AS and A level Religious Studies
Exploring different religions and beliefs

Discover our qualifications
Exploring different religions and beliefs

This brochure will provide an overview of the specifications for our Edexcel AS and A level Religious Studies qualifications. In here, we outline how our specifications will engage your students and enable them to confidently interpret, contextualise and analyse the expressions of religions and world views they encounter – and how we are supporting you every step of the way.

We provide:

- flexible study combinations of religions and topics ............pages 3-5
- opportunity to focus on philosophy and ethics topics ............pages 3-5
- clear and accessible assessments ........................................page 6
- co-teachable AS and A level courses .................................page 7
- expert support and guidance ...............................................pages 8-9

Flexible study combinations of religions and topics

Our AS and A level Religious Studies specifications offer a wide choice of topics within the requirement for more religious content, allowing you to tailor the course content to your students’ interests. Content is relevant to the real world and encourages students to develop an appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies.

- We offer four areas of study, allowing you to choose the three you wish to teach from:
  - Philosophy of Religion
  - Religion and Ethics
  - New Testament Studies
  - Study of Religion.
- The fourth area of study offers additional choice with the chance to study one out of the following six religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism.

Opportunity to focus on philosophy and ethics topics

Our specifications help to develop a holistic understanding of religion, facilitating enquiry into the purposes and commitments of human life, especially as expressed in philosophy, ethics and religion.

- Two individual papers covering familiar philosophy and ethics content ensure that you can adapt the course to include the topics which are currently popular with AS and A Level students.
Qualifications at a glance

The four topics are the same at AS and A level. The content of the AS level is a subset of the A level content. 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 the year. Students are assessed through three externally-examined papers.

AS level – choice of three papers from the following four options

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**Content overview**
- Philosophical issues.
- Nature and influence of religious experience.
- Problems of evil and suffering.

**Content overview**
- Significant concepts in issues and debates.
- Study of three ethical theories.
- Application of ethical theories.

**Options** - Students take one of the following six options:
- 4A: Buddhism
- 4B: Christianity
- 4C: Hinduism
- 4D: Islam
- 4E: Judaism
- 4F: Sikhism.

**Content overview**
- Contexts of the New Testament.
- Texts and interpretation of the Person of Jesus.
- Interpreting the text and the purpose and authorship.

**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 one in Section B.

**Section A:** Three structured questions.
**Section B:** One two-part essay question.

**Forbidden combination**

A level – choice of three papers from the following four options

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**Content overview**
- Philosophical issues.
- Nature and influence of religious experience.
- Problems of evil and suffering.
- Philosophical language.
- Works of scholars.
- Influences of developments.

**Content overview**
- Significant concepts in issues and debates.
- Study of three ethical theories.
- Application of ethical theories.
- Ethical language.
- Deontology, Virtue Ethics and the works of scholars.
- Medical ethics.

**Options** - Students take one of the following six options:
- 4A: Buddhism
- 4B: Christianity
- 4C: Hinduism
- 4D: Islam
- 4E: Judaism
- 4F: Sikhism.

**Content overview**
- Contexts of the New Testament.
- Texts and interpretation of the Person of Jesus.
- Interpreting the text and the purpose and authorship.
- Ways of interpreting the scripture.
- Texts and interpretation.
- Scientific and historical critical challenges.

**Assessment overview**
An externally-assessed written examination comprising three sections. Students answer all questions in Section A and Section B, and one question in Section C.

**Section A:** Two structured questions.
**Section B:** Two extended-response questions on an excerpt, sourced from the extracts list. These are published in the relevant pages of the A Level Religious Studies Anthology which can be downloaded from the Pearson qualifications website.
**Section C:** One extended essay question.

**Forbidden combination**
Clear and accessible assessments

We help you and your students to understand the assessment requirements fully.

- Question papers that are straightforward to navigate, with clear and simple instructional text and consistent use of command words.
- Clear and straightforward mark schemes help to indicate the required standard.
- Exam papers are marked by experts to ensure a fair and accurate marking process.

Extracts from A level Sample Assessment Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Explore ideas about analogy in the design argument for the existence of God. (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assess the debate between Copleston and Russell on religious experience as an argument for the existence of God. (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided. Read the following passage before answering the questions. A fine breath hypothesis may be killed by inches, the death by a thousand qualifications. It seems to people who are not religious as if there was no conceivable event the occurrence of which would be admitted by religious people to be a reason for concluding “There wasn’t a God after all.” Someone tells us that God loves us as a father loves his children. But then we must ask, who is this God who is to be qualified in this way? How can one be sure that these are the efforts to help, but his heavenly Father reveals no signs of concern. Some qualification is made: God’s love is “not merely human love.” But then we ask, just what would have to happen to entitle us to say “God does not exist”? A believer’s statement has been co-eroded that it is no longer an assertion at all. (Adapted from ‘The Philosophy of Religion’, New A, Author: Mitchell B. By permission of Oxford University Press)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (a)</td>
<td>Explore the key ideas associated with the problem of suffering. (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (b)</td>
<td>Analyse the success of one solution to the problem of suffering. (20)</td>
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Co-teachable AS and A level courses

Our Edexcel AS and A level Religious Studies specifications have been developed together and are designed to be completely co-teachable to aid planning and progression.

- The AS has the same number of unit choices as the A level.
- The first three topics in each unit are the same for AS and A level, allowing students to be entered for the AS at the end of the first year.

Extracts from AS Sample Assessment Materials

<table>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Explore key ideas about the nature of religious experience. (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assess the strengths of the ontological argument for the existence of God. (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Assess the strengths of the design argument for the existence of God. (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (a)</td>
<td>Explore the key ideas associated with the problem of suffering. (8)</td>
</tr>
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<td>4. (b)</td>
<td>Analyse the success of one solution to the problem of suffering. (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Explore’, ‘Assess’ and ‘Analyse’ are the three command words used at AS. At A level these are also used, in addition to ‘Clarify’ and ‘Evaluate’.
Expert support and guidance when you need it

We provide lots of free support to help you to plan, teach, track, assess and develop our Edexcel AS and A level Religious Studies with confidence.

Plan

- Our free Getting Started guide gives you an overview of the new AS and A level Religious Studies qualifications to help you understand what the changes mean for you and your students.
- We’ll provide a free editable course planner and scheme of work that you can adapt to suit your department.
- Our free mapping documents highlight the key differences and similarities between your current AS/A level Religious Studies specifications and our latest Edexcel specifications.

Teach

We’ll provide lots of free teaching and learning support to help you deliver the new qualifications, including:
- information on co-teachability
- marked exemplars of student work with examiner commentaries.

Track and assess

We provide support and resources to help you prepare your students for the assessments, including additional assessment papers, student exemplars and examiner commentaries.

ResultsPlus

ResultsPlus provides the most detailed analysis available of your students’ exam performance. Widely used by teachers across the country, this free online service will help you identify the topics and skills where further learning would benefit your students.

Develop

To help you plan for 2020 with confidence, we’re running free face-to-face and online events in the lead-up to the qualification going live.

Subject support

You can sign up via our Religious Studies page on the website to receive emails and be kept up to date about key dates, training events, news and support.

Call: 020 7010 2164
Visit online: www.?
Email: TeachingReligiousStudies@pearson.com
Follow us on Twitter: @Edexcel

Getting Ready to Teach events

FREE Getting Ready To Teach events will support you in delivering our AS and A level Religious Studies specifications for first teaching from September 2020. During the day you will:
- discover more about the structure, content and assessment of the new qualifications
- explore possible teaching and delivery strategies
- take part in planning activities
- have the opportunity to network and share ideas with other teachers
- get answers to your questions about these qualifications.
Next Steps ...

Sign up to teach

Edexcel AS and A level Religious Studies

If you are interested in teaching our qualifications, be sure to sign up to get all our specification updates and support. Sign up to teach at:

www.edexcel.com/alevelrs16

For queries, information and support, we’re here to help.

📞 Call us: 020 7010 2164

📧 Email us: TeachingReligiousStudies@pearson.com

🐦 Follow us: @Edexcel

Don’t forget our FREE Getting Ready To Teach events

Book your place online at: www.edexcel.com/training