

GCSE Religious Studies A (Short Course)



**Faith and Practice in
the 21st Century**

Specification

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Religious Studies A (Short Course) (3RA0)

First teaching from September 2016

First certification from 2018

Issue 1

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1 Introduction

Why choose Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies A (Short Course)?

We've listened to feedback from all parts of the religious education community, including higher education. We've used this opportunity of curriculum change to redesign qualifications so that students can use a wide range of concepts in order that they can confidently interpret, contextualise and analyse the expressions of religions and worldviews they encounter. This is one of two GCSE Religious Studies qualifications offered.

A specification to suit everyone – With our suite of two full course and two short course GCSE Religious Studies specifications you can pick the one that meets the needs of all your students.

A familiar approach – We have retained the aspects of our current specification and assessments that you like while adding new and exciting content.

Clear and coherent structure – We have designed our specification to allow you to co-teach the full and short course, allowing you to deliver both courses to the full cohort.

Choice of religion – available in four religions (Catholic Christianity, Christianity, Islam and Judaism) allowing you to choose the right combination to keep students engaged and motivated through the course.

Helps develop a holistic understanding of religion – the new specification explores religion and practice in the 21st Century and encourages students to reflect on and engage with fundamental questions.

Develops transferable skills for progression – students will develop analytical and critical thinking skills to enable them to present a wide range of well-informed and reasonable arguments, aiding in progression to AS and A level study.

Accessible assessment – our exam papers have been designed with a straightforward structure and consistent use of command words in questions.

Supporting you in planning and implementing this qualification

Planning

Our **Getting Started** guide gives you an overview of the new GCSE qualification to help you to 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

Teaching and learning

There will be lots of free teaching and learning support to help you deliver the new qualification, including:

- Guidance documents
- Exemplars
- Student guide
- Materials for your options evenings.

Preparing for exams

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, ask the expert and online community 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 to keep up to date with qualification updates and product and service news.

The Religious Studies Team can be contacted by email:
TeachingReligiousStudies@pearson.com and by telephone: 0844 463 2817.

Learn more at qualifications.pearson.com

Qualification at a glance

Content and assessment overview

The Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1) in Religious Studies A (Short Course) consists of four externally examined papers.

All students must complete **two** papers from Areas of Study 1, 2, 3 and 4 – Study of Religion (Catholic Christianity, Christianity, Islam and Judaism)

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

Catholic Christianity and Christianity are a forbidden combination.

Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Study of Catholic Christianity (Paper code: 3RA0/01)

Written examination: 50 minutes

50% of the qualification

51 marks

Content overview

Students must study all two content areas.

- Beliefs and Teachings
- Practices

Assessment overview

- Students must answer all questions.
- The assessment consists of two questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and will contribute a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Christianity (Paper code: 3RA0/02)

Written examination: 50 minutes

50% of the qualification

51 marks

Content overview

Students must study all two content areas.

- Beliefs and Teachings
- Practices

Assessment overview

- Students must answer all questions.
- The assessment consists of two questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and will contribute a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Study of Islam (*Paper code: 3RA0/03)

Written examination: 50 minutes

50% of the qualification

51 marks

Content overview

Students must study all two content areas.

- Beliefs and Teachings
- Practices

Assessment overview

- Students must answer all questions.
- The assessment consists of two questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and will contribute a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

Paper 4: Area of Study 4 – Study of Judaism (Paper code: 3RA0/04)

Written examination: 50 minutes

50% of the qualification

51 marks

Content overview

Students will be assessed on two content areas based upon their chosen religion.

- Beliefs and Teachings
- Practices

Assessment overview

- Students must answer all questions.
- The assessment consists of two questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and will contribute a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

*See *Appendix 4: Codes* for a description of this code and all other codes relevant to this qualification.

2 Subject content

Qualification aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- develop students' knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism
- develop students' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, and sources of wisdom and authority, including through their reading of key religious texts, other texts, and scriptures of the religions they are studying
- develop students' ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding of the subject
- provide opportunities for students to engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth, and their influence on human life
- challenge students to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what they have learnt and contribute to their preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of two religions
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/or sacred texts, where appropriate, which support contemporary religious faith
- understand the influence of religion on individuals, communities and societies 4
- understand significant common and divergent views between and/or within religions and beliefs
- apply knowledge and understanding in order to analyse questions related to religious beliefs and values
- construct well-informed and balanced arguments on matters concerned with religious beliefs and values.

Area of Study 1: Study of Catholic Christianity

Overview

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Catholic Christianity as a lived religion within with the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections: Beliefs and Teachings; Practices.

Students will be expected to study Catholic Christianity within the context of the wider British society whose religious traditions are, in the main, Christian. Students should compare and contrast the areas of belief and practice within Catholic Christianity with wider Christian perspectives as outlined in the content below.

- Beliefs about the afterlife and their significance (1.8)*
- The practice and significance of worship (2.2)*

Students should also recognise that within Catholic Christianity there may be more than one perspective in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed. Common and divergent views within the wider Christian tradition in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout including reference to Orthodox, Protestant and other Christian traditions.

The significance and importance of the various beliefs and practices to Catholics today should be explored throughout the two sections.

Section 1: Beliefs and Teachings

Students should have an understanding of:	
1.1	The Trinity: the nature and significance of the Trinity as expressed in the Nicene Creed; the nature and significance of the oneness of God; the nature and significance of each of the Persons individually: God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; how this is reflected in worship and belief in the life of a Catholic today.
1.2	Biblical understandings of God as a Trinity of Persons: the nature and significance of God as a Trinity of Persons including reference to the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13–17) and historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity, including reference to the First Council of Nicaea and the First Council of Constantinople.
1.3	Creation: the nature and significance of the biblical account of Creation including Genesis 1–3; and how it may be understood in divergent ways in Christianity, including reference to literal and metaphorical interpretations; the significance of the Creation account for Catholics in understanding the nature and characteristics of God, especially as Creator, benevolent, omnipotent and eternal.
1.4	The significance of the Creation account in understanding the nature of humanity: the nature and significance of the nature of humanity being created in the image of God including reference to Genesis 1–3 and divergent understandings of humanity’s relationship with Creation (dominion and stewardship); the implications of these beliefs for Catholics today.
1.5	The Incarnation: Jesus as incarnate Son, the divine Word including John 1, both fully God and fully human; the scriptural origins of this belief, including John 1:1–18 and its importance for Catholics today.
1.6	The events in the Paschal Mystery: Catholic teachings about the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, including reference to Luke 24; the redemptive efficacy of these events and their significance for Catholics today.
1.7	The significance of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus for Catholic beliefs about salvation and grace including John 3:10–21 and Acts 4:8–12; the implications and significance of these events for Catholic practice today.
1.8*	Catholic beliefs about eschatology: life after death; the nature of resurrection, judgement, heaven, hell and purgatory, including reference to John 11:17–27 and 2 Corinthians 5:1–10; divergent Christian beliefs about life after death with reference to purgatory and the nature of resurrection; why belief in life after death is important for Catholics today. Non-religious arguments against life after death including as a source of comfort, lack of evidence, fraudulent accounts and social control; and Catholic responses to them including 1 Peter 3:18–22.

Section 2: Practices

Students should have an understanding of:	
2.1	The sacramental nature of reality: Catholic teachings about how the whole of creation manifests the presence of God; the meaning and effects of each of the seven sacraments including Catechism of the Catholic Church 1210–1211; the practice and symbolism of each sacrament; how sacraments communicate the grace of God; divergent Christian attitudes to sacraments, including reference to Orthodox and Protestant Christianity.
2.2*	Liturgical worship within Catholic Christianity: the nature and significance of the Mass for Catholics including its structure and the Eucharist as the 'source and summit of Christian life' with reference to Lumen Gentium paragraph 7; divergent Christian attitudes towards the practice and meaning of liturgical worship, including its significance for Catholics and the less-structured worship in evangelical Christian denominations.
2.3	The funeral rite as a liturgical celebration of the Church: practices associated with the funeral rite in the home, the church and the cemetery, including reference to 'Preparing my funeral' by Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster; the aims of the funeral rite including communion with the deceased; the communion of the community and the proclamation of eternal life to the community and its significance for Catholics.
2.4	Prayer as the 'raising of hearts and minds to God': the nature and significance of different types of prayer; the Lord's Prayer including Matthew 6:5–14, set (formulaic) prayers and informal (extempore) prayer; when each type might be used and why; the importance of prayer and the importance for Catholics of having different types of worship.
2.5	The role and importance of forms of popular piety: the nature and significance of of the Rosary, Eucharistic adoration and Stations of the Cross; how each of these might be used and why; the importance of having different types of worship for Catholics including reference to Catechism of the Catholic Church 1674–1676; divergent Christian attitudes to these forms of piety.
2.6	Pilgrimage: the nature, history and purpose of Catholic pilgrimage; the significance of the places people go on pilgrimage; divergent Christian understandings about whether pilgrimage is important for Christians today with specific reference to Jerusalem, Lourdes, Rome, Walsingham and the Catechism of the Catholic Church 2691–2696.
2.7	Catholic Social Teaching: how Catholic Social Teaching reflects the teaching to show love of neighbour; Catholic teaching on justice, peace and reconciliation Evangelii Gaudium paragraphs 182–237 – The inclusion of the poor in society; How these teachings might be reflected in the lives of individual Catholics; the work of CAFOD, what it does and why.
2.8	Catholic mission and evangelism: the history and significance of mission and evangelism for Catholics; divergent ways this is put into practice by the Church and individual Catholics locally, nationally and globally, and how this fulfils the commission of Jesus and teachings of the Church including Evangelii Gaudium Chapter 5.

Assessment information

Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Study of Catholic Christianity

- First assessment: May/June 2018.
- The assessment is 50 minutes.
- The assessment is out of 51 marks.
- Students must answer both questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and will contribute a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment requires students to work across different parts of a qualification and to show their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area.

Synoptic assessment enables students to show their ability to combine their skills, knowledge and understanding with breadth and depth of the subject.

Synopticity will be assessed in all papers, students will be required to bring together their knowledge and understanding of religions from across the course of study.

Sample assessment materials

A sample paper and mark scheme can be found in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Religious Studies A (Short Course) Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)* document.

Area of Study 2: Study of Christianity

Overview

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Christianity as a lived religion within the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections: Beliefs and Teachings; Practices

Students will be expected to study Christianity within the context of the wider British society whose religious traditions are, in the main, Christian.

Students should recognise that Christianity is one of the many religious traditions in Great Britain which include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the specified content. Students should compare and contrast two areas of belief and practice within Christianity with one of these religions practiced in Great Britain:

- Beliefs about the afterlife and their significance (1.6)*
- The practice and significance of worship (2.1)*

Students should also recognise that within Christianity there may be more than one perspective in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed. Common and divergent views within Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout including reference to Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and other Christian traditions.

The significance and importance of the various beliefs and practices to Christians today should be explored throughout the two sections.

Section 1: Beliefs and Teachings

Students should have an understanding of:

1.1	The Trinity: the nature and significance of the Trinity as expressed in the Nicene Creed; the nature and significance of the oneness of God; the nature and significance of each of the Persons individually: including reference to Matthew 3:13–17; how this is reflected in Christian worship and belief today.
1.2	The creation of the universe and of humanity: the biblical account of creation and divergent ways in which it may be understood by Christians, including as literal and metaphorical; the role of the Word and Spirit in creation, including John 1:1–18 and Genesis 1–3; the importance of creation for Christians today.
1.3	The Incarnation: the nature and importance of the person of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God; the biblical basis of this teaching, including John 1:1–18 and 1 Timothy 3:16 and its significance for Christians today.
1.4	The last days of Jesus' life: the Last Supper, betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; the accounts of these within the Bible, including Luke 22–24 and the significance of these events to understanding the person of Jesus Christ.
1.5	The nature and significance of salvation and the role of Christ within salvation: law, sin, grace and Spirit, the role of Christ in salvation including John 3:10–21 and Acts 4:8–12; the nature and significance of atonement within Christianity and its link to salvation.
1.6*	Christian eschatology: divergent Christian teachings about life after death, including the nature and significance of resurrection, judgement, heaven, and hell and purgatory, with reference to the 39 Articles of Religion and Catholic teachings; how beliefs about life after death are shown in the Bible, including reference to 2 Corinthians 5:1–10 and divergent understandings as to why they are important for Christians today. Non-religious arguments against life after death including as a source of comfort, lack of evidence, fraudulent accounts and social control; and Christian responses to them including 1 Peter 3:18–22.
1.7	The problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God: the problems it raises for Christians about the nature of God, including reference to omnipotence and benevolence including Psalm 103; how the problem may cause believers to question their faith or the existence of God; the nature and examples of natural suffering, moral suffering.
1.8	Divergent solutions offered to the problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God: biblical, theoretical and practical including reference to Psalm 119, Job, free will, vale of soul-making, prayer, and charity; the success of solutions to the problem.

Section 2: Practices

Students should have an understanding of:	
2.1*	Christian worship: liturgical and non-liturgical forms of worship including activities which are informal and individual, including reference to the <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> ; when each form might be used and why; divergent Christian attitudes towards the practices, meaning and significance of liturgical and non-liturgical forms of worship in Christian life today, with reference to denominations which worship with less structure, such as some Pentecostal churches.
2.2	The role of the sacraments in Christian life and their practice in two denominations: the role of the sacraments/ordinance as a whole; the nature and importance of the meaning and celebration of baptism and the Eucharist in at least two denominations, including reference to the 39 Articles XXV–XXXVI; divergent Christian attitudes towards the use and number of sacraments in Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions.
2.3	The nature and purpose of prayer: the nature of and examples of the different types of prayer; set prayers; informal prayer and the Lord's Prayer, including Matthew 6:5–14; when each type might be used and why; divergent Christian attitudes towards the importance of each type of prayer for Christians today.
2.4	Pilgrimage: the nature, history and purpose of pilgrimage, including interpretations of Luke 2:41–43; the significance of the places people go on pilgrimage; divergent Christian teachings about whether pilgrimage is important for Christians today with specific reference to Catholic and Protestant understandings; the activities associated with, and significance of, Jerusalem, Iona, Taize and Walsingham.
2.5	Christian religious celebrations: the nature and history of Christian festivals in the church year including Christmas and Easter; the significance of celebrating Advent and Christmas; the significance of celebrating Holy Week and Easter with reference to interpretations of 1 Corinthians 15:12–34.
2.6	The future of the Christian Church: Church growth, the history and purpose of missionary and evangelical work including reference to Mark 16:9–20 and John 20: 21–22; divergent ways this is put into practice by the Church locally, nationally and globally; Christian attitudes to why evangelical work is important for the Church and for individual Christians.
2.7	The role and importance of the local church in the local community: how and why it helps the individual believer and the local area; local parish activities including interpretations of 1 Peter 5:1–4, ecumenism, outreach work, the centre of Christian identity and worship through living practices.
2.8	The role and importance of the Church in the worldwide community: how and why it works for reconciliation and the problems faced by the persecuted Church; divergent Christian responses to teachings about charity including 1 Corinthians 13 and Matthew 25:31–46; the work of Christian Aid, what it does and why.

Assessment information

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Christianity

- First assessment: May/June 2018.
- The assessment is 50 minutes.
- The assessment is out of 51 marks.
- Students must answer both questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and will contribute a maximum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

Synoptic assessment

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Synoptic assessment enables students to show their ability to combine their skills, knowledge and understanding with breadth and depth of the subject.

Synopticity will be assessed in all papers, students will be required to bring together their knowledge and understanding of religions from across the course of study.

Sample assessment materials

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Area of Study 3: Study of Islam

Overview

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Islam as a lived religion within the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections: Beliefs and Teachings and Practices

Students will be expected to study Islam within the context of the wider British society whose religious traditions are, in the main, Christian.

Students should compare and contrast two areas of belief and practice within Christianity and Islam:

- Beliefs about the afterlife and their significance (1.8)*
- The practice and significance of worship (2.3)*

Students should recognise that Islam is one of the many religious traditions in Great Britain which include Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the specified content. Students should also recognise that within Islam there may be more than one perspective in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed. Common and divergent views within Islam in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout including reference to Sunni and Shi'a traditions.

The significance and importance of the various beliefs and practices to Muslims today should be explored throughout the two sections.

Section 1: Beliefs and Teachings

Students should have an understanding of:	
1.1	The six Beliefs of Islam: their nature, history and purpose, including Kitab al-iman 1: 4; how they are understood and expressed in Sunni and Shi'a Muslim communities today; the importance of these principles for Muslims.
1.2	The five roots of 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam (Tawhid (oneness of Allah); 'Adl (Divine Justice); Nubuwwah (Prophethood); Imamah (Successors to Muhammad) and Mi'ad (The Day of Judgment and the Resurrection): the nature, history and purpose of the five roots with reference to their Qur'anic basis, including Surah 112 (the oneness of Allah); the importance of these principles for different Shi'a communities today including Sevenser and Twelver.
1.3	The nature of Allah: how the characteristics of Allah are shown in the Qur'an and why they are important: Tawhid (oneness), including Surah 16: 35–36, immanence, transcendence, omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness and justice, Adalat in Shi'a Islam.
1.4	Risalah: the nature and importance of prophethood for Muslims, including Surah 2: 136; what the roles of prophets teach Muslims, exemplified in the lives of Adam, Ibrahim, Isma'il, Musa, Dawud, Isa, Muhammad.
1.5	Muslim holy books (kutub): the nature, history, significance and purpose of Muslim holy books with reference to the Qur'an including Surah 53: 4-18, Tawrat (Torah), including Surah 5: 43–48; Surah, Zabur (Psalms), including Surah 4: 163–171; Injil (Gospel), including Surah 53: 36, Sahifah (Scrolls); divergent Muslim views about the importance of the holy books in their lives today.
1.6	Malaikah: the nature and importance of angels for Muslims; how angels Jibril, Izra'il and Mika'il are shown in the Qur'an, including Surah 19, 32: 11 and 2: 97–98, and their significance for Muslims today.
1.7	al-Qadr: the nature and importance of Predestination for Muslims; how al-Qadr and human freedom relates to the Day of Judgement, including reference to Sahih Al-Bukhari 78: 685; divergent understandings of predestination in Sunni and Shi'a Islam; the implications of belief in al-Qadr for Muslims today.
1.8*	Akhirah: Muslim teachings about life after death; the nature of judgment, paradise and hell; how they are shown in the Qur'an including Surah 17: 49–72; divergent ways in which Muslims teachings about life after death affect the life of a Muslim today. Non-religious arguments against life after death including as a source of comfort, lack of evidence, fraudulent accounts and social control; and Muslim responses to them.

Section 2: Practices

Students should have an understanding of:	
2.1	Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam: their nature, history and purpose of the Ten Obligatory Acts; the diversity of practice and importance of Ten Obligatory Acts for Shi'a Muslims today; their basis in the Qur'an including reference to Surah 9: 71–73; divergent understandings of these principles within Sunni Islam including links with the Five Pillars.
2.2	Shahadah as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role and significance of shahadah for Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, including reference to Surah 3: 17–21; why reciting shahadah is important for Muslims, and its place in Muslim practice today.
2.3*	Salah as one of the Five Pillars including reference to Surah 15: 98–99 and 29: 45: the nature, history, significance and purpose of salah for Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, including different ways of understanding them; how salah is performed, including ablution, times, directions, movements and recitations, in the home and mosque and Jummah prayer.
2.4	Sawm as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role, significance and purpose of fasting during Ramadan including Surah 2: 183–185; those who are excused from fasting and why; the significance of the Night of Power: the nature, history and purpose of the Night of Power; why Laylat al-Qadr is important for Muslims today.
2.5	Zakah as one of the Five Pillars and khums: the nature, role, significance and purpose of zakah and khums, including Surah 9: 58–60 and 8: 36–42; why zakah is important for Sunni Muslims; why khums is important for Shi'a Muslims; the benefits of receiving zakah or khums.
2.6	Hajj as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role, origins and significance of Hajj, including Surah Surah 2: 124–130; 22: 25–30; how Hajj is performed and why Hajj is important for Muslims; benefits and challenges from attending Hajj for Muslims.
2.7	Jihad: the origins, meaning and significance of jihad in Islam; divergent understandings of jihad within Islam, including the difference between lesser and greater jihad; the conditions for declaration of lesser jihad, including reference to Surah 2: 190–194 and 22: 39; the importance of jihad in the life of Muslims.
2.8	The nature, origins, activities, meaning and significance of the celebration/commemoration of Id-ul-Adha, with reference to Surah 37: 77–111, and Id-ul-Fitr in Sunni Islam with reference to their place within Shi'a Islam; and Id-ul-Ghadeer, with reference to Hadith and the interpretation of Surah 5: 3, and Ashura in Shi'a Islam with reference to their place within Sunni Islam.

Assessment information

Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Study of Islam

- First assessment: May/June 2018.
- The assessment is 50 minutes.
- The assessment is out of 51 marks.
- Students must answer both questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and will contribute a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment requires students to work across different parts of a qualification and to show their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area.

Synoptic assessment enables students to show their ability to combine their skills, knowledge and understanding with breadth and depth of the subject.

Synopticity will be assessed in all papers, students will be required to bring together their knowledge and understanding of religions from across the course of study.

Sample assessment materials

A sample paper and mark scheme can be found in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Religious Studies A (Short Course) Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)* document.

Area of Study 4: Study of Judaism

Overview

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Judaism as a lived religion within the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections: Beliefs and Teachings; Practices.

Students will be expected to study Judaism within the context of the wider British society whose religious traditions are, in the main, Christian.

Students should compare and contrast two areas of belief and practice within Christianity and Judaism:

- Beliefs about the afterlife and their significance (1.8)*
- The practice and significance of worship (2.4)*

Students should recognise that Judaism is one of the many religious traditions in Great Britain which include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the specified content. Students should also recognise that within Judaism there may be more than one perspective in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed. Common and divergent views within Judaism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout including reference to Orthodox, Reform and Liberal traditions.

The significance and importance of the various beliefs and practices to Jews today should be explored throughout the two sections.

Section 1: Beliefs and Teachings

Students should have an understanding of:	
1.1	The nature of the Almighty: how the characteristics of the Almighty are shown in the Torah, and why they are important in Jewish life today, including One, Creator, Law-Giver and Judge, including reference to Genesis 2.
1.2	The nature and importance of Shekhinah: how the divine presence is shown in the Torah and why it is important, including interpretations of 2 Chronicles 7:1–3; the divergent understandings of Shekhinah found in different forms of Orthodox Judaism and the importance of them for Jews today.
1.3	The nature and purpose of the Messiah: how messiahship is shown in the scriptures including Jeremiah 23:5–8; the nature and significance of the Messianic Age and the Jewish responsibility to bring it about; divergent understandings of the Messiah in different forms of Orthodox and Reform Judaism and the importance of them for Jewish people today.
1.4	The Covenant at Sinai: the nature and history of the Covenant at Sinai (the Ten Commandments), including Exodus 20; the role and significance of Moses in the Covenant at Sinai; divergent understandings of how and why the Decalogue is important in Jewish life today.
1.5	The covenant with Abraham and his descendants: the nature and history of the Abrahamic covenant; the role of Abraham in the covenant, including Genesis 17; why the Promised Land covenanted to Abraham and his descendants is important for Jews today.
1.6	Sanctity of life: the nature and importance of Pikuach Nefesh (primacy of life); why human life is holy by Jewish people; how life is shown as special and taking precedence over everything, including Talmud Yoma 83–84; divergent understandings of how and why the principle of Pikuach Nefesh is applied by Jews today.
1.7	Moral principles and the Mitzvot: the nature and importance of the Mitzvot, including reference to the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides: Sefer Mada; the importance of the relationship between keeping the Mitzvot and free will; the Mitzvot between humans and the Almighty, and between humans; divergent understandings of the importance of the Mitzvot between the Almighty and humans, and between humans, for Jewish life today.
1.8*	Jewish beliefs about life after death: divergent Jewish understandings of the nature and significance of life after death, including reference to different forms of Orthodox and Reform Judaism; Jewish teachings about life after death, including interpretations of Ecclesiastes 12; the nature of resurrection and judgement; why belief in life after death may be important for Jews today. Non-religious arguments against life after death including as a source of comfort, lack of evidence, fraudulent accounts and social control; and Jewish responses to them.

Section 2: Practices

Students should have an understanding of:	
2.1	The nature and purpose of Jewish public acts of worship: the nature, features and purpose of Jewish public worship, including interpretations of Psalm 116:12–19; the nature, features and importance of synagogue services for the Jewish community and the individual.
2.2	The Tenakh and the Talmud: the nature, features, purpose and significance of the Tenakh (the written law) and Talmud (the oral law) for Jews in daily life today, with reference to Perkei Avot 2; the nature and purpose of Jewish laws: food laws, kashrut, including kosher, and treifah and the separation of dairy and meat, including reference to Deuteronomy 14:3–10; the divergent implications of the Jewish food laws for Jews today.
2.3	The nature and purpose of prayer in the home and of private prayer: the nature, features and purpose of prayer three times a day; the importance of having different forms of prayers, including interpretations of Psalm 55:16–23.
2.4*	The nature and importance of the Shema and the Amidah (the standing prayer); when the Shema and the Amidah might be used, how and why, including reference to the Mezuzah; the importance of having the Shema and the Amidah for Jews today, including reference to Deuteronomy 6:4.
2.5	The importance of ritual for Jews today: the nature, features and purpose of the birth, marriage, Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, including interpretations of Genesis 21:1–8 and Leviticus 12; the nature, purpose and importance of mourning ceremonies; the distinct importance of the funeral, shiva, avelut and yahrzeit for Jews today; divergent understandings of the importance of each ritual for different forms of Orthodox and Reform Judaism today.
2.6	The nature, features, history and purpose of celebrating Shabbat: the nature, features and purpose of the celebration of Shabbat in the home and in the synagogue, including interpretations of Exodus 31:12–18; why the celebration of Shabbat is important for the Jewish community and the individual today.
2.7	Jewish festivals: the nature, history, purpose and significance of Jewish festivals; the origins and meaning of specific festivals, including Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot, including interpretations of Leviticus 23 (Rosh Hashanah); divergent understandings of why festivals are important to different forms of Orthodox and Reform Judaism today.
2.8	Features of the synagogue: the nature, history and purpose of the different design of the synagogues in Liberal, Reform and Orthodox Judaism, including facing Jerusalem, layout of seating the Ark and the bimah and with reference to Proverbs 14:28; how and why the synagogue is used by the different communities, including reference to Exodus 27:20–21; how and why objects of devotion are used within the synagogues, including a yad, Torah Scroll, ner tamid and menorah.

Assessment information

Paper 4: Area of Study 4 – Study of Judaism

- First assessment: May/June 2018.
- The assessment is 50 minutes.
- The assessment is out of 51 marks.
- Students must answer both questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and will contribute a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment requires students to work across different parts of a qualification and to show their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area.

Synoptic assessment enables students to show their ability to combine their skills, knowledge and understanding with breadth and depth of the subject.

Synopticity will be assessed in all papers, students will be required to bring together their knowledge and understanding of religions from across the course of study.

Sample assessment materials

A sample paper and mark scheme can be found in the *Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Religious Studies A (Short Course) Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)* document.

Assessment Objectives

Students must:		% in GCSE (Short Course)
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs, practices and sources of authority • Influence on individuals, communities and societies • Similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs. 	50%
AO2	Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.	50%
Total		100%

Breakdown of Assessment Objectives

Paper	Assessment Objectives		Total for all Assessment Objectives
	AO1 %	AO2 %	
Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Study of Catholic Christianity**	25%	25%	50%
Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Christianity**	25%	25%	50%
Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Study of Islam	25%	25%	50%
Paper 4: Area of Study 4 – Study of Judaism	25%	25%	50%
Total for GCSE (Short Course)*	50%	50%	100%

*Students are required to complete papers two papers from the four papers available.

**Catholic Christianity and Christianity are forbidden combinations.

3 Administration and general information

Entries

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

Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, special consideration and malpractice

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.

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). The form can be emailed to 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). The form, supporting documentation and as much information as possible can be emailed to 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.

Awarding and reporting

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

This GCSE (Short Course) qualification will be graded and certificated on a nine-grade scale from 9 to 1 using the total subject mark where 9 is the highest grade. 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 2018.

Student recruitment and progression

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.

Progression

Students can progress from this qualification to:

- AS and A Levels in Religious Studies and other subjects.
- Vocational qualifications, such as BTEC Nationals.

Appendices

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Appendix 1: The context for the development of this qualification

All our qualifications are designed to meet our World Class Qualification Principles^[1] 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 their documents *GCSE (9 to 1) Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements* and *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Religious Studies* published in June 2014.

^[1] 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 2*.

From Pearson's Expert Panel for World Class Qualifications

" 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

Appendix 2: 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.'^[1]

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:^[2]

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.^[3]

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.

^[1] OECD – *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives* (OECD Publishing, 2012)

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

^[3] PISA – *The PISA Framework for Assessment of ICT Literacy* (2011)

Appendix 3: Command Words

The following command words will be used in the assessment of students across all papers.

Command Word	Meaning	Number of Marks	Assessment Objectives
State	Provide knowledge of religion and belief by recalling factual information	3	AO1 – 3 marks
Outline	Provide knowledge of religion and belief by recalling factual information	3	AO1 – 3 marks
Describe	Provide an understanding of religion and belief and contrast with that of another.	4	AO1 – 4 marks
Explain	<p>There are two ways this command word will be used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (4 marks) Provide understanding of an aspect of religion and belief and developing this beyond a habitual response. 2. (5 marks) Provide understanding of an aspect of religion and belief and developing this beyond a habitual response. In addition, students will be required to reference one source of wisdom or authority in support of their explanation. 	4	AO1 – 4 marks OR AO1 – 5 marks
*Evaluate	Interpret a given stimulus in order to consider different viewpoints and perspectives relating to the importance or significance of a particular aspect of a religion or belief. Deconstruct the information or issue at hand, by constructing logical chains of reasoning and making connections between the elements in the question. Arguments must be justified by the appraisal of evidence leading to a supported conclusion.	12	AO2 – 12 marks

*Additional instructions are provided to students for all 'Evaluate' questions. These instructions reflect the additional requirements of the question. Please refer to the Sample Assessment Materials for further details.

Appendix 4: Codes

Type of code	Use of code	Code
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) codes	<p>Each qualification title is allocated an Ofqual Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) code.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>603/0062/0</p>
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.	GCSE – 3RA0
Paper codes	These codes are provided for reference purposes. Students do not need to be entered for individual papers.	<p>Paper 1: 3RA0/01</p> <p>Paper 2: 3RA0/02</p> <p>Paper 3: 3RA0/03</p> <p>Paper 4: 3RA0/04</p>

Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications

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