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AS  
**RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES**

(7061)

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**Specification**

For teaching from September 2016 onwards  
For exams in 2017 onwards

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## Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at [aqa.org.uk/7061](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7061)
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Why choose AQA for AS Religious Studies

Our courses offer a choice of different religions, ensuring students have a thorough understanding of diverse philosophical and ethical viewpoints.

Students gain critical and evaluative skills sought by higher education and employers – particularly in law, education, social work, politics, medicine, administration and the media.

Religious studies is a thought provoking subject and our contemporary themes will help you inspire engaging classroom discussion.

Highlights include:

- all religions, philosophical and ethical themes have the same learning requirements, helping you integrate your teaching
- we've worked with subject experts, teachers and higher education to create a stimulating and relevant curriculum with a straightforward approach to assessment
- question papers will allow students of all abilities the chance to show what they know
- the AS and A-level are co-teachable – although they are decoupled, the AS content links directly to A-level as it's the first half of the A-level course.

You can find out about all our Religious Studies qualifications at [aqa.org.uk/religious-studies](http://aqa.org.uk/religious-studies)

## 1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

### Teaching resources

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7061](http://aqa.org.uk/7061) to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- schemes of work
- specimen questions and marked exemplars
- topic guidance
- guidance for assessment
- introduction to resources
- training courses to help you deliver AQA Religious Studies qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly-qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for inspiration.

### Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7061](http://aqa.org.uk/7061) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- sample papers and mark schemes for new courses

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- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
  - example student answers with examiner commentaries.

## Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at [aqa.org.uk/era](https://aqa.org.uk/era)

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit [aqa.org.uk/results](https://aqa.org.uk/results)

## Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at [coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk](https://coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk)

## Help and support available

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7061](https://aqa.org.uk/7061)

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at [aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-religious-studies](https://aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-religious-studies)

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

E: [religiousstudies@aqa.org.uk](mailto:religiousstudies@aqa.org.uk)

T: 0161 957 3881

# 2 Specification at a glance

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This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

There are two assessed components. Students must take assessments in both Component 1 and Component 2 in the same exam series.

## 2.1 Subject content

- Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics
- Component 2: Study of religion
  - [2A Buddhism](#) (page 13)
  - [2B Christianity](#) (page 15)
  - [2C Hinduism](#) (page 16)
  - [2D Islam](#) (page 18)
  - [2E Judaism](#) (page 19)

## 2.2 Assessments

Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics
<p><b>What's assessed</b></p> <p>Section A: Philosophy of religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arguments for the existence of God.</li><li>• Evil and suffering.</li><li>• Religious experience.</li></ul> <p>Section B: Ethics and religion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ethical theories.</li><li>• Issues of human life and death.</li><li>• Issues of animal life and death.</li></ul>
<p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 2 hours</li><li>• 120 marks</li><li>• 67% of AS</li></ul>
<p><b>Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section A: Philosophy of religion – two compulsory two-part questions worth 15 marks and 15 marks on philosophy of religion (60 marks).</li><li>• Section B: Ethics – two compulsory two-part questions worth 15 marks and 15 marks on ethics and religion (60 marks).</li></ul> <p>In both sections, questions may be set that span more than one topic. In each two-part question, the first part tests AO1 and the second part tests AO2.</p>



**Component 2: Study of religion****What's assessed**

For each faith option (2A–2E) the following content is covered:

- Sources of wisdom and authority.
- God/gods/ultimate reality.
- Life after death.
- Key moral principles.
- Religious identity.

**How it's assessed**

- Written exam: 1 hour
- 60 marks
- 33% of AS

**Questions**

Study of religion – two compulsory two-part questions worth 15 marks and 15 marks relating to the religion chosen (60 marks).

In both sections, questions may be set that span more than one topic. In each two-part question, the first part tests AO1 and the second part tests AO2.



# 3 Subject content

## 3.1 Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics

### 3.1.1 Section A: Philosophy of religion

Students must develop knowledge and understanding of the following:

- the meaning and significance of the specified content
- the influence of these beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the cause and significance of similarities and differences in beliefs and teachings
- the approach of philosophy to the study of religion and belief.

The term 'belief(s)' includes religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs as appropriate.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Students should also be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

#### Arguments for the existence of God

Design

- Presentation: Paley's analogical argument.
- Criticisms: Hume.

Ontological

- Presentation: Anselm's a priori argument.
- Criticisms: Gaunilo and Kant.

Cosmological

- Presentation: Aquinas' Way 3. The argument from contingency and necessity.
- Criticisms: Hume and Russell.

Students should study the basis of each argument in observation or in thought, the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments, their status as 'proofs', their value for religious faith and the relationship between reason and faith.

#### Evil and suffering

The problem of evil and suffering.

- The concepts of natural and moral evil.
- The logical and evidential problem of evil.
- Responses to the problem of evil and suffering.
- Hick's soul making theodicy.
- The free will defence.

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- Process theodicy as presented by Griffin.
  - The strengths and weaknesses of each response.

### Religious experience

The nature of religious experience.

- Visions: corporeal, imaginative and intellectual.
- Numinous experiences: Otto, an apprehension of the wholly other.
- Mystical experiences: William James; non sensuous and non-intellectual union with the divine as presented by Walter Stace.

### Verifying religious experiences

- The challenges of verifying religious experiences.
- The challenges to religious experience from science.
- Religious responses to those challenges.
- Swinburne's principles of credulity and testimony.

The influence of religious experiences and their value for religious faith.

## 3.1.2 Section B: Ethics and religion

Students must develop knowledge and understanding of the following:

- the meaning and significance of the specified content
- the influence of these beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the cause and significance of similarities and differences in beliefs and teachings
- the approach of philosophy to the study of religion and belief.

The term 'belief(s)' includes religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs as appropriate.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Students should also be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

### Normative ethical theories

- Deontological: natural moral law and the principle of double effect with reference to Aquinas; proportionalism.
- Teleological: situation ethics with reference to Fletcher.
- Character based: virtue ethics with reference to Aristotle.
- The differing approaches taken to moral decision making by these ethical theories.
- Their application to the issues of theft and lying.
- The strengths and weaknesses of these ways of making moral decisions.

### The application of natural moral law, situation ethics and virtue ethics to:

- Issues of human life and death:
  - embryo research; cloning; 'designer' babies
  - abortion

- voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide
- capital punishment.
- Issues of non-human life and death:
  - use of animals as food; intensive farming
  - use of animals in scientific procedures; cloning
  - blood sports
  - animals as a source of organs for transplants.

## 3.2 Component 2: Study of religion

Students must study one Component 2 option from the following:

- [2A Buddhism](#) (page 13)
- [2B Christianity](#) (page 15)
- [2C Hinduism](#) (page 16)
- [2D Islam](#) (page 18)
- [2E Judaism](#) (page 19)

### 3.2.1 2A Buddhism

Students are required to study aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Buddhism specified below and the different ways these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Buddhism.
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought). However students are expected to recognise and understand the following technical terms: Dukkha, Anicca, Nirvana, karma, ahimsa.

#### Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Buddha: the significance the life of Gautama Buddha for Theravada Buddhists with reference to his relevance as a role model and his authority as 'the enlightened one'; the Mahayana view that the life and teaching of Gautama Buddha was 'skillful means', with reference to the parable of the burning house in the Lotus Sutra.

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- The meaning and relevance of Buddha's teaching about Dukkha, including the debate about whether Buddhism is pessimistic.
  - The Pali Canon: the nature and authority of the Pali Canon; different views about how far this is an accurate record of Gautama Buddha's teaching and the relevance for Buddhists of this debate; the use of Pali Canon in worship and daily life.

### Ultimate reality

- The key differences between the Theravada and Mahayana concepts of Buddha; the key features of the Trikaya doctrine in Mahayana Buddhism.
- Anicca: the meaning and importance of the concept of Anicca; the development of that idea in the Mahayana doctrine of emptiness.
- Nirvana: Nirvana in this life and after death; Nirvana as indescribable and beyond understanding; attempts in scripture to describe it and their strengths and weaknesses with reference to the 80<sup>th</sup> dilemma of the Questions of King Milinda.

### Self, death and afterlife

- The meaning and purpose of life: better rebirth and Nirvana as goals of life and their relative importance; the ideal of the arhat and bodhisattva in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.
- Anatta (no-self): the concept of anatta; the five aggregates and the analogy of the chariot in the Questions of King Milinda, Book II chapter 1.1.
- Samsara: the cycle of birth, death and rebirth; the nature of karma and its role on the wheel of becoming; the realms of becoming and their significance including literal, metaphorical and psychological interpretations; Tibetan Buddhist beliefs about the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama as an expression of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

### Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in the Buddhist way of life; the importance of intention; actions as kusala (healthy) or akusala (unhealthy); the extent of human free will and moral responsibility.
- The nature of the five precepts and the distinctive features of the six perfections of the Mahayana Buddhism.
- Ahimsa: the concept of ahimsa and its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child, treatment of animals and war, including the use of weapons of mass destruction; different Buddhist views.

### Expressions of religious identity

- The Sangha: the monastic Sangha and its changing roles in Thailand; the traditional lifestyle and role of the Sangha in Thailand including its relationship with the lay community; the Sangha in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; the main features of the Wat Phra Dhammakaya movement.
- Devotion and its purposes: acts of devotion in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism; the nature and role of Buddha images and the importance of making and sharing merit; the different perspectives of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism about the significance of worship.
- Meditation: the nature and purpose of meditation on the eightfold path; modern usage of Buddhist meditation as a form of therapy and how Buddhists have responded to this.

## 3.2.2 2B Christianity

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Christianity specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Christianity
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought).

### Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Bible: different Christian beliefs about the nature and authority of the Bible and their impact on its use as a source of beliefs and teachings, including the Bible as inspired by God but written by humans beings.
- The Church: the different perspectives of the Protestant and Catholic traditions on the relative authority of the Bible and the Church.
- The authority of Jesus: different Christian understandings of Jesus' authority, including Jesus' authority as God's authority and Jesus' authority as only human; implications of these beliefs for Christian responses to Jesus' teaching and his value as a role model with reference to his teaching on retaliation and love for enemies in the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:38–48.

### God

- Christian Monotheism: one God, omnipotent creator and controller of all things; transcendent and unknowable; the doctrine of the Trinity and its importance; the meaning and significance of the belief that Jesus is the son of God; the significance of John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 8:6
- God as Personal, God as Father and God as Love: the challenge of understanding anthropomorphic and gender specific language about God: God as Father and King, including Christian feminist perspectives.
- The concept of God in process theology: God as neither omnipotent nor creator.

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## Self, death and afterlife

- The meaning and purpose of life: the following purposes and their relative importance: to glorify God and have a personal relationship with him; to prepare for judgement; to bring about God's kingdom on earth.
- Resurrection: the concept of soul; resurrection of the flesh as expressed in the writings of Augustine; spiritual resurrection; the significance of 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 and 50-54.
- Different interpretations of judgement, heaven, hell and purgatory as physical, spiritual or psychological realities; objective immortality in process thought.

## Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in the Christian way of life, including reference to teaching about justification by works, justification by faith and predestination.
- Sanctity of life: the concept of sanctity of life; different views about its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child; the just war theory and its application to the use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Dominion and stewardship: the belief that Christians have dominion over animals; beliefs about the role of Christians as stewards of animals and the natural environment and how changing understandings of the effects of human activities on the environment have affected that role.

## Expressions of religious identity

- Baptism: the significance of infant baptism in Christianity with particular reference to the Catholic and Baptist traditions; arguments in favour of and against infant baptism.
- Holy Communion: differing practices associated with Holy Communion, and differing understandings of Holy Communion and its importance, in the Catholic and Baptist Churches; different Christian understandings of the significance of Jesus' actions at the last supper, Luke 22:17–20.
- The mission of the Church: developments in Christian ideas of 'mission' from the early 20th century to today.

### 3.2.3 2C Hinduism

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Hinduism specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Hinduism
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought). However students are expected to recognise and understand the following technical terms: Trimurti, avatar, karma, ahimsa, darshan.

### Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Vedas: concept of shruti (that which is heard); the nature and authority of the Vedas, their use in worship and their importance; the distinctive nature of the Upanishads and their importance for Hindu thought; the significance of the teaching in the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda about the origin of the caste system.
- The smṛti texts: the status of the smṛti (remembered) texts; the importance of the following: the Ramayana; the Bhagavad Gita and the Manusmṛti.
- Gurus: the role and authority of gurus in the modern world with reference to Swami Sivananda.

### Ultimate reality

- Differing ideas about God and gods in the Rig Veda, and their importance for Hinduism today.
- The Trimurti: the nature and roles of the three elements of the Trimurti and their relationship with Brahman; the concept of avatar with particular reference to Krishna and Rama; the importance of the Trimurti and avatars in Hinduism.
- Nirguna and Saguna Brahman: Nirguna Brahman as nothingness, without qualities, beyond description and understanding; Saguna Brahman with qualities and as a personal God; the importance of both concepts for Hindus, Kena Upanishad 1:3–8.

### Self, death and afterlife

- The meaning and purpose of life: the four aims of life; and their relative importance; different understandings of the nature of moksha.
- Atman: the concept of atman and its relationship with the body and with Brahman, with reference to the views of Advaita Vedanta (non-dualism) and Samkhya (dualism) the parable of the chariot: Katha Upanishad 3.
- Samsara: the concept of samsara; beliefs about reincarnation and the causes of reincarnation with reference to the different types of karma; the realms of reincarnation and the interconnectedness of all life.

### Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in Hinduism with reference to karma and karma yoga (selfless effort).
- Dharma: the concepts of Sanatana dharma (universal dharma), Varnashrama dharma (dharma for class and stage of life) and the relationship between them; the importance of each for the Hindu way of life.
- Ahimsa: the virtue of ahimsa, its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child, treatment of animals and war including the use of weapons of mass destruction; different Hindu views on these issues including Gandhi's views on non-violence.

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## Expressions of religious identity

- Yoga: the different paths of Yoga, their suitability for different types of character and the links between them.
- Bhakti Yoga: the nature and importance of bhakti yoga; darshan at shrines, temples and on pilgrimage with particular reference to the Ganges; the key aspects of puja.
- The changing role of ashrams: ashrams (spiritual retreat centres) in Hinduism; their role prior to the 20th century and the variety of types of ashram today, with particular reference to the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Dhanwantari Ashram in Kerala, and Skanda Vale Ashram UK.

### 3.2.4 2D Islam

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Islam specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Islam
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought). However students are expected to recognise and understand the following technical terms: Tawhid, Barzakh, Al-Qadr, Jihad.

## Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Qur'an: its nature and authority; Muslim beliefs about the revelation and compilation of the Qur'an; the importance of the Arabic text and how this is reflected in the treatment and use of the Qur'an in worship and in everyday life; translation as interpretation and the importance of trustworthy interpretation of the Qur'an.
- The Prophet: the status of Muhammad as Khatam an-Nabiyyin (seal of the Prophets) and his significance for Muslims today; different views about the nature and value of hadiths as sources of knowledge of the sayings and actions of Muhammad.
- Imams: the authority of the Imams in Shi'a Islam.

## God

- Tawhid: the Oneness of God; God as transcendent and indescribable, the omnipotent creator and controller of all things; teaching about God in the Throne verse: 2:255.
- Personal aspects of God: The significance of 'The Merciful' and 'The Compassionate' as Names of God; different Muslim views about how anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the

Qur'an should be interpreted. Ashari, Hanbali and Mutazili views, with particular reference to the hand of God and the face of God.

- Aspects of the Sufi concept of God: God as incomparable and unknowable in Himself ; Creation as emanation and God as immanent; the soul as one with God; Sufi understandings of the teaching about God in the verse of Light: 24:35.

### Self, death and afterlife

- Muslim views about the purpose of life as being to worship God and a moral test; the concept of worship and consideration of the view that, for Muslims, this life is only important as a preparation for the life to come.
- Al-Qadr: different understandings of the relationship between divine control, human freedom and responsibility. Mutazili and Ashari perspectives and the Shi'a concept of Bada.
- Akhirah (afterlife): the concept of soul; beliefs about Barzakh, judgement heaven and hell including different understandings of resurrection and of the descriptions of heaven and hell in the Qur'an including 47:15.

### Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in Islam including reference to the duty of obedience to God and the Prophet and to the greater jihad; the role of personal freedom and judgement in the Shari'ah law, with reference to the five-fold classification of actions.
- Sanctity of life: the concept of the sanctity of life and its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child; lesser jihad as a duty of the Ummah and how it applied to warfare at the time of the Prophet; debates about its application today, including to the use of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.
- Stewardship: the role of the Ummah as Khalifah (stewards) and their responsibilities towards the environment and to animal life; how changing understandings of the impact of human activities on the world change Muslim understandings of their responsibilities.

### Expressions of religious identity

- The concept of Muslim: the similarities and differences between Shi'a and Sunni views about what it means to be a Muslim.
- The Pillars of Islam: the concept of pillar and purpose of the five pillars of Islam; Salah: differences in Sunni and Shi'a practices; the importance of the outward actions of prayer and the underlying intentions and state of mind; the importance of daily and Jummah prayers; Hajj: developments in the practice of Hajj in the 20th century and the significance and importance of Hajj today.
- The mosque: the changing role of the mosque in the community, with particular reference to the history and developing work of the London Central Mosque.

## 3.2.5 2E Judaism

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Judaism specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies

- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Judaism
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought). However students are expected to recognise and understand the following technical terms: 'Eternal Thou', She'ol, pikuach nephesh, agunot, minyan.

### Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Tenakh: different Jewish beliefs about the nature and authority of the Tenakh, including: as the absolute Word of God, complete and unchangeable and as inspired by God but written by human beings; the influence of these beliefs on the way in which the Tenakh is used as a source of authority in worship and in everyday life.
- The Babylonian Talmud: different Jewish beliefs about its nature, authority and importance.
- Rabbis: their role and authority in contemporary Judaism, including reference to the Beth Din.

### God

- Monotheism: God as one, eternal, omniscient and omnipotent creator and controller of all things; beliefs about God expressed in Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of the Faith.
- God as personal: the personal God of the Bible, and debates about how the anthropomorphic and gender based language about God should be interpreted, with particular reference to God as King and Father and Genesis 3:8.
- Martin Buber: key ideas about God in Martin Buber's theology: God as the 'Eternal Thou'; God known in and through personal human relationships.

### Self, death and afterlife

- The meaning and purpose of life: different purposes of life and their relative importance: obedience; to bring the Messiah and to repair the world; different Jewish understandings of the Messianic Age.
- Life after death: In the Tenakh: including I Samuel 28:11–20 and the concept of She'ol; nature of the soul; resurrection of the flesh in the Thirteen Principles of the Faith and modern attitudes to this belief; immortality of the soul in later Jewish thinking including the expression of these beliefs in the Pittsburgh Platform; the link between belief in the afterlife and belief in the justice of God.
- Reincarnation in some kabbalistic thinking.

### Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good moral conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in Judaism with reference to obedience to God and the mitzvot; and the extent of human freedom and moral

responsibility; the place of individual reasoning and decision-making including the principle of pikuach nephesh.

- The sanctity of life: the concept of the sanctity of life and its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child and war; issues including the use of weapons of mass destruction; different Jewish views on these issues.
- Stewardship: the concept of stewardship and Jewish attitudes to animals and the environment, and how changing understandings of the effects of human activities on the environment have affected that role.

### Expressions of religious identity

- The concept of 'Jew', and different understandings of what it means to be a Jew, including: the importance of being born a Jewish mother; attitudes to circumcision and to bar/bat mitzvah.
- Expressions of Jewish identity in daily life: different attitudes to dress, keeping a kosher home and keeping Shabbat; expressions of Jewish identity in worship including the diversity of practice within synagogue worship, Yom Kippur and Pesach.
- The changing role of the synagogue in society with reference to its developments during the Exile in Babylon and its role today.



# 4 Scheme of assessment

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Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at [aqa.org.uk/pastpapers](http://aqa.org.uk/pastpapers)

This specification is designed to be taken over one or two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

AS exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2017 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our AS exams in Religious Studies include questions that allow 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 recognises the right of others to hold a different view.

## 4.1 Aims

Courses based on this specification should 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 individuals, communities and societies
- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion
- reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in light of their study.

## 4.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all AS Religious Studies specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:
  - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching
  - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies

- cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.
- AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

## Assessment objective weightings for AS Religious Studies

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)		Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	
AO1	33.5	16.5	50
AO2	33.5	16.5	50
Overall weighting of components	67	33	100

## 4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics	120	1	120
Component 2: Study of religion	60	1	60
Total scaled mark:			180

## 4.4 Assessment structure

### Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics

The exam tests students' ability in relation to both AO1 and AO2. The paper is divided into two sections:

- **Section A** covers philosophy of religion and consists of two compulsory two-part questions. In each two-part question, the first part tests AO1 (15 marks) and the second part tests AO2 (15 marks).
- **Section B** covers ethics and religion and consists of two compulsory two-part questions. In each two-part question, the first part tests AO1 (15 marks) and the second part tests AO2 (15 marks).

### Component 2: Study of religion

The exam tests students' ability in relation to AO1 and AO2.

The following options are available:

[2A Buddhism](#) (page 13)

[2B Christianity](#) (page 15)

[2C Hinduism](#) (page 16)

[2D Islam](#) (page 18)

[2E Judaism](#) (page 19)

The exam covers the study of religion and consists of two compulsory two-part questions. In each two-part question the first part tests AO1 (15 marks) and the second part tests AO2 (15 marks).



# 5 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at [aqa.org.uk/examsadmin](http://aqa.org.uk/examsadmin)

## 5.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	Option	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Religious Studies	Option A: Buddhism	7061A	TBC
	Option B: Christianity	7061B	TBC
	Option C: Hinduism	7061C	TBC
	Option D: Islam	7061D	TBC
	Option E: Judaism	7061E	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- Ofqual GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 601/8716/5.

## 5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level Religious Studies specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

## 5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E.

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Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

## 5.4 Resits and shelf life

Students can resit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

## 5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

However, we recommend that students should have the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE Religious Studies course or equivalent.

## 5.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. If any difficulties were encountered, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published on the JCQ website at [jcq.org.uk](http://jcq.org.uk)

### 5.6.1 Students with disabilities and special needs

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested are not changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a student who does not read Braille.

We are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

If you have students who need access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the Access arrangements online service at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

### 5.6.2 Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as the death of a relative. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see [aqa.org.uk/access](http://aqa.org.uk/access) or email [accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk](mailto:accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk)

## 5.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college has not previously offered any AQA specification, you need to register as an AQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](http://aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

## 5.8 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates.

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA-approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

A private candidate may be self-taught, home-schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. You must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at [aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates](http://aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates)
- email: [privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk](mailto:privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk)

## Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7061](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7061)

You can talk directly to the Religious Studies subject team:

E: [religiousstudies@aca.org.uk](mailto:religiousstudies@aca.org.uk)

T: 0161 957 3881