

# Which GCSE specification should I choose?

Updated second drafts  
January 2016



NATRE offers this guide to the draft specifications taken from material supplied by the awarding organisations. Please note that this guide should be read in conjunction with the **DfE's** subject content which sets out the material to be studied in relation to each topic of each religion and should not be taken as a substitute for the officially published content. All material is subject to **Ofqual** accreditation in the autumn term and could easily change between now and then.

## Full course – Option One

Part One The study of **TWO religions** with a focus on TWO topics from each religion: Beliefs and Teachings and Practices (Worth 50% of the qualification)

Part Two The study of **FOUR themes** from texts and or philosophy and ethics in the modern world (Worth 50% of the qualification)

Awarding organisation	Part one: Study of Religions 50% Subject content as set out in DfE annexes		Part Two: Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World 50%	Assessment
<b>EDUQAS Route A</b>	Beliefs and teachings and Practices from <del>either: Christianity OR Christianity (Catholic Christianity)</del> <b>AND</b> One world faith chosen from: 1. Buddhism 2. Hinduism 3. Islam 4. Judaism 5. Sikhism	Each section examined though one 1 hour paper – compulsory questions  (Two hours in total)	Study of issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationships</li> <li>Life and Death</li> <li>Good <b>and</b> Evil <del>and Suffering</del></li> <li>Human Rights, <del>Religion and Social Justice</del></li> </ul> Candidates will be expected to study different perspectives. These may derive from either <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>different religions</li> <li>different views/denominations within a particular religion</li> </ol>	Examined though one 2 hour paper – compulsory questions  Non-religious beliefs are permitted in part (d)
<b>OCR:</b>	<b>Beliefs and teachings and Practices</b> from two religions chosen from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christianity*</li> <li><del>Christianity – Roman Catholic*</del></li> <li>Buddhism</li> <li>Hinduism</li> <li>Islam</li> <li>Judaism</li> </ul>	Examined through one 2 hour paper (30 minutes per theme per religion)	Study of four themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationships and families</li> <li>The existence of God and ultimate reality</li> <li>Religion, peace and conflict</li> <li><b>Belief and non-belief Dialogue between religious and nonreligious beliefs and attitudes</b></li> </ul>	Examined through one 2 hour paper (30 mins per theme) <b>FOUR</b> compulsory questions for each paper  30 marks per question so one mark a minute on average

AQA	<p>Topics: Beliefs and teachings and Practices</p> <p>Study of two religions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Christianity*</li><li>2. Christianity (Catholic Christianity)*</li><li>3. Islam</li><li>4. Judaism</li><li>5. Hinduism</li><li>6. Buddhism</li><li>7. Sikhism</li></ol> <p>*prohibited combination</p>	<p>Each of the two religions chosen is examined by TWO 5-part compulsory questions (24 marks each question)</p> <p>There will be one question for each topic for each religion (four in total)</p> <p>Exam: 1 hour 45 mins – 96 marks (plus five marks for spelling, grammar and specialist terminology).</p>	<p>Religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world:</p> <p>Themes: 50%</p> <p>EITHER Four chosen from the six below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Religion and relationships</li><li>• Religion and life</li><li>• The existence of God and revelation</li><li>• Religion, peace and conflict</li><li>• Religion, crime and punishment</li><li>• Religion, human rights and social justice</li></ul> <p>OR</p> <p>TWO chosen from the six above (25%) PLUS Two themes from St Mark’s Gospel (25%)</p>	<p>Each of the four themes chosen is examined by one five-part compulsory question (24 marks each).</p> <p>Four questions in total</p> <p>Exam: 1 hour 45 mins – 96 marks (plus five marks for spelling, grammar and specialist terminology).</p>		
Edexcel B	<p>Two religions chosen from:</p> <table><tr><td><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buddhism</li><li>• Catholic Christianity*</li><li>• Christianity*</li><li>• Hinduism</li></ul></td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Islam</li><li>• Judaism</li><li>• Sikhism.</li></ul></td></tr></table> <p>*prohibited combination</p> <p>AND applied to <b>two</b> areas of study chosen from the <b>three</b> below. A different religion must be studied for each of the areas of study. Each of these areas is worth 50% of the GCSE:</p> <p>Area of Study 1 is <b>Religion and Ethics</b>. This explores <b>Beliefs, God, The Marriage and the Family (of the chosen religion), Worship Living the Religious Life</b> as well as <b>Matters of Life and Death</b>. (50%)</p> <p>Area of Study 2 is <b>Religion, Peace and conflict</b>. This explores <b>God, Beliefs, Crime and Punishment, Living the Religious Life –of the chosen religion, Reconciliation, Worship and Peace and Conflict</b> (50%)</p> <p>Area of Study 3 is <b>Religion, Philosophy and Social Justice</b>. This explores <b>God, Beliefs, Religious Experience, Living the Religious Life –of the chosen religion, Worship and Equality</b> (50%)</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buddhism</li><li>• Catholic Christianity*</li><li>• Christianity*</li><li>• Hinduism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Islam</li><li>• Judaism</li><li>• Sikhism.</li></ul>	<p>Students sit TWO papers. There are four sections within each paper with a combination of structured questions and extended open response/critical thinking.</p> <p>This means there are 7 papers available for each Area of Study - One for each of the 7 religions offered.</p> <p>Two papers of 1 hour 45 minutes 118 marks each</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buddhism</li><li>• Catholic Christianity*</li><li>• Christianity*</li><li>• Hinduism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Islam</li><li>• Judaism</li><li>• Sikhism.</li></ul>					

## Full course – Option Two

1(a) The study of ONE religion on FOUR topics: Beliefs and Teachings, Practices, Sources of wisdom and authority, Forms of expression (Worth 50% of the GCSE)

1(b) The study of a SECOND religion on TWO topics: Beliefs and Teachings, Practices, Sources of wisdom and authority (Worth 25% of the GCSE)

2 The study of TWO themes with a focus on texts and or philosophy and ethics in the modern world in one religion (Worth 25% of the GCSE)

Awarding organisation	Part one (1): Study of Religions 1 50% Subject content as set out in DfE annexes	Part one (2): Study of Religions 2 25% Subject content as set out in DfE annexes	Part Two: Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World 25%	
<b>Edexcel A</b>  <b>Faith and Practice in the 21st Century</b>	(Catholic Christianity*, Christianity* or Islam) Component 1 Primary Religion. This is worth 50% of the GCSE Students would study four topics 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Practices 3. Sources of wisdom and authority 4. Forms of expression and ways of life  *prohibited combination  1 hour and 45 minutes examination 112 marks worth 50%	Component 2 Second Religion. Students would study two topics: • Beliefs and Teaching • Practices. Seven religions offered chosen from: • Buddhism • Catholic Christianity* • Christianity* • Hinduism • Islam • Judaism • Sikhism.  50 min examination 56 marks worth 25%	Optional Component 3 Philosophy and Ethics in primary religion. Two themes: 1 Arguments for the existence of God from a variety of viewpoints within a religion. 2. Religious Teachings on Relationships and families in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century OR Optional Component 4 Textual Study. One textual study chosen from: Mark's Gospel and Qur'an  50 minute examination  56 marks worth 25%	1. Component 1: Primary Religion = 50% ( <b>FIVE questions in 1 hour 45 mins</b> ) 2. Component 2: Second Religion = 25% ( <b>TWO questions in 50 mins</b> ) <b>PLUS EITHER</b> 3. Component 3 Philosophy and Ethics. 25% of GCSE) <b>OR</b> 4. Component 4 Textual Study. 25% <b>(TWO questions in 50 mins)</b>  The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions
<b>AQA – Catholic Christianity</b>	Catholic Christianity (50%)  Four topics 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Practices 3. Sources of wisdom and authority 4. Forms of expression	A study of a second religion chosen from Judaism and Islam (25%)	A study of two themes. These can be based on philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world or text based (25%)	

<b>EDUQAS Route B</b>	Component 1: Fundamental Catholic Theology (37.5% of qualification)  Two themes –all questions compulsory <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Origins and Meaning</li> <li>Good and Evil</li> </ol> One paper : 1 hour and 30 minutes	Component 2: Applied Catholic Theology (37.5% of qualification)  Two themes –all questions compulsory <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life and Death</li> <li>Sin and Forgiveness</li> </ol> One paper : 1 hour and 30 minutes	Component 3: Study of Judaism (25% of the qualification)  Topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beliefs and teachings</li> <li>Practices</li> </ol> One paper : 1 hour	
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## Short Course

Awarding organisation	Part One:		Part Two:	
<b>EDUQAS</b>	A study of the beliefs and teachings of either: Christianity OR Catholic Christianity  Worth 25% of the qualification	A study of the beliefs and teachings of one of the following: Buddhism Hinduism Islam Judaism Sikhism Worth 25% of the qualification	A study of two themes from Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues of relationships</li> <li>Issues of Life and Death</li> </ol> Worth 50% of the qualification	Each of the three components will be assessed by compulsory questions focusing on knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the content Part One: Two examinations of 30 minutes each Part Two: One Exam of one hour
<b>OCR:</b>	A study of the beliefs and teachings of one of the following religions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christianity</li> <li>Islam</li> <li>Judaism</li> </ul> Worth 25% of the qualification	A study of the practices of one of the following religions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christianity</li> <li>Islam</li> <li>Judaism</li> </ul> Worth 25% of the qualification	A study of one theme from Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World:- <del>Religion, peace and conflict</del> <b>Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes</b> In relation to ONE of the following religions: Christianity/Islam/Judaism	2 hour written paper split into three sections:  A: Beliefs and teachings 60 marks B: Relationships and families 30 marks <del>C: Religion, peace and conflict</del> <b>Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes</b> 30 marks

<b>Edexcel B short course</b>	<p>Religion and Ethics</p> <p>A study of <b>ethics</b> in relation to <b>one religion</b> chosen from:</p> <p>Buddhism      Christianity          Hinduism      Islam          Judaism      Sikhism          Catholic Christianity</p> <p><i>Areas of study: <del>God, The family, Worship, Life and Death</del></i>  <i>-Religious Belief</i>  <i>-Marriage and the family</i></p>	<p>Worth 50%</p> <p>One examination of one hour</p> <p>4 compulsory questions assessing knowledge, understanding and evaluation</p> <p>Each question has FOUR parts</p>	<p>A study of <b>Peace and Conflict</b> in relation to <b>one religion</b> chosen from:</p> <p>Buddhism      Christianity          Hinduism      Islam          Judaism      Sikhism          Catholic Christianity</p> <p><i>Areas of Study: <del>God, Reconciliation, Worship and Peace</del></i>  <i>-Religious Belief</i>  <i>-Peace and conflict</i></p>	<p>Worth 50%</p> <p><b>TWO</b> examinations of <b>50 minutes</b></p> <p>The Areas of Study are the same titles as the full course but have less content</p> <p>2 compulsory questions per paper assessing knowledge, understanding and evaluation</p> <p>Each question has FOUR parts</p>
<b>AQA – short Course</b>	<p>A study of two topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Beliefs and Teachings</li> <li>2. Practices</li> </ol> <p>In relation to two of the following three religions*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christianity</li> <li>• Judaism</li> <li>• Islam</li> </ul> <p><b>Worth 50%</b></p>	<p>Section A: Answer one compulsory question from each of the two chosen religions 24 marks per question = 48 marks.</p> <p>Section B: Answer one compulsory question from each of the two themes. 24 marks per question = 48 marks.</p> <p>96 marks in total plus five marks for spelling, grammar and specialist terminology</p>	<p>A study of two themes from philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religion and Relationships</li> <li>• Religion, peace and conflict</li> </ul> <p><b>Worth 50%</b></p>	<p>The whole short course is assessed by one written examination</p> <p>1 hour and 45 minutes</p> <p><i>AQA may review the position for Buddhism in the future</i></p>
<b>Edexcel A – short course</b>	<p>A study of two topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Beliefs and Teachings</li> <li>2. Practices</li> </ol> <p>In relation to two religions chosen from:</p> <p>Christianity*, Catholic Christianity*, Islam and Judaism (50%)</p> <p>* prohibited combination</p>	<p>2 x <b>50 minute</b> papers – one for each religion</p> <p>Each paper worth 50% of the qualification</p> <p>2 compulsory questions per paper assessing knowledge, understanding and evaluation</p> <p>Each question has FOUR parts</p>		