



STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Date: THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2014 at 6.30 pm

**Lewisham Islamic Centre,
363-365 Lewisham High Street,
Lewisham,
London SE13 6NZ**

**Enquiries to: Valletta Bayley 07977695229
Telephone: (direct line)**

MEMBERS

Members are summoned to attend this meeting

**Barry Quirk
Chief Executive
Lewisham Town Hall
Catford
London SE6 4RU
Date: November 28 2014**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

ORDER OF BUSINESS – PART 1 AGENDA

Item No		Page No.s
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising not on the full agenda	1 - 8
3.	Confirmation of order of business for the meeting	
4.	SACRE Constitution	9 - 14
5.	Membership Update	15 - 16
6.	Multifaith Centre Update Oral update on progress since the last meeting.	
7.	DfE Teacher Standards 2013: an RE exemplification To consider the document produced by the RE Council and the National Association of teachers of RE designed as a support tool to help individuals interpret the DfE standards in relation to RE. To agree on their distribution to schools	17 - 20
8.	Standards in Lewisham Schools First information regarding results from summer 2014 public examinations.	
9.	Consultation on GCSE and A level reform The DfE is seeking views on revised subject content for GCSE and A level religious studies for first teaching from 2016. This is the final consultation on subject content.	21 - 69
10.	Any Other Business and Information Exchange	
11.	SACRE Development	
12.	To consider dates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the next Lewisham SACRE meeting (all meetings to take place from 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.) • an Agreed Syllabus Conference (postponed from last year) • Training for new SACRE members 	



Lewisham



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The public are welcome to attend our committee meetings, however occasionally committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of reports can be made available in additional formats on request.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (**SACRE**) which was open to the press and public and was held at the London Sivan Kovil, Clarendon Rise, Lewisham on **MONDAY 22ND September 2014 at 6.30PM**

Present

Group A: Mohammed Barrie, Gurbakhsh Singh Garcha, Gerald Rose,
Sarwoar Ahmed. Bala Vallipuram Subramaniam, James Dobson

Group B: Shaun Burns (Deputy Chair), John Goodey, Gail Exon

Group C: Fay Allen

Group D: Dinah Griffiths (Chair), Beverley Stanislaus

Also Present:

SACRE Adviser Denise Chaplin

Clerk Valletta Bayley

A Tour of the Temple – new members were encouraged to take the tour of the London Sivan Temple; explanatory notes describing the Temple and the meaning of the deities in the Temple were distributed among committee members.

1. WELCOME

Election of Chair and Vice Chair of SACRE

Chair

Denise Chaplin in her role as Advisor to the SACRE opened the meeting by welcoming all present and then proceeded to request nominations for the position of Chair.

Gail Exon nominated Dinah Griffiths. This was seconded by Gurbakhsh Garcha. Dinah agreed to be put forward. There were no further nominations. Members therefore unanimously voted for Dinah for the position of Chair, her term of office will be for exactly one year. In her role as Chair Dinah then took over the management of the election of Vice Chair. Election of Vice Chair

Dinah advised members that Kishan Manocha had sent his apologies as he had another meeting elsewhere. He had asked Dinah to nominate him for the position of Vice Chair which she duly did. However there was discussion among members who felt that they did not know Kishan well enough to be able to make a decision as he had only recently joined the SACRE and his first attendance had been at the previous meeting. Members discussed

the rules related to election of officers and suggested an amendment to the existing arrangements which currently simply require nomination by another SACRE member: someone wishing to put themselves forward for election can approach another SACRE member to nominate them. Dinah pointed out that it was unusual to have two nominations for election for either Chair or Vice Chair as most members were reluctant to take on these responsibilities.

Bearing this comment in mind and after discussion consensus was reached that the rules for election should be changed so that a nominee for either Chair or Vice Chair should have served as a SACRE member for at least one year before being considered for election.

The Chair then invited any other nominations and Shaun Burns was nominated by John Goodey and seconded by Gail Exon. There were no further nominations and Shaun Burns was duly unanimously elected Vice Chair for the following year.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves to the new Clerk, Valletta Bayley.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

Apologies for absence

Received from: Kishan Manocha, David Hutchens, Joan Goldberg, Rt Rev Monsignor Nicholas Rother, Angie Arnell, Lorna Trodd and Revd. Canon John Ackland.

Absences with No Apologies

Pastor Nick Hughes, Michael O'Hanlon, Cllr Jacqui Paschoud, Cllr David Britton.

Membership Issues

It was reported that Ms Nobhule Thebe who represented Turnham Primary School under the old arrangements for 'opted out' schools no longer worked at Turnham Primary School. A discussion was held around the possibility of replacing Ms Thebe with another teacher from Turnham. However as this category of membership was historical, pertaining to a situation which no longer existed it was proposed that the category should be altered to 'Those schools not currently under LA management' which would be an opportunity for RE specialists working in Academies or Free Schools to join.

However, it was proposed that this category should be renamed in order to include those "schools not currently under the LA management". The chair stated with this new title would enable any future independent schools to be placed under the category.

It was agreed that the Chair would contact Turnham School to advise the Headteacher of the proposed change and to thank them for their continued support to SACRE over many years. A

letter would then be sent out to all the schools in this category to obtain feedback and possible nominations or names of interested parties.

Denise Chaplin reported that she was still waiting to hear from the 'free churches' about two more Free Church representatives.

- It was reported that Beverley Stanislaus had taken up a post as Deputy Head of School at a school in Bexley Therefore she would not attend future meetings. Members thanked Beverly for her service.
- It was noted that there was still a vacancy for a secondary governor. It was reported that the vacancy had been advertised in the termly Governors' Information Pack issued by Lewisham but there had been no expressions of interest. David Britton would approach the governors of Trinity School to see if anyone would be willing to take on this role.

Action:

3. MINUTES / NOTES OF LAST MEETING (2014)

The minutes of the last meeting held were **AGREED** as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE FULL AGENDA

There were none

5. CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR THE MEETING

No changes were made to the order of the business.

6. SACRE CONSTITUTION

Denise took members through the draft constitution that she had reformulated after considerable input from Kishan Manocha and drew their attention to the following:-

- Role and functions

(i) To advise the Local Authority (Lewisham Council) on the religious education to be given in its schools in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus. In particular, the SACRE can offer advice on methods of teachings, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers.

(ii) To advise the Local Authority on matters pertaining to Collective Worship in its schools.

With regard to (i) and (ii), the Local Authority may refer matters to the SACRE, which the latter must then consider and advise on. The SACRE may also take the initiative and make recommendations to the Local Authority on these matters.

(iii) To receive, determine and review applications from Head Teachers as to whether the requirement for Collective Worship that is wholly or mainly of a Christian character may not apply. This application to vary the legal requirement for Collective Worship may be for the whole school or for groups of pupils.

(iv) To require the LA to set up a Statutory Agreed Syllabus Conference to review the Agreed Syllabus if, in the opinion of SACRE, this becomes necessary.

(v) To produce an annual report on its work which will, inter alia:

- a) describe the work that SACRE has undertaken
- b) specify matters in respect of which the SACRE has given advice to the Local Authority;
- c) broadly describe the nature of the advice given and the response given by the LA;
- d) where any such matters were not referred to the SACRE by the LA, provide the SACRE's reasons for offering advice on the matter.

Copies of the report will be made available to schools and the public on the SACRE and/or other appropriate website.

At the discretion of the LA, the SACRE may:

- (a) monitor the provision of Religious Education in order to inform its advice and reporting;
- (b) monitor the provision of Collective Worship in order to inform its advice and reporting;
- (c) be involved in Complaints Procedures.

Shaun felt that with the SACRE's long custodianship and support of the South London MultiFaith and MultiCultural Resources Centre, there should be reference in the constitution to that effect as it was a clear way in which SACRE could help fulfil its support of effective Religious Education within the LA.

Other members shared the importance of the inclusion of such a reference and asked Shaun to write an appropriate sentence to this effect that could be included in SACRE's constitution.

As part of the discussion about the Constitution members addressed the vexed question of long term non attendance. It was agreed that the following changes should be made to the Constitution

- Terms of Office of Members

Termination of SACRE membership by reason of non-attendance:

If a Member is absent for 3 or more consecutive meetings for any reason not acceptable to the SACRE there shall be deemed to be a vacated place to be filled by the sponsorship group / governing body for that class of Members.

Members asked for further clarification on this item. Denise explained that any member who is absent for three meetings and had not sent their apologies will be deemed as vacated their place. Members felt that a warning letter from the Clerk regarding their attendances should be sent in the first instance. It was suggested that the letter should be sent after two absences rather than three; this would give the member the opportunity to address their attendance on the third occasion. It was realised that three meetings would cover half an academic year which potentially meant that the SACRE would be operating with fewer people than necessary and maybe in danger of being inquorate if attendance was not dealt with effectively. A

further question was “what if the person had given a reasonable explanation for their absence”? It was stated that It was up to SACRE as to whether they accepted an absence or not. A discussion was held around this point in particular relating to absence through illness which it was felt should not be penalised.

It was **AGREED** that that a letter would be sent by the Clerk after two absences.

- The process for the election of Chair and Vice Chair.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council shall be chosen from Members of the SACRE and shall be elected at the first meeting in each education (academic) year.

As stated under item 1, of these minutes, members agreed that the self-nominee for both positions should have served on the board for at least twelve months so that members would have developed a relationship with that person and have caused to want to nominate them to such an important position.

7. SACRE DEVELOPMENT

Denise had run two training sessions for new or inexperienced SACRE members on the 15th and 16th September 2014, both events were open to Lewisham, Greenwich and Lambeth SACRE members. They were well attended but the Clerk, who was present for part of the training at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre, on the 16th, and took the tour of the centre, was the only new Lewisham member who attended training.

Denise explained that the training had reminded old and informed new members of the legal expectations of SACRE. It was decided to schedule another session in Lewisham at the Civic Suite so that Lewisham members could have another chance to attend.

8. OFSTED UPDATE INSPECTION GUIDANCE JULY 2014

Denise took members through the OFSTED update. Schools would be advised to acquaint themselves with the new guidance for schools.

The “Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils has been brought from the subsidiary guidance into the handbook and Collective Worship will be an important part of the evidence base for this area. All areas also contribute to judgements on leadership and management”, so schools should ensure that these areas are not over looked. RE planning should be alongside other subjects on schools’ websites from the 4th September 2014.

9. RADICALISATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEWISHAM

The chair had met with Imam Shakeel Begg regarding the situation in Birmingham. He had forwarded information to Dinah, Denise and Shaun from a blog which set out some of the background to the situation on some Birmingham schools and he was concerned about the implications.

Dinah had studied the blog and noted that the key issue seemed to be that a number of schools were failing badly with poor educational standards and weak governance. Many of these schools had large numbers of pupils from Muslim families and parents were understandably very concerned about the situation. The author of the blog stated that some of the original governors did not speak English fluently and had not understood their roles. Active members of the Muslim community replaced them with the clear aim of improving the educational chances of children in the community. Dinah felt that there were indications of a lack of governor training and even the new and enthusiastic governors were unclear about the role of governors. She felt that it was unlikely that a similar situation would occur in Lewisham: it is a much smaller Local Authority than Birmingham and so there is more opportunity for close vigilance. Furthermore Lewisham requires all new and prospective governors to attend governor training which focusses on the strategic role of governors and their range of responsibilities. Imam Shakeel and Dinah discussed setting up a programme whereby members of the Muslim community who were interested could be trained as potential governors. The clerk suggested that currently governor training focuses on existing new governors and extending the offer to the wider community would have financial implications. Dinah agreed to approach the head of Governors' services to discuss this. Gail Exon stated that Lewisham had 5 National Leaders of Governance and she was one of them. She will contact her colleagues to discuss how governors in the Borough can work together to support this initiative.

Dinah and Imam Shakeel also discussed the issue of radicalisation of young people which had been raised by Cllr David Britten at the previous meeting as an item for the agenda. Mohammed Barrie (SACRE member representing the Mosque and Head teacher of the Olive Tree School) said that he had not heard of any concerns among local young people. However Dinah and Imam Shakeel both felt that SACRE and the Mosque should work together to support members of the Muslim community, parents and schools so that issues of radicalisation can be tackled openly and in a timely fashion. To that end Imam Shakeel suggested opening the Mosque for an event jointly hosted with SACRE whereby interested and/or concerned parties – Parents, Teachers, and members of the local community - could look at the issues under discussion and develop a framework of mutual understanding and support. He also stated that in the immediate situation if any schools, parents or young people have concerns about these issues he is happy for them to contact him: he is willing to speak to anyone who is concerned. SACRE members supported the idea of an event at the Mosque and Dinah will contact Imam Shakeel to confirm this.

SACRE members noted that Imam Shakeel was one of the three Imams who wrote to Islamic State condemning their activities as unislamic. Dinah will write to Imam Begg to express appreciation of his stance.

It was agreed that the Imam should be praised for his work in the media, condemning the ISIL fighters.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Ramadan advice to school had been updated; Denise will email it to the two representatives from the Mosque to bring back to January meeting.

The Religious Advice for Schools – booklets needs to be updated Shaun, Denise and Dinah will review the booklet and bring it to the next meeting.

Of particular interest to SACRE members are:

11. DATES of future meetings

Next Meeting: It was **AGREED** that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 4th December 2014 at 6.30pm. The venue would be confirmed at a later date.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....

Appendix A.

Committee A Other Christian denominations and other faiths and beliefs represented in the LA

African-Caribbean Churches/ Pentecostal churches	1 representative
Baha'i	1 representative
Buddhism	1 representative
Free Churches	3 representatives
Hinduism	1 representative
Humanism	1 representative
Islam	2 representatives
Judaism	1 representative
Roman Catholicism	1 representative
Sikhism	1 representative

Committee B The Church of England

The Diocese of Southwark	5 representatives
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Committee C Teachers' Professional Associations

ATL	1 representative
NASUWT	1 representative
NUT	2 representatives
Lewisham Heads and Deputies	1 representative
Turnham school	1 representative

Committee D The Local Authority

Elected Members	3 representatives
Representative of the Executive Director	1 representative
Secondary school Governors	1 representative
Primary school Governors	1 representative

Also

Clerk to the SACRE	(non-voting)
RE Adviser to SACRE	(non-voting)
Co-optees	(non-voting)

LEWISHAM STANDING ADVISORY
COUNCIL
on
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(LEWISHAM SACRE)

CONSTITUTION

Dated:

DRAFT

LEWISHAM STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Council shall be called the Lewisham SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education). It is established under Section 3.90 – 3.97 of the Education Act 1996 as amended.

Interpretation

In this Constitution

‘Local Authority’ means Lewisham Council acting either independently or through the Education Lead Member and Directorate.

‘The Council’ means Lewisham’s SACRE.

‘Member’ means a Member of SACRE and includes a substitute or co-opted Member.

‘Elected member’ means an elected member of the council sitting on Committee D as a SACRE member

All questions of Interpretation are governed by the “Interpretation Act” 1978 as may be subsequently amended.

MEMBERSHIP

Current membership of Lewisham SACRE

Committee A Other Christian denominations and other faiths and beliefs represented in the LA

African-Caribbean Churches/ Pentecostal churches	1 representative
Baha’i	1 representative
Buddhism	1 representative
Free Churches	3 representatives
Hinduism	1 representative
Humanism	1 representative
Islam	2 representatives
Judaism	1 representative
Roman Catholicism	1 representative
Sikhism	1 representative

Committee B The Church of England

Southwark Diocese 5 representatives

Committee C Teachers’ Professional Associations

ATL	1 representative
NASUWT	1 representative
NUT	2 representatives
Lewisham Heads and Deputies	1 representative
Turnham school	1 representative

Committee D The Local Authority

Elected Members	3 representatives
Representative of the Executive Director	1 representative
Secondary school Governors	1 representative

Primary school Governors 1 representative

Also

Clerk to the SACRE	(non-voting)
RE Adviser to SACRE	(non-voting)
Co-optees	(non-voting)

All members shall be delegates who are interested in education in general and religious education in particular. Delegates as Members shall remain until such time as they will have resigned or have been removed from Membership under the rules dictated by their sponsorship group, Governing Body of that class of Members or for any reason stated therein.

There can be a substitute Member nominated by the absent member and notice of this substitution should be notified to the clerk of SACRE at least 6 hours in advance of the meeting.

If a Member is absent for 3 or more consecutive meetings for any reason not acceptable to the Council there shall be deemed to be a vacated place to be filled by the sponsorship group / governing body for that class of Members.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council shall be chosen from Members of the SACRE and shall be elected at the first meeting in each education (academic) year.

In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair at any meeting the Council can elect one of its member to act as the Chair for that meeting.

A meeting will only be quorate if the following numbers of representative/s of the respective groups are present: -

Group A - minimum of 2 representatives (1 Christian and 1 non-Christian)

Group B - minimum of 1 representative

Group C - minimum of 1 representative

Group D – minimum of 1 representative

All members are entitled to speak and vote on any issue as invited by the Chair but substitute or Co-opted members may speak but not vote at any meeting. SACRE will always seek to reach decisions on a consensus basis but when voting is to be exercised as only one vote is allowed from each group A, B, C or D as mentioned above.

Co-option – SACRE has the power to co-opt members as agreed by the majority of its members.

In the event of an equality of votes on any issue the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

The clerk of the Council shall be an employee of Southwark Council as designated by the Council's Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

THE DUTIES OF SACRE

To advise the LA on such matters concerned with school worship and with Religious Education according to an Agreed Syllabus as the LA may refer to it or as SACRE may see fit. These matters might include, for example, the provision of INSET, methods of teaching and choice of materials and the consideration of complaints should the LA so require.

SACRE shall send a copy of advice on religious education in accordance with the current agreed syllabus to the Head Teacher of all Academies or free schools within the borough. Such advice will also be sent to Schools with a religious character for information.

To receive, and determine whether an application from a Head Teacher to vary the legal requirement for collective is appropriate for the whole school or for groups of pupils.

To publish an annual report outlining SACRE's work, the advice given by SACRE to the LA and whether a Statutory Agreed Syllabus Conference was requested during that year. The report should broadly describe the nature of advice provided and, if such advice was in relation to matters not referred to SACRE by the LA, stating the reasons why such advice was offered.

A copy of the report will be sent by SACRE to the Department for Education (DfE) and the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)

To require the LA to set up a Statutory Agreed Syllabus Conference to review the Agreed Syllabus if, in the opinion of SACRE, this becomes necessary.

PROCEDURES

Dates

The dates of the main meetings will be decided at the first meeting in the education (academic) year.

Agenda

Matters for the Agenda of any meeting shall be sent to the Clerk at least 21 days in advance of the meeting.

T

he Agenda shall be distributed to reach members at least 7 working days in advance of the next listed meeting.

Minutes

The draft minutes of meetings shall be circulated to Members within one month of the meeting taking place.

..... (Chair) on behalf of Lewisham SACRE

Dated:

Lewisham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Dinah Griffiths
Chair of the SACRE

Date:

Please reply to:
3rd Floor, Laurence House, 1 Catford Rd,
London, SE6 4RU
Telephone: (020) 8-314-7150
Fax: (020) 8-314-3745

e-mail: vbeduclerk@gmail.com,
denise.chaplin@lewisham.gov.uk

Name
Address

Dear

I am writing on behalf of the SACRE as we have not seen you for (.....) meetings. We hope you are well. As you will be aware, SACRE is monitoring attendance of members in line with its new constitution, which you will have received with meeting papers. We are concerned that SACRE's deliberations are informed by involvement from all its constituent bodies and as well as being concerned for the health and welfare of members, we are also concerned that the SACRE's business can be carried forward effectively.

The constitution provides the facility for members to nominate substitutes who may represent their interest group if they are unable to attend. It may be that you would like to let me know of a substitute for you and that this will enable you to continue to be a member/

However if you feel that you are no longer able to attend as a member of SACRE , even with the support of a substitute, please let me know so that we can approach your sponsoring body for a new member nomination.

Yours sincerely

Valletta Bayley
SACRE Clerk
cc. : SACRE Chair & RE Adviser



Lewisham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Dinah Griffiths

Chair of the SACRE

Date:

Please reply to:

3rd Floor, Laurence House, 1 Catford Rd,

London, SE6 4RU

Telephone: (020) 8-314-7150

Fax: (020) 8-314-3745

e-mail: vbeduclerk@gmail.com,

denise.chaplin@lewisham.gov.uk

Name

Address

Dear

On (date) I wrote to you on behalf of the SACRE regarding your attendance at SACRE meetings.

Unfortunately, following that letter we did not hear from you and you did not attend a subsequent meeting on (). Therefore your position on SACRE has become vacant and I will be approaching your sponsoring body for a new member nomination.

Thank you for your support for the SACRE's work.

Yours sincerely

Valletta Bayley

SACRE Clerk

cc. : SACRE Chair & RE Adviser



Name	Meeting date	Meeting date	Meeting date	Meeting date	Meeting date	Sponsoring
Group A	22/09/14	04/12/14				body
KishanManocha	A					Baha'i
David Hutchens	A					Buddhism
Pastor Nick Hughes	O					Free (AOG)
VallipuramBala	√					Hinduism
James Dobson	√					Humanism
Mohammed Barrie	√					Islam
Sarwoar Ahmed	√					Islam
Gerald Rose	O					Judaism
Joan Goldberg	A					Judaism
Rt. Rev. Monsignor Nicholas Rotherham	A					RCC
Gurbakhsh Singh Garcha	√					Sikhism
Vacant						Free (URC)
Vacant						Free (Baptist)
Vacant						Evangelical
Vacant						Pentecostal
Group B						
Shaun Burns (Deputy Chair)	√					CE
Angie Arnell	A					CE
John Goodey	√					CE
Gail Exon	√					CE
Rev John Ackland	√					CE
Group C						
Fay Allen	√					NAS/UWT
Lorna Trodd	A					NUT
Nobhule Thebe	R					Turnham

Michael O'Hanlon	O					NUT
Gerry Cohen	R					
Vacant						ATL
Vacant						Jackie Woods
Group D						
Dinah Griffiths (Chair)	v					Governor Primary
Vacant						Governor Secondary
Cllr. JacqPaschoud	O					LA Member
Cllr. David Britton	O					LA Member
Beverlely Stannislaus	v					Representative
Vacant						LA Member

v - Denotes present at meeting

A - Denotes apologies received and granted

O - Denotes no apologies received or granted

R – Denotes Resignation

Note - Termination of SACRE membership by reason of non-attendance:

If a member is absent for 3 or more consecutive meetings for any reason not acceptable to the Council there shall be deemed to be a vacated place to be filled by the board.

The member will receive a enquiry letter from the Clerk after the second meeting failure to attend third meeting will result in cancelation of the members membership.

DFE Teacher standards 2013: An RE exemplification

This RE exemplification is designed as a support tool to help individuals interpret the DfE standards in relation to RE. It is in no sense statutory but is intended as guidance for self audit or professional development. It has been produced jointly by NATRE and the REC.

Section 1

	Teacher standards	RE exemplification
Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that adults and pupils are aware that it is their role to explore and evaluate beliefs and the impact they may have on those who hold them. but not to pass judgement on the validity of an individual's beliefs (unless views expressed are offensive or disrespectful to others) ensure RE classrooms provide both safe and challenging spaces, in which pupils' religions and beliefs are respected, whilst at the same time offering opportunity for rigorous critical enquiry demonstrate awareness that pupils may often have the ability to achieve above the level they achieve in other subjects if they are allowed to express their insight and understanding in a variety of ways (e.g. creatively and orally as well as in writing). give pupils opportunities to explore complex concepts and questions. be aware of own assumptions and beliefs, including that no one is 'neutral' or entirely objective when it comes to such matters. demonstrate appropriate openness about own beliefs and opinions, exercising professional judgement (informed by principles in the RE Council Code of Conduct for Teachers of RE) as to when this is appropriate and when it is not
Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate understanding of school tracking systems, using data to plan individualised support for pupils and aiming for them to make good or outstanding progress within each stage. plan work that takes account of pupils' prior knowledge (e.g. their home religious/belief background) so that all make good progress, whatever their individual starting point, and understand next steps for improvement develop pupils as active learners using AfL techniques so they take ownership of their own progress. ensure pupils understand the relevance of RE in the wider community, the world of work and their personal development. <p>See also RE Quality Mark Section A 'Learners and Learning'</p>

Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings • demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship • demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a clear sense of the purpose of RE and how this relates to pedagogical approaches • develop a plan for own professional development which takes account of own starting point in relation to subject knowledge and the steps by which expertise is broadened and deepened • demonstrate awareness of changes and new developments in RE by accessing authoritative online resources such as RE:ONLINE, the NATRE/RE Today websites and the REC PD Portal • demonstrate awareness of recent research (e.g. by reading British Journal of Religious Education, Journal of Beliefs and Values, RE Today and/or attending conferences linking research and classroom practice) • where appropriate develop links with a local HEI or ITE institute (e.g. to engage in RE action research projects) • share with pupils correct versions of RE specific vocabulary, including that there is sometimes more than one spelling of key vocabulary. <p>See also REQM Section B: Teachers and Teaching</p>
Plan and teach well-structured lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time • promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity • set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired • reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching • contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise that employing a range of teaching approaches is more likely to engage students than a single approach. • plan work that allows pupils to challenge and reflect on ideas using thinking skills and enquiry strategies and challenging questioning (all examples of the wide range of strategies that are particularly valuable in RE) • ensure that the structure of lessons is not over complicated and is structured to maximise pupil progress • teach RE that engages and pupils consider of relevance to the world they live in and make use of local, national and international events, including those raising ethical and philosophical issues, to help pupils understand the relevance of their learning • set homework tasks that link work in RE to the real world e.g. by using surveys and interviews • show awareness of role Learning Outside the Classroom can play in pupils' learning in RE e.g. by organising visits to places of religious or spiritual significance and by ensuring the curriculum includes encounters (whether electronic or face to face) with visitors from different religions and worldviews • make good use of assessment for learning to establish how effective learning has been, and be prepared to adapt planning in response • use pupil surveys as a source of evidence for assessing the impact of lessons, alongside other evidence of pupil achievement • co-operate with colleagues in developing resources and planning, drawing on the best ideas in the school • demonstrate awareness of examples of good practice locally and nationally and apply them in regular curriculum reviews. Ensure that appropriate opportunities for links with other subjects are taken up (e.g. Spirited Arts project linking RE with work in art or music, WW1 poetry being studied in English linked with learning about concepts of 'a just war' in RE) • when creating a curriculum or pupil resources regularly check that they are up to date, accurate and reflect diversity, including. reference to information offered by religion and worldview communities. <p>See also REQM Section B: Teachers and Teaching</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively • demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development • have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use questioning and other teaching and learning strategies appropriately to understand what pupils already know and to move on the learning of all individuals in class • demonstrate awareness of how good RE links to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupil and to other aspects of the school curriculum. • be sensitive when asking a pupil to talk about their own religious practice. Be aware which pupils feel comfortable to share aspects of their own belief and practice. Ensure the class is aware that this is one example and that other people from this religion or worldview may believe something different or practise differently. • present opportunities for pupils to engage their interest in religious, ethical or philosophical issues by signposting extra curricular opportunities such as philosophy clubs, Youth SACREs, pupil RE Conferences <p>See also REQM Section B: Teachers and Teaching and Section C: Curriculum</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Make accurate and productive use of assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements • make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress • use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons • give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate awareness of any changes in best practice in assessment • use supportive materials such as exemplification of standards materials • recognise that some elements in RE are not assessable, such as the personal character development of pupils or their religious beliefs • develop pupils as active learners so assessment is a developmental part of their ongoing progress, for example, peer marking, self marking, competitions linked to RE success criteria, time given for reflection and target-setting. • have a clear understanding of the difference between assessment for learning and assessment for accountability, and demonstrate the use of these in planning and teaching • recognise that progress in RE is not likely to be linear, so ensure that the curriculum offers opportunities to re-visit and deepen understanding of core concepts; assessment should show a deepening of understanding <p>See also REQM Section A: Learners and Learning</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy • have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly • manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them • maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow the principles of the REC's Code of Practice: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect persons 2. Value reason-giving 3. Practise reciprocity 4. Accept contestability and value self-awareness 5. Be open 6. Promote fair and accurate representation 7. Model-life-long learning 8. Promote balance • identify the Golden Rule (treat others as you would want to be treated) as a core moral precept across religions and beliefs, as well as in the classroom • connect and compare values of the classroom with values and virtues of religions and worldviews, to explore the wisdom learnt from centuries of human experience • create displays that stimulate pupils' interest in religions and worldviews and that support their learning <p>See also REQM Section B: Teachers and Teaching</p>

- make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- deploy support staff effectively
- take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
- communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being.
-

- be proactive in ensuring RE provides a focus for or leads on some whole school learning such as a diversity day.
- offer professional development in school, for example, circle time, running effective discussions, coping with controversy in the classroom, addressing painful subjects in the classroom.
- work effectively with support staff and colleagues without RE expertise to enable them to make effective contributions to pupils' progress
- engage in professional development including professional association membership, participation in teacher networks (electronic and/or face to face), in SACRE and Agreed Syllabus Conference opportunities where relevant, and through links with local communities of religion and belief
- take opportunities to support parents to understand the aims and purpose of RE and what their child will be learning.

Beyond the school

- support local schools by hosting networks, bringing teachers together, linking primary, secondary and special schools to share excellent practice

See also REQM Section B:Teachers and Teaching, Section D: Subject Leadership and Section E:Continuing Professional Development



Department
for Education

Reformed GCSE and A level subject content consultation

Government consultation

**Launch date 7 November
Respond by 29 December**

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The government is reforming GCSEs and A levels to ensure that they prepare students better for further and higher education, and for employment. GCSEs are being reformed so that they set expectations which match those of the highest performing countries, with rigorous assessment that provides a reliable measure of students' achievement. The new A levels will be linear qualifications that ensure that students develop the skills and knowledge needed for progression to undergraduate study.
- 1.2. Reforms to these qualifications are already underway. [GCSE subject content](#) in English literature, English language and mathematics was published in November 2013, and the new qualifications will be taught from September 2015. [GCSE subject content](#) in ancient languages, geography, history, modern foreign languages and science, to be taught from September 2016, was published in April 2014.
- 1.3. At AS and A level, [subject content](#) in art and design, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English language, English literature, English language and literature, history, physics, psychology, and sociology was published in April 2014. These new qualifications will be taught from September 2015.
- 1.4. We are now developing a further set of GCSEs, AS and A levels to be taught from 2016. We have already [consulted](#) on proposed subject content for GCSEs in art and design, computer science, dance, music, and physical education, and AS and A levels in dance, music, physical education, modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further mathematics and geography, with final content due to be publishing final content this winter. We are currently [consulting](#) on GCSEs in citizenship studies, cooking and nutrition, drama, and design and technology; and AS and A levels in drama and theatre. We are now consulting on proposed subject content for religious studies GCSE and AS and A level, which is the final subject that will be taught from 2016 and the focus of this consultation.
- 1.5. The main change to the religious studies GCSE content is the expectation that all students must study two religions. However, students will have the option to spend up to three quarters of their time studying one religion (if textual studies is taken into account). This will ensure all students have a well-rounded education that leads to a rigorous qualification thorough grounding in religion, religions and belief. A number of changes have also been made to the religious studies A level to re-balance the breadth and depth of the subject content to support students progressing to higher education.

- 1.6. Ofqual has [consulted](#) on proposals for the final phase of reform and will announce its decisions shortly. It is planned that reformed GCSEs and A levels in remaining subjects will then be introduced for first teaching from 2017.

2. Coverage of this consultation

- 2.1. This consultation seeks views on proposed subject content for religious studies GCSE and A level, which will be introduced from September 2016.
- 2.2. The proposed subject content requirements are designed to become regulatory documents which set out the minimum knowledge, understanding and skills needed for GCSE and A level qualifications. They provide the framework for awarding organisations to create the detail of qualification specifications.
- 2.3. This consultation covers:
 - proposed content for religious studies GCSE
 - proposed content for the AS and A level in religious studies.
- 2.4. Whilst responsibility for specifying the subject content of GCSEs and A levels lies with the Department for Education (DfE), responsibility for determining the assessment arrangements lies with Ofqual, the independent regulator. Ofqual is therefore consulting in parallel on GCSE and A level assessment arrangements for religious studies, including the assessment objectives. In order to understand how students will be expected to engage with these subjects it is important to consider both the content and the assessment objectives. The Ofqual consultation can be found [here](#).

3. Background and context for the consultation

GCSE reform

3.1. The primary purpose of GCSEs is to evidence the progress and achievement of students of all abilities against demanding and fulfilling subject content. GCSEs must also enable progression to further vocational and academic study. The new qualifications will remain universal qualifications which are accessible, with good teaching, to the same proportion of students who currently sit GCSEs at the end of key stage 4. At the level of a pass (currently indicated by a grade C), there must be an increase in demand to reflect that of high-performing jurisdictions. At the top end, the new qualifications should prepare students properly to progress to A level or other study.¹

The GCSE reform process to date

3.2. DfE consulted widely with subject experts, education experts, schools and teachers to develop the GCSE content for reformed GCSEs in English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. We published GCSE subject content in English language, English literature and mathematics in November 2013, for first teaching from September 2015. We then published GCSE subject content in ancient languages, history, geography, science, and modern foreign languages in April 2014, for first teaching from September 2016.

3.3. The former Secretary of State announced the second stage of GCSE reform in April 2014. GCSEs in art and design, citizenship studies, computer science, dance, design and technology, drama, music, physical education, and religious studies will be reformed for first teaching from September 2016. We consulted on proposed subject content for art and design, computer science, dance, music, and physical education from July to September. We are also seeking views upon proposed subject content for GCSEs in citizenship studies, cooking and nutrition, drama, and design and technology, with a consultation that is due to close in November. We are now consulting on proposed subject content for religious studies GCSE, which is the final subject that will be taught from 2016 and the focus of this consultation. We will publish a Government response to all of these consultations and the final content in the winter.

3.4. The Department has led on developing content for religious studies, using expert drafters and working in close consultation with subject organisations. As part of the development process the Department has worked closely with the Religious Education Council of England and Wales to draft the content, as well as awarding

¹ For more information please refer to Ofqual's response to its consultation earlier this year on how standards should be set for new GCSEs: <http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/setting-standards-new-gcses-2017/>

organisations and Ofqual. The organisations consulted for religious studies are listed in **Annex 1**.

- 3.5.** The religious studies GCSE and A level content has undergone an extensive period of informal consultation with subject experts, religious groups, higher education experts, awarding organisations and Ofqual in the run up to formal consultation. This consultation builds on the informal engagement, which included detailed discussions about the proposals and draft content, since the religious studies content development process began.

A level reform

- 3.6.** The primary purpose of A levels is to prepare students for undergraduate study. The purpose of AS qualifications is to enable students to broaden the range of subjects they study post-16, and to support progression to further study or employment. Reforms to AS and A levels are intended to ensure that they continue to meet this purpose, in particular, responding to concerns from higher education institutions that students lack some of the skills necessary for undergraduate success.² The new A levels will be linear thus allowing more time for teaching and for students to develop a deep understanding of their subject. The process for reform gives universities a greater role in the design and development of the new qualifications.

The A level reform process to date

- 3.7.** A review of A level subject content was conducted between April and July 2013 by the four awarding organisations for A levels in England. The review was independently chaired by Professor Mark E. Smith, Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University. As a result of this review [subject content](#) in art and design, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English language, English literature, English language and literature, history, physics, psychology, and sociology was published in April 2014. These new A levels will be taught from September 2015.
- 3.8.** Responsibility for reviewing subject content for the remaining facilitating subjects, modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further mathematics, and geography, which are to be taught from September 2016, was remitted to a

² 2012 Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, Fit for Purpose? The view of the higher education sector, teachers and employers on the suitability of A levels, <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2012-04-03-fit-for-purpose-a-levels.pdf>, Cambridge Assessment, What are the impacts of qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds on higher education? A survey of 633 university lecturers, <http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/images/116010-cambridge-assessment-he-research-survey-of-lecturers-executive-summary.pdf>.

new independent body, the A level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB).³ ALCAB provided recommendations on these subjects and we consulted on them from July to September. We will publish final subject content this winter.

- 3.9.** In April 2014, the former Secretary of State announced that a further set of A levels would be reformed for first teaching from September 2016. These are: dance, design and technology, drama and theatre, music, physical education, and religious studies. We consulted on proposed subject content for dance, music, and physical education from July to September and are seeking views on proposed subject content for the A level and AS in drama and theatre currently. We are now consulting on proposed subject content for religious studies AS and A level, which is the final subject that will be taught from 2016 and the focus of this consultation. We will publish a Government response to all of these consultations and the final content in the winter.
- 3.10.** The religious studies AS and A level has been developed through the same process as for GCSEs, with an additional requirement to draw on advice of experts from higher education institutions to ensure that the proposed content facilitates progression to higher education and builds upon the revised GCSE content.
- 3.11.** The organisations consulted for religious studies are listed in Annex 1.

³ It was decided that A levels in modern foreign languages, mathematics, further mathematics and geography required more significant change and development time and that these subjects would be reformed for first teaching in 2016. Following a request from the Department, the Russell Group of universities set up ALCAB to review subject content in these subjects, together with ancient and classical languages.

4. Proposed changes to GCSE and A level subject content

- 4.1. This section outlines the proposed changes to current religious studies GCSE and A level subject content. The full subject content can be downloaded from the consultation page on GOV.UK.

Religious studies GCSE

- 4.2. To ensure the new GCSE in religious studies provides students with a well-rounded education that leads to a rigorous qualification, for the first time the content sets the expectation that all students study two religions. This will ensure all students have a thorough grounding in religion, religions and belief. The qualification will ensure that all students who achieve a GCSE in religious studies are able to demonstrate that they have an understanding of more than just one religion. This is in line with other reformed subjects, for example history, where students would not achieve a GCSE if they had only studied one period of history, and would need to show a deep and broad historical understanding.
- 4.3. These changes reflect current practice in the majority of schools, including many faith schools, who prepare their students for life in modern Britain by teaching their pupils about more than one religion. The content is structured in such a way that ensures all students spend at least half of their time studying two religions. However, students will also have the option to spend up to three quarters of their time studying one religion (if textual studies is taken into account) and the remaining quarter studying a second religion. Schools will also have the freedom to decide which two religions are most appropriate for their students to study.
- 4.4. The content also sets out the expectation that students recognise the diverse range of religious and non-religious beliefs represented in Great Britain and the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian. This will help to ensure that students develop respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.
- 4.5. These expectations are set out in the content in Part One: 'Study of religions'. This means that, in future, all RS GCSE students will spend at least half of their time studying two religions. All students will also be expected to engage with and respond to questions about religions and beliefs, whether they come from a religious background or not. Detailed content for each religion that students can choose to study is set out in the annexes that have been prepared by representatives from religious groups on the Religious Education Council of England and Wales. The content for each religion includes the topics (beliefs and teachings of religion, and sources of wisdom and authority) that all students are expected to study in relation to their two chosen religions, as well as additional topics (practices, and forms of expression and ways of life) that students will study

if they choose to study one religion in further depth.

- 4.6.** In addition to studying two religions, students will also have the opportunity to engage with thematic studies in Part Two: 'Textual studies and religion, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world'. This will be taught within the context of two different perspectives from one religion or two religions, depending on the choice of the school. Textual studies will include an investigation of primary religious texts from the chosen religion and should encourage students to engage in sufficiently challenging material. On the advice of subject experts, Ofsted and Ofqual, students are also expected to demonstrate an understanding of religious teachings in responding to philosophical and ethical debates rather than simply providing personal response, ensuring they are grounded in religion. This part of the content also provides scope for the study of critiques of religion and of non-religious beliefs in addition to their studies of religions. Students are required to include a study of different philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world, building on their knowledge and understanding from the study of religions.
- 4.7.** Further detail about the main options that awarding organisations can offer to religious studies GCSE students is set out in **Annex 2**.

Religious studies AS and A level

- 4.8.** One of the main concerns raised by academics from higher education was that the A level does not currently provide the right breadth and depth of study to support students progressing to higher education. A number of changes have been made to address this balance. The content previously allowed students to choose one or more of up to eight quite specific areas of study, which led some students to focus very narrowly on a particular area. These eight areas of study have therefore now been consolidated into three – the systematic study of religion; textual studies; and philosophy, ethics and social scientific studies – to broadly reflect the main areas of study at higher education. Students can choose two of these areas of study to ensure that they have sufficient breadth of understanding whilst still ensuring depth of study.
- 4.9.** The content for each of the areas of study is now specified in detail, including prescribing and increasing religious content. The content also now prescribes the minimum core knowledge, understanding and skills expected of students. Furthermore, all students will now be expected to study the beliefs and teachings of at least one religion in depth through a systematic study of that religion and/or a detailed analysis of its texts. This will ensure sufficient breadth and depth of religious understanding and comparability between the different routes.
- 4.10.** Academics also provided feedback on the broad academic skills students needed to develop to progress to higher education. To reflect these comments, there is

now greater emphasis in the content on students gaining a holistic understanding of the subject including how religious belief and practice impacts on the lives of individuals and society, and the interaction between the areas studied. There is also a greater focus on understanding change over time and critically engaging with the ideas and arguments of academics, scholars and thinkers.

- 4.11.** To encourage greater respect and tolerance students will also be expected to engage in debate in a way that is respectful of the right of others to hold a different view.

Who this is for

- Schools; colleges; organisations representing school teachers and lecturers; subject associations; parents; young people; higher education; further education; academies; employers/business sector; school governors; local authorities; headteachers; teachers; and awarding organisations.

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 7 November.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on:

- 0370 000 2288.

or email:

- RSGCSEandAlevel.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) early in 2015.

About this consultation

5. Consultation questions

Questions:

This consultation document makes five proposal(s):

1. Is the revised GCSE content in religious studies appropriate? Please consider whether:
 - there is a suitable level of challenge
 - the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to further academic and vocational education
 - the amount of content in the qualification is appropriate and comparable to other reformed GCSEs and, if not, whether you have any suggestions for removing or adding content
 - the number of optional pathways through the qualification is suitable and these present comparable levels of challenge
 - there is the right balance between breadth and depth of study.
 - Please provide evidence to support your response.
2. Is the revised A level content in religious studies appropriate? Please consider:
 - whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to undergraduate study.
 - Please provide evidence to support your response.
3. Is the revised AS qualification content in religious studies appropriate? Please provide evidence to support your response.

6. Equalities Impact

- 6.1. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, public bodies must have “due regard”, when making decisions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations, in relation to relevant protected characteristics. It would therefore be very helpful to understand if, in your view, there is any potential for the subject content to have a disproportionate impact upon any student with relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. It would be particularly helpful to understand if you have evidence to support any concerns you may have about such impacts.

Questions:

4. Do you think that any of the proposals have the potential to have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific students, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics'? (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.) Please provide evidence to support your response.
5. How could any adverse impact be reduced and how could the subject content of GCSEs and/or A levels be altered to better advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it? Please provide evidence to support your response.

We would like to hear your views on our proposals.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit www.education.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a word document version of the form and email it or post it.

By email

- RSGCSEandAlevel.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Department on 0370 000 2288

Email: RSGCSEandAlevel.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

if your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail:

consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288

or via the Department's 'Contact Us' page

By post

- Alex Smith, Floor 2, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith St, Westminster, London SW1P 3BT, UK.

Deadline

The consultation closes on 29 December 2014.

Annex 1: Subject experts consulted in the development of proposed subject content

Working closely with the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, views of a range of subject experts were gathered as part of the subject content development process. These included representatives from the following organisations:

Al-Khoei Foundation

Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)

Association of University Lecturers in RE (AULRE)

Avanti Schools Trust

Board of Deputies of British Jews

British Humanist Association (BHA)

British Sikh Education Council

Catholic Education Service (CES)

Church of England Board of Education

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Culham St Gabriel's Trust

Free Churches Education Committee (FCEC)

Hindu Council (UK)

Hockerill Educational Foundation

Independent Schools RS Association (ISRSA)

ISCKON Educational Services

Muslim Council of Britain

National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE

National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE)

National Board of RE Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA)

National Society for Promoting Religious Education ISKCON

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Great Britain

Network of Buddhist Organisations

Network of Sikh Organisations

Pagan Federation

Religious Education Council of England and Wales

The Buddhist Society

The Stapleford Centre

The Oxford Foundation

Tony Blair Faith Foundation

TRS-UK

Annex 2: Religious Studies GCSE model

Option 1

Part One: 50% Study of religions		Part Two: 50% Thematic studies
<p>25% Study of a first religion</p> <p>Two topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Sources of wisdom and authority 	<p>25% Study of a second religion</p> <p>Two topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Sources of wisdom and authority 	<p>ONE of the following:</p> <p>50% Textual studies Four themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions OR</p> <p>50% Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world Four themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions OR</p> <p>25% Textual studies and 25% Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world Four themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions</p>

Option 2

Part One: 75% Study of religions	Part Two: 25% Thematic studies
<p>50% Study of a first religion</p> <p>Four topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Sources of wisdom and authority 3. Practices 4. Forms of Expression and ways of life 	<p>25% Study of a second religion</p> <p>Two topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Sources of wisdom and authority <p>ONE of the following:</p> <p>25% Textual studies Two themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions OR</p> <p>25% Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world Two themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions</p>



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for Education

Religious studies

GCSE subject content

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Introduction

1. GCSE subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject. It provides the framework within which awarding organisations create the detail of their specifications, so ensuring progression from the Key Stage 3 curriculum and the possibilities for progression to GCE A level.
2. By setting out the range of subject content and areas of study for GCSE specifications in religious studies, the subject content is consistent with the requirements for the statutory provision for religious education in current legislation as it applies to different types of school.

Subject aims and learning outcomes

3. GCSE specifications in religious studies should:
 - develop students' knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs
 - develop students' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, and sources of wisdom and authority, including through their reading of key religious texts, other texts, and scriptures of the religions they are studying
 - develop students' ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding of the subject
 - provide opportunities for students to engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth, and their impact on human life
 - challenge students to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what they have learnt and contribute to their preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community
4. GCSE specifications in religious studies must require students to:
 - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of **two religions**
 - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key sources of wisdom and authority including texts which support contemporary religious faith
 - understand the impact of religion on individuals, communities and societies
 - understand significant common and divergent views between and within religions and beliefs

- apply knowledge and understanding in order to analyse questions related to religious beliefs and values
- construct well-informed and balanced arguments on matters concerned with religious beliefs and values set out in the subject content below

Programme of Study

5. Specifications may offer alternative routes through the qualification, drawing from the content set out below in order to provide students with one or more of the following programmes of study:

- Study of religion: the beliefs and teachings and sources of wisdom and authority (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to two religions (making up 50% of the overall qualification weighting, shared equally between the two religions); AND either:
 - a study of four different themes from Part Two adopting a textual approach (50% of the qualification), OR
 - a study of four different themes from Part Two adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world (50% of the qualification), OR
 - a study of four different themes from Part Two adopting a textual approach for two of those themes and the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world for two themes (50% of the qualification)

OR

- study all four topics from Part One in relation to a primary religion (50% of the overall qualification weighting); AND beliefs and teachings and sources of wisdom and authority (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to a second religion (25% of the qualification); AND either:
 - two different themes from Part Two, adopting a textual approach (25% of the qualification), OR
 - two different themes from Part Two, adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world (25% of the qualification)

6. Throughout all of the programmes of study, specifications should include the study of common and divergent views within traditions in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed.

7. Specifications may offer students the ability to study the themes within Part 2 in relation to differing perspectives from either one or two religions. Where students approach a theme in relation to one religion, they must study differing perspectives from within that religion in order to ensure they meet the assessment objectives.
8. Awarding organisations can develop, combine or cross reference the required content in any way appropriate to the specification, as long as the overall criteria are met.

Subject content

Part One: Study of religions

9. The content outlined below sets out the requirements for the study of religions, which is described for specific religions in annex A.
10. Where a religion is studied from the perspective of one group or denomination the second option chosen must be from another principal religion (e.g Christianity and Catholic Christianity could not be combined). Where a group or denomination is studied it must be studied in the context of the wider religion to which it belongs.
11. The four (study of religion) topics from which specifications may draw, in line with the programme of study set out above, are:
 - a. beliefs and teachings of religion: beliefs about God, gods or ultimate reality; the role of communities of faith, key moral principles and the meanings and purposes of human life
 - b. sources of wisdom and authority: the nature, history and treatment of key religious texts or scriptures; and where appropriate, of key religious figures and/or teachers from the early history of the tradition and/or the modern age
 - c. practices: the application of beliefs and teachings to the lives of modern believers including the study of places and forms of worship (as appropriate to each religion) rituals, prayer, meditation, festivals and celebrations, fasting, rites of passage, religious journeys and pilgrimage
 - d. forms of expression and ways of life: the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies through ways of life and moral codes, through art forms such as drama, dance, literature, architecture and music inspired by religions and belief, and the role of these art forms in worship or ritual
12. In addition, all specifications must require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding that:

- religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse and include the following religions: Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religions and non-religious beliefs
- the fact that religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian

Part Two: Textual studies and religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

13. Students should engage with the subject content set out below for thematic studies through either a 'textual studies' or a 'religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world' approach.

Textual studies

14. If following a textual studies approach, all students must investigate primary religious texts from one or both of the religions they have studied for Part One: Study of Religions relating to:

- the significance, importance and impact of the texts for individuals, communities and societies
- how varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions
- how far communities give authority to such texts especially in relation to other sources of contemporary authority

15. Specifications must require students to demonstrate an understanding of these three issues in relation to the text as whole, while also studying themes of central concern to the religious text they are exploring.

16. Specifications should prescribe the study of clearly referenced material from the particular religion or religions selected. A single extended extract or multiple shorter ones from one or several texts may be specified, but taken as a whole the material must be sufficient to enable the themes to be explored thoroughly, for different perspectives to be explored and for the assessment objectives to be met.

17. Decisions about the number and length of the extracts must take account of the level of challenge posed by the comprehension of the material and whether the selection is taken from one religious tradition or two.

Religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

18. If the approach to thematic studies is through a religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world approach, students must be required to include a study of different philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should demonstrate the depth of their understanding of religion through the application of teachings from religions and beliefs including through specific references to sources of wisdom and authority.

Themes

- a. accounts in texts of key events in the lives of founders or important religious figures, their significance and impact, including on life in the 21st century. How varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- b. the significance, importance and impact of religious texts as a source for religious law making and codes for living in the 21st century. How varied interpretations of the meaning of these sources may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- c. the significance, importance and impact of stories and/or parables that communicate religious, moral and spiritual truths. How varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- d. relationships and families, religious teachings about the nature and purpose of families in the 21st century, sex, marriage, cohabitation and divorce. Issues related to the nature and purpose of families; roles of men and women; equality; gender prejudice and discrimination. How varied interpretations of sources and/or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)
- e. religious views of the world, including their relationship to scientific views; beliefs about death and an afterlife; explanations of the origins of the universe. How varied interpretations of sources and/or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions. (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)
- f. the existence of God, gods and ultimate reality, and ways in which God, gods or ultimate reality might be understood; through revelation, visions, miracles or enlightenment. How varied interpretations of sources or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions. (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)

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- g. religion, peace and conflict; violence, war, pacifism, terrorism, just war theory, holy war; the role of religion and belief in 21st century conflict and peace making; the concepts of justice, forgiveness and reconciliation (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- h. crime and punishment; causes of crime, aims of punishment, the concepts of forgiveness, retribution, deterrence, reformation; the death penalty, treatment of criminals; good, evil and suffering (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- i. dialogue within and between religions and non-religious beliefs; how those with religious and non-religious beliefs respond to critiques of their beliefs including the study of a range of attitudes towards those with different religious views – inclusivist, exclusivist and pluralist approaches (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- j. religion, human rights and social justice; issues of equality and freedom of religion or belief; prejudice and discrimination in religion and belief; human rights; wealth and poverty; racial prejudice and discrimination (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)

Religious studies short course

19. The content for GCSE religious studies short courses will be half the content of the GCSE full course. Specifications must offer the opportunity to either:

- study beliefs and teachings and sources of wisdom and authority (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to two religions

OR

- study beliefs and teachings (topic a from Part One) only in relation to two religions, AND two different themes from Part Two adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

Annex A: Part One: Study of religions

Buddhism

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the Buddha: the narratives of Siddattha (Siddhartha) including his early life, the Four Sights/Signs; Enlightenment
- the Dhamma (Dharma): Dependent origination/conditionality (paticcasamupada/pratityasamutpada); three marks of existence: dukkha-suffering-unsatisfactoriness (lakkhanas/lakshanas), anicca/anitya-impermanence; anatta/anatman (no fixed self, essence or soul), Four Noble Truths
- the First Noble Truth: dukkha (suffering), different types of dukkha
- the Second Noble Truth (samudaya): The causes of dukkha (suffering/unsatisfactoriness), Three Poisons, rebirth/rebecoming (punabbhava), Factors governing rebirth
- the Third Noble Truth: cessation of craving/desire(tanha), interpretations of nirvana (nibbana) and enlightenment
- the Fourth Noble Truth: The Eight Fold Path (magga/marga) to nirvana (nibbana), three strands: sila (ethics), panna/prajna (wisdom) and samadhi (concentration)
- the human personality: In addition to the three marks of existence: Theravada - Five Aggregates (khandas/skandhas), Mahayana views - shunyata;tathagata - garbha; Buddha-nature
- Human destiny: arhat (arahant) and bodhisattva ideals, Buddhahood and The Pure Land
- Ethical and moral principles: kamma/karma; actions have consequences: panna/prajna(wisdom); karuna (compassion); metta/maitri (loving kindness); five precepts (pancha sila); In Mahayana: development of the six perfections (paramitas) or virtues

Sources of wisdom and authority

- Buddha: different meanings of Buddha: Gautama, other Buddhas such as Amitabha/Amida, Mahayana concept of Buddha-nature

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- Buddhas and archetypal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: Avalokiteswara/Chenrezig (in Chinese Buddhism, Kuan Yin), Manjushri-Jamyang
- Dharma (note different scripture collections in different types of Buddhism)
- Sangha: Interpretations of the term sangha: monks; monks and nuns; all Buddhists; sangha as the community of spiritual friends
- roles in the monastic and lay sangha including additional precepts for ordained monastic sangha (monastic community); forms of ordination: including married priests in Japanese traditions; ordination in the Triratna Order
- preceptors and elders in Theravada, gurus/lamas in Tibetan Buddhism, master-pupil in Zen/Ch'an
- the Tripitaka (the Three Baskets): the Vinaya Pitaka; the Sutta Pitaka; the Abidhamma Pitaka; the Prajnaparamita Sutra; and the Lotus Sutra
- individual and personal experience as authoritative: the Kalama Sutta
- key figures (Historical) including King Ashoka; (contemporary) Tenzing Gyatso (His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama); Soto Zen: Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett; Sangharakshita

Practices

- meditation (in most but not all forms of Buddhism); samatha (concentration), vipassana (insight) and metta bhavana, visualisation, zazen
- chanting: including memorising key scriptures, making offerings, aiding mental concentration
- mantra recitation: chanting sacred syllables, concentration and the visualisation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; use of malas
- features and functions of Buddhist centres including temples, gompas, and viharas, shrines, artefacts and offerings
- puja in different Buddhist contexts
- ceremonies and rituals associated with death and mourning in Theravada communities and in Japan and Tibet
- festivals: Theravada: Wesak; Vassa/Rain Retreat and Kathina; uposatha days; Mahayana: Hanamatsuri and Obon (Japanese); Lama Tsong Khapa Day (Tibetan); Parinirvana Day

Forms of expression and ways of life

- Rupas (statues) of the Buddha and bodhisattvas within different traditions
- Thankas (In Tibetan Buddhism) including their use in worship
- symbols: the lotus flower, the wheel, the stupa
- Mudras (hand and body gestures) in iconography and worship
- Tibetan Wheel of Life: relationship to key teaching on causation and dependent origination (pratitya samutpada/paticca samuppada)
- one example of Buddhist charitable work in the UK (e.g. UK Buddhist development charity, the Karuna Trust), Buddhist chaplaincy (Angulimala, the UK Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy)
- pilgrimages and retreats including; India: Bodh Gaya (the Buddha's enlightenment); Deer Park at Sarnath (the Buddha's first teaching of the dhamma)

Common and divergent views within Buddhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Christianity

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the nature of God, such as omnipotence, the problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God
- Creation, including the role of Word and Spirit, with textual references to Genesis 1-3, and John 1
- the Trinity, including the Oneness of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- the person of Jesus Christ, including beliefs and teachings relating to his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension
- Christology, including the titles of Jesus in the Gospels and the creeds
- salvation, including law, sin, grace and Spirit, the role of Christ in salvation, and the nature of atonement

- Eschatological beliefs and teachings, including the importance of resurrection and life after death, judgement, heaven and hell

Sources of wisdom and authority

- the Bible, including its development, structure and purpose (Old Testament: law, history, prophets, writings; and New Testament: gospels, letters), its unity as the Word of God, and two contrasting interpretations of its authority
- the Gospels as a source of authority for the events in Jesus' life, including the commonalities and differences between the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and the fourth gospel (John)
- Jesus as the Word of God and the role of Jesus in modelling practices such as love for others, forgiveness, servanthood, reconciliation and social justice, and in establishing the Kingdom of God
- the growth of the church, including belief in the Church as the body of Christ; the development of different churches: Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Pentecostal/Charismatic
- leadership in the church, including the Pope, bishops, priests/ministers/ pastors; the role of women in leadership
- the role of the individual, including religious experience, reason and personal conscience
- the use of the Bible in worship and in personal and ethical decision making by Christians

Practices

- different forms of worship including liturgical, informal and individual
- the role and meaning of the sacraments in Christian life, including: baptism and Eucharist
- prayer, including the Lord's Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer
- the role of pilgrimage and celebrations, including at least two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage (such as Walsingham, Taizé, Iona) and celebrations
- mission, evangelism and church growth
- the role of the church in the local community

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- the worldwide church including working for reconciliation, the persecuted church and the work of Christian Aid/Tearfund/Cafod
- common and divergent views within Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout

Forms of expression and ways of life

- the significance and meaning of at least three forms of art, drawn from:
 - icons
 - drawing/painting
 - sculpture
 - music
 - drama
 - film
 - new technologies and social media
- the use of symbolism and imagery in religious art including Christian symbols such as ChiRho, Cross, fish, Alpha and Omega, symbols of the four evangelists
- the use of different styles of music in worship, including: psalms, hymns and worship songs

Christianity (Catholic Christianity)

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the belief in one God as a Trinity of persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The scriptural origins of this belief and its historical development and significance
- the doctrine of Creation and its implications: a belief in the goodness of the created world and the dignity of each person made in the image and likeness of God
- the interpretation of Genesis 1-3 within the Catholic interpretative tradition in contrast to creationism. The compatibility of the doctrine of Creation and the theory of evolution
- the doctrine of the Fall and original sin, its meaning and significance for Catholic beliefs about sin and freedom and its role in sacramental theology, especially baptism

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- the belief in Jesus as incarnate Son, divine Word, both human and divine. The scriptural and historical origins of this belief and its historical development through the early councils of the Church
- the significance of Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension and the implications these have for Catholic beliefs about salvation and grace
- an understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Catholic Church and in the lives of people today
- Catholic beliefs about life after death: heaven, hell and purgatory and the meanings and implications of each

Sources of wisdom and authority

- the nature and importance of Scripture as a source of revelation, an understanding of the shape of the Bible and the historical origins of this shape, including an understanding of the Catholic method of biblical interpretation
- an understanding of the authority of the Church's magisterium: both conciliar and pontifical, and the weight given to different kinds of Church teaching
- an understanding of the Church as "one, holy, catholic and apostolic" and the significance of each of these marks of the Church
- the role and example of Mary as a model of the Church and perfect disciple
- the Second Vatican Council – its history and key documents
- the role of individual reason and Catholic teaching on the relationship between conscience, freedom and authority
- sources of moral teaching: the Ten Commandments, Natural Law, the virtues and the Catholic Church's teaching on the primacy of conscience

Practices

- the Catholic teaching on sacraments, including a knowledge of each of the seven sacraments, their form and matter. The central place of the Eucharist as source and summit of Catholic Christian worship and life
- the daily office as an expression of the constant work of praise to which all Catholics are called as part of Vatican II's universal call to holiness
- popular piety as expressed in such devotions as the Rosary, Eucharistic adoration, Stations of the Cross

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- the Church's liturgical calendar, including an understanding of its fasts and feasts and the significance of each
- the Church at each level: domestic, local, national and global, including church structures, positions of authority and the papacy
- an understanding of the different features of a Catholic church and how these reflect Catholic beliefs and facilitate Catholic prayer and devotion

Forms of expression and ways of life

- a study of church and monastic architecture, design and decoration as expressive of Catholic beliefs and worship
- a study of one of the Church's great visual artists, for example Raphael, Michelangelo or other Catholic devotional artists
- a study of a Catholic devotional poet, for example Gerard Manley Hopkins
- Catholic iconography and statuary, for example different renderings of the Stations of the Cross or medieval rood screens
- Catholic liturgical music, including plainchant and other liturgical music
- other non-liturgical religious music, for example Elgar's Dream of Gerontius
- Catholic literature, for example the work of Graham Greene or Evelyn Waugh
- Catholic beliefs and practices as explored in film, for example The Mission, A Man for All Seasons or Of Gods and Men

Common and divergent views within Catholic Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Hinduism

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the individual, eternal self (atman), distinct from material mind and body
- Samsara (cycle of birth and death), the law of karma (moral action and reaction); types of moksha (liberation), prakriti (matter); the tri-guna (three qualities); maya (illusion); cosmology; eschatology; many worlds; cycle of four ages

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- Brahman (spirit; the ultimate reality or absolute truth); nirguna and saguna brahman
- three features of the divine: brahman (everywhere, as non-personal); antaryami (within the heart); bhagavan (beyond, as a personal loving God)
- manifestations of the divine: the tri-murti; male and female deities; avatara; murti
- the four aims of human life; dharma; sanatana dharma; varnashrama dharma
- Dharma and its meaning; Sanatana Dharma (eternal religion); Varnashrama Dharma (relative duties relating to the four varnas & four ashramas), to be distinguished from the later hereditary Jati
- individual free will, and responses to suffering; knowledge and ignorance
- personal virtues e.g. ahimsa, respect, empathy, mind/sense control, humility, love

Sources of wisdom and authority

- main sources of authority: 1. texts (oral and written) 2. holy people 3. personal insight
- main divisions of text: 1. Shruti (revealed scripture) and 2. Smriti (remembered scriptures)
- key texts: Vedas; Upanishads; Ramayana; Mahabharata; Bhagavad-gita; Puranas
- Sad-darshana (six schools of Indian philosophy); Vedanta theology (which largely represents modern thought), especially dvaita and advaita; debates about the existence, nature and identity of God
- the four primary religious traditions/denominations
- the role of guru and sacred lineages; the guru-disciplic relationship
- views on Hinduism's origins, history and founding figures; reformers
- Rishis; brahmins; saints; sannyasins; temple priests; gurus and swamis; famous women; key theologians (e.g. Shankara and Ramanuja)
- the Sanskrit language; its role and meaning within liturgy and scholarship

Practices

- the four paths towards yoga (union with the divine): karma (action), jnana (knowledge) astanga (meditation) and bhakti (devotion)

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- forms of worship/meditation: havan, puja, arati, darshan, bhajan/kirtan, japa, mantra
- places of worship: inside the home; temple; outdoors (e.g. shrine); within the space of the heart
- focusses of worship and representations of the divine (deities, guru, holy hills, rivers)
- sacred festivals and the origin and meaning of: Diwali, Holi, Navaratri, Dussehra, Ram Navami, Ratha-yatra, Janmashtami, Raksha Bandhan
- pilgrimage; associated purposes, practices and sacred sites
- ascetic traditions; world-affirming traditions - brahminism; social systems; family life
- modern leaders and movements in the UK: VHP, ISKCON and Swaminarayana
- Hindu responses to contemporary moral issues: Hindu environmental projects; charities to help others and promote peace, social inclusion and women's rights

Forms of expression and ways of life

- classical, medieval and modern (e.g. Gandhi) social reformers
- world-renouncing and ascetic traditions: sadhus and naked babas; austerity and penance. World-affirming traditions: Hindu social systems; brahminism; family life, children and education
- decorative arts: symbols, rangoli, temple architecture, sculpture, decoration of shrine and sacred image
- expressive and literary arts: song, dance, music, painting, drama, poetics, television and film; Sanskrit and scholarship
- Hindu etiquette; food, diet and hospitality; dress and ornamentation; respect for elders; modern expressions of culture
- Hindu achievements in mathematics (zero, pi, trigonometry), physics (speed of light, heliocentric cosmology), medicine (herbal medicine and surgery) and astronomy

Common and divergent views within Hinduism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Islam

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents approximately 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the six articles of faith in Sunni Islam and five roots of 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam
- teaching about the nature of Allah: His 99 Names, oneness (Tawhid), immanence, transcendence, omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness and justice (Adalat in Shi'a Islam)
- teachings about Risalah (prophethood), including Adam, Ibrahim, Ismael, Musa, Dawud, Isa, Muhammad
- teaching about Kutub (Books); Sahifah (Scrolls), Injil (Gospel), Tawrat (Torah), Zabur (Psalms)
- teaching about Malaikah (angels) including Jibril, Izra'il, Mika'il, Israfil, Munkar/Nakir and Kiraman/Katibin
- teaching about al-Qadr (predestination) and human freedom and its relationship to the Day of Judgement; teaching about Akhirah: life after death, human responsibility and accountability, heaven and hell

Sources of wisdom and authority

- the Qur'an including its revelation, compilation and its use by Muslims
- the Prophet Muhammad: life, teaching and authority including his call; work in Makkah and Madinah, the hijrah, role as 'seal of the Prophets' and as a role model
- Ahl-al-Baht (the family of the Prophet Muhammad including Caliph/Imam Ali) in Sunni and Shi'a Islam; the origins of differences and implications for questions of authority
- the Hadith as a record of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, compilation, main collections (Sunni and Shi'a), elements of Hadith - isnad and matn
- Shari'ah: how it is agreed including sources used by the main schools of Sunni and Shi'a Law; Qur'an; Hadith, Qiyas (analogy) and Ijma' (consensus); the role of qadis (judges) and the 'ulama (scholars)
- the Imam in Sunni and Shi'a Islam: origins, nature, role in individual and community life. The doctrine of Nass, the inerrancy and intercession of Imams in Shi'a Islam. The implications of teaching on Imams for the lives of Muslims today

Practices

- the Five Pillars of Sunni Islam and Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam
- Shahadah: declaration of Faith, the place of the Shahadah in Muslim practice
- Salah: how and why Muslims pray, ablution, times, directions, movements and recitations, in the home and mosque and elsewhere. Jumma prayer, diversity of practice
- Sawm: fasting during the month of Ramadan. Origins, duties, benefits, those who are excused and why, the Night of Power
- Zakah: giving alms: origins, how and why it is given, benefits of receipt. Khums (Shi'a)
- Hajj: Pilgrimage to Makkah: the origins, how and why it is performed
- Jihad: greater and lesser, origins, impact and conditions for declaration of lesser jihad.
- festivals and commemorations: Id-ul-Adha, Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Ghadeer and Ashura

Forms of expression and ways of life

- Muslim identity expressed through the ummah including the ceremonies for welcoming a child into the ummah; expectations about modesty including dress codes
- one national Muslim organisation working to relieve poverty and suffering in the UK
- halal and haram; categories, how they are applied to laws of food and drink, riba - prohibition of interest
- the use of art forms as an expression of Muslim belief including calligraphy, music, poetry and architecture
- the mosque: religious features of mosques including design, furniture, artefacts and associated practices
- Shi'a obligatory actions: Amr bil Maruf and Nahy Anil Munkar, Tawallah and tabarra; Love for the Prophet Muhammad and his family and disdain for their enemies

- Sufi ways of life including the origins, the Sheikh, teachers such as al-Ghazālī, ibn al-‘Arabi and Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyya, Key practices including orders, music, dance, poetry, fasting, dhikr, saints

Common and divergent views within Islam in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Judaism

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- beliefs and teachings about the nature of God including God as One, Creator, Law-Giver and Judge
- beliefs and teachings about the divine presence (Shekhinah)
- beliefs and teachings about the importance of the Covenant at Sinai (the Ten Commandments)
- beliefs and teachings about the importance that Judaism places on the sanctity of human life, including the concept of Pikuach Nefesh
- beliefs and teachings about the nature and role of the Messiah
- beliefs and teachings about the Promised Land
- beliefs and teachings regarding key moral principles including the relationship between free will and the 613 Mitzvot
- beliefs and teachings about Mitzvot between man and God and Mitzvot between man and man
- beliefs about life after death including judgement and resurrection

Sources of wisdom and authority

- diversity of beliefs regarding the interpretation of sources of wisdom and authority amongst the Jewish community
- the Tenakh (the Written Law): Torah, Neviim and Ketuvim (use in daily life)
- the Talmud (the Oral Law): collection of the Mishnah and Gemara (use in daily life)
- different denominations of Judaism including Orthodox (to include Hasidic and Modern Orthodox), and Liberal and Reform (the Pluralistic movement)

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- practices associated with sources of authority in daily life including the use of tefillin, mezuzah and tzitzit
- interpretation and application of sources of authority through study in yeshivot and authority and role of the Beth Din
- different denominations of Judaism including Orthodox (to include Hasidic and Modern Orthodox), Reform and Liberal (the Pluralistic movement)
- the role of the rabbi in the synagogue and the community

Practices

- public acts of worship: synagogue services
- the use of Tenakh and Talmud in daily life
- worship in the home and private prayer
- prayer in Jewish worship including amidah – the standing prayer
- rituals: birth ceremonies; Bar and Bat Mitzvah; marriage; mourning rituals
- Shabbat in the home and synagogue
- Jewish Festivals including Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot
- the synagogue; religious features of synagogues including design, artefacts and associated practices

Forms of expression and ways of life

- symbolism: how symbols and artefacts are used in worship including, Magen David and chanukiah
- expressing beliefs through Tzedekah and Gemilut Chassidim
- expressing beliefs through Bikur Cholim
- expressing beliefs through Tikkun Ha Olam – ‘Repairing/healing the world’ and Chessed – kindness to others
- different attitudes to Zionism and the State of Israel among Jewish people
- the nurture of the young in the Jewish family

DRAFT

- the work of one national Jewish organisation working to care for those in need such as to relieve poverty and suffering, to support families or to promote Jewish learning and education in the UK
- dietary laws: kosher and trefah, separation of milk and meat

Common and divergent views within Judaism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Sikhism

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- beliefs about the nature of God as expressed in the Mul Mantra
- belief about God as Creator
- beliefs about the nature of human life as an opportunity to unite with God
- beliefs in karma and rebirth, and the aim of mukti (liberation)
- beliefs about the importance of being gurmukh (God-centred) and the elimination of haumai (pride/ego)
- the belief in the oneness of humanity: equality of all human beings; complete gender equality as expressed in the Guru Granth Sahib and in stories from the lives of the Gurus and Sikhism today
- equality as expressed in stories from the lives of the Gurus and in Sikhism today
- the priority of the service of others
- the role of the sangat (community)

Sources of wisdom and authority

- the concept of 'Guru' and the place of the Ten Gurus in Sikhism
- the life and work of Guru Nanak including his three days in the river, his teachings about God and about equality, and his establishment of Kartarpur
- the life and work of Guru Gobind Singh: life and work including Vaisakhi and the formation of the Khalsa

DRAFT

- the authority and status of the Guru Granth Sahib, its origins, compilation, authority and status as the living Guru shown in practices including reading in worship and study
- the Rahit Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) as a guide to life and practice.
- the role of the granthi and other gurdwara functionaries such as rigis (custodian/reader of the Guru Granth Sahib)

Practices

- the gurdwara: religious features of the gurdwara including design, furniture, artefacts and associated practices
- role of the gurdwara within the Sikh community
- Langar as expression of sewa (selfless service to others)
- the practice of nam japa (meditating on the name of God) in daily life and in the gurdwara
- prayer in the home
- Gurpurbs (festivals): Guru Nanak's birthday, Vaisakhi, Divali, commemorations of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan and Guru Tagh Bahadur Ji
- the akand path (continuous 48 hour reading of the Guru Granth Sahib)
- birth and naming ceremonies; the significance and use of the names Singh and Kaur, Amrit sanskar (the initiation ceremony)
- visiting Sikh historical gurdwaras including the Harimander Sahib in Amritsar (the Golden Temple)

Forms of expression and ways of life

- Sewa in its various forms - tan (physical service), man (mental service) and dhan (material service)
- symbols, such as the Ik Onkar and khanda as expressions of belief
- Panj Kakke (the 'Five ks') and their significance
- respect for all religions as written in the Guru Granth Sahib and practiced through langar and within the Sikh community
- the role of kirtan (singing) in diwan

DRAFT

- Nam japna and avoidance of five evils of lust, anger, pride, greed and undue attachment, kirat karo (honest work), and vand chakko (service of those in need) as key values in life
- the work of one Sikh organisation working to relieve poverty and suffering
- work of a Sikh organisation promoting community cohesion and interfaith understanding
- no use of pictures or statues for worship, the availability of artists' expression of Gurus' pictures for decoration

Common and divergent views within Sikhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.



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GCE AS and A level subject content for religious studies

Introduction

1. AS and A level subject content sets out the knowledge and understanding common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.
2. It provides the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

3. AS and A level specifications in religious studies must encourage students to:
 - develop their interest in a rigorous study of religion and belief and relate it to the wider world
 - develop knowledge and understanding appropriate to a specialist study of religion
 - develop an understanding and appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to the individual, communities and society
 - adopt an enquiring, critical, and reflective approach to the study of religion
 - reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their study

Subject content

4. This section sets out the minimum range of content for AS and A level specifications in religious studies.
5. AS and A level specifications in religious studies should build on the requirements for religious studies in earlier key stages including the knowledge and understanding established at key stage 4 and GCSE qualifications.
6. Where different knowledge, understanding and/or skills are required to ensure students studying at A level go into greater depth and/or breadth than AS, this is specified.
7. Where the focus of this area of study is a particular group or denomination within a religion rather than the religion more generally, specifications must place this study in the context of the broader religious tradition to which it belongs.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

8. Religious studies specifications at AS and A level must require students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills through two of the following approaches that must require an equal amount of teaching, learning and assessment:

Systematic Study of one Religion

9. At AS and A level this includes the study of:

- religious beliefs, values and teaching in their diverse manifestations in history and in the contemporary world, including those linked to the nature and existence of God or ultimate reality, the role of the community of believers, key moral principles, beliefs about the self, death and afterlife, beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life
- sources of authority and wisdom including, where appropriate; scripture and/or sacred texts and how they are used and treated by believers; key religious figures and/or teachers and how they are regarded in relation to other sources of wisdom and authority
- practices including prayer/meditation, ritual, festivals and celebration
- forms of expression inspired and influenced by religion and religious belief

10. In addition at A level this includes the study of:

- significant social and historical developments in theology or religious thought including the challenges of secularism, science, responses to pluralism and diversity within traditions, migration, the changing roles of men and women, feminist and liberationist approaches
- a comparison of the work of at least two theologians/thinkers
- two themes related to issues of identity and belonging for religious believers today such as dietary and dress codes, the compatibility of religious and other forms of identity, issues of equality in the freedom to practice a religion
- religious tolerance, respect and recognition, interfaith dialogue and the ways that religious traditions view other religious traditions and their truth-claims
- how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical and social scientific studies of religion or by textual interpretation

Philosophical, Ethical and Social Scientific Studies of Religion

11. At AS and A level this includes the study of:

- philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief including at least two contrasting arguments about: the existence and non-existence of God, gods or ultimate reality; the nature and impact of religious experience; the problems of evil and suffering

- two ethical theories such as utilitarianism and virtue ethics and their application to issues related and applied to religious belief such as matters of life and death, poverty and world development
- two contrasting approaches to religion and religious experience chosen from the fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology

12. In addition at A level this includes the study of:

- how views of religious language have changed over time; the challenges posed by the verification/falsification debate and language games theory over whether religious language should be viewed cognitively; and a consideration of at least two different views about talk about God being understood symbolically and analogically.
- a comparison of the key ideas presented in works of at least two key scholars selected from the fields of the philosophy of religion, religious ethics and/or social scientific study of religion and developments in the way these ideas are applied to contemporary issues in religion and belief
- how philosophical, ethical and social scientific studies have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices or textual interpretation

Textual Studies (one religion, not necessarily a religion studied for the other two approaches above)

13. Specifications should prescribe the study of clearly referenced texts from one religion. Whole texts or multiple passages from one or several texts may be specified but taken as a whole, the texts must be sufficient to enable the themes to be explored thoroughly and for all three assessment objectives to be met.

14. Decisions about the quantity of text required for study must take account of the level of challenge posed by the comprehension of the text.

15. At AS and A level this includes the study of:

- selected text(s) or substantial passages in translation from a particular religious work or corpus of scripture, examining the meaning of the material, its literary features, ideas, authorship and audience and its relationship with other texts and/or sources of wisdom and authority from the religion.
- legal/ theological/ ethical content and the role of a text or texts in religious law making and codes for living
- issues that arise from the formation, transmission and translation of the text(s)
- the origin, social and historical context of the text(s)
- the ways in which the text(s) are interpreted and used by religious communities and how these have changed over time

- the religious, cultural and other significance of the text(s) including its reception and influence beyond a religious community

16. In addition at A level this includes the study of:

- modern and historical commentary on the selected texts, including allegorical or other interpretations
- methods and methodology in interpretation
- the scientific and historical-critical challenges to the authority of texts and religious responses to these
- modern critical scholarship including different contemporary approaches, religious and non-religious, to the primary text or corpus, and the religious or intellectual assumptions that underpin them
- how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical and social scientific studies of religion or developments in religious thought (as set out above for systematic study of religion)

17. Within the chosen approach, all AS and A level specifications in religious studies must require students to acquire and develop knowledge and a critical understanding of:

- religious thought, belief and practice and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies
- how religious texts and/ or other relevant sources of authority are interpreted and applied
- major issues, challenges and questions within and about the study of religion (for example, the role of tolerance, respect and recognition and interreligious dialogue, methods of study, relevance to contemporary society) and responses to these
- the cause, meaning and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought, belief and practice within and/or between religion(s)

18. In addition A level specifications in religious studies must require students to demonstrate critical awareness of:

- questions, issues and arguments posed by scholars from within and outside religious traditions
- social, religious and historical factors that have influenced developments in the study of religions and beliefs
- connections between the various elements of the area(s) of study, as set out in content above

19. GCE AS and A level specifications in religious studies must require students to demonstrate their ability to:

- reflect on, select and apply specified knowledge
- construct well informed and reasoned arguments substantiated by relevant evidence
- understand, interpret and evaluate critically religious concepts, texts and other sources
- present responses to questions which are clear and coherent
- use specialist language and terminology appropriately
- identify, investigate and critically analyse questions, arguments, ideas and issues arising from the chosen approaches
- engage in debate in a way that is respectful of the right of others to hold a different view

20. In addition, A level specifications in religious studies will require students to demonstrate their ability to:

- critically analyse and evaluate the views and arguments of scholars/ academics
- account for the influence of social, religious and historical factors on developments in the study of religions and beliefs
- analyse the nature of connections between the various elements of their course of study
- develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification as a whole

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