

# Which A level specification should I choose?

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 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.

Awarding organisation	Component 1: the study of religion	Component 2: Philosophy of Religion	Component 3: Ethics and religion	Assessment
<b>WJEC</b>  <b>AS</b>	One religion chosen from: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism  AS level study four themes There will be four themes within each option: 1 : Religious Figures and Sacred Texts 2 : Religious Concepts 3 : Religious Life 4 : Religious Practices	There will be four themes within this component:  1 : Cosmological arguments for the Existence of God 2 : Teleological arguments for the Existence of God 3 : The Non-Existence of God : the Problem of Evil 4 : Religious Experience	AS level study four themes (including some applied ethics in Themes 2-4):  1 : Ethical Language and Thought 2 : Aquinas' Natural Law 3 : Fletcher's Situation Ethics 4 : Utilitarianism	<b>AS level:</b> Two questions must be answered from a choice of four.  The four questions can be selected from any area within the option. Each question will be divided into two sub-questions. Part (a) will assess knowledge and understanding Part (b) will assess skills of analysis and evaluation  Assessment weighting within the component: (50% AO1, 50% AO2)
<b>WJEC</b>  <b>A-level</b>	A level study four themes 1 : Religious Figures and Sacred Texts 2 : Religious Concepts 3 : Development of religious thought and contemporary issues 4 : Religious practices and religious identity	A level study four themes: 1 : Arguments for the existence of God 2 : Challenges to religious belief 3 : Religious Experience 4 : Religious Language	A-level study four themes (including some applied ethics in Themes 2 and 3):  1 : Ethical language and thought 2 : Deontological ethics 3 : Teleological ethics 4 : Freewill and determinism	<b>A level:</b> Two questions must be answered from a choice of four. All four themes will not necessarily be assessed each year  Each question will be divided into two sub questions Part (a) will assess knowledge and understanding Part (b) will assess skills of analysis and evaluation  Assessment weighting within the component: (40% AO1, 60% AO2)

Awarding organisation	Component 1: the study of religion	Component 2: Philosophy of Religion	Component 3: Ethics and religion	Assessment
<b>OCR:</b>  <b>AS</b>	Development in Religious Thoughts One religion chosen from: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism AS level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>religious beliefs, values and teachings</li> <li>sources of wisdom and authority</li> <li>practices that shape and express religious identity</li> </ul>	Philosophy of religion  AS level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief including at least three contrasting arguments about the existence or non-existence of God, gods or ultimate reality</li> <li>the nature and influence of religious experience</li> <li>challenges to religious belief such as the problems of evil and suffering</li> <li>philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in the philosophy of religion</li> </ul>	Religion and ethics  AS level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in religion and ethics.</li> <li>three normative ethical theories such as deontological, teleological or character based ethics (at least two of which must be religious approaches)</li> <li>the application of ethical theory to two personal, societal or global issues of importance, including religious ethical perspectives</li> </ul>	At AS level: Candidates study three components and sit a 90 minute examination for each. Weighting 33.3% Marks 90 1: Philosophy of Religion 2: Religion and ethics 3: Development in Christian Thought
<b>OCR</b>  <b>A-level</b>	A level as AS above and in addition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>significant social and historical developments in theology or religious thought</li> <li>a comparison of the significant ideas presented in works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of religion and belief</li> <li>two themes related to the relationship between religion and society</li> </ul> how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical and ethical studies of religion	A level as AS above and in addition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 or non-cognitively; and a consideration of at least two different views about religious teachings being understood symbolically and analogically</li> <li>a comparison of the significant ideas presented in works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of the philosophy of religion and developments in the way these ideas are applied to issues in religion and belief</li> <li>how the philosophy of religion has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices and ethics</li> </ul>	A level as AS above and in addition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how ethical language in the modern era has changed over time; including a study of meta-ethical theories and significant ideas in religious and moral thought such as free will, conscience or authority</li> <li>a comparison of the significant ideas presented in the works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of religion and ethics, and developments in the way these ideas are applied to significant issues in religion and belief</li> <li>how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices, the philosophy of religion</li> </ul>	At A level:  Candidates study the same three components as at AS and sit one 2 hour examination for each.  Weighting 33.3% Marks 120

Awarding organisation	Component 1: the study of religion	Component 2: Philosophy of Religion	Component 3: Ethics and religion	Assessment
<b>AQA</b>  <b>AS</b>	One religion chosen from: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism  Paper 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>God/ gods/ultimate reality</li> <li>Life after death</li> <li>Source of wisdom and authority</li> </ul> Paper 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The key moral principles of one religion</li> <li>Religious identity</li> </ul>	Paper 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three arguments for the existence of God/gods/ultimate reality</li> <li>Evil</li> <li>Religious experience</li> </ul>	Paper 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three ethical theories</li> <li>Issues of human life and death</li> <li>Issues of animal life and death</li> </ul>	The content for the <b>three</b> components are divided between <b>two</b> papers.  2 x written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes each 50% of AS  Section 1: One two-part question (30 marks) Section 2: Two two-part questions (30 marks each)
<b>AQA</b>  <b>A-level</b>	A level – paper 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>God/ gods/ultimate reality</li> <li>Life after death</li> <li>Source of wisdom and authority</li> <li>The challenge from science</li> </ul> The nature and role of religion  A level – paper 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The key moral principles of one religion</li> <li>Religious identity</li> <li>Religion and sexual identity</li> <li>Religion and religious pluralism</li> </ul>	A level – paper 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three arguments for the existence of God/gods/ultimate reality</li> <li>Evil</li> <li>Religious experience</li> <li>Religious Language</li> <li>Miracles with reference to David Hume and Maurice Wiles</li> <li>Self and life after death</li> <li>The nature and function of religion</li> </ul> A level – paper 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three ethical theories</li> <li>Issues of human life and death</li> <li>Issues of animal life and death</li> <li>Introduction to meta-ethics</li> <li>Freewill and moral responsibility</li> <li>Conscience</li> <li>Bentham and Kant</li> </ul>	The dialogue between philosophy and religion –paper 1  How religion is influenced by, and influences, philosophy of religion in relation to the issued studies  The dialogue between ethical studies and religion –paper 2 (A level only)  How religion is influenced by, and influences, ethical studies in relation to the issued studies	<b>A-level</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 x written exam: 3 hours</li> <li>each 50% of A-level</li> </ul> Section 1: One two-part question (25 marks) Section 2: Two two-part questions ( 25 marks each) Section 3: The dialogue between philosophy / ethics and religion One unstructured synoptic question from a choice of two (25 marks)  In all sections, questions may be set that span more than one topic

Awarding organisation	Component 1: the study of religion	Component 3: Textual Studies	Component 1: Philosophy of Religion	Component 2: Ethics and religion	Assessment
<b>Edexcel</b>  <b>AS</b>	<b>Component 4: Study of Religion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious beliefs, values and teachings</li> <li>Sources of wisdom and authority</li> <li>Practices that shape and express religious identity</li> <li>(Set texts will be specified)</li> </ul>	<b>Component 3: New Testament Studies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of the New Testament</li> <li>Texts and Interpretation of the New Testament</li> <li>Interpreting the text and the purpose and authorship of the 4th Gospel</li> </ul>	<b>Component 1: Philosophy of Religion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philosophical issues</li> <li>Nature &amp; Influence of religious experience</li> <li>Problem of evil and suffering</li> </ul>	<b>Component 2: Religion and Ethics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant concepts in issues and debates</li> <li>Utilitarianism, situation ethics and natural moral law</li> <li>War &amp; Peace and Sexual Ethics</li> </ul>	Candidates study three of the four components. Each is worth 33.3% of qualification Each component is assessed by a 1 hour exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured questions</li> <li>Essay</li> </ul>
<b>Edexcel</b>  <b>A-level</b>	<b>Component 4: Study of Religion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious beliefs, values and teachings</li> <li>Sources of wisdom and authority</li> <li>Practices that shape and express religious identity</li> <li>Social and Historical developments</li> <li>Comparative study of two scholars</li> <li>Religion and Society</li> <li>(Set texts will be specified)</li> </ul>	<b>Component 3: New Testament Studies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of the New Testament</li> <li>Texts and Interpretation of the New Testament</li> <li>Interpreting the text and the purpose and authorship of the 4th Gospel</li> <li>Ways of interpreting scripture</li> <li>Variety of texts and interpretations</li> <li>Scientific and historical challenges in faith and history</li> </ul>	<b>Component 1: Philosophy of Religion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philosophical issues</li> <li>Nature &amp; Influence of religious experience</li> <li>Problem of evil and suffering</li> <li>Language</li> <li>Philosophers</li> <li>Influences and developments</li> </ul>	<b>Component 2: Religion and ethics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant concepts in issues and debates</li> <li>Utilitarianism, situation ethics and natural moral law</li> <li>War &amp; Peace and Sexual Ethics</li> <li>Ethical Language</li> <li>Ethical Theory (including comparison of 2 scholars)</li> <li>Medical ethics</li> </ul>	Candidates study three of the four components. Each is worth 33.3% of qualification Each component is assessed by a 2 hour exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured questions</li> <li>Extract from an unseen source</li> <li>Essay</li> </ul>