suffering – with reference to anti-Semitism;
- Jewish views about war – including disarmament, nuclear war, pacifism and terrorism;
- protest – different ways of protesting and reasons for protest;
- reconciliation.

4. The Environment

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Jewish views on stewardship and the value of the natural world influence attitudes to the following:

- the created world – reasons why it is valued by Jews;
- causes of pollution and conservation and Jewish attitudes to these;
- animal rights – care of animals, using animals for research;
- stewardship.

5. Crime and Punishment

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Jewish views of law, punishment and forgiveness influence attitudes to the following:

- aims of punishment – deterrence, protection, reformation, reparation, retribution;
- types of punishment and impact of these on society and the individual, including fines, imprisonment, community service, death penalty (capital punishment);
- the teaching of the Torah on punishment;
- forgiveness;
- attitudes to the death penalty (capital punishment).

6. Relationships and Lifestyle

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Jewish beliefs and law and the principles of commitment and responsibility influence attitudes to the following:

- the purposes of Jewish marriage and attitudes to marriage;
- reasons why Jews divorce and divorce procedure;
- Jewish attitudes to divorce and remarriage;
- Jewish attitudes to chastity and to sex outside marriage;
- attitudes to homosexuality;
- ritual cleansing – the mikveh;
- responsibilities of children and parents;
- Jewish attitudes to alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and prescribed drugs;
- the role of Jewish schools and yeshivot.

3.12 Unit 12 Buddhism

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 12

In this unit, candidates will be expected to know and understand the proper terms for aspects of Buddhism which form part of the subject content. They will also be expected to understand the significance of these aspects for Buddhism and how Buddhist teachings and principles may be applied to faith and lifestyles in the modern world. Candidates will be expected to be aware of the common ground that all Buddhists share, and, where appropriate, diversity of views and practices among Buddhists.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set that span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. The Life of the Buddha

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the significance for Buddhists of the first of the Three Refuges.

- stories relating to the birth of the Buddha;
- the four signs;
 - old man;
 - sick man;
 - dead body;
 - ascetic holy man.
- the Buddha's ascetic life;
- the Buddha's enlightenment.

2. The Dhamma (Dharma)

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the significance for Buddhists of the second of the Three Refuges.

- the Three Universal Truths (the Three Marks of Existence);
 - anicca (impermanence);
 - anatta (no individual self);
 - dukkha (suffering).
- the Four Noble Truths;
 - dukkha (life involves suffering);
 - samudaya (selfish desire (tanha) dominates);
 - nirodha (getting rid of tanha is the cure for dukkha);
 - magga (this is the Middle Way, i.e. following the Noble Eightfold Path).
- the Noble Eightfold Path;
- aims and methods of meditation, including samatha and vipassana;
- kamma (karma), samsara and nibbana (nirvana);
- the nature and authority of the Tipitaka (the Three Baskets);
 - vinaya pitaka;
 - sutta pitaka;
 - abhidhamma pitaka.

3. The Sangha

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the significance for Buddhists of the third of the Three Refuges.

- ordination (initiation) as the making of a monk or nun;
- monks (bhikkhus) and nuns (bhikkhunis);
- their relationship with the laity (lay men (upasikas) and lay women (upasikas));
- the role and status of women;
- 'engaged' Buddhism.

4. Worship and Festivals

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the importance for Buddhists of forms of worship, holy places and festivals.

- the nature, use and importance of temples and stupas;
- visiting Bodhi Gaya and the Deer Park at Sarnath;
- worship in the home;
- Wesak;
 - celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death;
 - forms of celebration.

5. Attitudes to Life

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of how Buddhist teachings influence attitudes to abortion, euthanasia, life and death.

- the five moral precepts;
 - do not take life;
 - do not take what is not given;
 - do not misuse the senses;
 - do not speak falsehoods;
 - do not take intoxicants that cloud the mind.
- the principles of metta (loving kindness) and karuna (compassion);
- abortion;
- euthanasia;
- ceremonies associated with death and mourning.

6. Global Issues

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of Buddhist attitudes and responses to global concerns.

- prejudice and discrimination, including reference to race and religion;
- wealth and poverty, including the work of a well-known Buddhist organisation;
- the environment, including attitudes to conservation and animal rights.

3.13 Unit 13 Hinduism

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 13

In this unit, candidates will be expected to know and understand the proper terms for aspects of Hinduism which form part of the subject content. They will be also be expected to understand the significance of these aspects for Hinduism recognising its nature as Sanatana (eternal and universal) Dharma and as a pluralistic religion. They should also understand how Hindu beliefs and teachings may be applied to faith and lifestyles in the modern world. Candidates will be expected to be aware of the common ground that all Hindus share, as well as to appreciate the great variety of practices and views found in Hinduism.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set that span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. Beliefs and Sources of Authority

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Hindu beliefs about the nature of God recognising that Hinduism is a pluralistic religion, the aims and cycle of life, and about the distinction between sacred texts.

- **ideas about the nature of God:**
 - religious pluralism – that each of us relates to God in a different way, and all forms of God are symbolic of that pluralism;
 - the concept of Brahman as ultimate reality;
 - Trimurti (triad): Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva;
 - Shakti as a symbol of female power;
 - popular deities: Krishna and Radha, Rama and Sita, Hanuman, Ganesha, Lakshmi; Sarasvati;
 - the concept of atman as inner self, and as a reflection of the divinity of humankind.

- **key beliefs:**

- the four aims of life (dharma, artha, kama, moksha);
- the concepts of karma and samsara (cycle of rebirth).

- **sacred texts:**

- shruti texts, including the Rig Veda and Upanishads;
- smriti, including the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana and the Laws of Manu.

2. Worship

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of the importance for Hindus of worship in mandirs and the home.

- the design of Hindu mandirs (temples);
- the meaning and use of objects in shrines and mandirs;
- symbols and their symbolism in shrines and mandirs, including murti, Om and swastika;
- the various forms of worship in the mandir and in the home, including puja, arti, havan and bhajans.

3. Pilgrimage and Festivals

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of the importance for Hindus of pilgrimage and festivals.

- the origins, significance and practices associated with the following places of pilgrimage:
 - the Ganges River;
 - Varanasi;
 - Kumbh Mela (a 12-yearly coming together of Hindus in one of four places).
- the origins, significance and practices associated with the following festivals:
 - Divali;
 - Holi.

4. Personal Duties and Family Relationships

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of the importance for Hindus of fulfilling dharma, diet, yoga, rites of passage and family responsibilities.

- **Varnasramadharmas:**
 - the four stages of life: student, householder, retired person, homeless wanderer;
 - attitudes to the caste system.
- **diet.**
- **the means of attaining moksha:**
 - jnana yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and karma yoga.
- rites of passage:
 - naming ceremonies;
 - the sacred thread ceremony;
 - marriage rites;
 - death rites, including shraddha ceremony.

- **family life:**

- the importance for Hindus of marriage;
- the importance for Hindus of the family;
- Hindu attitudes to divorce.

5. Justice and Equality

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Hindu views on prejudice and discrimination, women, and wealth and poverty.

- prejudice and discrimination, with reference to race and religion;
- the role and status of women;
- wealth and poverty, including the work of a well-known Hindu organisation.

6. Respect for Life

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Hindu views on issues relating to the preservation of all life in the created world.

- the principle of ahimsa;
- suffering;
- abortion;
- euthanasia;
- the created world, including:
 - environmental concerns;
 - attitudes to animals.

3.14 Unit 14 Sikhism

Aims of GCSE Religious Studies Specifications

This unit will provide 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.

Unit 14

In this unit, candidates will be expected to know and understand the proper terms for aspects of the Sikh faith which form part of the subject content. They will also be expected to understand the significance of these aspects for Sikh faith and how they may be applied to faith and lifestyles in the modern world. Candidates will be expected to study Sikhism as practised in the United Kingdom (UK) in the context of multi-faith communities and be aware of the common ground that all Sikhs share and, where appropriate, significant differences of views and practices among Sikhs.

Assessment

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set that span two or more of them. The sequence in which the material is set out is not intended to indicate either the order in which it should be studied or its relative importance. Stimulus questions may be set using texts which the candidates will not be expected to have studied.

1. Beliefs and Sources of Authority

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the key beliefs and sources of authority that underpin the Sikh way of life and influence their behaviour and attitudes.

- the Mool Mantra;
- manmukh: the human condition;
- the evils;
- the virtues;
- the five stages of liberation – dharma khand, gian khand, saram khand, karam khand, sach khand;
- gurmukh: God created man;
- the Guru Granth Sahib – its compilation, use and importance;
- the Adi Granth;
- the Dasam Granth;
- the Ten Gurus as a source of authority.

2. Practice and Organisation

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the practice and significance of the following, together with an understanding of their importance and place within the faith.

- **The Gurdwara and Worship**
 - the leaders of the community with special reference to the granthi;
 - design and functions of the gurdwara;
 - the Langar;
 - reading the Guru Granth Sahib;
 - ardas and karah parshad;
 - worship at the gurdwarda and in the home.

3. Festivals and the Gurus

Within this topic, candidates should show understanding of the festivals celebrated in Sikhism and the importance of the Gurus to Sikhs.

- Baisakhi and the founding of the Khalsa;
- Divali;
- Gurpurbs;
- The Ten Gurus with special reference to:
 - Guru Nanak;
 - Guru Arjan;
 - Guru Gobind Singh.
- the Khalsa – including significance of the names Singh and Kaur.

4. Personal Lifestyle

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Sikh views on the following issues.

- Rahit Maryada;
- the Three Responsibilities:
 - nam japna (meditation on God's name);
 - kirat karna (honest work);
 - vand chhakna (giving in charity);
- sewa;
- dress – including the 5Ks – kesh, kangha, kachera, kara, kirpan;
- diet;
- respect and concern for the created world.

5. Family Life

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Sikhs views on the following issues relating to relationships.

- family relationships – the importance of the family;
- birth and naming;
- Amrit Sanskar;
- marriage – ceremony and significance;
- divorce;
- ceremonies associated with death.

6. Justice, Equality and the Right to Life

In this topic, candidates should show understanding of Sikh views on prejudice and discrimination, women, and wealth and poverty.

- the role and status of women;
- prejudice and discrimination with reference to race and religion;
- wealth and poverty;
- abortion;
- euthanasia.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Aims and learning outcomes

GCSE courses based on this specification should encourage candidates to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, satisfying and worthwhile course of study that challenges young people and equips them to lead constructive lives in the modern world.

This specification enables candidates to:

- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion;
- explore religions and beliefs, reflect upon fundamental questions, engage with them intellectually and respond personally;
- enhance their spiritual and moral development, and contribute to their health and well being;
- enhance their personal, social and cultural development, their understanding of different cultures locally, nationally and in the wider world to contribute to social and community cohesion;
- develop their interest 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.

4.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

The assessment units will assess the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills set out in Section 3 (Subject Content).

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

AO1 and AO2 are interrelated and connections must be made. Candidates will be expected to use their knowledge and understanding to support their responses to the issues for evaluation.

Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

GCSE Specifications which require candidates to produce written material in English must:

- 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;
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

In this Specification QWC will be assessed in all questions that require extended writing and in all units.

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for GCSE Short Course

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the GCSE Short Course units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)	Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	All Units	
AO1	50	50
AO2	50	50
Overall weighting of units (%)	100	100

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for GCSE Full Course

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the GCSE Full Course units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)		Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	1 st Unit	2 nd Unit	
AO1	25	25	50
AO2	25	25	50
Overall weighting of units (%)	50	50	100

4.3 National criteria

This specification complies with the following.

- The Subject Criteria for GCSE Religious Studies including the rules for Controlled Assessment
- Code of Practice
- The GCSE Qualification Criteria
- The Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria
- The requirements for qualifications to provide access to Levels 1 and 2 of the National Qualification Framework.

4

4.4 Prior learning

There are no prior learning requirements.

However, any requirements set for entry to a course following this specification are at the discretion of centres.

4.5 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

GCSEs often require assessment of a broader 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 were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any candidates regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation. If this was the case, the situation was

reviewed again to ensure such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with groups who represented the interests of a diverse range of candidates.

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. Further details are given in Section 5.4.

5 Administration

5.1 Availability of assessment units and certification

Examinations and certification for this specification are available as follows:

	Availability of Units	Availability of Certification	
	All Units	Short Course	Full Course
January 2010			
June 2010	✓	✓	
January 2011			
June 2011 onwards	✓	✓	✓

5.2 Entries

Please refer to the current version of *Entry Procedures and Codes* for up to date entry procedures. You should use the following entry codes for the units and for certification.

Unit 1 Christianity (405001)
 Unit 2 Christianity: Ethics (405002)
 Unit 3 Roman Catholicism (405003)
 Unit 4 Roman Catholicism: Ethics (405004)
 Unit 5 St Mark's Gospel (405005)
 Unit 6 St Luke's Gospel (405006)
 Unit 7 Philosophy of Religion (405007)
 Unit 8 Islam (405008)
 Unit 9 Islam: Ethics (405009)
 Unit 10 Judaism (405010)

Unit 11 Judaism: Ethics (405011)
 Unit 12 Buddhism (405012)
 Unit 13 Hinduism (405013)
 Unit 14 Sikhism (405014)

GCSE Short Course certification – (4051)
 GCSE certification – (4052)

QCA's 40% terminal rule means that 40% of the assessment must be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is awarded. This rule is not dependent on the size of the qualification. Therefore, all GCSE candidates, whether taking short course, single and double awards, must have 40% of their assessment taken at the end.

5.3 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates. Private candidates should write to AQA for a copy of *Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates*.

5.4 Access arrangements and special consideration

We have taken note of equality and discrimination legislation and the interests of minority groups in developing and administering this specification.

We follow the guidelines in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*. This is published on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk>) or you can follow the link from our website (<http://www.aqa.org.uk>).

Access arrangements

We can make arrangements so that candidates with special needs can access the assessment. These arrangements must be made **before** the examination. For example, we can produce a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment.

Special consideration

We can give special consideration to candidates who have had a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination. Where we do this, it is given **after** the examination.

Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

5.5 Language of examinations

We will provide units for this specification in English only.

5.6 Qualification titles

Qualifications based on this specification are:

- AQA GCSE Short Course in Religious Studies.
- AQA GCSE Full Course in Religious Studies.

5.7 Awarding grades and reporting results

The GCSE and GCSE short course qualifications will be graded on an eight-grade scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade G will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

We will publish the minimum raw mark for each grade, for each unit, when we issue candidates' results. We will report a candidate's unit results to centres in terms of uniform marks and qualification results in terms of uniform marks and grades.

For each unit, the uniform mark corresponds to a grade as follows.

Each Unit (maximum uniform mark = 100)

Grade	Uniform Mark Range
A*	90–100
A	80–89
B	70–79
C	60–69
D	50–59
E	40–49
F	30–39
G	20–29
U	0–19

We calculate a candidate's total uniform mark by adding together the uniform marks for the relevant units. We convert this total uniform mark to a grade as follows.

Short Course (maximum uniform mark = 100)

Grade	Uniform Mark Range
A*	90–100
A	80–89
B	70–79
C	60–69
D	50–59
E	40–49
F	30–39
G	20–29
U	0–19

Full Course (maximum uniform mark = 200)

Grade	Uniform Mark Range
A*	180–200
A	160–179
B	140–159
C	120–139
D	100–119
E	80–99
F	60–79
G	40–59
U	0–39

5.8 Re-sits and shelf-life of unit results

Unit results remain available to count towards certification within the shelf life of the specification whether or not they have already been used.

Candidates may re-sit a unit once only. The better result for each unit will count towards the final qualification provided that the 40% rule is satisfied. Candidates may re-sit the qualification an unlimited number of times.

Candidates will be graded on the basis of the work submitted for assessment.

Candidates must take units comprising at least 40% of the total assessment in the series in which they enter for certification.

Appendices

A 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 should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined 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 (see Section 4) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the candidates' performance may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Description
A	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
C	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
F	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

B Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Legislative, Sustainable Development, Economic and Cultural Issues, and Health and Safety Considerations

AQA has taken great care to ensure that any wider issues, including those particularly relevant to the education of students at Key Stage 4, have been identified and taken into account in the preparation of this specification. They will only form part of the assessment requirements where they relate directly to the specific content of the specification and have been identified in Section 3: Content.

European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Environmental Education

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report “Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education” 1993 in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Avoidance of Bias

AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and specimen units to avoid bias of any kind.

C Overlaps with other Qualifications

There is the potential for AQA GCSE Religious Studies Specification A to overlap peripherally with Specification B depending on the option(s) chosen within Specification B. However, the approaches adopted in the two Specifications are different. Because of the very specific systematic focus in Specification A, and the generic, thematic

approaches adopted in Specification B it is considered that the two Specifications would provide the basis for a valuable, complementary and mutually enlightening study of religion.

In all cases of overlap, the perspective and depth required in the study of issues or aspects of religion varies within each Specification.

D Key Skills – Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence

Introduction

The Key Skills Qualification requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of Communication, Application of Number and Information and Communication Technology.

The Wider Key Skills of Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others and Problem Solving are also available. The acquisition and demonstration of ability in these ‘wider’ Key Skills is deemed highly desirable for all candidates.

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- What you need to know
- What you must do
- Guidance.

Candidates following a course of study based on this specification for Religious Studies can be offered opportunities to develop and generate evidence of attainment in aspects of the Key Skills of:

- Communication
- Application of Number
- Information and Communication Technology
- Working with Others
- Improving own Learning and Performance
- Problem Solving.

Areas of study and learning that can be used to encourage the acquisition and use of Key Skills, and to provide opportunities to generate evidence for Part B of units, are provided in the Teachers’ Resource Bank for this specification.

The above information is given in the context of the knowledge that Key Skills at levels 1 and 2 will be available until 2010 with last certification in 2012.

Key Skills Qualifications of Communication, Application of Number and Information and Communication Technology will be phased out and replaced by Functional Skills qualifications in English, Mathematics and ICT from September 2010 onwards. For further information see the AQA website: <http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/keyskills/com04.php>



GCSE Religious Studies A Teaching from 2009 onwards

Qualification Accreditation Number: 500/4514/3 and 500/4484/9 (Short Course)

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.

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Support meetings are available throughout the life of the specification.

Further information is available at:

<http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>

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