

Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies

Getting Started Guide

Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies (NRS0)

First teaching from September 2024

Issue 1



Getting Started: Entry Level Certificate

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1. Introduction

This Getting Started guide provides an overview of the new [Entry Level in Religious Studies specification](#), to help you get to grips with the content and assessment, and to help you understand what this means for you and your students.

We've listened to feedback from a range of key stakeholders including teachers and diocesan leads to design an Entry Level Certificate (ELC) which complements the [Pearson Edexcel GCSE \(9-1\) in Religious Studies A specification](#), when Catholic Christianity and Judaism are chosen as the two religions for study. Our Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies aims to support students in their enjoyment of the subject and has specifically been designed to closely match the programme of study and provide a progression route to GCSE Religious Studies A. The Entry Level Certificate supports advancement in Religious Studies by cementing core understanding of content based on Catholic Christianity and Judaism to maximise accessibility and drive engagement within the subject.

Entry Level Certificate qualifications are designed to be taught in small steps, to meet students' individual learning styles and each unit is only assessed when you decide that your students are ready.

Co-teachability with GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0)

This specification is designed to be entirely co-teachable alongside Edexcel's existing [GCSE Religious Studies A qualification](#). This ensures learners can still enter for GCSE if they progress well through the Entry Level course. Equally, students who have struggled to access GCSE Religious Studies, can easily switch to study the ELC in Religious Studies.

Because ELC and GCSE are co-teachable, many of the GCSE teaching resources will be relevant to ELC as well. These can be found on our GCSE Religious Studies A website, under '[Teaching and learning materials](#)'.

Flexible and designed to encourage progression to GCSE

ELC assesses much of the same underpinning knowledge as GCSE, but in small manageable tests that can be taken when students are ready. This builds confidence and provides a solid foundation for progression to GCSE.

Sample assessment materials can be found on our Entry Level in Religious Studies website, under '[Specification and sample assessments](#)'.

2. Planning

2.1 Planning and Delivery models

Identifying Entry Level Certificate students

The Entry Level Certificate is a suitable choice for students who may find the GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0) course too challenging.

The course will enable low attainers to acquire a body of core knowledge and understanding based on Catholic Christianity and Judaism, to help them develop a holistic understanding of these religions and encourage them to reflect on and engage with fundamental questions.

Delivering ELC alongside GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0)

We have designed this specification to align closely to the content covered in GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0) for Catholic Christianity and Judaism and for students who face significant barriers in engagement, literacy and recall.

There are many ways to structure your course and we recognise the need for flexibility. For example, courses may be taught over different years and accommodating different amounts of teaching time. You may find the free [schemes of work](#) and [course planners](#) available on our [website for GCSE Religious Studies A \(1RA0\)](#), may assist you in your planning.

Options you may consider include:

- Identifying your lower attainers and only teaching them the Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies separately from the GCSE classes.
- Teaching GCSE and ELC students in the same classroom. All students learn the GCSE content, but with differentiated teaching and learning resources (with the ELC resources adapted to the specific requirements of the ELC content and assessment).

2.2 Suggested resources

Schemes of work

Our schemes of work for GCSE Religious Studies A, for [Area of study 1: Catholic Christianity](#), [Area of study 2: Judaism](#) and [Area of study 3: Philosophy and Ethics – Catholic Christianity](#), demonstrate how students can cover GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies A (1RA0) alongside the reduced content featured in the Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies. Students will have the option to either consolidate the Entry Level Certificate and take their final assessments for this, or use the Entry Level Certificate as a means to build their confidence, better preparing them for the GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0) qualification.

Below are the links to the relevant schemes of work for GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0), on our website:

- [Area of study 1: Catholic Christianity](#)
- [Area of study 2: Judaism](#)
- [Area of study 3: Philosophy and Ethics – Catholic Christianity](#)

Course planners

We are aware that Religious Studies teaching time varies widely between schools. In producing our course planners, schools were consulted on the teaching time allocated to Religious Studies. This information was then used to calculate the average number of hours of teaching available to students studying GCSE Religious Studies or other Key Stage 4 courses. Below is the link to our course planner, designed for schools delivering GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0) over a 2-year period:

- [GCSE Religious Studies A \(1RA0\) 2-year planner](#)

3. Content guidance

3.1 Pearson Edexcel Certificate in Religious Studies

Overview of topics that make up the ELC in Religious Studies:

Pearson Edexcel Certificate in Religious Studies

Paper 1: Catholic Beliefs, Teachings and Practices

Paper 2: Catholic Wisdom and Living

Paper 3: Jewish Beliefs, Teachings and Practices

Paper 4: Catholic Philosophy and Ethics

4. Assessment guidance

4.1 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives for the Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies are as follows:

Assessment Objectives and weightings		% in Entry Level Certificate
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and practices	50%
AO2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sources of religious authority, forms of expression and ways of life	25%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious philosophy and ethics	25%

4.2 Breakdown of Assessment Objectives

Component/Paper	AO1%	AO2%	AO3%	Total for all Assessment Objectives (Aos)
1: Catholic Beliefs, Teachings and Practices	25%	-	-	25%
2: Catholic Wisdom and Living	-	25%	-	25%
3: Jewish Beliefs, Teachings and Practices	25%	-	-	25%
4: Catholic Philosophy and Ethics	-	-	25%	25%
Total for ELC	50%	25%	25%	100%

Extra information for each test

- Externally set tests, administered and marked by the centre and moderated by Pearson. There is no set time for when each test is completed or how long the student takes to complete each test.
- 20 marks are available for each test and each test represents 25% of the qualification.
- Students should answer all questions.
- Students should answer the questions in the spaces provided.

4.3 Question styles

Like our GCSE Religious Studies A papers, our assessments are made up of a range of question styles. These include but, are not limited to:

- **Matching questions:**

Life after death

- 1 Draw a line to match the words with the definitions.

The first one has been done for you.

Heaven	•	•	A life with God after we die. This lasts forever.
Hell	•	•	A preparation for heaven for people who are not ready.
Purgatory	•	•	The body returning to life after death.
Resurrection	•	•	Life away from God after we die for people who reject God.

- **Sorting questions:**

The Bible

- 1 Put a tick (✓) to show if each statement is about the Old Testament or New Testament.

The first one has been done for you.

	Old Testament	New Testament
It is the story of Jesus and the early Church.		✓
It is the story of the people of Israel before Jesus.		
It contains the Gospels.		
It contains books about the prophets.		
It contains letters written to early church communities.		

- **True/false questions:**

Shabbat

- 4 Say if each statement is **true** or **false**.

The first one has been done as an example for you:

Statement	True or False?
Shabbat is the name for the Jewish day of rest.	true
Shabbat begins on Friday evening.	
Shabbat ends on Monday morning.	
Jews can work at Shabbat.	
It is traditional to eat a special meal at home at Shabbat.	

- **Short open response questions:**

Prayer

6 (a) One type of set (formulaic) prayer is the Lord’s Prayer.

Name **one** other type of set prayer used by Catholics.

(1)

.....

(b) One reason why Catholics pray to God is to **praise** him.

Give **two more** reasons why Catholics pray to God.

(2)

1

2

- **Ordering questions:**

The Covenant with Moses

2 Put these events into the correct order (1–4).

The first one has been done for you.

Event	Order
Moses gave the Commandments to the Israelites.	
Moses received the 10 Commandments from God.	
Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness.	1
Moses was called by God to go up Mount Sinai.	

4.4 Availability of papers and mark schemes

Sample papers and mark schemes for ELC Religious Studies:

- [Papers 1-4 are available on the website here.](#)

Live papers and mark schemes for ELC Religious Studies:

- Papers 1-4 will be published in the Autumn term of 2024.

The live materials outlined above will be valid for the lifetime of the qualification.

Materials for ELC Religious Studies will be available for first teaching from September 2024.

5. Administering the tests

The tests are designed to be taken when your students are ready. Usually, this will be once you have finished teaching the relevant section of content from the specification. However, all assessments could equally be taken at the end of the course.

Tests are stored in a secure area of our website under 'gold padlock'. When you are ready to administer the test, your exams officer can download a master copy of the test and mark scheme from the secure area of the website. A copy of this can then be printed and photocopied for each of your students. If you download the tests in advance, they must be kept confidential and must be kept under secure conditions at all times. The tests and mark schemes will remain valid for the lifetime of the qualification.

Other points to be aware of:

- The test can be sat in normal classroom conditions, but other examination procedures apply, regarding invigilation and safeguards against communication between students.
- There is no set time for when each test is completed or how long the student takes to complete each test.
- Students have the opportunity to retake the tests. However, no feedback or guidance on their original answers should be provided.
- There must be a gap of at least two weeks before they can retake the tests (each time it is retaken).

5.1 Marking and moderation

Marking the tests

Once your students have taken the test, you should mark it according to the published mark scheme. You may wish to consider the cumulative marks gained by each student and how this relates to the level they will be likely to achieve. See [page 12](#) for more information on how the marks relate to the level of achievement.

Moderation

The entry deadline for the ELC in Religious Studies is the 21st of February each year for summer certification. Once your students have been entered you will be assigned a moderator, which will appear on Edexcel Online from mid-April each year. When assigned, your moderator's details will appear in [Edexcel Online \(EOL\)](#) you can then mark and submit student scores for each test, using the assessment record and authentication sheet. This is available on the Pearson website pages for the qualification and in Appendix 1 of the [ELC specification](#).

Please note it is of utmost importance that the final marks on this form should be submitted to us for moderation by the 15th of May, in the year of certification. This means that all the tests that you would like to submit for your students need to be completed by this date.

Once we have received the forms for your students, a moderator will be assigned whose details will appear on your centre's Edexcel Online account. The moderator will not contact your centre directly however, a sample of papers will be selected by them and you'll see a tick next to the names of those students whose work needs to be sent for moderation.

Moderation sample sizes will vary depending on the cohort size but for cohorts of up to 100, the minimum sample size will be 10 candidates or all candidates if the entry number is lower than 10. Please note that the Highest and lowest scoring candidates will always be required as part of the sample. If for any reason the requested sample is lower than 10, where the cohort size is 10 or more students, other samples should be sent, to make up the short fall and these can be selected by the centre.

Level of achievement

Marks for the externally set tests are combined to give a maximum mark of 80. Your student's total mark out of 80 then gives you the level they have achieved as shown in the table below:

Level	Minimum total marks required
Fail	Below 16
Entry Level 1	16/80
Entry Level 2	35/80
Entry Level 3	53/80

Informing candidates of their centre assessed marks prior to submission

Candidates must be told the grade given by their centre for a centre assessed component/unit. This requirement is to enable candidates to request a review of the centre's marking prior to the grades being submitted to the awarding body, should they wish to do so. [Please see the JCQ guidance.](#)

Although the requirement to inform candidates of their marks strictly applies only to GCSE, GCE and Project qualifications, centres are reminded that the JCQ publication [General Regulations for Approved Centres](#) states that centres must have a written internal appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions in all qualifications and to ensure that details of this procedure are communicated, made widely available and accessible to all candidates. Giving candidates access to their marks is an important part of the procedure.

Carrying out internal standardisation

Where marking has been carried out by more than one teacher in a centre, there must be a process of internal standardisation carried out to ensure that there is a consistent application of the assessment criteria.

Small schools with only one teacher need not carry out internal standardisation. It is helpful to include a covering note with your sample explaining that you are in this situation.

6. Entries and fees

The entry codes for the ELC in Religious Studies are shown in the table below:

	ELC Religious Studies
<p>Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) code</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The QN for this qualification is: 610/4028/9</p>
<p>Subject code</p> <p>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</p>	<p>NRS0</p>

Entry fees and registration deadlines for Pearson Edexcel qualifications can be found in our General Qualifications UK fees document which is available in the link below:

[Academic and vocational fees | Pearson qualifications](#)

Details of how to enter students for the examinations for this qualification can be found in our Information Manuals. A copy is made available to all examinations officers and is available in the link below:

[Entries & information manual | Pearson qualifications](#)

7. Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is Entry Level Certificate for?

Entry Level Certificate is aimed at learners who are targeted a grade 1 or below at GCSE and are identified as requiring support to access GCSE Religious Studies.

2. How is ELC assessed?

Entry Level Certificate is assessed by 4 short tests which are sat in classroom conditions. The tests have been designed for students that are not yet ready for GCSE exams. Each test is 20 marks long and is not time restricted. The tests are marked by the class teachers and these marks are sent to Pearson Edexcel to award the qualification. Each unit is only assessed when the teacher feels the learners are ready.

3. What are the benefits of ELC?

The Entry Level Certificate allows students to gain confidence with the ideas that underpin GCSE Religious Studies. The smaller steps and shorter assessments allow students to see the progress they are making and to feel more engaged with the Religious Studies curriculum and motivated to succeed.

4. When do I need to enter learners for the course?

You will need to enter your learners by the entry deadline of 21st February in the year of certification.

5. Can I enter students for ELC and GCSE at the same time?

Yes, you can enter students for both of these qualifications in the same year.

6. How can I fit Entry Level Certificate in with the teaching GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0)

ELC can be taught alongside GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0), please see section 3. Planning, on page 4. There are also [course planners](#) available on the [GCSE Religious Studies A \(1RA0\) website](#), which you may find helpful.

7. Is it possible for students to be entered for the ELC without being entered for the GCSE alongside it?

Yes, it is a stand-alone qualification and can be entered for, without entering for the GCSE also.

8. Are there different exam papers or is there different content to cover, based on whether ELC level 1, 2 or 3 is taken?

No, all students study the same content and take the same tests. Their performance in these tests determines their final level.

9. Is the ELC be restricted to Catholic Christianity and Judaism on Specification A?

Yes, the units in this ELC focus only on Catholic Christianity and Judaism.

10. Do the bishops allow for the teaching of this ELC in Religious Studies?

This specification has been reviewed by the Catholic Education Service and is among the list of qualifications which comply with bishop requirements. It is an accessible and inclusive qualification which encourages progression to GCSE and recognises candidate achievement (if delivered as an alternative to Edexcel's existing GCSE in Religious Studies A).

11. Can the ELC be taught in place of the new Religious Education Curriculum Directory and is this suitable for Key Stage 3?

No, we have worked with the Catholic Education Service on this qualification but, it is focused at 14–16-year-olds who are working below Grade 1 at GCSE, so that they can achieve a certificate to reward their KS4 studies and is not meant as an alternative to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.

12. How suitable is this qualification for co-teaching alongside a Non-Pearson GCSE in Religious Studies?

Whilst this ELC in Religious Studies is designed to be 100% co-teachable with Edexcel's GCSE, Religious Studies A specification there is a degree of overlap with some units provided by other boards however, not all units align.

13. How long is the ELC course?

The Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies is designed to be taught over 120 guided learning hours.

14. Does the Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies count on school KS4 performance tables?

No.

15. Can we provide students with readers and scribes as needed and/or is it permissible for a translator to help students understand the questions?

For the Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies, the centre is not required to have each candidate individually assessed for use of a scribe, however the SENCo must determine the need for a scribe or speech recognition technology, based on how the candidate normally works in class. The centre is also permitted to grant access to a bilingual dictionary without the need to record this arrangement or evidence this need on file.

Further guidance, regarding additional arrangements for candidates with disabilities and learning, who are undertaking ELC qualifications can be found in [this document](#) which is available from the [Joint Council for Qualifications \(JCQ\) website](#).

16. When do I submit the marks for my learners?

You will need to submit learner marks by May 15th of the year of certification.

17. What GCSE grade are the ELC qualifications equivalent to?

ELC is not equivalent to a GCSE grade as it is a qualification aimed those learners targeted below grade 1 GCSE. However, it can be a useful segway qualification into GCSE Religious Studies A (1RA0).

18. Will this be available to schools in Wales?

No, this qualification is not currently available for schools in Wales.

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