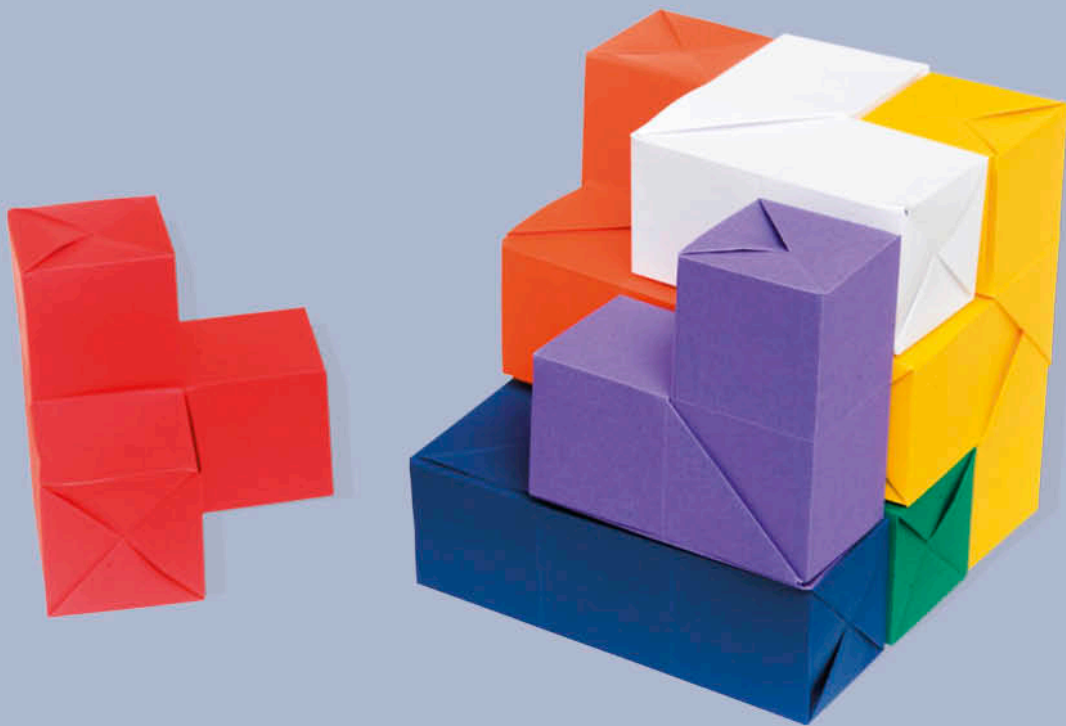


# Getting Started Guide



**GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies B**

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**Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Religious Studies B**

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# 1. Introduction

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This Getting Started guide provides an overview of the new GCSE Religious Studies B Beliefs in Action specification, to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment and to help you understand what these mean for you and your students.

We will be providing a package of support to help you plan and implement the new specification.

- Planning: In addition to the section in this guide, we are providing course planners and schemes of work that you can adapt to suit your department
- Additional specimen papers for some of the religions and options so that you can have extra papers to use with students in preparing for the exams
- Student exemplar answers with examiner commentary.

These support documents will be available on the GCSE 2016 Religious Studies Specification B page of the Pearson qualifications website.

## 2. What's changed?

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### 2.1 What are the changes to the GCSE qualification?

GCSE Religious Studies specifications are changing for first assessment 2018: these changes therefore apply to all two-year courses from 2016 and three-year courses from 2015.

- There will be a new 9-1 grading system, with 9 being the top level (see page 23).
- There will be no coursework or controlled assessment components: all assessment, as now, will be through external examinations.
- There will be a fully linear structure, with all exams sat at the end of the course.
- GCSE Religious Studies qualifications will be untiered. There will be tiers in only a small number of subjects, such as Maths.

#### Changes to GCSE Religious Studies content requirements

The content requirements for GCSE Religious Studies have been revised by the DfE. All awarding organisations' specifications for GCSE Religious Studies must meet these criteria.

The key points from the content requirements are:

- Students must now study **two** religions from a choice of Buddhism, Christianity or Catholic Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism; previously schools could follow a single faith route.
- The subject criteria now contain more content and details of Areas of Study for each religion.
- Specific philosophical, ethical and religious themes have been introduced.
- The subject criteria have been split into two parts (A & B) to allow specifications to be designed with two different approaches
  - One allows a 75/25 split between 2 religions
  - One allows a 50/50 split between 2 religions

This Getting Started guide is for Specification B which has the 50%/50% split. (For details of Specification A which has the 75%/25% split, please see the separate Getting Started Guide for Specification A.)

#### Changes to Assessment Objectives

The GCSE Religious Studies Assessment Objectives have also been revised.

<b>AO1</b> 50%	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• beliefs, practices and sources of authority</li> <li>• influence on individuals, communities and societies</li> <li>• similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs</li> </ul>
<b>AO2</b> 50%	Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence

**Timeline and league table points**

<b>Specification</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Current specification</b>	Summer series as normal	Last assessment	
<b>NEW 2016 specifications</b>	First teaching of two-year course		First assessment for full course

The last available assessment of the current Religious Studies GCSEs will be June 2017. Only the reformed GCSEs will be reported in the 2018 performance tables. Therefore, it is possible to enter Year 10 students for the 2017 summer series of the current GCSE, but the results for this Year 10 cohort will not count in the school's 2018 performance tables.

## 2.2 Changes to the Edexcel specification

### Two different GCSE Religious Studies specifications

As the new content requirements now allow awarding bodies to develop two separate qualifications to meet the needs of all schools, from 2016 we are offering two separate Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies specifications. This guide is all about the Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies Specification B which allows you to have equal focus on two religions (50% on each).

### Specified religions

The DfE requirements state that **two** of the following religions must be studied:

- Catholic Christianity **OR** Christianity
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Judaism
- Hinduism
- Sikhism

For Specification B (see table below), it is possible to study any combination of the religions above – one for each paper choice – except both Catholic Christianity and Christianity.

Entry codes for each paper and religion will be made available in the Information Manual. It is crucial that exams officers use the correct codes to ensure the right exam papers are received.

### GCSE Religious Studies Specification B Full Course overview

The GCSE Religious Studies Specification B builds on approaches from previous specifications, allowing students to study two religions, integrated with the key philosophical and ethical issues facing the local, national and international community. This specification allows beliefs, teachings and practices of two religions to be brought to life as well as exploring different viewpoints within religions.

- There are three papers – students study **two** of these three papers.
- All seven religions are offered for each paper. Students study one religion per paper.

Paper 1: Area of Study 1 Religion and Ethics	50%	<p><b>Paper 1: Religion and Ethics</b></p> <p>Four compulsory content areas based on the chosen religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beliefs</li> <li>• Marriage and the Family</li> <li>• Living the Religious Life</li> <li>• Matters of Life and Death</li> </ul>
Paper 2: Area of Study 2	50%	<p><b>Paper 2: Peace and Conflict</b></p> <p>Four compulsory content areas based on the chosen</p>

Peace and Conflict		religion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beliefs</li> <li>● Crime and Punishment</li> <li>● Living the Religious Life</li> <li>● Peace and Conflict</li> </ul>
Paper 3: Area of Study 3 Religion and Philosophy	50%	<b>Paper 3: Religion, Philosophy and Social Justice</b> Four compulsory content areas based on the chosen religion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beliefs</li> <li>● Religious Experience</li> <li>● Living the Religious Life</li> <li>● Equality</li> </ul>

### Constructing a coherent course

For GCSE Religious Studies Specification B, all seven religions are available in each of the three papers offered. It is possible to 'mix and match' any paper and religion although it is NOT permissible to take Christianity and Catholic Christianity together as they do not count as two separate religions. For example, one possible combination is Paper 1: Religion and Ethics with Christianity *and* Paper 2: Peace and Conflict with Islam.

Some examples of how to plan the course can be found in Section 3 of this guide, as well as a wide selection of planners and schemes of work available on the website.

### Changes to specification content

The DfE published the content for GCSE Religious Studies which can be found on their website. The areas of content for each religion are listed here and can be found in the specifications.

The overview table below indicates areas of broad content overlap between the 2009/2012 Edexcel GCSE specification and the new 2016 specification. However it should be noted that the new subject content defined by the DfE is significantly more detailed, so it is crucial that the detailed content in the specification is read carefully to ensure the new content is covered in the correct depth.

2009/2012 Edexcel GCSE Specification	2016 Edexcel GCSE Specification
<i>Students take TWO of the following units</i>	<i>Students take TWO of three papers</i>
<b>Unit 1: Religion and Life Based on a Study of Christianity and at least one other religion</b>	<b>Paper 1: Religion and Ethics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beliefs</li> <li>● Marriage and the family</li> <li>● Living the religious life</li> <li>● Matters of life and death</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 2-7: Religion and Life Based on a study of Christianity/Roman Catholic Christianity/Islam/Judaism/Hinduism/Sikhism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Believing in God</li> <li>● Matters of life and death</li> <li>● Marriage and the family</li> <li>● Religion and community cohesion</li> </ul>	
<b>Unit 8: Religion and Society based on a study of Christianity and at least one other religion</b> This unit covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rights and responsibilities</li> <li>● Environmental and medical issues</li> <li>● Peace and conflict</li> <li>● Crime and punishment</li> </ul>	<b>Paper 2: Peace and Conflict</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beliefs</li> <li>● Crime and punishment</li> <li>● Living the religious life</li> <li>● Peace and conflict</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 9-15: Christianity/Roman Catholic Christianity/Islam/Judaism/Hinduism/Sikhism</b> All these units cover the four topics of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beliefs and values</li> <li>● Community and tradition</li> <li>● Worship and celebration</li> <li>● Living the religious life</li> </ul>	<b>Paper 3: Religion, Philosophy and Social Justice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beliefs</li> <li>● Religious experience</li> <li>● Living the religious life</li> <li>● Equality</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 16: Mark's Gospel</b> This unit covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discipleship</li> <li>● Conflict and argument</li> <li>● Death and resurrection</li> <li>● The identity of Jesus</li> </ul>	There is no direct overlap in content with this unit in Specification B, but all of the new papers contain references to sources of wisdom and authority. Mark's Gospel is an option in Specification A Paper 4.



## 3. Planning

### 3.1 Planning and delivering a linear course

The new GCSE Religious Studies Specification B full course is linear which means that all papers must be sat at the end of the course.

There are a number of ways to deliver the course and some options are laid out below in 3.3. These models, along with the planners on the website, are designed for centres to adapt to their own circumstances and teaching methods.

Some centres choose to start the GCSE course in Year 9. This still remains a valid option and there are a variety of 3-year planners on the website to help the delivery of the course over both 2 and 3 years.

As stated in Section 1 of this guide, the first assessment for the new GCSE will be in 2018. The last assessment for the current (2012) GCSE is summer 2017. The results from the last assessment in June 2017 will appear in the 2017 performance tables. The new full course GCSEs will count in the 2018 tables.

### 3.2 Delivery models for the full course

The top-level tables below suggest ways of splitting the content over either 2 years or 3 years and how much to cover in each week. There are a number of course planners available on the website which provide more detail. Note that the suggested weeks available are likely to vary year on year due to Easter and other religious holidays.

#### Example 2-year plan for GCSE RS Specification B

This example takes the same integrated approach as the course planners on the website, with one section of each paper taught one after the other – so that students learn about both religions each term. For a 2-year course taking this approach, it is suggested that one bullet point in each section is covered per week.

*Note that this example plan is for Paper 1 and Paper 2 but can easily be adapted for any choice of paper combinations.*

Term	Weeks (approx.)	Proposed content coverage
<b>Year 10</b>		
<b>Autumn Term 1</b>	7 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 1</b> Content bullet points 1-7
<b>Autumn Term 2</b>	7 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 1</b> Content bullet point 8 <b>Paper 2: Section 1</b> Content bullet points 1-6
<b>Spring Term 1</b>	6 weeks	<b>Paper 2; Section 1</b> Content bullet points 7-8 <b>Paper 1: Section 2</b> Content bullet points 1-4
<b>Spring Term 2</b>	6 weeks (dependent on Easter)	<b>Paper 1: Section 2</b> Content bullet points 5-8 <b>Paper 2: Section 2</b> Content bullet points 1-2

<b>Summer Term 1</b>	6 weeks	<b>Paper 2: Section 2</b> Content bullet points 3-8
<b>Summer Term 2</b>	6 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 3</b> Content bullet points 1-6
Year 11		
<b>Autumn Term 1</b>	7 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 3</b> Content bullet points 7-8 <b>Paper 2: Section 3</b> Content bullet points 1-5
<b>Autumn Term 2</b>	7 weeks	<b>Paper 2: Section 3</b> Content bullet points 6-8 <b>Paper 1: Section 4</b> Content bullet points 1-4
<b>Spring Term 1</b>	7 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 4</b> Content bullet points 5-8 <b>Paper 2: Section 4</b> Content bullet points 1-3
<b>Spring Term 2</b>	6 weeks (dependent on Easter)	<b>Paper 2: Section 4</b> Content bullet points 4-8 Start revision
<b>Summer Term 1</b>	6 weeks	Revision
<b>Summer Term 2</b>		Examinations

An alternative approach would be to teach one paper/religion per year, starting the second paper in the summer term of Year 10 to allow sufficient time for revision in Year 11.

Autumn term	<b>Paper 1</b> Section 1 bullet points 1-8 <b>Paper 1</b> Section 2 bullet points 1-6
Spring term	<b>Paper 1</b> Section 2 bullet points 7-8 <b>Paper 1</b> Section 3 bullet points 1-8 <b>Paper 1</b> Section 4 bullet points 1-2
Summer term	<b>Paper 1</b> Section 4 bullet points 3-8 <b>Paper 2</b> Section 1 bullet points 1-6
Autumn term	<b>Paper 2</b> Section 1 bullet points 7-8 <b>Paper 2</b> Section 2 bullet points 1-8 <b>Paper 2</b> Section 3 bullet points 1-4
Spring term	<b>Paper 2</b> Section 3 bullet points 5-8 <b>Paper 2</b> Section 4 bullet points 1-8
Summer term	Revision and examinations

**Example 3-year plan for GCSE RS Specification B**

This example takes the same integrated approach as the course planners on the website, with one section of each paper taught one after the other. For a 3-year course following this approach, it is suggested that each bullet point is covered in 1.5 weeks, so that each section is covered in 12 weeks. This means one section is taught per term, with two additional weeks in the autumn term that can be used for an introduction in Year 9 and a recap in Years 10 and 11. Note that this example plan is for Paper 1 and Paper 2 but can easily be adapted for any choice of paper combinations.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Approximate number of weeks</b>	<b>Proposed content coverage</b>
<b>Year 9</b>		
<b>Autumn Term</b>	14 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 1</b>
<b>Spring Term</b>	12 weeks	<b>Paper 2: Section 1</b>
<b>Summer Term</b>	12 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 2</b>
<b>Year 10</b>		
<b>Autumn Term</b>	14 weeks	<b>Paper 2: Section 2</b>
<b>Spring Term</b>	12 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 3</b>
<b>Summer Term 2</b>	12 weeks	<b>Paper 2 Section 3</b>
<b>Year 11</b>		
<b>Autumn Term</b>	14 weeks	<b>Paper 1: Section 4</b>
<b>Spring Term</b>	12 weeks	<b>Paper 2: Section 4</b>
<b>Summer Term</b>	6 weeks	Revision and examinations

## 4. Assessment guidance

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### 4.1 Assessment overview

Students sit two papers, each worth 50% of the qualification. Both exams are 1 hour 45 mins and worth 102 marks.

All papers follow the same pattern of question types. Each paper has one question on each area of specification content: in the full course, students answer four questions in each paper.

#### Full course structure for all papers

Question	Marks	Assessment objective
1(a)	3	AO1
1(b)	4	AO1
1(c)	5	AO1
1(d)	12 + 3 SPaG	AO2
2(a)	3	AO1
2(b)	4	AO1
2(c)	5	AO1
2(d)	12	AO2
3(a)	3	AO1
3(b)	4	AO1
3(c)	5	AO1
3(d)	12 + 3 SPaG	AO2
4(a)	3	AO1
4(b)	4	AO1
4(c)	5	AO1
4(d)	12	AO2

## 4.2. Part (a) questions

Part (a) is worth 3 marks. It assesses AO1 and tests knowledge of religion or belief by recalling factual information.

Part (a) questions will follow one of two formats:

- Outline three...
- State three...

### Part (a) 'Outline' questions

These questions will ask students to outline three different elements; these could be features, elements, beliefs, responses, teachings etc.

The command word 'Outline' requires students to provide knowledge of religion and belief by recalling factual information. Therefore, for this response, students are required to write three sentences to outline the pieces of information required by the question. They are not required to add any extra detail such as development, description or added examples or quotations.

These questions will be marked using a points-based mark scheme. The one below is for Paper 1: Christianity, Q2(a) in response to the question:

#### ***Outline three Christian beliefs about marriage***

All of the 'Outline' questions for the full course will follow a very similar pattern.

There is always a clear instruction about how marks should be awarded. These can also be used to advise students that they need three separate and different points.

The mark scheme will always state how many marks are awarded for each AO.

Question number	Answer	
2(a)	<p>AO1 3 marks</p> <p>Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marriage is a sacrament which blesses the union of two people (1)</li> <li>• Marriage is the proper place to have sex (1)</li> <li>• Marriage is a demonstration of love and commitment (1)</li> <li>• Marriage is the place to have and raise Christian children (1)</li> </ul> <p>Accept any other valid responses</p>	3

The mark scheme will provide more than 3 possible responses and instruct that any other valid responses should be accepted.

### Part (a) 'State' questions

These part (a) questions require students to recognise other religious traditions in Great Britain. The command word 'State' also requires students to provide knowledge of religion and belief by recalling factual information. Therefore, for this response, students will be required to state three different religions, other than the one they have studied, in Great Britain. As with the 'Outline' questions, they are not required to provide any extra detail.

These questions will be marked using a points-based mark scheme. The one below is for Paper 1: Catholic Christianity, Q1(a) in response to the question:

***State three religious traditions, other than Christianity, in Great Britain***

All of the 'State' questions for the full course will follow a very similar pattern.

Question number	Answer	Mark
1(a)	AO1 3 marks Award one mark for each point identified up to a maximum of three. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Judaism (1)</li> <li>● Islam (1)</li> <li>● Buddhism (1)</li> <li>● Sikhism (1)</li> <li>● Hinduism (1)</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>

Again there is an instruction as to how marks should be awarded, which can also be used to advise students that they need three separate and different religions to gain all three marks. Note here that the acceptable responses are the main religions of Great Britain.

### 4.3 Part (b) questions

Part (b) is worth 4 marks. It assesses AO1 and tests knowledge of religion or belief by recalling factual information.

They will follow one of two formats:

- Explain two...
- Describe two...

#### Part (b) 'Explain' questions

These questions will ask students to explain two elements. These could be ways, reasons etc.

The command word 'Explain' requires students to provide knowledge of religion and belief and develop this beyond a habitual response. Therefore, for this response, students are required to give two reasons and then demonstrate a higher level of understanding by developing this reason. The development must address the question and link clearly with the reason given, supplying more information about the question asked. Students need to give one reason and develop this reason and then give a second, different reason and develop this in a different way from the first reason.

These questions will be marked using a points-based mark scheme. The one below is for Paper 2: Islam, Q1(b) in response to the question:

***Explain two reasons the five roots of 'Usul ad-Din' are important for Shi'a Muslims***

All of the 'Explain' questions for the full course will follow a very similar pattern.

The marking instruction indicates that students need to give two reasons and develop both reasons to gain the marks.

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
1(b)	<p>AO1 4 marks</p> <p>Award one mark for providing a reason. Award a second mark for development of the reason. Up to a maximum of four marks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are the five principles of faith (1) they show a person what they must believe to be a Muslim</li> <li>• They come from the teachings of the Qur'an (1) for example Surah 112 says "He Allah is one"</li> <li>• They are the beliefs that Muslims must hold if their practices are to be correct (1) they ensure that the practices that they teach are the correct ones (1)</li> </ul> <p>Accept any other valid response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated reason/judgement</li> <li>• Reject development that does not relate both to the reason given and to the question</li> </ul>	4

This column has instructions to reject repeated reasons or developments, or developments not linked to both the reason and the question.

The bullets here are split into two. The first part exemplifies reasons students might give in response to the question. The second part of the bullet is the development students may provide to support the reason.

**Part (b) 'Describe' questions**

One of the DfE content requirements is that students study one chosen religion within the context of the wider British society whose religious traditions are, in the main, Christian.

This means that, in some part (b) questions, students will need to compare and contrast two areas of belief and practice within other religions with those areas in Christianity. The two areas of content where this is a requirement are marked with asterisks (\*) in the specification.

These questions will ask students to describe two differences between the religion the paper is assessing and the main religious tradition of Great Britain. On the

Christianity papers, this question will ask students to describe two differences between Christianity and another religion they have studied.

The command word 'Describe' requires students to provide an understanding of religion and belief and contrast with that of another. Therefore, for this response, students are required to give two relevant beliefs/practices from the religion the paper is assessing and then two contrasting descriptions from a Christian tradition.

The development must address the question and contrast clearly with the belief or practice identified in the first part of the response, supplying more information about the question asked. Students need to describe one belief/practice and contrast this belief/practice from the other religion and then give a second, different belief/practice and contrast this in a different way from the first description.

These questions will be marked using a points-based mark scheme. The one below is for Paper 1: Islam, Q3(b) in response to the question:

***Describe two differences in forms of worship between Islam and other forms of the main religious tradition of Great Britain***

All of the 'Describe' questions for the full course will follow a very similar pattern.

Question number	Answer	Reject	Mark
3(b)	<p>AO1 4 marks</p> <p>Students are required to recognise that Christianity is the main religious tradition of Great Britain</p> <p>Award one mark for describing a relevant Christian belief/practice</p> <p>Award a second mark for a contrasting description from the named religion. Up to a maximum of four marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muslims must wash before worship (1) Christians are not commanded to prepare for worship by washing (1)</li> <li>• Muslims have prescribed times for worship (1) Christians can generally choose their own times for communal worship (1)</li> <li>• Muslims worship facing Makkah (1) whereas in most Christian Churches worshippers face East (1)</li> </ul> <p>Accept any other valid response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated reason/judgement</li> <li>• Reject development that does not relate both to the reason given and to the question</li> </ul>	<b>4</b>

The mark scheme indicates that students need to recognise that Christianity is the main religious belief and that they need to give two relevant beliefs/practices with two contrasting Christian traditions.

The bullets here are split into two: the first part exemplifies Islamic belief/practice. The second part of the bullet is the contrasting Christian tradition.



### 4.4 Part (c) questions

Part (c) questions are worth 4 marks. They assess AO1 and test knowledge of religion or belief by recalling factual information. They will follow the same format:

- Explain two... In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Note that the part (c) questions are similar to the (b) Explain questions, but also ask students to refer to a source of wisdom and authority in their response. The sources of wisdom provided in the specification and in the support materials are listed to assist teachers and give ideas for relevant passages and sources. Other relevant sources will also be accepted as valid responses.

#### 'Explain' for part (c) questions

These questions are worth 5 marks and will ask students to explain two elements. These could be ways, reasons, teachings etc. The command word 'Explain' for part (c) questions requires students to provide knowledge of religion and belief and develop this beyond a habitual response as well as reference to one source of wisdom and authority. Therefore, for this response, students are required to give two reasons and then demonstrate a higher level of understanding by developing this reason. The development must address the question and link clearly with the reason given, supplying more information about the question asked. Students need to give one reason and develop this reason and then give a second, different reason and develop this in a different way to the first reason.

These questions will be marked using a points-based mark scheme. The one below is for Paper 2: Judaism, Q1(c) in response to the question:

***Explain two reasons it is important for Jews to keep all the Mitzvot***

All of the 'Explain' questions for the full course will follow a very similar pattern.

The bullets are split into three. The first part exemplifies reasons students might give in response to the question. The second part is development students may provide to support the reason. The third part is the source of wisdom and authority which the student may use.

The marking instructions indicate that students need to give two reasons and develop both reasons to gain the marks and how to integrate a source of wisdom and authority into their response.

Question number	Answer	Mark
1(c)	<p>AO1 5 marks</p> <p>Award one mark for each reason/belief. Award further marks for each development of the reason/belief up to a maximum of four marks. Award one further mark for any relevant source of wisdom or authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are given to the Jewish people by the Almighty (1) commands which have been provided as a way of life so they are righteous(1) as explained in the laws about marriage in the Mishneh Torah Ishut 24 (1)</li> <li>• Keeping the 613 Mitzvot in the Torah is part of the Jewish peoples the covenant with Almighty, (1) therefore it shows their devotion to him (1) as shown in the covenant with Moses in Exodus 20 (1)</li> <li>• Many of the Mitzvot help people in their relationship with</li> </ul>	

	<p>one another (1) or with their relationship with the Almighty and are therefore of utmost importance (1) as seen in Exodus 20: 12 which explains how Jews should treat their parents (1)</p> <p>Accept any other valid response</p>	5
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Note that for the source of wisdom and authority, the indicative content provides an accurate quotation/reference but there is no expectation that students will learn quotations or exact references to include in their response. Students need to state a source but can paraphrase and/or make textual references to this source. Each bullet of indicative content has a relevant source of wisdom and authority but students are only expected to provide one source in their response.

The mark scheme instructs that any other valid response should be accepted. Therefore, students can be taught other relevant sources of wisdom and authority to exemplify key religious teachings or beliefs.

#### 4.5 Part (d) questions

Part (d) questions are worth 12 marks. They assess AO2 and test students' ability to analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence. Note that Questions 1(d) and 3(d) on each paper are out of 15: 12 marks are awarded for the response with a further 3 marks awarded for SPaG (see Section 4.6 below for more details on SPaG).

They will follow a similar format and will ask students to:

- Evaluate a statement, considering arguments for and against.

The question will then have some supporting bullets to direct students' responses to the question. These bullets will always ask students to refer to religious teachings and reach a justified conclusion, but, depending on the content, could ask students to refer to

- different [assessed religion] points of view
- non-religious points of view
- relevant philosophical arguments
- relevant ethical arguments

Each of the content bullet points in the specification clearly states when each of these elements needs to be covered.

#### Evaluate part (d) questions

These questions ask students to evaluate a statement.

The command word 'evaluate' requires students to interpret a given stimulus to consider different viewpoints and perspectives relating to the importance of significance of a particular aspect of a religion or belief. Students will also be required to deconstruct the information or issue at hand, by constructing logical chains of reasoning and making connections between the elements of the question. Arguments must be justified by the appraisal of evidence leading to a supported conclusion. Therefore, for this response, students are required to read the question carefully and evaluate the statement with arguments for and against, with reference to the stated bullets. They must also reach a conclusion.

These questions will be marked using a levels-based mark scheme. The one below is for Paper 3: Christianity, Q2(d) in response to the question:

***"Religious experiences show that God exists"***

***Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your response you should:***

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

For levels-based mark schemes, the indicative content is provided first, followed by the levels.

**Indicative content**

Question number	Answer	Mark
2(d)	<p>AO2 12 marks</p> <p>Candidates must underpin their analysis and evaluation with knowledge and understanding. Candidates will be required to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding as well as accuracy of religion and belief when responding to the question and in meeting AO2 descriptors.</p> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <p><b>Arguments for the statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God spoke to Moses when he revealed the commandments on Sinai; this experience confirmed Moses' faith in God as lawgiver; he was then able to strengthen the faith of the Israelites by recounting this experience</li> <li>• St Paul encountered God on the road to Damascus; this experience was powerful enough to bring about his conversion to Christianity; would-be converts to Christianity were inspired by his conversion to believe and seek baptism</li> <li>• The Catholic Church teaches that people can be brought to belief in God by a sense of awe at God's power; some have said that they were aware of the presence of God when viewing the beauty of creation, and this has been sufficient to give them faith</li> </ul> <p><b>Arguments against the statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many non-believers argue that religious experiences are akin to psychological illness; they say it is impossible to prove that the experience is real; they therefore conclude that no religious experience can count as proof of the existence of God</li> <li>• Some point out that religious experiences most often come to those who already believe; they argue that such people are already disposed to believe even when the evidence is weak; therefore, their testimony is unreliable</li> <li>• Most religious experiences are personal; some argue that such an experience could cause a conversion or increase in faith for that person; however, the experience of others is not sufficient to convert those who only hear accounts of that experience</li> </ul> <p>Accept any other valid responses.</p> <p>Candidates who do not consider different viewpoints within the religious tradition or non-religious viewpoints (as instructed in the question) cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2.</p>	12

The marking instructions indicate that students need to analyse and evaluate, but also that they must use accurate religious knowledge to underpin their evaluation. The indicative content is split into two sections: examples of the arguments students may give *for* the statement and examples of the arguments students may give *against* the statement.

Note that students who do not discuss different viewpoints or non-religious viewpoints (as instructed in the question) cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2. Therefore, students should be advised to read the question and the bullet points very carefully before they begin their response.

### Levels

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable response
Level 1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information/issues are identified and make superficial connections among a limited range of elements in the question, underpinned by isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief [including any relevant philosophical and/or ethical arguments].</li> <li>Judgements are supported by generic arguments to produce a conclusion that is not fully justified.</li> </ul>
Level 2	4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superficial connections are made among many, but not all, of the elements in the question, underpinned by a limited understanding of religion and belief [including any relevant philosophical and/or ethical arguments].</li> <li>Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made. Judgements are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence, much of which may be superficial, leading to a conclusion that is not fully justified.</li> </ul>
Level 3	7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints. These are underpinned by an accurate understanding of religion and belief [including any relevant philosophical and/or ethical arguments]. Connections are made among many, but not all, of the elements in the question.</li> <li>Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many, but not all, of the elements in the question. Judgements are supported by the appraisal of evidence, some of which may be superficial, leading to a partially justified conclusion.</li> </ul>
Level 4	10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critically deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints. These are underpinned by a sustained, accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief [including any relevant philosophical and/or ethical arguments]. Connections are made among the full range of elements in the question.</li> <li>Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question. Judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence, leading to a fully justified conclusion.</li> </ul>

- The first green bullet focuses on the chains of reasoning and the consideration of the different viewpoints of the question. It also assesses the students' understanding of religion and belief.
- The second blue bullet focuses on the use of evidence and use of reasoned judgements in relation to the question as well as the quality of the conclusion.

- The green and blue bullets shown above are in all part (d) mark schemes. In mark schemes for questions which require students to refer to relevant philosophical and/ethical arguments, the text in red is also assessed.

## 4.6 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

As with previous GCSE RS specifications, there is a requirement for all awarding bodies to assess students' use of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology. This contributes a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting of each paper.

The marks are allocated as follows:

### Full course

- Papers 1-3: 3 marks for Q1(d) and Q3(d) – 6 marks in total for the paper  
This is assessed via the grid shown below.

Marks		Descriptor
0	No marks awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate writes nothing</li> <li>The candidate's response does not relate to the question</li> <li>The candidate's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example, errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning</li> </ul>
1 mark	Threshold performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy</li> <li>Candidates use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall</li> <li>Candidates use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> </ul>
2 marks	Intermediate performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy</li> <li>Candidates use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall</li> <li>Candidates use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> </ul>
3 marks	High performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy</li> <li>Candidates use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall</li> <li>Candidates use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> </ul>

## 5. 9–1 grading

Ofqual has provided the following information about the new 9–1 grading:

- 1 is the lowest, anchored to grade G: 'The bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G.'
- 7 will be anchored to grade A: 'Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve an A and above.'
- 9 is the highest, for the top 3% or so: 'For each examination, the top 20 per cent of those who get grade 7 or above will get a grade 9 – the very highest performers.'
- 4 will be anchored to grade C: 'Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above.'
- 5 will be set between C and B: 'Grade 5 will be positioned in the top third of the marks for a current Grade C and bottom third of the marks for a current Grade B.'
- The diagram below provides a visual representation of this information.

