

---

# GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

(8063)

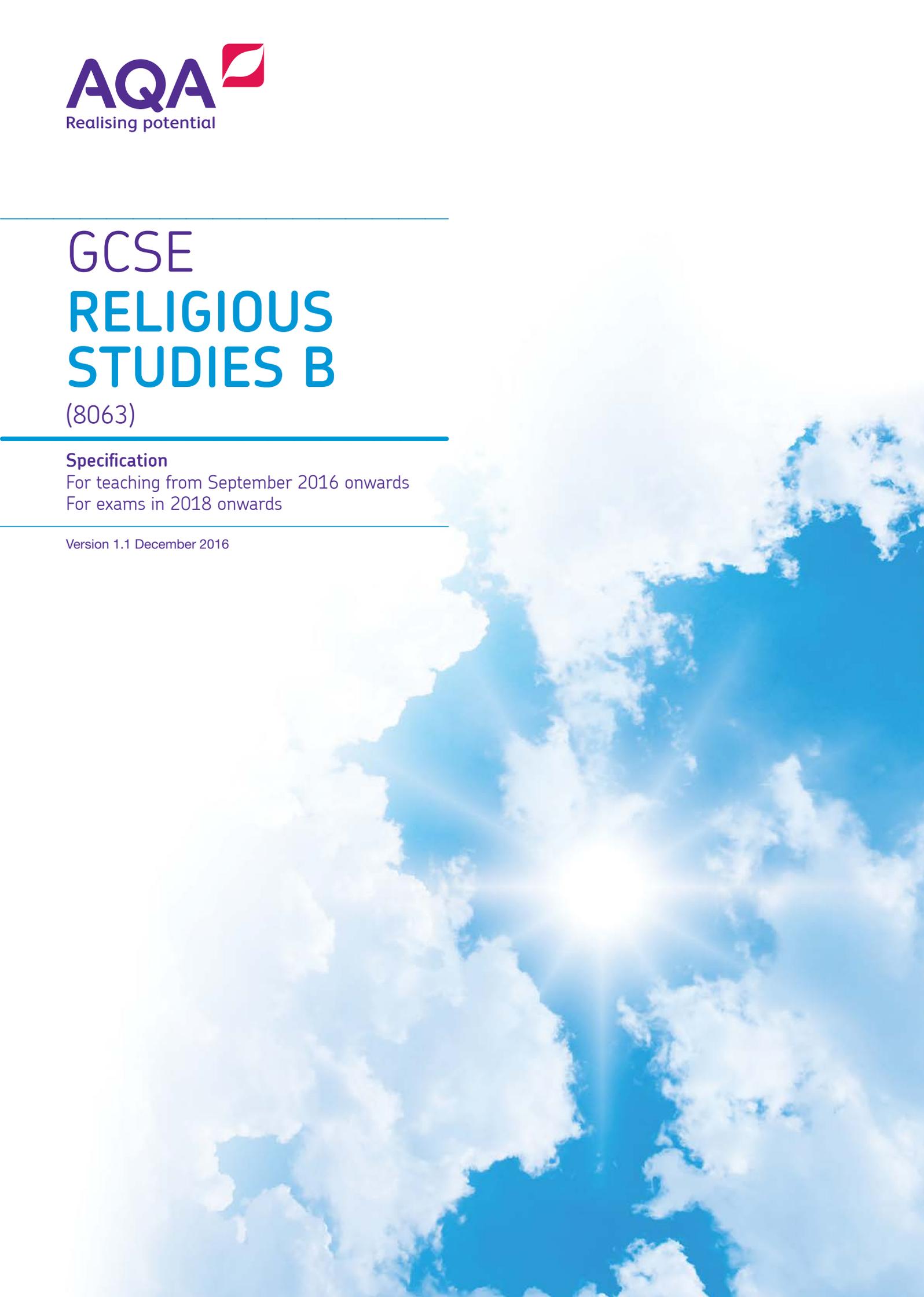
---

**Specification**

For teaching from September 2016 onwards  
For exams in 2018 onwards

---

Version 1.1 December 2016



# Contents

---

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	Why choose AQA for GCSE Religious Studies B	5
1.2	Support and resources to help you teach	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Specification at a glance</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1	Subject content	8
2.2	Assessments	8
<b>3</b>	<b>Subject content</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1	Component 1: Catholic Christianity	10
3.2	Component 2: Perspectives on faith	16
<b>4</b>	<b>Scheme of assessment</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1	Aims and learning outcomes	26
4.2	Assessment objectives	27
4.3	Assessment weightings	27
4.4	Assessment structure	27
4.5	Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)	29
<b>5</b>	<b>General administration</b>	<b>30</b>
5.1	Entries and codes	30
5.2	Overlaps with other qualifications	30
5.3	Awarding grades and reporting results	30
5.4	Re-sits and shelf life	31
5.5	Previous learning and prerequisites	31
5.6	Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion	31
5.7	Working with AQA for the first time	31
5.8	Private candidates	32

---

## Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at [aqa.org.uk/8063](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8063)
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to this specification.

# 1 Introduction

---

## 1.1 Why choose AQA for GCSE Religious Studies B

Our GCSE enables you to focus in depth on the Catholic faith, by looking at beliefs, teachings, practices, sources of authority and forms of expression within Catholic Christianity.

Students will broaden their understanding of religion by studying the beliefs and practices of another major world faith – either Islam or Judaism.

There's also the choice of either studying contemporary ethical issues through Catholic and other religious and non-religious perspectives, or engaging with scripture in depth through the study of St Mark's gospel.

This specification will not only help students understand theological concepts and religious doctrines, but it will also promote and equip students with valuable skills for their future development, such as analytical and critical thinking, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills.

Highlights include:

- experienced subject experts and teachers helped us create a clear and straightforward approach to assessment
- question papers will enable students of all abilities to show what they know.

You can find out all about our Religious Studies B qualification at [aqa.org.uk/religious-studies](https://aqa.org.uk/religious-studies)

## 1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

### Teaching resources

Visit [aqa.org.uk/8063](https://aqa.org.uk/8063) to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- schemes of work
- specimen questions and marked exemplars
- resources listed for each of the religions
- step by step guidance for assessment
- guidance to new content
- training courses to help you deliver AQA GCSE Religious Studies B
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly-qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

### Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/8063](https://aqa.org.uk/8063) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- specimen papers and mark schemes for new courses
- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
- exemplar student answers with examiner commentaries.

---

## Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at [aqa.org.uk/era](https://aqa.org.uk/era)

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit [aqa.org.uk/results](https://aqa.org.uk/results)

## Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at [coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk](https://coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk)

## Get help and support

---

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/8063](https://aqa.org.uk/8063)

You can talk directly to the religious studies subject team

E: [religiousstudies@aqa.org.uk](mailto:religiousstudies@aqa.org.uk)

T: 0161 957 3881

---

# 2 Specification at a glance

---

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

## 2.1 Subject content

1. [Catholic Christianity](#) (page 10)
2. [Perspectives on faith](#) (page 16)

## 2.2 Assessments

There are two routes through this specification. Students should enter either Route A or Route B. Component 1 is common to both routes.

In Route A Component 2A requires students to answer questions on either Islam or Judaism, plus two religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes (chosen from Themes A–C).

In Route B Component 2B requires students to answer questions on either Islam or Judaism, plus both textual studies themes (Themes D–E).

Component 1: Catholic Christianity	+ Component 2: Perspectives on faith
<p><b>What's assessed</b></p> <p>Catholic beliefs, teachings, practices, sources of authority and forms of expression in relation to six topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation</li> <li>• incarnation</li> <li>• the Triune God</li> <li>• redemption</li> <li>• church</li> <li>• eschatology.</li> </ul>	<p><b>What's assessed</b></p> <p>One religion chosen from either Islam or Judaism</p> <p><b>and either</b></p> <p>two religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes chosen from:</p> <p>Theme A: Religion, relationships and families</p> <p>Theme B: Religion, peace and conflict</p> <p>Theme C: Religion, human rights and social justice.</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>two textual studies themes:</p> <p>Theme D: St Mark's Gospel – the life of Jesus</p> <p>Theme E: St Mark's Gospel as a source of spiritual truth.</p>
<p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes</li> <li>• 96 marks (plus 5 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar)</li> <li>• 50 % of GCSE</li> </ul>	<p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes</li> <li>• 96 marks (plus 5 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar)</li> <li>• 50 % of GCSE</li> </ul>
<p><b>Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In each exam series, questions will be set on any four of the topics listed above.</li> <li>• Students must answer all the questions.</li> <li>• Each topic is marked out of 24 marks.</li> <li>• There will be one five-part question per topic of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks.</li> <li>• The 12 mark questions will require extended writing and test analysis and evaluation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Questions</b></p> <p><b>Section A: Islam or Judaism</b></p> <p>Students must answer questions on one religion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islam</li> <li>• Judaism.</li> </ul> <p>There will be two five-part questions per religion.</p> <p><b>Section B: Themes</b></p> <p>Students must answer questions on two themes.</p> <p>One question will be set on each theme. There will be five parts to each question.</p> <p>In both Section A and B:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each five-part question will be marked out of 24</li> <li>• each group of five questions will follow the same structure of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks</li> <li>• the 12 mark questions will require extended writing and test analysis and evaluation.</li> </ul>

# 3 Subject content

This specification covers the content laid down by the Department for Education (DfE) subject content for GCSE Religious Studies.

Students are required to study different faiths and non-religious beliefs in contemporary British society. They should be aware that religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, and that the religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse. They include Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the subject content.

Where quotations from the Bible are used in the exam paper they will be taken from the *New Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition*.

## 3.1 Component 1: Catholic Christianity

This component covers the content laid down by DfE for study of religions: Catholic Christianity: beliefs and teachings; practices; sources of wisdom and authority, and forms of expression.

Catholic Christianity should be studied in the context of Christianity as a whole, and common and divergent views within Catholic Christianity and, where relevant, Christianity as a whole, should be included throughout. Students should be aware of the influence of Catholic Christianity on individuals, communities and societies.

### 3.1.1 Creation

Students explore the Catholic understanding of creation, particularly the notions of God as creator, humanity as the image of God and the role of humanity as stewards of creation. Students also explore the basis for these beliefs in scripture and their expression both in the visual arts and in the increasing agency of the Church in tackling global concerns about the environment, as well as different Christian understandings of the account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 and the Catholic understanding of the harmony between science and religion. Although the material is set out in separate sections, all parts are linked and students may draw ideas together in any way they wish in response to the set questions.

#### 3.1.1.1 Forms of expression – art

- The meaning and significance of Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*.
- How it reflects Catholic beliefs about God as creator and the creation of humanity in the image of God.
- How its meaning and significance contrasts with one other Christian artistic expression of creation.

#### 3.1.1.2 Beliefs and teachings

- The nature of God expressed in Genesis 1 and 2: God as creator, God as transcendent and omnipotent; the significance of these beliefs for Catholics.
- The meaning and significance of the belief that human beings are made in the image of God.
- The influence of this on Catholic views about: free will, stewardship, the dignity of human beings and the sanctity of life.

### 3.1.1.3 Sources of authority

#### Scripture

- The origin of the Bible, its structure and key literary forms, including law, history and prophecy.
- The meaning and significance of Catholic understanding of inspiration and of the Bible as the revealed Word of God.
- Issues concerning the literary type of the Genesis creation accounts and different Christian understandings of their significance.

#### Tradition

Natural law, including how belief in the goodness of creation leads to Catholic understanding of natural law and how belief in natural law influences Catholic views about the sanctity of life.

#### Magisterium

The influence of the Second Vatican Council on Catholic views of the harmony between science and religion, eg *Gaudium et Spes* 36.

### 3.1.1.4 Practices

- Care for the environment as an expression of the requirement to ‘love our neighbour’ in concrete terms.
- The meaning of stewardship and of different ways in which Catholics might carry out their duty to be stewards at a local national and global level.
- The meaning and significance of CAFOD’s work on sustainability as an expression of Catholic beliefs about the goodness of creation.

## 3.1.2 Incarnation

Students explore the Catholic understanding of incarnation as the revelation of God in the image of humanity. The significance of the example and teaching of Jesus as the authoritative source for moral teaching is considered, alongside the importance of the sacramental nature of reality and expressions of beliefs about Jesus in symbol and statuary. This leads to an examination of different Christian views about images of Jesus. Although the material is set out in separate sections, all parts of the content are linked and students may draw ideas together in any way they wish in response to the set questions.

### 3.1.2.1 Forms of expression – symbol and incarnation

- The religious significance and relevance of the following Christian symbols: Icthus (fish), Alpha and Omega, Chi-Rho.
- How belief in the incarnation has influenced Catholic views about religious art and imagery.
- The meaning and significance for Catholics of one sculpture or statue of Jesus and different Christian views about sculptures, statues or images of Jesus.

### 3.1.2.2 Beliefs and teachings

- The meaning and scriptural origins of the belief in Jesus as the incarnate Son (Luke 1:26–38 and Matthew 1:18–24) and divine Word (John 1:1–4.14).
- Jesus as both fully human and fully God, including the meaning and significance of:
  - Jesus as ‘Son of Man’ (Mark 8:31)
  - Jesus as ‘Son of God’ (Mark 14:61–62).

---

### 3.1.2.3 Sources of authority

#### Scripture

Jesus as the fulfilment of the law, a model of virtues and authoritative source for moral teaching as exemplified in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1 – 12) and in his teaching on how Christians should respond to those in need (Matthew 25:31 – 46).

#### Tradition

The meaning and significance of ‘the glory of God is a human being, fully alive’ from the writings of Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses*, 4,20,7).

#### Magisterium

The similarities and differences in the understanding of the incarnation as presented in *Dei Verbum* 4 and *Verbum Domini* 12.

### 3.1.2.4 Practices

- The meaning and significance of grace and the sacramental nature of reality, including how a belief in the incarnation leads to these beliefs.
- The names of the seven sacraments and Catholic beliefs about their effects on the sanctification of life.
- The meaning and significance of the influence of *imago dei* on Catholic practice in terms of protection of the unborn, with reference to Luke 1:44.

## 3.1.3 The Triune God, mission and prayer

Students consider Catholic understanding of the glory of God and the mystery of the Trinity. Expressions of this belief in music, scripture and tradition are explored along with the authority and influence of the magisterium and the practice of prayer. Although the material is set out in separate sections, all parts of the content are linked and students may draw ideas together in any way they wish in response to the set questions.

### 3.1.3.1 Forms of expression – music and the glory of God

- The use of different styles of music in worship including psalms, plainchant, traditional hymns, contemporary worship songs and their influence.
- Mass settings used in liturgy, their significance and influence.
- Eucharistic acclamations: the Gloria, Alleluia, Sanctus and Mystery of Faith.

### 3.1.3.2 Beliefs and teachings

- One God as a Trinity of persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit as expressed in the Nicene Creed; the scriptural origins of this belief: Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 3:16–17, Galatians 4:6.
- How belief in the Trinity has influenced Christian interpretations of Genesis 1:1–3.
- The significance and influence of belief in the Trinity in Catholic life today, including an understanding of mission and evangelism as a work of the Spirit presented in Benedict XVI’s *Deus Caritas Est* 19.

### 3.1.3.3 Sources of authority

#### Scripture

Christian understanding of God as a Trinity of persons with reference to Mark 1:9–11 and Galatians 4:6–7.

#### Tradition

St Augustine and Catherine LaCugna on the intimacy of God's love; similarities and differences.

#### Magisterium

The meaning and significance of conciliar magisterial authority, including its influence on Catholic doctrine of the Trinity with reference to the Councils of Nicaea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381).

### 3.1.3.4 Practices

- The meaning and significance of Baptism as a sign of initiation and participation in the life of God, Father, Son and Spirit.
- The significance of prayer as a 'raising of the heart and mind to God', including contrasting features of traditional and spontaneous prayers.
- How prayer and posture are linked in Christian worship.

## 3.1.4 Redemption – ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven

Students explore the Paschal mystery of salvation as it is understood in Catholic theology and as it is celebrated and realised in Catholic worship, as well as the Church as the 'Body of Christ' and a redeemed 'People of God'. They will consider the different metaphors used to express the mystery of salvation and the shape, contents and meaning of Church buildings and decoration – specifically those parts of a Church which speak directly about the mystery of salvation as celebrated and made present in the sacrament of the Eucharist. The wonder of redemption is a common theme within Catholic Christianity, but thinkers such as Irenaeus and Anselm emphasise different aspects of the tradition. Although the material is set out in separate sections, all parts of the content are linked and students may draw ideas together in any way they wish in response to the set questions.

### 3.1.4.1 Forms of expression – architecture and design

- How the architecture, design and decoration of Catholic churches reflect Catholic beliefs and facilitate worship.
- How the lectern, altar, crucifix and tabernacle express different aspects of the mystery of redemption and facilitate worship.
- How contrasting architecture and artefacts within a church emphasise different aspects of Catholic belief both for individuals and as a community of believers including table or altar, a plain cross, crucifix or 'risen Christ'.

### 3.1.4.2 Beliefs and teachings

- The death of Jesus understood as restoration through sacrifice; the resurrection understood as restoration through recreation; the ascension understood as restoration of the cosmic order.
- The significance of each event in the story of redemption.
- Contrasting Christian views on 'salvation' (past, present or future) and grace.
- How far the story of redemption has influenced Catholic understanding of the liturgy.

---

### 3.1.4.3 Sources of authority

#### Scripture

Identification and understanding of redemption themes in Mark 15:21–39 and John 20:1–18, Acts 1:6–11 and 2:1–4.

#### Tradition

A comparison of salvation metaphors in Irenaeus and Anselm.

#### Magisterium

The meaning and significance of the conscience as the Voice of God and as a guide for the redeemed with reference to Gaudium et Spes 16 and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Different Christian understandings of the conscience and its value as a guide.

### 3.1.4.4 Practices – Eucharist and redemption

- The Mass as the ‘source and summit’ of Christian life including the meaning and significance of the Eucharist for Catholics and other Christian denominations.
- Understanding how the Words of Institution, the Agnus Dei, the ‘Real Presence’ and ‘the sacrifice of the Mass’ are linked. How belief in the ‘real presence’ influences Eucharistic adoration.

## 3.1.5 Church and the Kingdom of God

Students explore the nature of the Church and its mission to bring about the Kingdom of God as expressed in the Lord’s Prayer. Catholic understanding of the Church as the pilgrim people of God is explored through the study of dramatised prayer and pilgrimage and the meaning of mission through vocation and service.

Although the content is set out in separate sections, all parts are linked and students may draw ideas together in any way they wish in response to the set questions.

### 3.1.5.1 Forms of expression – drama and the faith journey

- How ‘dramatised prayer’, including the Stations of the Cross, reflects Catholic beliefs about the Church as a people of God on a sacred journey of service.
- Pilgrimage as dramatised journey: the meaning and significance of pilgrimage to holy sites including Jerusalem, Rome, Walsingham and Lourdes.
- How Catholic understandings of mission and evangelism are expressed in drama and the influence of such drama.

### 3.1.5.2 Beliefs and teachings

- The meaning and significance of the ‘Reign’ or ‘Kingdom’ of God as expressed in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13).
- Understanding of Catholic teaching on justice, peace and reconciliation as signs of the Kingdom.
- Understanding the hierarchy of the Church and its consultative nature as reflected in the Second Vatican Council, including an outline of the history of the Council, the four key documents and their themes.

### 3.1.5.3 Sources of authority

#### Scripture

The meaning and significance of Mary as model of discipleship in the Church: Luke 1:46–55 the Magnificat as a controversial Kingdom prayer.

#### Tradition

Identification and meaning of the four marks of the Church: one, holy, Catholic and apostolic; how belief in ‘apostolic succession’ leads to a Catholic understanding of the magisterium.

#### Magisterium

- The nature of the magisterium both conciliar and pontifical.
- The role of the magisterium in providing Catholic social teaching in *Gaudium et Spes* 1 and *Evangelii Gaudium* 53–54.

### 3.1.5.4 Practices – Church as Body of Christ

- How the command to love our neighbour in concrete ways is expressed in the works of Catholic agencies, locally, nationally and globally: the work of two agencies should be studied, one working locally, the other working nationally and globally.
- How Kingdom values have influenced the ways in which vocation is understood in Catholicism whether through priesthood, family, religious life or community.
- How belief in justice, peace and reconciliation is expressed in the life of one important Catholic figure.

## 3.1.6 Eschatology: Christian life, death and eternity

Students consider what Catholics believe about life after death and the implications of these beliefs for how Catholics live their lives today.

This includes an exploration of the Paschal candle as an expression of the risen Christ and Michelangelo’s *Last Judgement*, as well as beliefs about life after death, the funeral rites and the implications of beliefs about life and death for Catholic views about euthanasia. Although the material is set out in separate sections, all parts of the content are linked and students may draw ideas together in any way they wish in response to the set questions.

### 3.1.6.1 Forms of expression – artefact and eschatology

- The features and Christian significance of the Paschal candle as an artefact of Resurrection.
- Michelangelo’s *The Last Judgement*; the meaning and significance of its religious themes.
- How different Christian beliefs about life after death are expressed in different forms of memorial expression, eg tombstones, monuments and remembrance gardens.

### 3.1.6.2 Beliefs and teachings

- Catholic beliefs about eschatology and life after death; resurrection, including how the resurrection of Jesus has influenced Christian eschatology with reference to 1 Corinthians. 15:42–44.
- The four last things: death, judgement, heaven and hell.
- Catholic beliefs about purgatory and the difference between particular and final judgement.
- The meaning and significance of different Christian beliefs about life after death.

---

### 3.1.6.3 Sources of authority

#### Scripture

The religious significance of the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31).

#### Tradition

The meaning and significance of the idea of the cosmic reconciliation of all things with reference to Mother Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love 32.

#### Magisterium

The importance of the Second Vatican Council for a Catholic understanding of eschatology, with particular reference to *Lumen Gentium* 48 and Catechism of the Catholic Church 1037.

### 3.1.6.4 Practices – liturgies of life and death

- Identification and understanding of ‘the last rites’ as sacramental expression of reconciliation, healing and hope.
- Understanding and evaluation of the ways in which the prayers and actions of the funeral rite are influenced by Catholic beliefs about life after death.
- Evaluate the influence of ‘the sanctity of life’ on Catholic views about the care of the dying and euthanasia.

## 3.2 Component 2: Perspectives on faith

In Section A of this component, students should study either Islam or Judaism, with a focus on the beliefs, teachings and practices of the religion studied.

In Section B students should study either two religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes (chosen from Themes A–C) or both textual studies themes (Themes D–E).

### 3.2.1 Section A: Islam or Judaism

#### 3.2.1.1 Islam

Students should study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Islam specified below and their basis in Islamic sources of wisdom and authority. They should be able to refer to scripture and other writings where appropriate. Some texts are prescribed for study in the content set out below and questions may be set on them. Students may refer to any relevant text in their answers and AQA will publish a list of appropriate texts as part of the supporting material for this specification. These additional texts will not be required for study, alternatives may be used, and questions will not be set on them.

Students should study the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on individuals, communities and societies.

Common and divergent views within Islam in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout. Students may refer to a range of different Muslim perspectives in their answers, including those from Sunni and Shi’a Islam. They must study the specific differences identified below.

Students should know and understand that Islam is one of the religious traditions in Great Britain today, that religions and beliefs in Great Britain are diverse and include Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism as well as other religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism, and that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian.

Students should identify and explain two teachings common to Christianity and Islam:

- Monotheism.
- God as Creator.

Students should identify different understandings of Jesus as Prophet and Son of God as a topic on which the teachings of Islam and Christianity differ and explain the different perspectives on that topic.

## Beliefs and teachings

### Key beliefs

- The six articles of faith in Sunni Islam and five roots of Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam including key similarities and differences.
- The Oneness of God (Tawhid), Qur'an Surah 112.
- The nature of God: omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness and justice (Adalat in Shi'a Islam), including different ideas about God's relationship with the world: immanence and transcendence.
- Angels, their nature and role, including Jibril and Mika'il.
- Predestination and human freedom and its relationship to the Day of Judgement.
- Life after death (Aakhirah), human responsibility and accountability, resurrection, heaven and hell.

### Authority

- Prophethood (Risalah) including the role and importance of Adam, Ibrahim and Muhammad.
- The holy books:
  - Qur'an: revelation and authority
  - the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel, the Scrolls of Abraham and their authority.
- The imamate in Shi'a Islam: its role and significance.

## Practices

### Worship

- Five Pillars of Sunni Islam and the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam (students should study the Five Pillars and jihad in both Sunni and Shi'a Islam and the additional duties of Shi'a Islam).
- Shahadah: declaration of faith and its place in Muslim practice.
- Salah and its significance: how and why Muslims pray including times, directions, ablution (wudu) movements (rak'ahs) and recitations; salah in the home and mosque and elsewhere; Friday prayer (Jumma); key differences in the practice of salah in Sunni and Shi'a Islam, and different Muslim views about the importance of prayer.

### Duties and festivals

- Sawm: the role and significance of fasting during the month of Ramadan including origins, duties, benefits of fasting, the exceptions and their reasons, and the Night of Power, Qur'an 96:1–5.
- Zakah: the role and significance of giving alms including origins, how and why it is given, benefits of receipt, Khums in Shi'a Islam.
- Hajj: the role and significance of the pilgrimage to Makkah including origins, how hajj is performed, the actions pilgrims perform at sites including the Ka'aba at Makkah, Mina, Arafat, Muzdalifah and their significance.
- Jihad: different understandings of jihad: the meaning and significance of greater and lesser jihad; origins, influence and conditions for the declaration of lesser jihad.
- Festivals and commemorations and their importance for Muslims in Great Britain today, including the origins and meanings of Id-ul-Adha, Id-ul-Fitr, Ashura.

---

### 3.2.1.2 Judaism

Students should study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Judaism specified below and their basis in Jewish sources of wisdom and authority. They should be able to refer to scripture and/or sacred texts where appropriate. Some texts are prescribed for study in the content set out below and questions may be set on them. Students may refer to any relevant text in their answers and AQA will publish a list of appropriate texts as part of the supporting material for this specification. These additional texts will not be required for study, alternatives may be used, and questions will not be set on them.

Students should study the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on individuals, communities and societies.

Common and divergent views within Judaism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout. Students may refer to a range of different Jewish perspectives in their answers, for example, Orthodox, Reform and Liberal Judaism. They must study the specific differences identified below.

Students should know and understand that Judaism is one of the religious traditions in Great Britain today, that religions and beliefs in Great Britain are diverse and include Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism as well as other religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism, and that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian.

Students should identify and explain two teachings common to Christianity and Judaism:

- Monotheism.
- God as Creator.

Students should identify beliefs about the Messiah as a topic on which the teachings of Judaism and Christianity differ and explain the different perspectives on that topic.

### Beliefs and teachings

#### Key beliefs

- The nature of God:
  - God as one
  - God as Creator
  - God as Law-Giver and Judge, loving and merciful.
- The divine presence (Shekhinah).
- Beliefs about life after death, including judgement and resurrection.
- The nature and role of the Messiah, including different views on the role and importance of the Messiah.

#### The Covenant and the mitzvot

- The promised land and the Covenant with Abraham, Genesis 12:1–3.
- The Covenant at Sinai and its importance including the role of Moses and the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:1–17.
- Key moral principles including justice, healing the world, charity and kindness to others.
- The importance of the sanctity of human life, including the concept of ‘saving life’ (Pikuach Nefesh).
- The relationship between free will and the 613 mitzvot.
- Mitzvot between man and God, and mitzvot between man and man, including different views about their importance.

## Practices

### The synagogue and worship

- The synagogue and its importance.
- The design and religious features of synagogues including reading platform (bimah), ark (aron hakodesh), ever burning light (ner tamid) and associated practices; differences between Orthodox and Reform synagogues.
- Public acts of worship including:
  - synagogue services in both Orthodox and Reform synagogues
  - the significance of prayer, including the Amidah, the standing prayer.
- Shabbat in the home and synagogue and its significance.
- Worship in the home and private prayer.
- The written law (Tenakh) and the oral law (Talmud), and their study, use and significance in daily life.

### Family life and festivals

- Rituals and their significance:
  - ceremonies associated with birth including Brit Milah.
  - Bar and Bat Mitzvah
  - the marriage ceremony
  - mourning rituals.
- Dietary laws and their significance, including different Jewish views about their importance:
  - kosher and trefah
  - separation of milk and meat.
- Festivals and their importance for Jews in Great Britain today, including the origins and meaning of:
  - Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
  - Pesach.

## 3.2.2 Section B: Themes

Students must study two of the religious, philosophical and ethical themes (Themes A–C) or the two textual studies themes (Themes D–E). Students who choose Themes A–C should study Christian and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism in contemporary British society.

They must also study Christian and philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence on the modern world.

Students will be expected to show their understanding of religion through the application of teachings from religion and beliefs. They will also be expected to make specific references to sources of wisdom and authority including scripture or other religious texts. Some texts are prescribed for study in the content that follows, and questions may be set on these. Students may refer to any relevant text in their answers. As part of the supporting information for this specification, AQA will publish a list of suggested texts. These will not be required for study, alternatives may be used and questions will not be set on them.

---

### 3.2.2.1 Theme A: Religion, relationships and families

Students should study the following dialogues.

#### Dialogue 1: Relationships and the human condition – love and sexuality: communion and complementarity

##### Key ideas

- Foundational biblical understanding of human beings as sexual, male and female.
- The meaning and significance of Catholic teaching about the nature and purpose of sexual love as marital, unitive and procreative.
- Key features of John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

##### Contrasts or links

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including sex before marriage, adultery and homosexuality.

#### Dialogue 2: Perspectives on relationships – marriage, cohabitation, divorce and separation

##### Key ideas

- Foundational conditions of a valid marriage in the Catholic Church.
- The nature of marriage and the marriage vows.
- Catholic guidelines on annulment, divorce and remarrying.

##### Contrasts or links

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including cohabitation and the extension of marriage laws to same sex couples.

Ethical arguments related to divorce, including those based on the sanctity of marriage vows and compassion.

#### Dialogue 3: Families and responsibilities – roles of men, women and children within the family

##### Key ideas

- Catholic approaches to family planning.
- Catholic views on the nature and purpose of the family in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including procreation; security and education of children; the roles and responsibilities within the family of men and women (Ephesians 5:21–6.4).
- Catholic teaching on the dignity of work within the home.

##### Contrasts or links

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including the use of artificial contraception and the rights of same-sex parents and single people to have children.

#### Dialogue 4: Gender, equality and discrimination – equality of women and men

##### Key ideas

- Foundational equality of women and men in biblical tradition.
- Catholic teaching on the equality of women and men.
- Gender prejudice and discrimination, including examples; key features of Catholic opposition to gender prejudice and discrimination.

**Contrasts or links**

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including the view that treating men and women equally means treating them the same.

**3.2.2.2 Theme B: Religion, peace and conflict**

Students should study the following dialogues.

**Dialogue 1: Christian perspectives on human violence, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation****Key ideas**

- Biblical perspectives on violence as a feature of the human condition including bullying.
- The concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation; teachings of Jesus in the New Testament about forgiveness and reconciliation, including John 14:27.
- The concept of justice; Catholic perspectives on the relationship between justice and human dignity.

**Contrasts or links**

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including anger (including 'righteous anger') as a response to injustice and violent protest as a response to injustice.

**Dialogue 2: Christian perspectives on societal war and just war****Key ideas**

- The meaning and significance of the Just War theory.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church 2309.
- Catholic attitudes to nuclear war and the use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Catholic views regarding consequences of modern warfare: civilian casualties, refugees and environmental damage.

**Contrasts or links**

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including nuclear deterrence (including different Catholic views), nuclear war and the use of weapons of mass destruction.

**Dialogue 3: Holy war and pacifism****Key ideas**

- Religion and belief as a reason for war and violence; the idea of Holy War.
- Old Testament biblical perspectives on war.
- The role of religion in 21<sup>st</sup> century conflicts, including responses to the victims of war.

**Contrasts or links**

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including pacifism, Catholic beliefs about pacifism, and pacifism as a developing theme in Papal teaching.

---

## Dialogue 4: Christian perspectives on terrorism and Christian initiatives in conflict resolution and peace making

### Key ideas

- Biblical and contemporary Catholic perspectives on terrorism as a mode of conflict.
- Catholic views on the use of torture.
- Catholic views about radicalisation and martyrdom.
- Catholic perspectives on conflict resolution and peacemaking, including biblical perspectives.

### Contrasts or links

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues.

The work of two Christian organisations active in conflict resolution and peacemaking and examples of nonviolent resistance from within and beyond the Catholic tradition.

## 3.2.2.3 Theme C: Religion, human rights and social justice

Students should study the following dialogues.

### Dialogue 1: Human rights and religious freedom

#### Key ideas

- Foundational Biblical teaching – the dignity of all people because they are created in the image of God; The concept of ‘loving your neighbour’.
- Catholic understanding of human rights, and their importance for human dignity, set out in *Gaudium et Spes* 26.
- Catholic attitudes to freedom of religion or belief.

#### Contrasts or links

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including how the pursuit of human rights may be expressed in action by the individuals and the Church.

Belief about how rights are linked to responsibilities, including the duty to protect the rights of others.

### Dialogue 2: Perspectives on wealth

#### Key ideas

- Catholic teaching on the responsibilities of wealth, duty of stewardship of wealth.
- Catholic teaching about wealth creation, including exploitation of the poor and human trafficking.
- Catholic attitudes to wealth, including the wealth of the Church.

#### Contrasts or links

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including greed, materialism and ideas about the value of individuals based on their wealth and possessions as well as Christian beliefs about the need to sacrifice wealth and possessions for entry into God’s kingdom.

### Dialogue 3: Perspectives on poverty

#### Key ideas

- Catholic teaching about the Christian duty to take action against poverty and the causes of poverty: the Preferential option for the Poor (*Evangelii Gaudium* 198).
- Christian views about, of and actions on, poverty, including issues related to giving money to the poor.
- Christian action against poverty, and the causes of poverty, as an expression of Christian values: the work of CAFOD or Christian Aid.

#### Contrasts or links

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist) in contemporary British society on these issues including who should have responsibility for helping those in poverty, and the responsibility of those living in poverty to help overcome the difficulties they face.

### Dialogue 4: Prejudice and discrimination

#### Key ideas

- Christian teaching against racial prejudice and discrimination and about how the worth of the individual should be judged.
- Christian teaching about the ideals of equality and justice.
- Christian attitudes towards prejudice and discrimination within religion, with reference to gender and sexuality.

#### Contrasts or links

Different perspectives, Christian and non-religious (such as atheist or humanist), in contemporary British society on these issues and ethical arguments related to racial discrimination (including positive discrimination), including those based on the ideals of equality and justice.

How Christianity actively promotes tolerance and racial equality and supports victims of racial prejudice.

### 3.2.2.4 Theme D: St Mark's Gospel – the life of Jesus

Students should be aware of the significance, importance and influence of St Mark's Gospel for individuals, communities and societies, including the relevance of Jesus' example and teaching for non-religious believers such as atheists and humanists in contemporary British society. They should understand how varied interpretations of passages from St Mark's Gospel may give rise to diversity within Christian traditions. They should also consider how Christian and non-religious communities give authority to St Mark's Gospel, especially in relation to other sources of contemporary authority.

Students should be able to show knowledge of the set texts for study and an understanding of their importance for Jesus, his early followers and for people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Students should be able to show knowledge and understanding that the main religious traditions of Great Britain are Christian but there are also non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism in contemporary British society. They should consider the authority of the Gospel and the relevance of Jesus' example and teaching for non-religious believers in Great Britain today.

#### The early ministry of Jesus

- John's preparation for Jesus' ministry: 1:1–8.
- Jesus' baptism and temptation: 1:9–13.
- The paralysed man: 2:1–12.
- Jairus' daughter: 5:21–24a, 35–43
- The rejection at Nazareth: 6:1–6.
- The feeding of the five thousand: 6:30–44.

---

### The later ministry of Jesus

- The conversation at Caesarea Philippi: 8:27–33.
- The transfiguration of Jesus: 9:2–9.
- Jesus' passion prediction: 10:32–34.
- The request of James and John: 10:35–45.
- Bartimaeus: 10:46–52.
- The entry into Jerusalem: 11:1–11.

### The final days in Jerusalem

- The Last Supper: 14:12–26.
- Jesus in Gethsemane: 14:32–52.
- The trial before the Jewish authorities: 14:53, 57–65.
- The trial before Pilate: 15:1–15.
- The crucifixion and burial: 15:21–47.
- The empty tomb: 16:1–8.

### Significance and importance

- The titles Son of Man, Son of God, Christ (Messiah) and Son of David, including their meaning for 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews and Jesus.
- The significance for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians of Jesus' understanding of the titles Son of Man, Son of God, Christ (Messiah) and Son of David.
- St Mark's portrayal of Jesus as a teacher and miracle worker, including contrasting views in contemporary British society on the historicity of the miracle stories. These should include both Christian views as well as non-religious views.
- Differing beliefs about the meaning of Jesus' words and actions at the Last Supper.
- Differing beliefs about the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection, and different explanations given for the empty tomb, including Christian views, as well as non-religious views in contemporary British society.
- Differing views on the authority of St Mark's Gospel relating to the life of Jesus in relation to the challenges posed by secular sources of contemporary authority.

#### 3.2.2.5 Theme E: St Mark's Gospel as a source of spiritual truth

Students should be aware of the significance, importance and influence of St Mark's Gospel for individuals, communities and societies, including the relevance of Jesus' example and teaching for non-religious believers such as atheists and humanists in contemporary British society. They should understand how varied interpretations of passages from St Mark's Gospel may give rise to diversity within Christian traditions. They should also consider how Christian and non-religious communities give authority to St Mark's Gospel, especially in relation to other sources of contemporary authority.

Students should be able to show knowledge of the set texts for study and an understanding of their importance for Jesus, his early followers and for people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Students should be able to show knowledge and understanding of the fact that the main religious traditions of Great Britain are Christian but there are also non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism in contemporary British society. They should be able to consider the authority of the Gospel and the relevance of Jesus' example and teaching for non-religious believers in Great Britain today.

### The Kingdom of God

- Parable of the sower: 4:1–9, 14–20.
- Parable of the growing seed: 4:26–29.
- Parable of the mustard seed: 4:30–32.
- Jesus and the children: 10:13–16.
- The rich man: 10:17–27.
- The greatest commandment: 12:28–34.

### Jesus' relationships with those disregarded by society

- The man with leprosy: 1:40–45.
- The call of Levi: 2:13–17.
- The Greek (Syro-Phoenician) woman's daughter: 7:24–30.
- The epileptic (demon-possessed) boy: 9:14–29.
- The widow at the treasury: 12:41–44.
- The anointing at Bethany: 14:1–9.

### Faith and discipleship

- The call of the first disciples: 1:16–20.
- The woman with a haemorrhage: 5:24b–34.
- The mission of the Twelve: 6:7–13.
- The cost and rewards of discipleship: 8:34–38; 10:28–31.
- Peter's denials: 14:27–31, 66–72.
- The commission and ascension: 16:14–20.

### Significance and importance

- Different ways in which the Kingdom of God might be understood, including as a present reality and a future hope, and as a personal inner state and a community.
- Reasons for 1<sup>st</sup> century attitudes and those of Jesus to those disregarded by society.
- The significance and importance for Christians of Jesus' attitudes to those disregarded by the society of his day.
- Different views on the significance and importance for Jesus' disciples and for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians of discipleship as seen in incidents relating to Jesus' disciples and in Jesus' teaching.
- Different views on the nature and importance of faith as seen in Mark's Gospel.
- Differing views on the authority of Jesus' teaching as recorded by Mark in relation to the challenges posed by secular sources of contemporary authority.

# 4 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at [aqa.org.uk/pastpapers](http://aqa.org.uk/pastpapers)

This specification is designed to be taken over two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

GCSE exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2018 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our GCSE exams in Religious Studies B include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- apply knowledge and understanding of two religions
- apply 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
- understand significant common and divergent views between an/or within religion 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 set out in the subject content below.

## 4.1 Aims and learning outcomes

Courses based on this specification should encourage students to:

- develop their knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism
- develop their 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 their ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding the subject
- engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth, and their influence on human life.

## 4.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Religious Studies B specifications and all exam boards.

The exams and non-exam assessment will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and beliefs including:
  - beliefs, practices and sources of authority
  - influence on individuals, communities and societies
  - similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs.
- AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

### Assessment objective weightings for GCSE Religious Studies B

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)		Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	
AO1	25	25	50
AO2	25	25	50
Overall weighting of components	50	50	100

## 4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Component 1: Catholic Christianity	101	x1	101
Component 2: Perspectives on faith	101	x1	101
Total scaled mark:			202

## 4.4 Assessment structure

There are two routes through this specification. Students should enter either Route A or Route B. Component 1 is common to both routes. In Route A Component 2A requires students to answer questions on either Islam or Judaism, plus two religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes (chosen from Themes A–C).

In Route B Component 2B requires students to answer questions on either Islam or Judaism, plus both textual studies themes (Themes D–E).

---

### 4.4.1 Component 1: Catholic Christianity

For each exam, the following will apply:

- Students must answer all the questions.
- There will be four five-part questions.
- The structure of each five-part question will be identical.
- Each question will be assessed out of 24 marks, with 12 marks for AO1 and 12 marks for AO2.
- Marks will be allocated as follows: 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12.
- The first four questions will test AO1, the fifth will test AO2; this will be a 12 mark extended writing assessment of AO2.

### 4.4.2 Component 2: Perspectives on faith

For every series, the following will apply:

#### Section A

- Students must answer questions from Section A on **either** Islam **or** Judaism.
- All the questions on the chosen faith must be answered.
- Each religion is assessed out of 48 marks, with 24 marks for AO1 and 24 marks for AO2.
- There are two five-part questions per faith.
- The structure of the five-part questions in Section A will be identical; marks will be allocated as follows: 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12.
- In each five-part question the first four questions will test AO1 and the fifth will be a 12 mark extended writing assessment of AO2.

#### Section B

- Students must also answer questions on **either** religious, philosophical and ethical themes **or** textual studies themes in Section B.
- There are three religious, philosophical and ethical themes and two textual studies themes available.
- Students may answer questions on **either** any two religious, philosophical and ethical themes **or** two textual themes (see [Entries and codes](#) (page 30)).
- Each theme will be assessed out of 24 marks, with 12 marks for AO1 and 12 marks for AO2.
- There will be one compulsory five-part question set for each of the themes.
- The structure of the five-part questions in Section B of this component will be identical; marks will be allocated as follows: 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12.
- In each five-part question, the first four questions will test AO1 and the fifth will be a 12 mark extended writing assessment of AO2.

An additional five marks will be awarded in both components in respect of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG). This will be awarded in respect of performance in the 12 mark extended writing questions. Marks will be awarded on the basis of a student's best performance in each component in these questions.

## 4.5 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in 12 mark questions against the following criteria:

Level	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
<b>High performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy.</li> <li>Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall.</li> <li>Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate.</li> </ul>	4–5
<b>Intermediate performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy.</li> <li>Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall.</li> <li>Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate.</li> </ul>	2–3
<b>Threshold performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy.</li> <li>Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall.</li> <li>Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate.</li> </ul>	1
<b>No marks awarded</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The learner writes nothing.</li> <li>The learner's response does not relate to the question.</li> <li>The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning.</li> </ul>	0

# 5 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at [aqa.org.uk/examsadmin](http://aqa.org.uk/examsadmin)

## 5.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code:

- further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications
- only one of them will be counted for the purpose of the *School and College Performance tables* – the DfE's rules on 'early entry' will determine which one.

Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	Option	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA GCSE in Religious Studies B	Option A (including religious, philosophical and ethical studies)	8063A	DD1
	Option B (including textual studies)	8063B	DD1

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCSE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCSEs
- Ofqual GCSE subject level conditions that apply to all GCSEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 601/8401/2.

## 5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There are no overlaps with any other AQA qualifications at this level.

## 5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The qualification will be graded on a nine-point scale: 1 to 9 – where 9 is the best grade.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade 1 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

## 5.4 Re-sits and shelf life

Students can re-sit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

## 5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

## 5.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. If any difficulties were encountered, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published on the JCQ website at [jqc.org.uk](http://jqc.org.uk)

### 5.6.1 Students with disabilities and special needs

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested are not changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a student who does not read Braille.

We are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

If you have students who need access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the Access arrangements online service at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

### 5.6.2 Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as the death of a relative. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see [aqa.org.uk/access](http://aqa.org.uk/access) or email [accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk](mailto:accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk)

## 5.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college has not previously offered any AQA specification, you need to register as an AQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](http://aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

---

## 5.8 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates.

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA-approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

A private candidate may be self-taught, home-schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. You must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at [aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates](https://www.aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates)
- email: [privatecandidates@aca.org.uk](mailto:privatecandidates@aca.org.uk)

## Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/subjects/8063](http://aqa.org.uk/subjects/8063)

You can talk directly to the religious studies subject team

E: [religious\\_studies@aqa.org.uk](mailto:religious_studies@aqa.org.uk)

T: 0161 957 3881