



# AS

# Religious Studies

## Specification

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Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Religious Studies (8RS0)

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*First teaching from September 2016*

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*First certification from 2017*

Issue 2



## Summary of AS Religious Studies Issue 2 changes

<b>Summary of changes made between previous issue and this current issue</b>	<b>Page number</b>
Clarification of what students need to learn for topic 1.2 in Paper 1	14
Spelling of second section of the Tipitaka corrected	25
Clarification of what students need to learn for topic 2.1 in Paper 4, Option 4B	28

If you need further information on these changes or what they mean, contact us via our website at: [qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/contact-us.html](https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/contact-us.html).



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# 1 Introduction

## Why choose Pearson Edexcel AS Level Religious Studies?

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We have listened to feedback from all parts of the religious studies community, including higher education. We have used this opportunity of curriculum change to redesign qualifications to reflect the demands of a truly modern and evolving religious studies environment. This new qualification will allow students to apply a wide range of concepts enabling them to confidently interpret, contextualise and analyse the expressions of religions and world views they encounter.

**Clear and coherent structure** – our qualification offers a choice of three from the following four components - Philosophy of Religion, Religion and Ethics, New Testament Studies and a study of a chosen religion. All of the components are assessed through an externally examined paper which follow the same structure.

**Develops understanding and appreciation** – this qualification encourages students to develop an appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies. The qualification does this through an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion.

**Helps develop a holistic understanding of religion** – the specification facilitates enquiry into, and develops insightful evaluations of, ultimate questions about the purposes and commitments of human life, especially as expressed in philosophy, ethics and religion. The qualification encourages students to make connections so that in each field of study they understand the influences over time of developments in religious beliefs and practices, the philosophy of religion, religious ethics and/or textual interpretation.

**Develops transferable skills for progression to higher education** – students will use ideas from a range of approaches to the study of religions and beliefs in order to research and present a wide range of well-informed and reasonable arguments, which engage profoundly with moral, religious and spiritual issues. This will enable students to make a smooth transition to the next level of study.

**Supports progression from Key Stage 4** – the content builds on the understanding developed at Key Stage 4, while also ensuring that students new to the subject are appropriately supported.

**AS and A Level qualifications that are co-teachable** – co-teaching AS and A Level provides flexibility for you and your students. Centres co-teaching AS and A Level can deliver the first three topics in each component in the first year, allowing students to be entered for the AS at the end of year.

# Supporting you in planning and implementing this qualification

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## Planning

- Our **Getting Started** guide gives you an overview of the new AS and A Level qualifications to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment and to help you understand what these changes mean for you and your students.
- We will give you an editable **course planner** and **scheme of work** that you can adapt to suit your department.
- **Our mapping documents** highlight key differences between the new and current qualifications.

## Preparing for examinations

We will also provide a range of resources to help you prepare your students for the assessments, including marked exemplars of student work with examiner commentaries.

## ResultsPlus

ResultsPlus provides the most detailed analysis available of your students' exam performance. It can help you identify the topics and skills where further learning would benefit your students.

## Get help and support

Our support line and Ask the Expert will ensure you receive help and guidance from us and that you can share ideas and information with other teachers. You can sign up to receive e-newsletters from the subject advisor service for qualification updates and product and service news.

The Religious Studies Team can be contacted by email at: [TeachingReligiousStudies@pearson.com](mailto:TeachingReligiousStudies@pearson.com) and by telephone on: 0844 463 2817.

Learn more at [qualifications.pearson.com](http://qualifications.pearson.com)

## Qualification at a glance

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### Content and assessment overview

The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Religious Studies consists of three externally-examined papers. Students are required choose to **three** papers from a choice of four.

Students must complete all assessment in May/June in any single year.

<b>Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion (*Paper code: 8RS0/01)</b>
<p><b>Written examination: 1 hour</b></p> <p><b>33.33% of the qualification</b></p> <p><b>54 marks</b></p>
<p><b>Content overview</b></p> <p>Philosophical issues and questions; The nature and influence of religious experience; Problems of evil and suffering.</p>
<p><b>Assessment overview</b></p> <p>An externally-assessed written examination comprising two sections. Students answer all questions in Section A and Section B.</p> <p><b>Section A</b></p> <p>Three extended, open-response questions.</p> <p><b>Section B</b></p> <p>One two-part essay question.</p>
<b>Paper 2: Religion and Ethics (*Paper code: 8RS0/02)</b>
<p><b>Written examination: 1 hour</b></p> <p><b>33.33% of the qualification</b></p> <p><b>54 marks</b></p>
<p><b>Content overview</b></p> <p>Significant concepts in issues or debates in religion and ethics; A study of three ethical theories; Application of ethical theories to issues of importance.</p>
<p><b>Assessment overview</b></p> <p>An externally-assessed written examination comprising two sections. Students answer all questions in Section A and Section B.</p> <p><b>Section A</b></p> <p>Three extended, open-response questions.</p> <p><b>Section B</b></p> <p>One two-part essay question.</p>



**Paper 3: New Testament Studies (\*Paper code: 8RS0/03)**

**Written examination: 1 hour**

**33.33% of the qualification**

**54 marks**

**Content overview**

Social, historical and religious context of the New Testament; Texts and interpretation of the Person of Jesus; Interpreting the text and issues of relationship, purpose and authorship.

**Assessment overview**

An externally-assessed written examination comprising two sections. Students answer all questions in Section A and Section B.

**Section A**

Three extended, open-response questions.

**Section B**

One two-part essay question.

**Forbidden option**

Candidates who enter for Paper 3: New Testament Studies cannot enter for Paper 4B: Christianity

**Paper 4: Study of Religion (Paper codes: 8RS0/4A-4F)**

**Written examination: 1 hour**

**33.33% of the qualification**

**54 marks**

**Options**

Students take **one** of the following six options.

**4A:** Buddhism

**4B:** Christianity

**4C:** Hinduism

**4D:** Islam

**4E:** Judaism

**4F:** Sikhism

**Content overview**

Religious beliefs, values and teachings; Sources of wisdom and authority; Practices that shape and express religious identity.

**Assessment overview**

An externally-assessed written examination comprising two sections. Students answer all questions in Section A and Section B.

**Section A**

Three extended, open-response questions.

**Section B**

One two-part essay question.

**Forbidden option**

Candidates who enter for Paper 4B:Christianity cannot enter for Paper 3: New Testament Studies

\*See *Appendix 5: Codes* for a description of this code and all other codes relevant to this qualification.

## 2 Subject content and assessment information

The subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to this qualification. Together with the assessment information, it provides the framework within which centres create their programmes of study, so ensuring progression from Key Stage 4 national curriculum requirements and the possibilities for progression to A Level.

### Qualification aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable 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 the light of their study.

# Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

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## Overview

The content for this paper helps students to explore some of the main contemporary philosophical issues and questions about religion, such as belief in God or the conviction that life has both meaning and purpose. It provides a relevant and challenging context for exploring the particular beliefs, values and practices that characterise religious communities. In turn, the paper provides a sound basis for understanding and reflecting on the contemporary influence of religion, the views of those who do not share a religious belief and the impact of these factors on people's lives.

Students will engage with arguments and debates on religious and non-religious views of life, which focus on some key areas of controversy that shape modern views of the world, such as the problem of evil and suffering. Students will extend their understanding through engagement in debates on issues such as the value of evidence based on accounts of religious experience. They will analyse and evaluate particular viewpoints of thinkers who have contributed to these debates.

In this paper, students will be required to study the ideas of key contributors in relation to specific content areas. These are indicated against each relevant sub-topic. Students will be required to use these ideas to support and underpin their knowledge and understanding.

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>1</b>  <b>Philosophical issues and questions</b>	1.1	<p>Design Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Inductive reasoning, <i>a posteriori</i> types of arguments, interpretation of experience.</li> <li>b) Types of order and regularity, role of analogy, cumulative effect of evidence, anthropic principle, regularities of co-presence and regularities of succession.</li> <li>c) Strengths and weaknesses of Design Arguments: probability rather than proof, alternative interpretations, including evolution and deism. Challenges to the argument.</li> <li>d) Philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues in the philosophy of religion.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of W Paley and D Hume.</p>
	1.2	<p>Cosmological Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Inductive reasoning, <i>a posteriori</i> types of arguments.</li> <li>b) Principle of sufficient reason, explanation, interpretation of experience, movement, cause and effect, contingency, infinite regress, first cause, necessary existence, Kalam version.</li> <li>c) Strengths and weaknesses of Cosmological Arguments: probability rather than proof, brute fact, debates about infinite regress, necessary existence and God as a necessary being. Challenges to the argument.</li> <li>d) Philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues in the philosophy of religion.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of Aquinas, D Hume and I Kant</p>
	1.3	<p>Ontological Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>A priori</i> compared to <i>a posteriori</i> types of arguments, deductive reasoning, not evidence based but understanding of concept 'God' as an analytic proposition.</li> <li>b) Definitions of 'God', necessary existence, aseity.</li> <li>c) Strengths and weaknesses of the Ontological Arguments: concept of proof compared to probability, debates about 'existence' and predicates. Challenges to the argument.</li> <li>d) Philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues in the philosophy of religion.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of Anselm and B Russell.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>The nature and influence of religious experience</b></p>	2.1	<p>The nature of religious experience</p> <p>a) Context of religious experience across religious traditions, range of definitions related to belief in God and/or ultimate reality, theistic and monistic views, ineffability, noetic, transience, passivity.</p> <p>b) Types: conversion, prayer, meditation, mysticism, numinous. Relationship between religious experience and propositional and non-propositional revelation.</p> <p>c) Alternative explanations, physiological and naturalistic interpretations, objectivist and subjectivist views.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of W James and R Otto.</p>
	2.2	<p>Influence of religious experience as an argument for the existence of God</p> <p>a) Inductive reasoning based on evidence, the link between appearances, how things seem, how things really are and conclusions drawn from experience about reality and existence. Principles of testimony and credulity, the value and role of testimony to religious experience.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of R Swinburne and J Hick.</p> <p>b) Strengths and weaknesses of religious experience as an argument for the existence of God: experiences influenced by the religious context of the believer, religious experiences interpreted as any other sensory experiences, complexity of interpretations, issues of probability and proof as relating to the argument, nature of God, including transcendent and immanent, limitations of language, lack of uniformity of experiences, refinements of and challenges to the argument.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of M Persinger and R Dawkins.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>3</b>  <b>Problems of evil and suffering</b>	3.1	<p>Problem of evil and suffering</p> <p>The nature of the problem across a range of religious traditions, types of evil and suffering, moral and non-moral. The challenge to religious belief posed by the inconsistency of the nature of God and the evident existence of evil and suffering challenging belief in the existence of God.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of D Hume and J Mackie.</p>
	3.2	<p>Theodicies and solutions to the problem of suffering</p> <p>a) Belief that creation was good; evil and suffering is a privation of good due to the fall of the angels and man because of the misuse of free will, soul-deciding, significance of reconciliation.</p> <p>b) Belief that creation is a mix of good and evil linked to the vale of soul making theodicy, including free will defence, best of all possible worlds, epistemic distance, eschatological justification.</p> <p>c) Process theodicy: God is not responsible for evil and suffering, but he is co-sufferer and cannot coerce the free will of human agents.</p> <p>d) Strengths and weaknesses of theodicies and solutions: compatibility or otherwise with modern views about origins of life, nature of God, innocent suffering, hypothesis of life after death.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of Augustine and Irenaeus.</p>

## Assessment information

- First assessment: May/June 2017.
- The assessment is 1 hour.
- The assessment is out of 54 marks.
- The assessment consists of two sections.
- Students must answer all questions in Section A and in Section B.
- The paper includes short-open and extended writing questions.
- See *Appendix 1* for the command words that will be used in the examination paper.
- Use of specialist language will be assessed as it is through the selection and deployment of specialist language and terminology that students are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

## Sample assessment materials

A sample paper and mark scheme can be found in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Religious Studies Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)* document.



## Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

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### Overview

The content for this paper is focused on exploring both common ground and controversy in dealing with issues that arise in the areas of morality and religion in the context of the modern world. The paper will help students to study some of the underlying ideas and concepts of these issues, as well as questions and issues about how ethical and religious ideas and solutions may be applied in practice in contemporary social, political and personal situations. The study addresses an important part of the key underlying concerns that students raise about the world in which they are growing up, and about their own views, opinions and commitments.

In this paper, students will study issues and practical problems such as equality, war and peace and sexual ethics. These issues and problems will provide a sufficient balance of breadth and depth for students to acquire the skills they need to address a wide range of contemporary moral dilemmas and to progress to further study. A representative array of ethical stances provides a basis for discussion and debate about major issues. This is further sharpened by engagement with the views and stances of significant ethical thinkers who have contributed to the debates.

In this paper, students will be required to study the ideas of key contributors in relation to specific content areas. These are indicated against each relevant sub-topic. Students will be required to use these ideas to support and underpin their knowledge and understanding.

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>1</b> <b>Significant concepts in issues or debates in religion and ethics</b>	1.1	<p>Environmental issues</p> <p>a) Concepts of stewardship and conservation from the point of view of at least one religion and at least one secular ethical perspective, animal welfare and protection, sustainability, waste management and climate change.</p> <p>b) Strengths and weaknesses of significant areas of disagreement and debate, assessment of relevant examples, legal changes and social attitudes, appropriateness and value of employing religious perspectives in these debates.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of J Lovelock and A Næss.</p>
	1.2	<p>Equality</p> <p>a) Ethical and religious concepts of equality, including the issues of gender or race or disability and the work of one significant figure in campaigns for equality in the chosen area, significant events in the progress of equality in these areas, perspectives on equality from at least one religion and one secular ethical perspective.</p> <p>b) Strengths and weaknesses of significant areas of disagreement and debate, assessment of relevant examples, legal changes and social attitudes, appropriateness and value of employing religious perspectives into these debates.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of Martin Luther King and Joni Eareckson Tada.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>A study of three ethical theories</b></p>	2.1	<p>Utilitarianism</p> <p>a) Concepts of utility, pleasure, hedonism and happiness, influences on the emergence of the theory, including social, political and cultural influences, the significant contribution of Bentham and Mill to a recognised theory. Act and Rule Utilitarianism, the development of the theory, including Preference, Negative and Ideal Utilitarianism, the application of the theory in historical and contemporary ethical situations, including political and social reform, the concept of relativism in ethics.</p> <p>b) Strengths and weaknesses of the theory and its developments, appropriateness of its continuing application and use, assessment of relevant examples, change in the law and social attitudes vis a vis the theory, compatibility or otherwise with religious approaches.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of J Bentham and J S Mill.</p>
	2.2	<p>Situation Ethics</p> <p>a) Please change part a) so it reads: 'Ethical and religious concepts of equality, including the issues of gender or race or disability and the work of one significant figure in campaigns for equality in the chosen area, significant events in the progress of equality in these areas, perspectives on equality from at least one religion and one secular ethical perspective.'</p> <p>b) Strengths and weaknesses of the theory and its developments, appropriateness of its continuing application and use, assessment of relevant examples, change in the law and social attitudes vis a vis the theory, compatibility or otherwise with religious approaches.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of J A T Robinson and J Fletcher.</p>
	2.3	<p>Natural Moral Law</p> <p>a) Concepts of absolutism and legalism in ethics, early development of natural moral law, biblical and classical foundations of the approach, concepts of purpose, <i>telos</i>, primary and secondary precepts, contemporary applications and adaptations, including proportionalism.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of Aquinas and B Hoose.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>3</b> <b>Application of ethical theories to issues of importance</b>	3.1	<p>War and peace</p> <p>a) The contribution of at least one religion to issues of war and peace, including the teaching of sacred text(s), the Just War Theory, including principles <i>jus ad bellum</i>, <i>jus in bello</i> and <i>jus post bellum</i>, reasons for and influences on the development of the theory, examples of wars, including contemporary conflicts that may be evaluated against the theory, special issues arising from nuclear war.</p> <p>b) Concepts of pacifism, including absolute, relative/selective and nuclear pacifism, the role of pacifist movements and pressure groups. The success of the Just War Theory as a theory and in practice, the practicality of pacifism in its different forms, perceived advantages of war such as technological development, relevance of religious contributions, success of named wars in achieving their goal.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of Augustine and Aquinas.</p>
	3.2	<p>Sexual Ethics</p> <p>a) The contribution of at least one world religion on issues in sexual ethics, including the teaching of sacred text(s) and understanding of the diversity of religious approaches, sexual relationships in and outside of marriage, including pre-marital sex, adultery, promiscuity, same-sex relationships, including marriage and civil partnership, contraception and childlessness, secular ethical approaches to these issues and social and cultural influences on them.</p> <p>b) The continuing relevance and application of religious teachings and beliefs on sexual ethics, strengths and weaknesses of changing social attitudes, the success or otherwise of contributions from ethical theory in making decisions in matters of sexual ethics.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of P Vardy and J Dominionian.</p>

## Assessment information

- First assessment: May/June 2017.
- The assessment is 1 hour.
- The assessment is out of 54 marks.
- The assessment consists of two sections.
- Students must answer all questions in Section A and in Section B.
- The paper includes short-open and extended writing questions.
- See *Appendix 1* for the command words that will be used in the examination paper.
- Use of specialist language will be assessed as it is through the selection and deployment of specialist language and terminology that students are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

## Sample assessment materials

A sample paper and mark scheme can be found in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Religious Studies Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)* document.

## Paper 3: New Testament Studies

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### Overview

The content for this paper comprises a study of extended textual material. This study is set in a historical context so that students can become familiar with some of the more technical language and terminology used in the texts. It is also set in the context of the specific study of the Gospel texts, and involves a detailed understanding of the nature of selected passages of text as well as the scholarly and critical methods used today to study the text of the New Testament. There is a focus on understanding the Gospel teaching about how the first Christians understood the New Testament text and how they expressed and interpreted the relationship between Jesus and God.

In this paper, students will be required to study the ideas of key contributors in relation to specific content areas. These are indicated against each relevant sub-topic. Students will be required to use these ideas to support and underpin their knowledge and understanding.

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>1</b> <b>Social, historical and religious context of the New Testament</b>	1.1	Prophecy regarding the Messiah a) The Suffering Servant of Isaiah, the importance of the line of David, the idea of the messianic secret. b) The significance of these expectations and their impact on New Testament texts, including Matthew’s proof texts in the birth narratives and for understanding the Gospel texts. With reference to the ideas of R Brown and M Hooker.
	1.2	The world of the first century and the significance of this context for the life and work of Jesus a) Religious groups in Palestine. b) Hellenism. c) Roman occupation. d) The role and impact of these influences on legal and ethical dimensions of life in first-century Palestine and the relationship of Jesus’ life and work to these influences.

Topics	What students need to learn	
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Texts and interpretation of the Person of Jesus</b></p>	2.1	<p>The Prologue in John (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The meaning and theological significance, including ideas about the nature and person of Jesus, the Word made flesh, concepts of life, light and dark, belief, children of God, flesh and spirit, law, grace and truth.</li> <li>b) The influences of Judaism and Hellenism and the importance of these themes in understanding the gospel.</li> <li>c) The implication for religious laws and codes for living of different understandings of the identity and message of Jesus, including its influence beyond a religious community.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of C H Dodd and M Hooker.</p>
	2.2	<p>Titles of Jesus in the synoptic gospels and selected 'I am' sayings in John (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The meaning and significance of the terms Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, and 'I am the bread of life/light of the world/good shepherd/true vine'.</li> <li>b) The background and context of these titles, including Old Testament references and symbolism and the importance of these for interpreting and understanding the Gospels.</li> <li>c) The implication for religious laws and codes for living of different understandings of the identity and message of Jesus, including its influence beyond a religious community.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of R Brown and C H Dodd.</p>
	2.3	<p>Miracles and signs (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The meaning and significance of the signs in the Fourth Gospel: Turning water into wine, the Healing of the Official's son, the Healing at the pool, the Feeding of the 5000, Walking on water, the Healing of the blind man and the Raising of Lazarus.</li> <li>b) Ideas about the identity and role of Jesus and the importance of these signs for understanding Jesus' ministry.</li> <li>c) The implication for religious laws and codes for living of different understandings of the identity and message of Jesus.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of R Brown and C H Dodd.</p>



Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>3</b>  <b>Interpreting the text and issues of relationship, purpose and authorship</b>	3.1	Interpreting the text  a) The synoptic problem, source, form and redaction criticism – an examination of the relationship between the synoptic Gospels, including two source hypothesis (priority of Mark and 'Q source'), the idea of proto-Gospels and the four-source hypothesis.  b) Units of tradition and their type/form, the way texts appear to have been translated, edited and transmitted.  c) The significance of this for understanding the texts.
	3.2	The purpose and authorship of the Fourth Gospel  a) An examination of the different purposes of the Gospel and views of its authorship: Jesus as Christ, Son of God, life in his name, Spiritual Gospel, a Gospel to convert Jews and Gentiles, fulfilment of scripture.  b) The strengths and weaknesses of these views based on the text and modern scholarship, and their significance for understanding the text for individuals and communities.  With reference to the ideas of R Brown and C H Dodd.

## List of extracts for Paper 3: New Testament Studies

Students are expected to study a range of texts that support and underpin their knowledge and understanding. The following texts are **not** exclusive to the topic areas under which they appear; students will need to be able to apply these texts across any suitable topic area. These are published in the *A Level Religious Studies Anthology: Paper 3 – New Testament Studies*, which can be downloaded from our website.

Suggested version of the Bible is the New International Version (NIV).

(1) Matthew 1:18–2:23

(2) John 1:1–18

(3) John 6:24–59, 8:12, 9:1–12, 10:1–21, 15:1–17

(4) John 2:1–11, 4:43–54, 5:1–15, 6:1–24, 9:1–34, 11:1–57

## Assessment information

- First assessment: May/June 2017.
- The assessment is 1 hour.
- The assessment is out of 54 marks.
- The assessment consists of two sections.
- Students must answer all questions in Section A and in Section B.
- The paper includes short-open and extended writing questions.
- See *Appendix 1* for the command words that will be used in the examination paper.
- Use of specialist language will be assessed as it is through the selection and deployment of specialist language and terminology that students are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

## Sample assessment materials

A sample paper and mark scheme can be found in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Religious Studies Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)* document.

## Paper 4: Study of Religion

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### Overview

The content for this paper comprises a focused and in-depth study of a chosen religion. The study provides a foundation for understanding the key beliefs and values of a religion, recognising that 'belief' itself does not necessarily have the same role and emphasis in religions or between religions. The study helps students explore how believers attribute authority both to key people in the religious community and to various kinds of traditional, sacred texts. This study also explores various and diverse ways in which religious believers express their sense of identity through, for example, their most sacred rituals and their codes of behaviour. It gives students an opportunity to explore both common ground and diversity in the religious tradition. They will broaden their understanding through familiarity with the views of various contributors, from within and outside the tradition, who have studied this religion in some depth.

In this paper, students will be required to study the ideas of key contributors in relation to specific content areas. These are indicated against each relevant sub-topic. Students will be required to use these ideas to support and underpin their knowledge and understanding.

Students must study **one** religion from the following six options.

**4A:** Buddhism

**4B:** Christianity

**4C:** Hinduism

**4D:** Islam

**4E:** Judaism

**4F:** Sikhism

## Paper 4, Option 4A: Buddhism

Topics	What students need to learn
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Religious beliefs, values and teachings</b></p>	<p>1.1 The Four Noble Truths as the basis of Buddhism and the centrality of such for different Buddhists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Three Poisons.</li> <li>b) the Buddha’s teaching on suffering and the cessation of craving/desire in the Four Noble Truths: dukkha, samudaya/tanha, nirodha and magga. Including reference to the nature of Enlightenment and nibbana.</li> <li>c) The Eightfold Path:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o its summary in the Three-fold Way: ethics, meditation and wisdom</li> <li>o the ethical principles of the Noble Eightfold Path: right action, right speech, right livelihood</li> <li>o the qualities of metta, karuna and khanti</li> <li>o the relationship between these principles and the Four Noble truths.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>How these are understood in Theravada and Mahayana, both historically and in the contemporary world.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of D Keown and B Bodhi.</p>
	<p>1.2 How the three marks and the Five khandas are understood in Theravada and Mahayana, both historically and in the contemporary world, including how they may be linked to the rejection of the idea of the self and the non-existence of God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The three marks of existence and how these are reflected throughout existence and also through Buddhist teachings. The importance of this in understanding the nature of reality, the ultimate reality, and the meaning and purpose of life.</li> <li>b) The Five khandas in Theravada; death and the afterlife: the concept of rebirth, Nibbana, karma and the search for Enlightenment. The importance of this in understanding the nature of reality, the ultimate reality, and the meaning and purpose of life.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of Buddhaghosa in the Visuddhimagga and T W Rinpoche.</p>
	<p>1.3 The meaning and significance of the three refuges: the Buddha, dhamma and the sangha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The significance of each of these for a place of refuge within Buddhism.</li> <li>b) The interrelationship between these three refuges.</li> <li>c) Different interpretations of the role and nature of the sangha and the role and nature of the Buddha.</li> <li>d) The implications of the refuges for worship and daily life.</li> </ul>

Topics	What students need to learn	
		<p>How these are understood in Theravada and Mahayana, both historically and in the contemporary world.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of B Bodhi and T Bhikkhu.</p>
	1.4	<p>Key Moral Principles</p> <p>a) The Five Precepts.</p> <p>b) How these are understood in Theravada and Mahayana both historically and in the contemporary world.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of P Harvey and B Bodhi.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>2</b>  <b>Sources of wisdom and authority</b>	2.1	<p>The life and work of the Buddha, its meaning and significance in its historical, religious and social context and the important teachings that his life exemplifies</p> <p>a) The key events of his life, including birth, childhood, the four sights, life as an ascetic, search for Enlightenment, founding of the sangha, preaching, his death and parinibbana.</p> <p>b) Links with a range of religious groupings at this time, including their beliefs and practice.</p> <p>c) Understanding and assessment of sacrifices, caste systems, social and economic groupings and changes; types of authority and kingship.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of K Armstrong and N Bhikkhu.</p>
	2.2	<p>The significance, interpretation, use and treatment of the Tipitaka.</p> <p>a) The status of the Tipitaka as the teachings of the Buddha and its collection and formation.</p> <p>b) The different sections, along with their context and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Vinaya Pitaka and how this aims to produce a cohesive community</li> <li>o Sutta Pitaka and the search for Enlightenment</li> <li>o Abhidhamma Pitaka and interpretation and understanding of the Buddha's teachings and a consideration of whether this is the work of the Buddha himself.</li> </ul> <p>c) The significance of the Tipitaka as the source of the Buddha's teachings and its use, importance and impact as a source of wisdom in Buddhism.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of D Keown and M Meghaprasara.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>3</b>  <b>Practices that shape and express religious identity</b>	3.1	Distinctive practices and emphases of Theravada Buddhism and how they shape and express religious identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Its significance as the only surviving form of Nikaya Buddhism.</li> <li>b) Rejection of the idea of the Three Vehicles.</li> <li>c) The centrality of Buddha Gautama, especially in their use of images and stupas.</li> <li>d) The goal of nibbana and parinibbana as a central teaching alongside an emphasis on renunciation, including the four stages to becoming an arahant.</li> <li>e) The distinctive teachings of Theravada; their interpretation and application in light of the life and teachings of the Buddha and other traditions of Buddhism and their different emphases.</li> </ul> With reference to the ideas of R Gombrich and H Gunaratana.
	3.2	Distinctive practices and emphases of Mahayana Buddhism and how they shape and express religious identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Its development and context in the second century BCE and the first century CE.</li> <li>b) The extension of the concept of the Buddha to include the Buddha and creation. The specific concept of the Buddha as a cosmic presence that influences the world.</li> <li>c) The Buddha nature in every person. The centrality of Buddha Gautama, especially in their use of images and stupas.</li> </ul> The different schools of Mahayana should be explored in the context of the countries in which they developed and are practised.           With reference to the ideas of A Basham and the 14th Dalai Lama.
	3.3	The different types and purposes of meditation, their context and application and how they shape and express religious identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The different types of meditation in Buddhism.</li> <li>b) The place and context of meditation as part of the Noble Eightfold Path, links to wisdom and morality, including the influence of types of meditation on moral development.</li> <li>c) The practice and purpose of dhyana, samatha and vipassana as types of meditation, including accounts of meditation techniques, their purposes and context.</li> <li>d) Understanding of the purposes of meditation in terms of Enlightenment and the relative importance of some aspects of meditation. The practices of chanting, giving and study to understand Buddhism as it is lived by laypeople as well as monastics.</li> </ul> With reference to the ideas of T Bhikkhu and J Goldstein.

## Paper 4, Option 4B: Christianity

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>1</b>  <b>Religious beliefs, values and teachings</b>	1.1	<p>The nature of God as personal and as Creator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Personal relationship, omnipotence and immutability; ex nihilo, emanation, construction and artistic expression, goodness of creation, stewardship.</li> <li>b) Implications of these teachings about God for an understanding of the self, the meaning and purpose of life, death and the afterlife.</li> <li>c) Interpretations of these teachings and evidence for these views, the challenges of these interpretations and their significance for Christianity, the experience of these roles of God in the life of a Christian.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of M Buber and Augustine.</p>
	1.2	<p>The Trinity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Biblical basis for ideas about the Trinity.</li> <li>b) Notions of relation and analogy to understand the Trinity.</li> <li>c) Modern views on the Trinity, their strengths and weaknesses, the impact of these views on the life of a Christian and their significance for Christianity.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of K Barth and K Rahner.</p>
	1.3	<p>The nature of the Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Key concepts of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity.</li> <li>b) Interpretations of these teachings, challenges to these views and their impact on the life of Christian communities and individuals.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of Cyprian of Carthage and M Luther.</p>
	1.4	<p>Key moral principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The concept of Love as the principal Christian value and the basis of all other values and qualities.</li> <li>b) The love of God as revealed in creation, the incarnation and the Trinity as the basis of this value.</li> <li>c) The relationship of all Christian values with the key principle of love.</li> </ul>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>2</b>  <b>Sources of wisdom and authority</b>	2.1	<p>The Bible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Role as a Source of authority, the word of God, its compilation and use, including as a basis for ethical teaching of the Church and the role of tradition.</li> <li>b) The Bible as revealed theology and its relationship to natural theology, role of Spirit in revelation/mysticism.</li> <li>c) Strengths and weaknesses of various models of interpretation of the text.</li> </ul>
	2.2	<p>The nature and role of Jesus, including the strengths and weaknesses of key ideas, their impact on the development of Christianity and understanding the nature of Jesus in the life of Christians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Early Church – the Arian heresy and the Chalcedonian definition concerning the two natures of Jesus and his work in salvation. With reference to the ideas of Arius and Athanasius.</li> <li>b) The Reformation – views on salvation and justification, including notions of sin, sacrifice, justification by grace, revelation of God, Mediator, Prophet, Priest and King. With reference to the ideas of M Luther and J Calvin.</li> <li>c) Modern views – whether and how God suffers in or through Jesus, context to these thoughts and the relationship of biblical texts on suffering to notions of impassibility. With reference to the ideas of J Moltmann and T Weinandy.</li> </ul>



Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>3</b> <b>Practices that shape and express religious identity</b>	3.1	The diversity of practice in the Eucharist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The importance of sacraments in some denominations, the context of differing practices of the Eucharist, interpretations of the variety of practices and their meaning and significance.</li> <li>b) Key ideas, including sacrament, grace, transubstantiation and transignification, Real Presence, memorial.</li> <li>c) The experience of believers when taking part in the Eucharist, reflection and self-awareness. Implications for Christian practice in the experience of a believer and Christian communities.</li> </ul>
	3.2	The diversity of practice in creative expressions of religious identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The depiction of the Nativity and the crucifixion in Christian art and its interpretations and role in Christian devotion.</li> <li>b) The role of music in Christian worship in a variety of denominations.</li> <li>c) The role of prayer in private and public devotion, including the use of aids to prayer.</li> <li>d) The significance of these creative expressions and their impact on Christianity and the lives of Christians as an expression of religious identity and as a connection to, or vehicle for, religious experience.</li> </ul>

Suggested version of the Bible is the New International Version (NIV).

## Paper 4, Option 4C: Hinduism

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>1</b>  <b>Religious beliefs, values and teachings</b>	1.1	<p>Beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Sanatana Dharma, rta, including implications for Hindu belief and practice in their interconnections as reflected historically and in the contemporary world and for the community of believers.</li> <li>b) Karma and the importance of eternal and universal order, with implications for all peoples and the righteous living, law of action and consequences.</li> <li>c) Samsara as a cycle of birth and types of reincarnation and the significance of moksha. Beliefs about the self, death and the afterlife.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of R Zaehner and I Jamieson.</p>
	1.2	<p>Beliefs about Brahman and also avatars as God in human form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Brahman: the universal spirit and how he is represented in the world, deities and scripture.</li> <li>b) Krishna: the ideal avatar and the heart of the bhakti movements, ISKCON.</li> <li>c) Rama: accounts of this incarnation of Vishnu, the ideal man and the working out of various types of dharma.</li> <li>d) Shakti: creative power as Goddess, in some contexts worshipped as one of her manifestations believed to be the true form of the Divine.</li> <li>e) Significance of the context of beliefs about Vishnu who descends to the human world as an avatar when needed to re-establish the dharma.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of J Lipner and S Sivananda.</p>
	1.3	<p>Key moral principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The underlying principles of dharma (duty), karma (deeds) and ahimsa (non-violence).</li> <li>b) Values linked with the ashramas (dharma, artha, kama, vairagya and their relationship with moksha).</li> <li>c) Virtues and qualities associated with the gunas.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of P Bilimoria.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>2</b>  <b>Sources of wisdom and authority</b>	2.1	Emergence of Hindu traditions  a) The Indus Valley culture, archaeological surveys; decline, Aryan invasion/migration/continuous development; significance for later Hinduism.  b) Role of sacrifices and Agni, worship of Indra and role of soma.  c) Points for discussion: significant problems with evidence and its interpretation; significance of possible links with the development of Hinduism; implications given that the evidence is not conclusive about the origins of Hinduism.
	2.2	Sources of wisdom and authority  a) Shruti compared to smriti; meanings and examples, significance of their differences concerning authority; links with worship ceremonies.  b) Vedas as the books of knowledge, including the Upanishads and the beginnings of philosophical traditions and their significance for the Vedanta schools.  c) Smriti texts, including Ramayana and Mahabharata with accounts of avatars and the Puranas presenting ethical teachings; the significance of the use of narrative form in smriti.
	2.3	Points for discussion  a) Implications arising from the breadth and range of scriptures for an understanding of Hinduism.  b) Relative authority of some scriptures compared to the timeless knowledge of shruti scriptures.  With reference to the ideas of J Brockington and W O'Flaherty.

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>3</b> <b>Practices that shape and express religious identity</b>	3.1	Santana dharma with links and differences to varnashrama-dharma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Cosmic order giving norms to society as exemplified in life stages. Varna (birth); ashrama (stage in life); dharma (appropriate duty); an ideal social order.</li> <li>b) Ways in which the rules of varnashrama-dharma are transformed by bhakti.</li> <li>c) Overlap and differences between varna and jati; debates about the status of jati in modern Hinduism.</li> <li>d) Role of the community of believers.</li> <li>e) Beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life.</li> </ul>
	3.2	Yoga: meanings and main types <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Karma yoga: and its aim of identification with the transcendent; significance of practice of dharma without attachment; the path of action to purify the mind.</li> <li>b) Jnana yoga: the path of wisdom, applicable to certain groups such as Brahmins; value of renunciation and aim of identification with Brahman; links with raja yoga and emphasis on meditation.</li> <li>c) Bhakti yoga: applicable to a wide range of people, devotion to Krishna identified with Brahman leading to moksha.</li> <li>d) Hatha yoga: mental and physical health seeking to purify the body and to realise its divine nature; its Western evolution.</li> </ul>
	3.3	Points for discussion about yoga <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Key beliefs across yogic traditions – moksha and liberation from samsara and practices; implications of links to Samkhya tradition.</li> <li>b) Views about different purposes and diverse significance across different traditions.</li> <li>c) Implications for practice of Hinduism across different cultures.</li> </ul>

## Paper 4, Option 4D: Islam

Topics	What students need to learn
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Religious beliefs, values and teachings</b></p>	<p>1.1 The interpretation and application of the Six Beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The beliefs as the basis of Islam and their interconnections.</li> <li>b) Their centrality in different forms of Islam and for the life and expressions of believers.</li> <li>c) Key concepts/emphases of the individual Beliefs and the differences of interpretation in Islam:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the belief in Allah as the one</li> <li>○ the belief in angels</li> <li>○ the belief in holy books</li> <li>○ the belief in the prophets</li> <li>○ the belief in the Day of Judgment, including beliefs about death, the afterlife, the self, and the meaning and purpose of life</li> <li>○ the belief in predestination, including beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life.</li> </ul> </li> <li>d) The nature and existence of Allah, including the 99 Beautiful Names, and tawhid and adalat.</li> </ul> <p>The interconnections and various understandings of their importance and influence historically and in the contemporary world. This should include specific reference to differences between Sunni and Shi'a Islam.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of S H Nasr and W Chittick.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>2</b>  <b>Sources of wisdom and authority</b>	2.1	<p>The meaning and significance of the life and work of the Prophet Muhammad in its historical, political, religious and social context and assessment of his significance for Muslims today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The key events in the life of Muhammad, including his birth, childhood, marriage to Khadijah, Night of Power, life in Makkah, Hijrah, life in Madinah, return to Makkah, Last Sermon and death.</li> <li>b) Polytheism, animism and jinns, festivals, sacrifices, Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian traditions, and the status of Makkah.</li> <li>c) Political and economic factors, social groupings and changes.</li> <li>d) Literature, including poetry.</li> <li>e) Understanding of his significance, including the strengths or otherwise of these background factors in an understanding of the status of Muhammad, including his rejection of many of these features.</li> <li>f) Revelations and Muhammad, significance of the Night of Power, the significance of the hijrah and the growth of theocracy.</li> <li>g) The view of Muhammad as final messenger and prophet, transcending such 'contexts' should also be explored.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of K Armstrong and M Lings.</p>
	2.2	<p>The key events in the life of Muhammad and his sayings as a basis for Muslim living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Hadith and Sunnah, their compilation and authority.</li> <li>b) The significance and implications of the Hadith and Sunnah for Muslim living.</li> </ul>
	2.3	<p>The interpretation, significance, treatment and use of the Qur'an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The status of the Qur'an as revealed word of Allah, its revelation and formation, purpose and message. This should include specific reference to its declaration of Allah and the nature of submission to Allah in Surah-Al-Fatiha 1. Surah Al-Baqarah 2 as a summary of the various messages of the Qur'an, including submission to the will of Allah.</li> <li>b) Its significance as a basis and source of authority for all Muslim belief and practice.</li> <li>c) The use of the Qur'an and the Hadith in the establishment of Shari'ah law, and its various interpretations and expressions, including its application to key moral principles and activities that are considered halal and haram (including alcohol; modesty; gambling; killing and eating of animals); the principle of makruh and how that has been applied.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of S H Nasr and F R Malik.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>3</b> <b>Practices that shape and express religious identity</b>	3.1	<p>The central role of the five pillars of Islam as fulfilling the purpose of life to live in submission to the will of Allah and a way of shaping and expressing religious identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Expressions of the worship of Allah as the one and of Islamic spirituality in different forms of Islam.</li> <li>b) The meaning and importance of individual pillars and their unity as the basis of Islamic practice and identity today.</li> <li>c) Similarities and diversity of practice, emphasis and interpretation in Islam.</li> <li>d) The relationship between intention and action and an understanding of the purposes and significance of these acts.</li> </ul> <p>The various understandings of their importance and influence historically and in the contemporary world. This should include specific reference to differences between Sunni and Shi'a Islam. With reference to the ideas of S H Nasr and M Siddiqui.</p>
	3.2	<p>The ummah as an expression of Islamic identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The historical understanding and development of the ummah and its spread from the time of Muhammad to the present day.</li> <li>b) The role and purpose of the ummah in contemporary society as understood in Sunni and Shi'a Islam.</li> <li>c) Similarities and contrasts of emphasis and interpretation in Islam.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of W M Watt and S H Nasr.</p>

Suggested translation of the Qur'an is by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

## Paper 4, Option 4E: Judaism

Topics	What students need to learn	
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Religious beliefs, values and teachings</b></p>	1.1	<p>Ethical monotheism</p> <p>a) Creator, and Sustainer of all creation; He alone is God, Oneness, no physical comparison whatsoever, alone worthy of worship; rewards and punishes.</p> <p>b) Obligations between people and obligations between humans and God.</p> <p>c) Interpretations across different Jewish traditions; provides a context to the beliefs across a range of Jewish traditions, significance in terms of being the essence and foundation of Judaism and for the community of believers.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of D Cohn Sherbok and G Robinson.</p>
	1.2	<p>God reveals himself to his people in the Torah and in the Talmud</p> <p>a) Jews seen as the chosen people, obligations of the Jews as an example of living in accordance with God’s will.</p> <p>b) Significance of revelation; preservation of Jewish identity, impacts on whole of life of the community.</p> <p>c) Status of Moses and the Ten Commandments, status of different covenants.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of A Cohen and G Robinson.</p>
	1.3	<p>Interpretation of these beliefs and their impact on understanding the meaning and purpose of life and death across different traditions. The significance of these for an understanding of the distinctive features of Judaism today</p> <p>a) The nature of the soul.</p> <p>b) Life after death; spiritual and physical resurrection, judgment, heaven and She’ol/Gehenna (hell).</p> <p>c) Jewish thought on the meaning and purpose of life.</p> <p>With reference to the ideas of E Kaplan-Spitz and B L Weiss, and Y Buxbaum.</p>



Topics	What students need to learn	
	1.4	<p>Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The relationship between revelation. Torah and values, dealing with every aspect of life (Ethics of the Fathers – context in Nezikin).</li> <li>b) Jewish values and universal values: Jewish distinctiveness as the People of the Almighty and the Noahide Code expressing universal values (Ethics of the Fathers – significance of gemiluth chasadim).</li> <li>c) The qualities of the Almighty and their reflection in the values of love, justice and holiness. God is the source of moral values.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of G Robinson and M Kellner.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Sources of wisdom and authority</b></p>	2.1	<p>Tenakh, Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Type of authority and the distinctive emphasis that God reveals Himself to His people in the Torah.</li> <li>b) Use of these sources in Jewish studies of scripture and in worship and the range of interpretations across different Jewish traditions.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of G Robinson and D Cohn-Sherbok.</p>
	2.2	<p>The development of Rabbinic Judaism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Commentary by Rashi and his pupils on Jewish scriptures in order to add explanations to clarify the text, and at times referred to contemporary events; commentary on the Babylonian Talmud and continued influence via tosafots.</li> <li>b) Judah Halevi: unity between God and the People of Israel; piyyutim poems of the diaspora for festivals and Sabbath and his Songs of Zion; emphasis on religious experience and value of prophecy. Supremacy of the divine word in nature and the Law. Rejected Aristotelian philosophy, Christianity and Islam, presenting views to support Judaism.</li> <li>c) Historical and religious context of these figures; nature of their authority and role of interpretation; influence on development of Rabbinic Judaism and significance in terms of emphases on selected Jewish beliefs.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of P Chaim and H Halkin.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>3</b> <b>Practices that shape and express religious identity</b>	3.1	<p>Orthodox</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Various meanings and interpretations of Orthodoxy; written and oral Torahs are divinely inspired, with an emphasis of living according to Halakhah.</li> <li>b) Status of revelation compared to theology. Debates about a literal view of the Torah or as a source for a Jewish philosophy of history.</li> <li>c) Place of the Temple; distinctive practices in synagogues and daily religious observances.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of B Brown and G Robinson.</p>
	3.2	<p>Reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Significance of beliefs and practices changing over time; reform views about revelation; significant changes to synagogue services and different emphases in religious observances, including gender issues.</li> <li>b) Influence of Haskalah (enlightenment and rationalism).</li> <li>c) Different types of Reform in Germany compared to more radical movements in America and in Jerusalem.</li> </ul> <p>With reference to the ideas of M Meyer and D E Kaplan.</p>

## Paper 4, Option 4F: Sikhism

Topics	What students need to learn	
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Religious beliefs, values and teachings</b></p>	1.1	<p>Sikhs and the divine</p> <p>a) Sikh teachings about the nature and existence of God; how Sikhs envisage the divine and the way to unite with it. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ reference to key concepts about Waheguru: oneness, sat, shabad, especially the Mool Mantar, nam, hukam, nadar</li> <li>○ reference to key concepts about the nature of the self, the meaning and purpose of life, death and the afterlife, including maya, guru, nadar, gurmukh, manmukh, mukti, samsara and karma.</li> </ul> <p>b) Contrasting the meaning of these ideas in contemporary Sikhism with pre-existing Indic thought, comparison of Sikh ideas with those of the sant movement, examining it as background for the emergence of Sikh thought tracing the impact of existing thought and practices on the beliefs, values and teachings of Guru Nanak.</p> <p>With reference to K E Nayar and J S Sandhu.</p>
	1.2	<p>The importance of sangat</p> <p>a) The development of this concept in the lives of the Gurus, including building spiritual and political centres at Amritsar.</p> <p>b) Study of the concept of Panth as a qaum or nation and the authority and status of the Panth as Guru from the lifetime of Guru Gobind Singh.</p> <p>c) The meaning of sangat today looking at local and global levels and at virtual and physical communities.</p> <p>With reference to N K Singh and K Nayar.</p>
	1.3	<p>Key moral principles and values</p> <p>a) Nam japna, kirt karna and vand chakna and their applications in gurmukh lifestyles today.</p> <p>b) The key principle of seva (service to God and to others).</p> <p>c) Miri-piri as the unique, original and distinctive feature of Sikhism, including a study of the warrior tradition.</p> <p>d) Sikh values as expressions of the quality of manmukh.</p> <p>With reference to N K Singh and J Sandhu.</p>

Topics	What students need to learn	
<b>2</b>  <b>Sources of wisdom and authority</b>	2.1	The nature, role and status of the Guru Granth Sahib  a) Role in worship and ceremony, its theological and legal status.  b) The process by which the text was compiled and recognised as Guru, including the debate between Gurinder Singh Mann and the Institute of Sikh Studies.  c) The role and status of secondary texts such as the janamsakhis, vars of Bhai Gurdas and the Dasam Granth.  With reference to Gurinder Singh Mann and the Institute of Sikh Studies.
	2.2	The lives of the ten Gurus as teachers and exemplars for Sikhs (2)  a) The significance of the lives of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh and the martyrdoms of Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadur.  b) The teachings of the Gurus and their importance for Sikhs and the Sikh community today.  c) The succession of Gurus, including the decisions of Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 and 1708.  d) The role of sants in contemporary Sikh life.  With reference to N K Singh and W O Cole.
<b>3</b>  <b>Practices that shape and express religious identity</b>	3.1	The affirmation of a distinctive Sikh identity starting toward the end of the 19th century through the Singh Sabha movements  a) The process by which the Sikh Rehat Maryada, the Anand Marriage Act 1909 and Gurdwara reform took place under British rule in India.  b) Assessment of the impact of each in making official a particular variant of Sikh thought and practice.  With reference to Oberoi and the Institute of Sikh Studies.
	3.2	Different perspectives about the following.  a) The importance of initiation into the Khalsa and wearing the 5 Ks, including amritdhari, keshdhari and sehajdhari Sikhs, and patits.  b) The nature and importance of nam simaran, including meditational practices and the use of mantras.

## Assessment information

- First assessment: May/June 2017.
- The assessment is 1 hour.
- The assessment is out of 54 marks.
- The assessment consists of two sections.
- Students must answer all questions in Section A and in Section B.
- The paper includes short-open and extended writing questions.
- See *Appendix 1* for the command words that will be used in the examination paper.
- Use of specialist language will be assessed as it is through the selection and deployment of specialist language and terminology that students are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

## Sample assessment materials

Sample papers and mark schemes can be found in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Religious Studies Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)* document.

## Assessment Objectives

Students must:		% in GCE AS Level
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</li> <li>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</li> <li>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</li> <li>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</li> </ul>	50
<b>AO2</b>	Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

## Breakdown of Assessment Objectives

Paper (choice of three papers out of four)	Assessment Objectives		Total for all Assessment Objectives
	AO1 %	AO2 %	
Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion	16.67	16.67	33.33
Paper 2: Religion and Ethics	16.67	16.67	33.33
Paper 3: New Testament Studies	16.67	16.67	33.33
Paper 4: Study of Religion	16.67	16.67	33.33
<b>Total for GCE AS Level*</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>100%</b>

NB Totals have been rounded either up or down.

\*Three papers out of four

## 3 Administration and general information

### Entries

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Details of how to enter students for the examinations for this qualification can be found in our *UK Information Manual*. A copy is made available to all examinations officers and is available on our website [qualifications.pearson.com](http://qualifications.pearson.com)

### Forbidden combinations and discount code

There is one forbidden combination of options in this qualification, which is enforced through entry codes. This relates to Paper 3: New Testament Studies and Paper 4B: Christianity.

Centres should be aware that students who enter for more than one GCE qualification with the same discount code will have only one of the grades they achieve counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables – normally the better grade (please see *Appendix 5: Codes*).

Students should be advised that, if they take two qualifications with the same discount code, colleges, universities and employers are very likely to take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCEs. The same view may be taken if students take two GCE qualifications that have different discount codes but which have significant overlap of content. Students or their advisers who have any doubts about their subject combinations should check with the institution to which they wish to progress before embarking on their programmes.

### Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, special consideration and malpractice

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Equality and fairness are central to our work. Our equality policy requires all students to have equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessments, and our qualifications to be awarded in a way that is fair to every student.

We are committed to making sure that:

- students with a protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) are not, when they are undertaking one of our qualifications, disadvantaged in comparison to students who do not share that characteristic
- all students achieve the recognition they deserve for undertaking a qualification and that this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers.

### Language of assessment

Assessment of this qualification will be available in English. All student work must be in English.

## Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- access the assessment
- show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual student with a disability, without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Access arrangements should always be processed at the start of the course. Students will then know what is available and have the access arrangement(s) in place for assessment.

## Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding organisation to make reasonable adjustments where a person with a disability would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. The awarding organisation is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and therefore might not be in the list of available access arrangements.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors, which will include:

- the needs of the student with the disability
- the effectiveness of the adjustment
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment on the student with the disability and other students.

An adjustment will not be approved if it involves unreasonable costs to the awarding organisation, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

## Special consideration

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a student's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment in an assessment.

## Further information

Please see our website for further information about how to apply for access arrangements and special consideration.

For further information about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration, please refer to the JCQ website: [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk).



## Malpractice

### Candidate malpractice

Candidate malpractice refers to any act by a candidate that compromises or seeks to compromise the process of assessment or which undermines the integrity of the qualifications or the validity of results/certificates.

Candidate malpractice in examinations **must** be reported to Pearson using a *JCQ Form M1* (available at [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice)). The form can be emailed to [pqsmalpractice@pearson.com](mailto:pqsmalpractice@pearson.com) or posted to Investigations Team, Pearson, 190 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH. Please provide as much information and supporting documentation as possible. Note that the final decision regarding appropriate sanctions lies with Pearson.

Failure to report malpractice constitutes staff or centre malpractice.

### Staff/centre malpractice

Staff and centre malpractice includes both deliberate malpractice and maladministration of our qualifications. As with candidate malpractice, staff and centre malpractice is any act that compromises or seeks to compromise the process of assessment or which undermines the integrity of the qualifications or the validity of results/certificates.

All cases of suspected staff malpractice and maladministration **must** be reported immediately, before any investigation is undertaken by the centre, to Pearson on a *JCQ Form M2(a)* (available at [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice)). The form, supporting documentation and as much information as possible can be emailed to [pqsmalpractice@pearson.com](mailto:pqsmalpractice@pearson.com) or posted to Investigations Team, Pearson, 190 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH. Note that the final decision regarding appropriate sanctions lies with Pearson.

Failure to report malpractice itself constitutes malpractice.

More-detailed guidance on malpractice can be found in the latest version of the document *JCQ General and Vocational Qualifications Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments*, available at [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice)

### Awarding and reporting

This qualification will be graded, awarded and certificated to comply with the requirements of Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition.

This AS Level qualification will be graded and certificated on a five-grade scale from A to E using the total subject mark. Individual papers are not graded.

Students whose level of achievement is below the minimum judged by Pearson to be of sufficient standard to be recorded on a certificate will receive an unclassified U result.

The first certification opportunity for this qualification will be 2017.

## Student recruitment and progression

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Pearson follows the JCQ policy concerning recruitment to our qualifications in that:

- they must be available to anyone who is capable of reaching the required standard
- they must be free from barriers that restrict access and progression
- equal opportunities exist for all students.

### Prior learning and other requirements

There are no prior learning or other requirements for this qualification.

Students who would benefit most from studying this qualification are likely to have a Level 2 qualification such as a GCSE in Religious Studies.

### Progression

Students can progress from this qualification to:

- a range of different, relevant academic and higher education qualification
- employment in a relevant sector
- further training.

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## Appendix 1: Command word definitions

This table lists the command words that will be used in the examinations for this qualification and their definitions.

Command word	Definition	Assessment Objectives	
<b>Analyse</b>	Deconstruct information and/or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning in order to make judgement's regarding their important/relevance to the question context.	5 AO1	15 AO2
<b>Assess</b>	Requires reasoned argument of factors to reach a judgement regarding their importance/relevance to the question context.	3 AO1	9 AO2
<b>Explore</b>	Demonstrate understanding by investigating different reasons, concepts and ideas.	8 AO1	

\*Please refer to the Sample Assessment Materials and associated Levels Descriptors for further guidance relating to each command word. Each command word has a different Assessment Objective weighting. The approach to this weighting and details of how each skills must be evidenced is provided in the levels descriptors for each question.

## Appendix 2: The context for the development of this qualification

All our qualifications are designed to meet our World Class Qualification Principles<sup>[1]</sup> and our ambition to put the student at the heart of everything we do.

We have developed and designed this qualification by:

- reviewing other curricula and qualifications to ensure that it is comparable with those taken in high-performing jurisdictions overseas
- consulting with key stakeholders on content and assessment, including learned bodies, subject associations, higher-education academics and teachers to ensure this qualification is suitable for a UK context
- reviewing the legacy qualification and building on its positive attributes.

This qualification has also been developed to meet criteria stipulated by Ofqual in *GCE Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements* and *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Religious Studies*, published in June 2015.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Pearson's World Class Qualification Principles ensure that our qualifications are:

- **demanding**, through internationally benchmarked standards, encouraging deep learning and measuring higher-order skills
- **rigorous**, through setting and maintaining standards over time, developing reliable and valid assessment tasks and processes, and generating confidence in end users of the knowledge, skills and competencies of certified students
- **inclusive**, through conceptualising learning as continuous, recognising that students develop at different rates and have different learning needs, and focusing on progression
- **empowering**, through promoting the development of transferable skills, see *Appendix 3*.

## **From Pearson's Expert Panel for World Class Qualifications**

**May 2014**

“ The reform of the qualifications system in England is a profoundly important change to the education system. Teachers need to know that the new qualifications will assist them in helping their learners make progress in their lives.

When these changes were first proposed we were approached by Pearson to join an 'Expert Panel' that would advise them on the development of the new qualifications.

We were chosen, either because of our expertise in the UK education system, or because of our experience in reforming qualifications in other systems around the world as diverse as Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and a number of countries across Europe.

We have guided Pearson through what we judge to be a rigorous qualification development process that has included:

- extensive international comparability of subject content against the highest-performing jurisdictions in the world
- benchmarking assessments against UK and overseas providers to ensure that they are at the right level of demand
- establishing External Subject Advisory Groups, drawing on independent subject-specific expertise to challenge and validate our qualifications
- subjecting the final qualifications to scrutiny against the DfE content and Ofqual accreditation criteria in advance of submission.

Importantly, we have worked to ensure that the content and learning is future oriented. The design has been guided by what is called an 'Efficacy Framework', meaning learner outcomes have been at the heart of this development throughout.

We understand that ultimately it is excellent teaching that is the key factor to a learner's success in education. As a result of our work as a panel we are confident that we have supported the development of qualifications that are outstanding for their coherence, thoroughness and attention to detail and can be regarded as representing world-class best practice. ”

**Sir Michael Barber (Chair)**

Chief Education Advisor, Pearson plc

**Professor Lee Sing Kong**

Director, National Institute of Education, Singapore

**Bahram Bekhradnia**

President, Higher Education Policy Institute

**Professor Jonathan Osborne**

Stanford University

**Dame Sally Coates**

Principal, Burlington Danes Academy

**Professor Dr Ursula Renold**

Federal Institute of Technology, Switzerland

**Professor Robin Coningham**

Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Durham

**Professor Bob Schwartz**

Harvard Graduate School of Education

**Dr Peter Hill**

Former Chief Executive ACARA

All titles correct as at May 2014

# Appendix 3: Transferable skills

## The need for transferable skills

In recent years, higher education institutions and employers have consistently flagged the need for students to develop a range of transferable skills to enable them to respond with confidence to the demands of undergraduate study and the world of work.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines skills, or competencies, as 'the bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learned and that enable individuals to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task and can be built upon and extended through learning.'<sup>[1]</sup>

To support the design of our qualifications, the Pearson Research Team selected and evaluated seven global 21st-century skills frameworks. Following on from this process, we identified the National Research Council's (NRC) framework as the most evidence-based and robust skills framework. We adapted the framework slightly to include the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ICT Literacy and Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) Skills.

The adapted National Research Council's framework of skills involves:<sup>[2]</sup>

## Cognitive skills

- **Non-routine problem solving** – expert thinking, metacognition, creativity.
- **Systems thinking** – decision making and reasoning.
- **Critical thinking** – definitions of critical thinking are broad and usually involve general cognitive skills such as analysing, synthesising and reasoning skills.
- **ICT literacy** – access, manage, integrate, evaluate, construct and communicate.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Interpersonal skills

- **Communication** – active listening, oral communication, written communication, assertive communication and non-verbal communication.
- **Relationship-building skills** – teamwork, trust, intercultural sensitivity, service orientation, self-presentation, social influence, conflict resolution and negotiation.
- **Collaborative problem solving** – establishing and maintaining shared understanding, taking appropriate action, establishing and maintaining team organisation.

## Intrapersonal skills

- **Adaptability** – ability and willingness to cope with the uncertain, handling work stress, adapting to different personalities, communication styles and cultures, and physical adaptability to various indoor and outdoor work environments.
- **Self-management and self-development** – ability to work remotely in virtual teams, work autonomously, be self-motivating and self-monitoring, willing and able to acquire new information and skills related to work.

Transferable skills enable young people to face the demands of further and higher education, as well as the demands of the workplace, and are important in the teaching and learning of this qualification. We will provide teaching and learning materials, developed with stakeholders, to support our qualifications.

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<sup>[1]</sup> OECD – *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives* (OECD Publishing, 2012)

<sup>[2]</sup> Koenig J A, National Research Council – *Assessing 21st Century Skills: Summary of a Workshop* (National Academies Press, 2011)

<sup>[3]</sup> PISA – *The PISA Framework for Assessment of ICT Literacy* (2011)



# Appendix 4: Level 3 Extended Project qualification

## What is the Extended Project?

The Extended Project is a standalone qualification that can be taken alongside GCEs. It supports the development of independent learning skills and helps to prepare students for their next step – whether that be university study or employment. The qualification:

- is recognised by universities for the skills it develops
- is worth half of an Advanced GCE qualification at grades A\*–E
- carries UCAS points for university entry.

The Extended Project encourages students to develop skills in the following areas: research, critical thinking, extended writing and project management. Students identify and agree a topic area of their choice for in-depth study (which may or may not be related to a GCE subject they are already studying), guided by their teacher.

Students can choose from one of four approaches to produce:

- a dissertation (for example an investigation based on predominately secondary research)
- an investigation/field study (for example a practical experiment)
- a performance (for example in music, drama or sport)
- an artefact (for example creating a sculpture in response to a client brief or solving an engineering problem).

The qualification is coursework based and students are assessed on the skills of managing, planning and evaluating their project. Students will research their topic, develop skills to review and evaluate the information, and then present the final outcome of their project.

The Extended Project has 120 guided learning hours (GLH) consisting of a 40-GLH taught element that includes teaching the technical skills (for example research skills) and an 80-GLH guided element that includes mentoring students through the project work. The qualification is 100% internally assessed and externally moderated.

## How to link the Extended Project with Religious Studies

The Extended Project creates the opportunity to develop transferable skills for progression to higher education and to the workplace, through the exploration of either an area of personal interest or a topic of interest from within the religious studies qualification content.

Through the Extended Project students will develop skills that support their study of religion, including:

- conducting, organising and using research
- independent reading in the subject area
- planning, project management and time management
- developing a research brief as the basis of investigations
- collecting, handling and interpreting evidence
- critical thinking
- adopting an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion
- reflecting on and developing their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their study
- developing an understanding and appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies.

In the context of the Extended Project, critical thinking refers to the ability to identify and develop arguments for a point of view and to consider and respond to alternative arguments. This supports the development of evaluative skills, as students critically analyse and evaluate the views and arguments of scholars/academics as well as constructing well-informed and reasoned arguments substantiated by relevant evidence.

## Types of Extended Project related to Religious Studies

Students may produce a dissertation on any topic that can be researched and argued, for example a controversial ethical issue such as euthanasia or challenges to religious belief, or the religious, cultural and other significance of religious texts, including their reception and influence beyond a religious community.

A dissertation might involve an investigation such as:

- 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
- how religious texts and/or other relevant sources of wisdom and authority are interpreted and applied

The dissertation uses the ideas of scholars to provide a reasoned defence or a point of view, with consideration of counter-arguments.

An alternative might be an investigative project involving the collection of evidence from primary research, for example a case study of inter-faith relations in Bradford.

## Using the Extended Project to support breadth and depth

In the Extended Project, students are assessed on the quality of the work they produce and the skills they develop and demonstrate through completing this work. Students should demonstrate that they have extended themselves in some significant way beyond what they have been studying in Religious Studies. Students can demonstrate extension in one or more dimensions:

- **deepening understanding** – where a student explores a topic in greater depth than in the specification content. This could be an in-depth exploration of scepticism in David Hume's 'Dialogues concerning Natural Religion'
- **broadening skills** – where a student learns a new skill. This might be linking theology with New Testament studies such as an investigation into Albert Schweitzer's claim that Jesus is embedded in the presuppositions of the Gospel writers and subsequent commentators and thus he remains as 'One unknown'
- **widening perspectives** – where the student's project spans different subjects. A student studying Religious Studies with Sociology may wish to research the appeal and problems associated with new religious movements. A student studying Religious Studies with History may wish to use the implications of diversity of religious beliefs in the Middle East.

A wide range of information to support the delivery and assessment of the Extended Project, including the specification, teacher guidance for all aspects, an editable scheme of work and exemplars for all four approaches, can be found on our website.

## Appendix 5: Codes

Type of code	Use of code	Code
Discount codes	Every qualification eligible for performance tables is assigned a discount code indicating the subject area to which it belongs.  Discount codes are published by DfE.	Please see the GOV UK website*
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) codes	Each qualification title is allocated an Ofqual Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) code.  The RQF code is known as a Qualification Number (QN). This is the code that features in the DfE Section 96 and on the LARA as being eligible for 16–18 and 19+ funding, and is to be used for all qualification funding purposes. The QN will appear on students' final certification documentation.	The QN for this qualification is:  601/8766/9
Subject codes	The subject code is used by centres to enter students for a qualification. Centres will need to use the entry codes only when claiming students' qualifications.	AS Level – 8RS0
Paper codes	These codes are provided for reference purposes. Students do not need to be entered for individual papers.	Paper 1: 8RS0/01 Paper 2: 8RS0/02 Paper 3: 8RS0/03 Paper 4: 8RS0/4A-4F

\*[www.gov.uk/government/publications/2018-performance-tables-discount-code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2018-performance-tables-discount-code)



### **Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications**

Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body offering academic and vocational qualifications that are globally recognised and benchmarked. For further information, please visit our qualification website at [qualifications.pearson.com](http://qualifications.pearson.com). Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at [qualifications.pearson.com/contactus](http://qualifications.pearson.com/contactus)

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This specification is Issue 2. Key changes are sidelined. We will inform centres of any changes to this issue. The latest issue can be found on the Pearson website: [qualifications.pearson.com](http://qualifications.pearson.com)

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