

GCE

AS and A Level Specification

Religious Studies

AS exams 2009 onwards

A2 exams 2010 onwards



Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Why choose AQA?	3
1.2	Why choose Religious Studies?	3
1.3	How do I start using this specification?	4
1.4	How can I find out more?	4
2	Specification at a Glance	5
3	Subject Content	8
3.1	Units 1 and 2 Introduction to Religious Studies	8
	AS Unit A Religion and Ethics 1	8
	AS Unit B Religion and Ethics 2	10
	AS Unit C Philosophy of Religion	12
	AS Unit D Religion, Philosophy and Science	14
	AS Unit E The History of Christianity or Religion, Art and the Media	17
	AS Unit F Old Testament	21
	AS Unit G New Testament	23
	AS Unit H Religion and Contemporary Society	26
	AS Unit J World Religions 1: Buddhism or Hinduism or Sikhism	29
	AS Unit K World Religions 2: Christianity or Judaism or Islam 1	35
	AS Unit L Islam 2	41
3.2	Unit 3 Studies in Religion	43
	Unit 3A Religion and Ethics	43
	Unit 3B Philosophy of Religion	46
	Unit 3C The History of Christianity or Religion and Art	48
	Unit 3D Old Testament	52
	Unit 3E New Testament	54
	Unit 3F Religion and Contemporary Society	56
	Unit 3G World Religions 1: Buddhism or Hinduism or Sikhism	58
	Unit 3H World Religions 2: Christianity or Judaism or Islam	64
3.3	Unit 4 Religion and Human Experience	70
	Unit 4A Topic I or Topic II or Topic III	70
	Unit 4B Topic I or Topic II or Topic III	73
	Unit 4C Topic I or Topic II or Topic III	76
4	Scheme of Assessment	79
4.1	Aims	79
4.2	Assessment Objectives	79
4.3	National Criteria	80
4.4	Prior Learning	80
4.5	Synoptic Assessment and Stretch and Challenge	81
4.6	Access to Assessment for Disabled Students	81

5	Administration	82
5.1	Availability of Assessment Units and Certification	82
5.2	Entries	82
5.3	Private Candidates	82
5.4	Access Arrangements and Special Consideration	83
5.5	Language of Examinations	83
5.6	Qualification Titles	83
5.7	Awarding Grades and Reporting Results	83
5.8	Re-sits and Shelf-life of Unit Results	83

	Appendices	84
A	Performance Descriptions	84
B	Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and other Issues	86
C	Overlaps with other Qualifications	87
D	Key Skills – Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence	88

Vertical black lines indicate a significant change or addition to the previous version of this specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA?

It's a fact that AQA is the UK's favourite exam board and more students receive their academic qualifications from AQA than from any other board. But why does AQA continue to be so popular?

- **Specifications**

Ours are designed to the highest standards, so teachers, students and their parents can be confident that an AQA award provides an accurate measure of a student's achievements. And the assessment structures have been designed to achieve a balance between rigour, reliability and demands on candidates.

- **Support**

AQA runs the most extensive programme of support meetings; free of charge in the first years of a new specification and at a very reasonable cost thereafter. These support meetings explain the specification and suggest practical teaching strategies and approaches that really work.

- **Service**

We are committed to providing an efficient and effective service and we are at the end of the phone when you need to speak to a person about an important issue. We will always try to resolve issues the first time you contact us but, should that not be possible, we will always come back to you (by telephone, email or letter) and keep working with you to find the solution.

- **Ethics**

AQA is a registered charity. We have no shareholders to pay. We exist solely for the good of education in the UK. Any surplus income is ploughed back into educational research and our service to you, our customers. We don't profit from education, you do.

If you are an existing customer then we thank you for your support. If you are thinking of moving to AQA then we look forward to welcoming you.

1

1.2 Why choose Religious Studies?

- The Specification offers an academic approach to the study of religion and is accessible to candidates of any religious persuasion or none.
- The AQA Religious Studies Specification encourages candidates to:
 - develop their interest in, and enthusiasm for, a rigorous study of religion and its relation to the wider world
 - treat the subject as an academic discipline by developing knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to a specialist study of religion
 - adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion
 - reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their learning.
- Many of the topics offered are based on AQA's previous GCE Religious Studies Specification, in order that teachers can continue to use their existing resources as far as possible. However, AQA has expanded the units available within its GCE Religious Studies Specification to include exciting new topics of study. All topics meet the revised subject criteria, which require that candidates study four units instead of six as previously, but with no reduction in the total content. These changes will make it possible to study each of the areas chosen in greater depth.
- Candidates will have an opportunity to study aspects of one or more religions, including textual, theological, historical, ethical, phenomenological and philosophical perspectives.
- This Specification offers a comprehensive range of options which enables teachers to design a course that reflects their specialism and that will engage candidates. A wide choice of topics is offered for study in the areas of ethics, philosophy of religion, the world religions, aspects of Christianity, religion and art, and religion and contemporary society. The Specification is designed to be flexible and to allow teachers and candidates:
 - either** to focus on one area of Religious Studies, thus ensuring coherence. The following are examples: a study of Ethics; a study of Philosophy of Religion; a study of Islam; a study of Religion in Contemporary Society; a study of two World Religions; a study of aspects of Christianity; a study of the Old and New Testaments,
 - or** to undertake a broader study of religion through the selection of a variety of topics which, although eclectic, complement each other. The following are examples: a study of the Old Testament and the History of Christianity; a study of Religion and Art and Sikhism; a study of Philosophy and Islam.

- No prior knowledge of Religious Studies is required. However, the opportunity is provided for candidates who have studied Religious Studies at GCSE (either as a Full or Short Course) to build on knowledge, understanding and skills gained at that level.
- Whichever path through the Specification is taken, the course encourages candidates to develop the critical and evaluative skills which will enable them to go on to Higher Education to study a wide range of courses, including Religious Studies, Theology, Philosophy, Law, Sociology and the Social Sciences.
- A study of AQA's GCE Religious Studies Specification complements many other popular A Levels including Philosophy, Law, History, History of Art, Government and Politics, Sociology and English Literature.

1.3 How do I start using this specification?

Already using the existing AQA Religious Studies specification?

- Register to receive further information, such as mark schemes, past question papers, details of teacher support meetings, etc, at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>
Information will be available electronically or in print, for your convenience.
- Tell us that you intend to enter candidates. Then we can make sure that you receive all the material you need for the examinations. This is particularly important where examination material is issued before the final entry deadline. You can let us know by completing the appropriate Intention to Enter and Estimated Entry forms. We will send copies to your Exams Officer and they are also available on our website
http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_entries.html

Not using the AQA specification currently?

- Almost all centres in England and Wales use AQA or have used AQA in the past and are approved AQA centres. A small minority are not. If your centre is new to AQA, please contact our centre approval team at centreapproval@aqa.org.uk

1.4 How can I find out more?

Ask AQA

You have 24-hour access to useful information and answers to the most commonly-asked questions at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>

If the answer to your question is not available, you can submit a query for our team. Our target response time is one day.

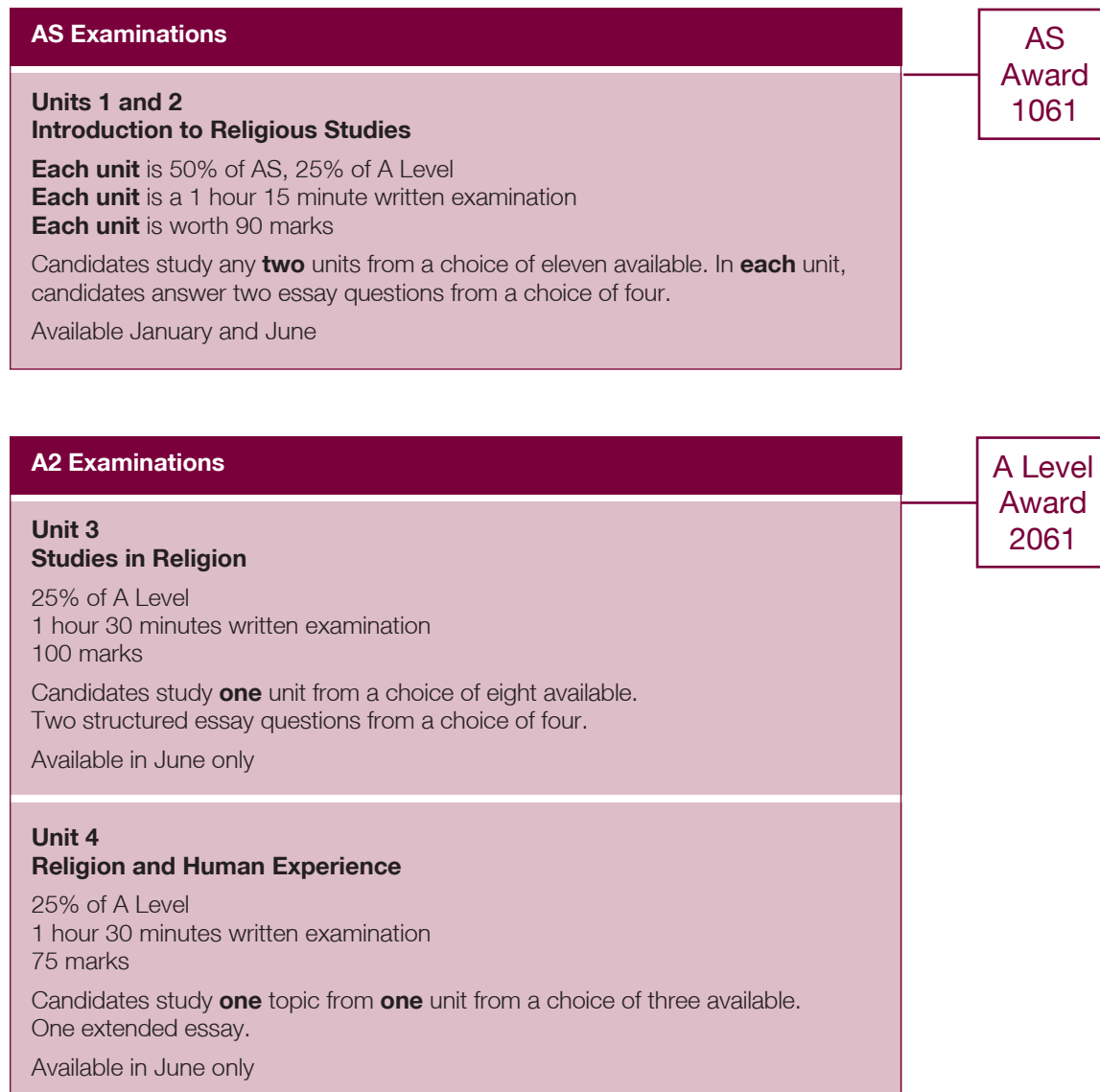
Teacher Support

Details of the full range of current Teacher Support meetings are available on our website at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/support/teachers.html>

There is also a link to our fast and convenient online booking system for Teacher Support meetings at <http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>

If you need to contact the Teacher Support team, you can call us on 01483 477860 or email us at teachersupport@aqa.org.uk

2 Specification at a Glance



2

$$\boxed{\text{AS}} + \boxed{\text{A2}} = \boxed{\text{A Level}}$$

AS Assessment Units**Units 1 and 2 Introduction to Religious Studies**

Candidates study any **two** units from the following eleven available:

Code	Title
RSS01	AS Unit A Religion and Ethics 1
RSS02	AS Unit B Religion and Ethics 2
RSS03	AS Unit C Philosophy of Religion
RSS04	AS Unit D Religion, Philosophy and Science
RSS05	AS Unit E either The History of Christianity or Religion, Art and the Media
RSS06	AS Unit F Old Testament
RSS07	AS Unit G New Testament
RSS08	AS Unit H Religion and Contemporary Society
RSS09	AS Unit J World Religions 1 (either Buddhism or Hinduism or Sikhism)
RSS10	AS Unit K World Religions 2 (either Christianity or Judaism or Islam 1 <i>The Way of Submission</i>)
RSS11	AS Unit L Islam 2 <i>The Life of the Prophet</i>

The same papers are set for Unit 1 and Unit 2.

To qualify for an AS award candidates must enter for **two different** units from the eleven available.

Candidates may re-sit an individual unit (e.g. RSS01 AS Unit A Religion and Ethics 1) and the better UMS mark will be counted towards the AS award. However, they **must** be entered for **two different** units from the eleven available in order for the AS award to be made.

Candidates may **not** cash in results for different sections of one unit (such as Buddhism and Hinduism, or History of Christianity and Religion, Art and the Media), although they are not precluded from changing their choice of sections if they are re-sitting a unit.

A2 Assessment Units**Unit 3 Studies in Religion**

Candidates study **one** unit from the following eight available:

Code	Title
RST3A	Unit 3A Religion and Ethics
RST3B	Unit 3B Philosophy of Religion
RST3C	Unit 3C either The History of Christianity <i>The Christian Church in the 20th century</i> or Religion and Art
RST3D	Unit 3D Old Testament
RST3E	Unit 3E New Testament
RST3F	Unit 3F Religion and Contemporary Society
RST3G	Unit 3G World Religions 1 (either Buddhism or Hinduism or Sikhism)
RST3H	Unit 3H World Religions 2 (either Christianity or Judaism or Islam)

Any of the Unit 3 options may be chosen, **but** A2 units assume that candidates are building on the foundations laid in a corresponding AS unit. Therefore, the responsibility for doing any additional preparatory work that may be necessary to bring a candidate's knowledge, understanding and skills up to the threshold of the unit rests with the centre and the candidate.

Unit 4 Religion and Human Experience

Code	Title
RST4A	Unit 4A Topic I Life, Death and Beyond or Topic II Perceptions of Ultimate Reality or Topic III Religious Experience
RST4B	Unit 4B Topic I Religious Fundamentalism or Topic II Religion and Contemporary Society or Topic III Religion and the Visual Arts
RST4C	Unit 4C Topic I Religious Authority or Topic II Ways of Moral Decision-Making or Topic III Ways of Reading and Understanding Scripture

3 Subject Content

3.1 AS Units 1 and 2 Introduction to Religious Studies

Candidates study **two** units from a choice of eleven (Unit A to Unit L).

AS Unit A Religion and Ethics 1 (RSS01)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Utilitarianism

- The general principles of Utilitarianism: the greatest happiness principle; consequential or teleological thinking in contrast to deontological thinking
- Bentham's Utilitarianism, the hedonic calculus
- Mill's Utilitarianism, quality over quantity
- Act and Rule utilitarianism
- The application of Bentham's and Mill's principles to **one** ethical issue of the candidate's choice **apart from abortion and euthanasia**

Issues arising

- Strengths and weaknesses of the ethical systems of Bentham and Mill
- Which is more important – the ending of pain and suffering, or the increase of pleasure?
- How worthwhile is the pursuit of happiness, and is it all that people desire?
- How compatible is Utilitarianism with a religious approach to ethics?

2. Situation Ethics

- The general principles of Situation Ethics: the middle way between legalism and antinomianism; the idea of situation; conscience – what it is and what it is not; the emphasis on making moral decisions rather than following rules
- Fletcher's six fundamental principles and the understanding of Christian love
- Fletcher's four presumptions: pragmatism, contextual relativism, positivism, personalism
- The application of Situation Ethics to **one** ethical issue of the candidate's choice **apart from abortion and euthanasia**

Issues arising

- Strengths and weaknesses of Situation Ethics as an ethical system
- Does Christian love allow people to do anything, depending on the context, and how far is it true that love should be the highest Christian law, overruling all others when necessary?
- How practical is Situation Ethics?
- How compatible is Situation Ethics with other Christian approaches to moral decision-making?

3. Religious teaching on the nature and value of human life

Candidates will be expected to have studied the teaching of **one** of the six major world religions, but, where appropriate, may refer to more than one religion in their answers.

- Nature of humanity and the human condition: what it means to be human
- Fatalism and free will: to what extent human beings are able to influence their own life and destiny
- Equality and difference: religious teaching about equality with particular reference to race, gender and disability
- The value of life: religious teachings about the value of life with particular reference to the quality of life, self-sacrifice and non-human life including the relative importance of human and non-human life

Issues arising

- How far must a religious view of life be fatalistic?
- How far can religion support the idea of equality?
- Human life must be given priority over non-human life and some human lives are more valuable than others – how far could religion accept this view?

4. Abortion and euthanasia

- Abortion: definitions for the start of human life and their relevance to the abortion debate, including: potentiality, conception, primitive streak, viability, birth
 - The value of potential life – differing views
 - Mother's versus child's interests, double effect
 - Ethical issues involved in legislation about abortion
- Euthanasia: active or passive, voluntary, involuntary and non-voluntary
 - Ethical issues involved in legislation about euthanasia; issues concerning quality of life and their relevance to the euthanasia debate
 - The role of hospices and palliative care (as alternatives to euthanasia)
- Arguments for and against abortion and euthanasia with reference to religious and ethical teachings

Issues arising

- Does the definition of human life stop abortion being murder?
- Can abortion and euthanasia ever be said to be 'good'?
- Do humans have a right to life, and a right to choose to die?

AS Unit B Religion and Ethics 2 (RSS02)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Kant's theory of ethics

- Kant's ethical theory, including:
 - The deontological approach; reason and morality; contrast with teleological approaches
 - The importance of duty in Kant's ethics
 - The categorical imperative
 - The *summum bonum*
- The application of Kant's approach to **one** ethical issue of the candidate's choice **apart from environmental issues**

Issues arising

- Can reason be the basis of a successful ethical system?
- The strengths and weaknesses of Kant's ideas as an ethical system
- How coherent is Kant's idea of the *summum bonum*?
- Are Kant's ideas about human beings realistic?
- How compatible are these aspects of Kant's ethics with a religious approach to ethics?

2. Natural Law and ethics

- Aristotle's four causes: material cause, efficient cause, formal cause, final cause
- Aquinas' development of the idea of natural good, Natural Law Ethics, principle of double effect
- Casuistry: Natural Law in action
- A modern development: Finnis and practical reason
- The application of Natural Law to **one** ethical issue of the candidate's choice **apart from environmental issues**

Issues arising

- The place of cause at the centre of life
- The strengths and weaknesses of Natural Law as an ethical system
- Is there such a thing as natural good?
- How compatible is Natural Law with a religious approach to ethics?

3. Religious views of the created world

Candidates will be expected to have studied the views of **one** religion, but, where appropriate, may refer to more than one religion in their answers.

- Narratives of the creation of the world by God
- The views that this world, created by God, must be the best possible world
- The world created according to God's intentions
- God sustains the created world
- The status and duty of humankind in the created world
- Status of the non-human world

Issues arising

- Is God's world perfect and must it be so?
- The ethical implications of the idea that God sustains creation
- Strengths and weaknesses of religious views about
 - the status and duty of humans in the created world
 - the status of the non-human world

4. Environment, both local and worldwide

- Threats to the environment: pollution and its consequences, especially global warming
- Protection and preservation of the living and non-living environment
- The developing Third World and attempts to restrict this development
- Religious teachings about human responsibility for the environment (from one or more religions)

Issues arising

- Is protection of the environment an issue only for the rich?
- Is protection of the environment only for the good and benefit of humankind?
- How far should humans be forced to be environmentally responsible?
- Strengths and weaknesses of religious teachings about human responsibility for the environment

AS Unit C Philosophy of Religion (RSS03)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. The cosmological argument

Candidates may refer to any version of the argument but are expected to be familiar with:

- The cosmological argument as proposed by Aquinas with particular reference to: its basis in observation; the rejection of infinite regress; God as the first mover and first cause, and as the necessary being
- Differing understandings of the role of God in the argument: God as the temporal first cause; God as the sustainer of motion, causation and existence; God as the explanation of why there is something rather than nothing
- Key criticisms of the argument relating to: the possibility of infinite regress and the universe as a 'brute fact'; the fallacy of composition; the identity of the necessary being as God and drawing a conclusion that goes beyond the evidence

Issues arising

- How far does the cosmological argument prove that God exists or show that it is reasonable to believe in God?
- The strengths and weaknesses of the argument
- The value of this argument for religious faith

2. Religious experience

- The variety of religious experience: credit will be given for reference to any relevant form of religious experience, but candidates are expected to be familiar with the main characteristics of visions, conversion and mystical experiences
- The argument from religious experience for the existence of God
- The challenges to religious experience from philosophy and science, including:
 - for philosophy
 - (i) whether the finite could experience the infinite
 - (ii) problems of verifying religious experience
 - for science
 - (i) natural explanations for religious experiences (e.g. drugs; temporal lobe epilepsy)
 - (ii) simulating religious experiences (e.g. Persinger's helmet)

Issues arising

- Can religious experience show that God probably exists?
- Is it necessary to have a religious experience in order to be able to understand what a religious experience is?
- How successful are the challenges to religious experience from philosophy and science?

3. Psychology and religion

Candidates will be credited for their understanding of any relevant psychological views of religion, and will be expected to be familiar with how religion has been understood by Freud and Jung:

Freud

Religion as a collective neurosis; as wish fulfilment and a reaction against helplessness; and as a response to the Oedipus complex and repressed guilt

Jung

Religion as an expression of the collective unconscious; the 'god within'; the theory of archetypes: the shadow, the animus, anima and the Self and the quest for integration

Candidates should recognise why some of these views are seen to challenge religious belief and how religion has responded to this challenge.

Issues arising

- Has 'God' been explained away by psychology?
- The strengths and weaknesses of psychological views of religion
- What is the relationship between religion and mental health?

4. Atheism and postmodernism

- The rise of atheism and the death of God: reasons for the rise of atheism with reference to science, empiricism, evil, the rebellion against moral absolutes and awareness of other faiths; meaning of the slogan 'God is dead'
- The nature of atheism: positive and negative atheism; distinction from agnosticism
- Religious responses to atheism, including a postmodernist view of religion. Key ideas in postmodernism: religions as cultural constructs; no right or wrong religions; personal spiritual search, the religious supermarket and the pick and mix approach; living religion rather than intellectual faith

Issues arising

- Is religion in retreat in the modern world?
- Is postmodernism an affirmation of religion?
- How successfully has religion responded to the challenge of atheism?

AS Unit D Religion, Philosophy and Science (RSS04)

3

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Miracles

Candidates will be given credit for any relevant understanding of miracle, but will be expected to be familiar with the following:

- a violation of Natural Law or an exception
- an event of religious significance.

Violations of Natural Law and exceptions

- Meaning of this concept illustrated with reference to different types of apparent violations and exceptions – including raising from the dead; healing and nature miracles
- Implications for religious understandings of the way God interacts with the world
- Challenges to the idea of an interventionist God and issues relating to the continued existence of suffering in the world
- Arguments against violations of Natural Law and exceptions from David Hume; arguments from science – with reference to natural explanations for miracles and the idea of the 'God of the gaps'
- Religious responses to these arguments from Hume and from science

Events of religious significance

- Meaning of this concept with reference to different types of event – including signs (e.g. stigmata); amazing coincidences and natural events
- Implications for religious understandings of the way God interacts with the world
- The argument that such events are miracles only because they are interpreted that way
- Religious responses to that argument

Issues arising

- The strengths and weaknesses of the arguments from David Hume and from science
- If miracles happen, do they make it reasonable to believe that God exists?
- If God exists, would God intervene to perform a miracle if asked?

2. Creation

Candidates will **not** be expected to have a detailed knowledge of scientific ideas in this section, but will be expected to know enough of the science to understand the philosophical and religious ideas and issues identified.

- Religious beliefs about the creation of the world, the origin of human beings, and the continuing relationship between God and the created world
 - God as creator – differing religious views of the creation of the world and of human beings by God, including six-day (young earth) creationism, and progressive (old earth) creationism; the theory of intelligent design
 - God as sustainer – creation as ongoing action by God
 - Key ideas of deism
- An outline of the nature, origin and end of the universe according to science: the Big Bang Theory – including ideas concerning the ‘Big Crunch’ and the alternative idea that the universe will endlessly expand
- An outline of the evolutionary theory for the origin and development of life
- The challenge to religious belief presented by these theories and religious responses to this challenge

Issues arising

- Science and religion – are they in conflict, complementary or irrelevant to each other in relation to these issues?
- The implications for religion of the idea that God is simply an answer to unanswered questions and an explanation for the unexplained
- The strengths and weaknesses of religious responses to the challenges posed by scientific views
- Is intelligent design a scientific theory or a religious one?

3. The design argument

Credit will be given for reference to any relevant version of the design argument, but candidates will be expected to be familiar with the following:

- The argument as presented by Aquinas
- The argument as presented by Paley

Arguments against the design argument:

- From philosophy with reference to David Hume
- From science with reference to Richard Dawkins

Responses to these arguments with particular reference to the presentation of the design argument by Richard Swinburne

Issues arising

- The strengths and weaknesses of the arguments studied
- How far does the design argument make it reasonable to believe in God?
- How far has Swinburne’s design argument successfully met the challenges of philosophy and science?

4. Quantum mechanics and a religious world view

- Key ideas in the world view of quantum mechanics: quanta; light as a wave and a particle; the nature of the electron; the role of the observer in resolving uncertainty
- Parallels with mystical insights into the nature of reality, e.g. as understood by Fritjof Capra in “The Tao of Physics”
- The implications for religion

Issues arising

- How important is ‘agreement’ with science for religion?
- Has science ‘discovered’ something that mystics knew all along?
- Can science be ‘religious’?

AS Unit E The History of Christianity OR Religion, Art and the Media (RSS05)

The same papers are set for Unit 1 and Unit 2. To qualify for an AS award candidates must enter for **two different** units. Candidates may **not** cash in results for different sections of one unit (such as History of Christianity and Religion, Art and the Media), although they are not precluded from changing their choice of sections if they are re-sitting a unit.

EITHER

The History of Christianity

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. The Celtic Church

- The religious and social context of the Celtic Church; relationship between Celtic Christianity, the Roman Church and paganism
- The monastic ideal
- The distinctive features of Celtic spirituality, including its artistic expression and nature mysticism
- The contribution of particular individuals, including Aidan, Columba, David, Ninian, Patrick; their missionary activities
- The making of the saints; the characteristics of saints in the Celtic Church, including nature elements and accounts of spiritual experience and miracles

Issues arising

- How far was the spirituality of the Celtic Church distinctive?
- The extent to which Celtic Christianity has relevance in the 21st century
- The lasting significance of particular leaders
- How far the concept of sainthood relates to contemporary understandings

2. The Protestant Reformation

- The Catholic Church on the eve of the Reformation
- The practices and beliefs seen as being in need of reform
- Luther: his personal motivation; main doctrinal emphases, including making religion accessible to the people – the importance of scripture and justification by faith
- Calvin: his personal motivation; main doctrinal emphases, including teaching on the practice and organisation of the church

Issues arising

- The significance of the work of Luther and Calvin
- How far their emphases were mainly theological or socio-political
- Successes and limitations of the reforms

3. The Catholic Reformation

- The Catholic Church on the eve of the Reformation
- Oratory of Divine Love and the reform of the Papacy
- Society of Jesus; Ignatius Loyola and the work of the Jesuits
- The Council of Trent; clarification of doctrine; the Index

Issues arising

- Whether the Catholic Reformation was merely a reaction to the Protestant Reformation
- The significance of the reforms
- Which of the reforms was of most lasting significance?
- Success and limitations of its reforms

4. The rise of Methodism

- The social and religious context of the day
- The methods of preaching and teaching of John and Charles Wesley
- The main emphases in the Wesleys' teaching: salvation by faith, Arminianism, assurance, scriptural holiness
- The organisation of the Methodist movement, e.g. class meetings and the connexional structure; building of preaching houses and other institutions
- Social and religious impact during the 18th century

Issues arising

- How far conditions of the time led to change
- Wesleys' Methodism as predominantly a theological or a social gospel
- Strengths and weaknesses of 18th century Methodism
- Lasting impact of John and Charles Wesley

OR

Religion, Art and the Media (Unit E)

Three topics are identified for study. There will be four questions set. **Two questions will be set on the first topic (numbered 1 and 2 below) and one on each of the others.** Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1 and 2. The nature and purpose of religious art

Two questions will be set on this topic.

Candidates will be expected to have studied the art of **one** of the six major world religions, but, where appropriate, may refer to the art of more than one religion in their answers.

- What is religious art? The range of visual art in religion, e.g. manuscripts; architecture; stained glass; images and statuary; pictures and illustrations
- The purposes of religious art, including: education; propaganda; expression of personal faith of the artist or of the status and / or beliefs of the sponsor; to inspire the audience / observer
- The distinctive characteristics and purposes of the art of **one** religion
- The contribution of art to worship
- The importance and significance of religious art for the artist, the community of believers and society
- The relevance of religious art for religion today

Issues arising

- Are religious subjects appropriate subject matter for the visual arts?
- Must religious art have a religious subject?
- Is religious art important as art, or only for the message it brings or the purpose it serves in religion?
- Which is more important – the inspirational power of art or its informative content?
- Can religious art only be fully understood by religious people?
- How high a priority in religion should be given to the production and maintenance of religious art?

3. Religion, art and popular culture

- *Humour and religion* – comedy and satire, their role in religion; religious responses to comedy about religion, the impact of such comedy on religion
- *Fiction and religion* – the use of religion / religious themes and issues in fiction. Reasons for the popularity of such works and religious responses to them

Candidates should be able to refer to specific examples of comedy and to **two** works of fiction but questions will not be set on specific texts, many of which could also be studied through, for example, films, television (TV) or plays.

Issues arising

- Is religion a legitimate subject for humour and fiction?
- Does religion have a negative attitude to humour in and about religion?
- Do fiction and humour have a positive contribution to make to religion?

4. Cyber religion and TV religion

- *Religion on the Internet* – the variety of material related to religion on the Internet; the opportunities and challenges of the Internet for religion and religious responses to them; virtual religion
- *Religion on television (TV)* – televangelism, its nature and impact; the presentation of religious themes in popular broadcasting, e.g. 'The Simpsons'; traditional religious broadcasting; the significance of religious broadcasting for religion

Issues arising

- Are the Internet and television assets to religion?
- Televangelism – cult or religion?
- Popular television – does it trivialise religion?

AS Unit F Old Testament (RSS06)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

The use of Bibles, including the Apocrypha, is allowed in the examination. Any version is permitted, provided that it does not contain notes, apart from plain cross-references or translators' footnotes. Centres will be required to ensure that Bibles taken into the examination room are suitable. Questions will be set on the assumption that all candidates will have Bibles before them in the examination room, but candidates will not be given credit for writing out lengthy quotations from the Bible. Biblical quotations used in questions will be taken from the Revised Standard Version. Where appropriate, the source of quotations will be given.

1. An introduction to the world of the Old Testament

Candidates will be expected to have a very basic understanding of the life of pre-exilic Israel, with reference to the following:

- a wandering people: the traditions of the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings
- a people becoming a nation – the search for a king: Samuel's warnings about kingship and the anointing of Saul
- a people among other peoples – Israel among the Canaanites – the religion of the Canaanites and its effects on Hebrew religion

Passages for study

Exodus 15–16

1 Samuel 8–10

1 Kings 18^{17–46}

Issues arising

- How far the accounts of the Exodus and conquest are credible as history
- Slavery and freedom: the significance of the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings for the people of the time and as a continuing theme
- The meaning of nationhood and the significance of kingship
- Syncretism and intolerance; inclusivity and exclusivity – the significance of the relationship between the Israelites and Canaanites

2. Old Testament views of God's relationship with the people

- The idea of covenant: its place in the everyday life of Ancient Israel; ideas of covenant in the political life of the Ancient Near East; 20th century critical views about the making of the covenant
- Abraham – the beginning of the covenant relationship

- Moses – the relationship formalised through Law
- The giving of the Law

Passages for study

Genesis 17; 22¹⁻¹⁸

Exodus 19–20

Issues arising

- The relevance of Old Testament ideas of God in the 21st century
- The significance of the idea of covenant
- The impact of critical views on an understanding of covenant
- Is the Law of Moses in any way adequate and relevant in the 21st century?

3. The phenomenon of prophecy

- The nature of prophets and their function in society
- The development of prophecy in the 10th and 9th centuries, with particular reference to Samuel and Elijah
- The development of the prophetic experience; types of prophets

Passages for study

1 Samuel 9¹–10¹⁶

1 Kings 18¹⁷–19¹⁸; 21

Issues arising

- Prophets as ordinary or extraordinary people; their credibility in society
- The inevitability of conflict between prophets and the authorities of their day in the Old Testament and in other times
- The continuing significance of prophetic experience

4. 8th century prophecy – Amos

- The continuing significance of Amos' theme of the relationship between religious practice and morality
- His teaching on the nature of God, and God's relationship with the people
- The ideas of election and responsibility
- His criticisms of the social, religious and political life of the people
- His views on the future of the people, including his teaching on the 'Day of the Lord'

Passages for study

Amos

Issues arising

- Amos as a prophet of doom
- The relative importance of Amos' social, religious and political criticisms
- The extent to which covenant underpinned Amos' teaching
- The extent to which Amos may be viewed as a typical prophet
- Was Amos right in his views on God and Israel and his predictions of Israel's future?

AS Unit G New Testament (RSS07)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

The use of Bibles, including the Apocrypha, is allowed in the examination. Any version is permitted, provided that it does not contain notes, apart from plain cross-references or translators' footnotes. Centres will be required to ensure that Bibles taken into the examination room are suitable. Questions will be set on the assumption that all candidates will have Bibles before them in the examination room, but candidates will not be given credit for writing out lengthy quotations from the Bible. Biblical quotations used in questions will be taken from the Revised Standard Version. Where appropriate, the source of quotations will be given.

3

1. How the synoptic gospels came into being

- Oral tradition
- Reasons for the synoptic gospels being committed to writing
- The relationship between the three synoptic gospels; the priority of Mark
- Reasons for writers editing material as they wrote the synoptic gospels
- Reasons for translating the original Greek synoptic texts

Issues arising

- Whether understanding about how the synoptic gospels came into being assists understanding of the synoptic gospels themselves
- The advantages and disadvantages of having three similar gospels (the synoptic gospels) rather than just one
- Given the time gap before the gospels were written, uncertainty about their sources and authorship, etc, can we trust them to be accurate?
- Can a translation be the Word of God?

2. Aspects of Jesus' teaching and action, parables and healings

With particular reference to the passages listed below, candidates will be expected to know about:

- the role and the purpose of parables and healings as recorded in the synoptic gospels
- scholars' views of the theology and the teaching found in parables and healings.

Parables

The Sower

Matthew 13³⁻²³ and Mark 4³⁻²⁰

The Tenants in the Vineyard

Matthew 21³³⁻⁴⁶ and Mark 12¹⁻¹²

Healings

Centurion's Slave

Matthew 8⁵⁻¹³ and Luke 7¹⁻¹⁰

Legion

Mark 5¹⁻²⁰ and Luke 8²⁶⁻³⁹

Issues arising

- In a scientific age, do Jesus' healings have to be rationalised?
- Is context so important that parables cannot be understood in the 21st century?
- Are scholars necessary to ensure people have a true understanding of the theological messages from the parables and the healings?

3. The arrest, trial and death of Jesus

Candidates should be familiar with the accounts of these events in the synoptic gospels.

Candidates will be expected to know:

- Scholars' views of the theological message and the teaching about the person of Jesus provided by the writers in these accounts
- The main similarities and differences between the three accounts:
Matthew 26^{36-27⁶¹}
Mark 14^{32-15⁴⁷}
Luke 22^{40-23⁵⁶}

Issues arising

- Is there any satisfactory explanation of why the synoptic accounts of the arrest, trial and death of Jesus are so different from each other?
- Is it possible to deduce from them the reason why Jesus was crucified?
- Are the accounts of the arrest, trial and death of Jesus historically reliable?
- How convincing are the claims made about the person of Jesus and his ministry based on the synoptic accounts of his arrest, trial and death?

4. The resurrection of Jesus

Candidates should be familiar with the synoptic accounts of the resurrection.

Candidates will be expected to know:

- Scholars' views of the theological message and the teaching about the person of Jesus provided by the writers in these accounts
- The main similarities and differences between the three accounts:
Matthew 27⁶²–28²⁰
Mark 16^{1–20} (noting the variant readings of the text)
Luke 24

Issues arising

- Are the resurrection accounts symbolic, historical or both symbolic and historical?
- Is there any satisfactory explanation of why the synoptic accounts of the resurrection are so different from each other?
- Is the longer ending of Mark's Gospel authentic?
- How important are the synoptic resurrection narratives for Christian faith?

AS Unit H Religion and Contemporary Society (RSS08)

3

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

Although questions will not be set on the demographic background, it is expected that candidates will have some general awareness of the following aspects of general demographics:

- Broad statistics
 - Geographical concentrations and distributions of different religions within the United Kingdom (UK) today, and also concentrations of different groups within those religions
 - Some background on the cultural roots of different groups within the UK
 - Some basic statistics on levels of practice (variously defined) within different groups
- 1. Changing patterns of religious practice in the UK during the 20th century**
- The main religions found in the UK and their relative numerical strengths and distribution
 - Membership patterns within Christianity
 - Changing denominational structures within Christianity
 - Concept of 'decline' set against other indices of practice

Candidates will **not** be expected to know precise statistics, but to consider general patterns.

Issues arising

- Whether the concept of 'decline' is appropriate
- Whether the UK should still be described as a 'Christian' society
- Whether ideas of membership and belonging to religious and other groups have lost their importance in the 21st century

2. Expressions of religion within society

- The visible presence of religion through diversity of buildings / places of worship; the identification of these through their main features
- Meeting the needs of religious groups through other buildings, shops, community centres, etc.
- The role and expansion of faith schools
- Leaders and sources of authority within religion and their role in the wider society

Candidates will be expected to be able to exemplify and comment on examples of buildings / places of worship, and to comment on their significance within a community; they should be able to comment on the ways in which the cultural and religious needs of communities are met by a range of other buildings found within localities, and they should be able to cite relevant examples of the sorts of places which may be found. They should be familiar with the existence of the 'dual system' within educational provision, and with the ways in which schools of a variety of faiths have been granted state funding in recent years, as well as the position of faith schools outside the state system. They should be able to identify the different types of religious leaders found within society, and to describe their roles within the faith communities, as well as their significance in wider society, where appropriate.

Issues arising

- Whether faith schools are appropriate in 21st century society
- The relative importance of various forms of leadership and authority
- Ways in which buildings, community centres, etc. contribute to/detract from social cohesion

3

3. Issues of identity and belonging

Candidates will be expected to consider specific problems/ challenges in practising specific religions in the UK today. These will be generic themes to be illustrated from **one or more** particular religion(s) of the candidate's choice.

- Issues of the definition of identity and belonging – differing concepts of 'identity', including the relationship between religious and cultural identity
- Dress and dietary rules
- Ways of maintaining community – especially in areas where the religion(s) studied is/are in a significant minority
- Facilities and times for the practice of religion
- 'Assimilation' – in a variety of forms

Issues arising

- Assessment of the relative difficulties caused by some of these issues
- Assessment of the importance of maintaining identity
- Importance of dress and dietary practices
- Challenges to religion posed by difficulties in maintaining identity

4. An introduction to New Religious Movements (NRMs) and the rise of new forms of religious activity during the 20th century

- The nature of millenarianism
- The nature of New Religious Movements
- The sociological definitions of the sect and the cult
- Some theological explanations for their rise
- Some sociological explanations for their rise

Candidates should be able to define millenarianism and to identify some groups which may be described as millenarianist. They should be able to recognise and exemplify groups which may be defined as cults or sects and to explain the distinctions between them.

They should be able to describe some of the sociological and theological explanations for the rise and popularity of such groups during the second half of the 20th century. It should be emphasised that a study of particular groups is **not** required.

Issues arising

- Validity of sociological designations of the cult and the sect
- Assessment of the impact of such movements
- Assessment of the attraction of such movements
- Whether theological or social factors are of greater significance
- Whether such movements have lost their significance in the 21st century

AS Unit J
World Religions 1:
Buddhism OR Hinduism
OR Sikhism
(RSS09)

The same papers are set for Unit 1 and Unit 2. To qualify for an AS award candidates must enter for **two different** units. Candidates may **not** cash in results for different sections of one unit (such as Buddhism and Hinduism), although they are not precluded from changing their choice of sections if they are re-sitting a unit.

EITHER

Buddhism

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Samsara and the three marks of existence

- The concept of samsara – the cycle of death and rebirth
- The concepts of dukkha, anatta and anicca
- The implications of these ideas for the Buddhist way of life and attitude to life

Issues arising

- Is the Buddhist attitude to life negative and pessimistic?
- Are the truths of dukkha and anicca simply common sense?
- Can the concepts of samsara, dukkha, anicca and anatta be understood only through experience?

2. The Four Noble Truths

- The framework of the Four Noble Truths – the illness, the cause of the illness, the truth that there is an end to the illness, and the prescription
- **Tanha** – the different types of craving and how they lead to suffering: craving for sense pleasures, craving to be rid of something and craving for re-becoming; the root of tanha in ignorance and the pointlessness of trying to fulfil tanha in samsara
- **Nibbana** – the truth of the end of craving and the end of dukkha arising from it; contrasts between samsara and nibbana; the experience of the arahant in this world and beyond death
- The implications of these ideas for the Buddhist way of life and attitude to life

Issues arising

- If the end of dukkha is achieved by the end of desire, should Buddhists desire to end desire?
- Can the goal of Buddhism be understood?
- Is it accurate to say that a Buddhist must be detached from, and disinterested in, life?

3. The Eightfold Path

- The nature and purpose of the Eightfold Path
- In the context of the Eightfold Path:
 - The nature of wisdom and its importance – right understanding and right thought
 - The nature of morality and its importance – right speech, right action and right livelihood
 - The nature of meditation and its importance – right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration
 - The relationship between wisdom, morality and meditation, and the ways in which they contribute to the path to enlightenment

Issues arising

- Is any one of the three elements of the Eightfold Path – wisdom, morality and meditation – more important than the others?
- Do Buddhists follow the Eightfold Path for their own benefit rather than for the benefit of others?
- The significance of this teaching for Buddhists today

4. The Sangha

- The Sangha as refuge
- The monastic community – its nature and discipline
- The lay community – its life and discipline
- The relationship between the monastic and lay community, and the relative importance of each as a path to enlightenment

Issues arising

- Is the way of the monk harder and better than the way of the lay Buddhist?
- Is Buddhism escapist?
- Which is more important for Buddhism today – the way of the monastic Sangha or the way of the lay Buddhist?

OR**Hinduism (Unit J)**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. The Hindu concept of God

- The concept of Brahman – personal and impersonal
- The Trimurti – Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva
- The concept of avatar
- Personal deities – Krishna, Rama, Ganesh
- Goddesses – Lakshmi, Durga and Saraswati
- The importance of gods and goddesses in Hinduism

Issues arising

- Is Hinduism polytheistic?
- The importance of personal gods in Hinduism
- The significance of the goddess in Hinduism
- Is God unknowable except in personal form?

2. Means to liberation in Hinduism

- The nature of atman and self-realisation
- The relationship between atman and Brahman
- Yoga: the paths of jnana, bhakti, and karma yoga; differences and similarities
- The importance of these concepts and practices in Hinduism

Issues arising

- Is yoga essential in Hinduism?
- Which is more important in Hinduism – what people do or what they believe?
- The relative value and importance of each of the different ways to liberation; meditation versus good deeds or devotion to God

3. Worship in Hinduism

- The practice of puja in the home
- The nature, design and purpose of Hindu temples (mandirs)
- Worship in the temple, including havan, yajna and festival celebrations
- The importance of these places and forms of worship in Hinduism

Issues arising

- Which is more important – worship in the home or in the temple?
- If God is everywhere, why have special places of worship?
- Is worship essential to the Hindu way of life?

4. The Hindu way of life

- The four stages in life: brahmacharya (student), grihastha (householder), vanaprasta (retired person), and sannyasin (homeless wanderer). Duties for each stage, and meaning and importance of each stage
- Nature and role of holy men in Hinduism, with particular reference to sadhus, rishis and gurus
- Ashrams: their role and importance
- Nature and role of temple priests
- The importance of these holy men in Hinduism

Issues arising

- Is the path of the holy man superior to the path of the householder?
- The relative importance of the home and the ashram in expressing the Hindu way of life
- Is renouncing the world the ultimate goal of the Hindu way of life?
- Is the role of temple priests more essential to Hinduism than that of gurus?

OR**Sikhism (Unit J)**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. The Gurus

- Life and teachings of the Gurus within the context of the background of their time, with particular reference to Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan, Guru Har Gobind, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh
- The formation of the Khalsa in 1699, and the reasons for its formation

Issues arising

- The extent to which the Gurus' teaching challenged the social, political and religious culture of their time
- The contribution of each of the Gurus to the development of Sikhism, and the relative importance of each
- The significance of the human Gurus for Sikhs today

2. Festivals

- Vaisakhi: the celebration of Vaisakhi in the home, gurdwara and local community; its significance for Sikhs
- Diwali: celebration in the home and community, and the significance of the festival for Sikhs
- Gurburbs: celebrations of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh – their form and significance

Issues arising

- How far festivals are important in the lives of Sikhs today, and what they contribute to Sikh life and faith
- Whether the 'public' nature of festivals, or their inner meaning, is the more important
- How far Sikh festivals only look to the past, rather than relating to the present world

3. The Guru Granth Sahib and the Gurdwara

- The Guru Granth Sahib – formation, structure and content; the authority of the Guru Granth Sahib
- The uses of the Guru Granth Sahib by Sikhs today
- The gurdwara: its nature; its role in Sikh life and faith
- The Golden Temple complex, including Harmandir Sahib, Akal Takt

Issues arising

- Accessibility of the Guru Granth Sahib to members of the sangat and its importance to Sikhs
- Whether the gurdwara adequately meets the needs of Sikhs in the United Kingdom (UK) today
- Is the gurdwara more a social institution than a religious one?
- How significant is the Golden Temple for Sikhs, particularly UK Sikhs?

4. Diwan and langar

- Worship in the home and worship (diwan) in the gurdwara
- The practice of langar in its historical and present-day context
- The concept of sewa and the various ways it is practised
- Langar as an expression of sewa; ‘the laboratory of sewa’

Issues arising

- Relative importance of worship in the home and diwan in the gurdwara
- Whether langar today is a true expression of its original intentions
- The relative importance to Sikh life of diwan, sewa and langar
- How far Sikhism emphasises practice more than belief

AS Unit K
World Religions 2:
Christianity Or Judaism
Or Islam 1 *The Way of*
Submission
(RSS10)

The same papers are set for Unit 1 and Unit 2. To qualify for an AS award candidates must enter for **two different** units. Candidates may **not** cash in results for different sections of one unit (such as Christianity and Judaism), although they are not precluded from changing their choice of sections if they are re-sitting a unit.

EITHER

Christianity

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Some beliefs about God: Trinity and salvation

- Christian idea that there are three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and that each is equal and separate from each other with distinct, yet unifying, actions. Knowledge about each of the persons of the Trinity and what they are thought to be and what they are thought to do
- The statements about the persons of The Trinity in the Apostles and Nicene creeds
- Christian ideas about salvation: why it is necessary, with ideas about original sin and human nature
- How salvation can be achieved through the death of Jesus and people's beliefs about this alongside good works

Issues arising

- Whether Christian belief about the Trinity is rational
- Does teaching about the Trinity force people to be either theocentric or christocentric?
- How can Christianity be monotheistic with these ideas?
- Is salvation necessary? Can the death of a person, Jesus, have any effect upon salvation?

2. Christian scriptures: nature and purpose

- Nature of the scriptures: Old and New Testaments; recognition of their origins
- Different types of material found in the scriptures, including: Jewish history; history of early church; Jewish law and Christian guidance about how to live the Christian life; the gospels
- Issues about the authority and status of the material, ranging from the belief that it is the absolute word of God to the belief that it is people's ideas about God and his works

- Purpose and use in churches; how Christians see the Old Testament and why it is in the collection of Christian scripture; the New Testament as a record of Jesus' life and teachings; the letters and their role. Different ways scripture is used in Christian churches and the different ways scripture is treated

Issues arising

- Does knowing about different types of material in the scriptures help an understanding of them?
- Can people really live according to the scriptures?
- Issues about the authority and status of Christian scriptures

3. Aspects of Christian worship

Candidates should be able to illustrate their answers by referring to **two** different Christian denominations.

- Beliefs and practices about elements found in worship, both public and private; prayer, use of scriptures, music and ceremony
- Role and status of clergy and laity in worship
- Beliefs and practices associated with the observance of the eucharist

Issues arising

- Is public worship important?
- Why have an ordained ministry?
- How can Christianity allow such different approaches to the beliefs and practices of giving the people bread and wine?

4. A Christian way of life; initiation, marriage and death

- Beliefs and practices associated with baptism and forms of confirmation
- Beliefs and practices associated with marriage
- Beliefs and practices associated with death

Issues arising

- The Christian debate about infant and believer initiation
- The debate about the status of marriage in legal terms and issues about divorce and remarriage
- Different Christian ideas about why there is a need to prepare for death, resurrection and judgement

OR**Judaism (Unit K)**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. God and his people

- Beliefs about the relationship between God and the Jews: the idea of the chosen people; beliefs about the covenant relationship as it is seen today
- The nature of God, including: a loving, merciful God, but equally one who will punish; ideas found in the Psalms
- Challenges to the traditional Jewish ideas about God in the 21st century

Issues arising

- The relevance of the concepts of 'chosen people' and the covenant for Jews today. Are the Jews really special?
- In the light of Jewish history, is it possible to maintain that God is omnipotent and all-loving?
- The relevance of the concept of corporate responsibility as found in the covenant for Jews today

2. Scripture

- Jewish views of the nature of the scriptures: Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim (Tanak); type and style of material found in each
- Authority of scripture(s) as the word of God
- Use of scripture in Judaism: in worship, the study of scripture
- The Talmud: its nature and use in Judaism; the relationship between other scriptures and the Talmud

Issues arising

- Can different views about the scriptures lead to different styles of Judaism?
- Has the strong scriptural nature of Jewish worship prevented it from developing into something relevant for the 21st century?
- The relevance of the Talmud for a full understanding of Jewish scripture

3. Aspects of worship and festivals: Shabbat, Yom Kippur and Pesach

- Shabbat services in the synagogue: Shabbat eve, morning, additional/afternoon, concluding observances in the home; teachings about Shabbat
- Use of scripture and prayer in services; role of rabbi and cantor; role of men; general style of worship
- Yom Kippur: preparation with ten days of penitence, practice on the day, fasting, synagogue services, teaching about meaning and purpose of the day
- Pesach: home celebration, preparation of home, family occasion – seder meal, ceremony during meal. Meaning and teachings expressed during meal and whole of Pesach: salvation and God's purpose and power

Issues arising

- The significance of each of these festivals; their relative significance
- Home or synagogue – which is more important for Jewish celebrations?
- Is it the social, the educational or the spiritual aspects of festivals that are most valuable today?

4. Styles of Judaism: Orthodox and Reform beliefs and practices

- Key differences in beliefs between Orthodox and Reform Jews
- The beliefs about the Temple
- The centrality of the land of Israel
- Practices in the synagogue; the differences: seating of men and women, the use of music and Hebrew, length of Shabbat services, the rabbi
- Different ways of living as a Jew: religious observances in daily life
- Different definitions of who is a Jew
- Role and status of women in Orthodox and Reform Judaism

Issues arising

- Relationships between Orthodox and Reform Jews
- Is the role of women only in the home?
- Which style of Judaism survives more comfortably in diaspora?

OR

Islam 1 *The Way of Submission* (Unit K)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. The Qur'an

- The revelation, compilation and authority of the Qur'an
- The use of the Qur'an in worship and in everyday life
- The use of the Qur'an as a source of law
- The importance of the Qur'an for Muslims, including comparison and contrast with the importance of the hadith and the sunnah

Issues arising

- How far is the Qur'an the only guidance a Muslim needs?
- Are the commandments in the Qur'an for all time and for all places?
- Every Muslim can hear the words of the Qur'an, but who/what has the authority to say what those words mean today?

2. The Five Pillars

- The concept of worship
- The concept of Pillar
- Shahadah; Salah; Zakah; Sawm; Hajj
- The significance of the Five Pillars for Muslims, including their contribution to the development of the ideal Muslim character and of the Umma

Issues arising

- Which is most important – the actions of worship or the state of mind/intention of the worshipper, or both?
- Are the Five Pillars the most important duties for Muslims today?
- How far is it true that carrying out the Five Pillars makes a good Muslim?

3. The doctrine of God

- Tawhid: the oneness and uniqueness of God
- The implications of tawhid for Muslim life
- The error of shirk
- Humanity's relationship with God; the concept of Muslim, and the concept of God as lawgiver and judge

Issues arising

- If God is unique, how far can God be described or understood?
- How should 'Muslim' be defined?
- Is it good to fear God?

4. Key beliefs

- Risalah
Prophets – the nature, role and authority of prophets in Islam.
Muhammad as the seal of the prophets
Angels – their nature and role
- Akhirah
Judgement – God as lawgiver and judge; the role of recording angels; beliefs about the final judgement
- The implications of these beliefs for Muslim life

Issues arising

- How far is it true that, in matters of belief, the words of the Qur'an are believed but their meaning is disputed?
- How far are beliefs about angels, resurrection and judgement reasonable today?
- What is the importance of these beliefs for Muslims today?

AS Unit L

Islam 2 *The Life of the Prophet* (RSS11)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

Although questions will not be set on the sources of information about the Prophet's life, candidates should be generally aware of their nature and of differing views among Muslims about their reliability.

1. Jahiliyyah

The social, political and religious background to the rise of Islam in Arabia in the 6–7th century CE

- The concept of jahiliyyah
- The regional importance of Makkah as a centre of pilgrimage and trade
- The social situation – the tribal/clan system and the importance of the tradition of the ancestors; social problems in Makkan society
- The religious context: Bedouin polytheism; Christianity, Judaism and the Hanifs
- The main themes of the Prophet's teaching between 610 and 622 CE

Issues arising

- How far was the message/religion brought by Muhammad new? Was it a complete rejection of the beliefs and values of the day?
- How important is the concept of jahiliyyah today? How far is it true to say that the age of jahiliyyah ended with the coming of the Qur'an?
- How important to the success of Islam was the fact that Muhammad was born in Makkah?

2. Makkah 610-622 CE

- The call to Prophethood and Muhammad's role in Makkah
- The main themes of the Prophet's teaching between 610 and 622 CE
- Development of Islam in Makkah
- Opposition to the Prophet in Makkah – causes, nature and the responses to it
- Events leading to the Hijrah

Issues arising

- Was the Prophet's role in Makkah mainly, or only, as a 'Warner'?
- The importance of the Prophet's call in 610 both for the Prophet & the people
- How successful was the Prophet in Makkah?
- How important was the Prophet's career in Makkah in the development of Islam and for Islam today?

3. Madinah 622-632 CE

- The Hijrah and the challenges facing the emigrants
- Responses to those challenges
- Emergence and nature of the Umma in Madinah and elsewhere – the Muhajirun, the Ansar and other Muslims
- The status and role of the Prophet
- The conquest of Makkah and its significance

Issues arising

- The significance of the Hijrah for Islam today
- The importance of the Madinan period for Muslims today
- Why was Muhammad successful in this period – because he was a Prophet, because he was a statesman/warrior, or both
- Was the Umma at this time a spiritual or a political community?

4. The death of the Prophet, the emergence of the Caliphate and of the Sunni/Shi'a divide

- The Prophet's achievements by the time of his death
- The nature of the Umma
- The immediate consequences of the Prophet's death and responses to them
- The election, role and status of the Caliph – Sunni and Shi'a perspectives
- The emergence of Shi'a Islam

Issues arising

- The basis and nature of the Umma at the time of Muhammad's death and after – political, spiritual or both?
- The significance of these events for Islam today
- The significance of Muhammad's life for Islam today

3.2 A2 Unit 3 Studies in Religion

Candidates study **one** unit from a choice of eight (Unit 3A to Unit 3H).

A2 Unit 3A Religion and Ethics (RST3A)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Libertarianism, free will and determinism

- Free will: question of genetics and environment; free will curtailed by volition; contracting into societies; conflict of free wills
- Libertarianism: the personality and the moral self; the conscience; the causally undetermined choice
- Determinism: the principle of causality; 'hard' determinism and 'soft' determinism; internal and external causation
- A religious perspective on libertarianism and determinism

Issues arising

- How free are human actions and choices?
- Is it the case that, unless you are in complete isolation, you can never have true libertarianism?
- Does libertarianism require no influences to be truly free?
- If we are not free, can we be held responsible for our actions?
- Strengths and weaknesses of libertarianism, free will and determinism for making ethical choices

2. Virtue Ethics

- Aristotle's view: happiness (eudaimonia), moral and intellectual virtues, cardinal virtues and capital vices
- Modern Virtue Ethics: MacIntyre and Foot
- The application of Virtue Ethics to **one** issue of the candidate's choice **apart from issues in science and technology**

Issues arising

- Strengths and weaknesses of Virtue Ethics as an ethical system
- Is Virtue Ethics really different from deontological and teleological systems?
- The significance of a particular view of human nature for Virtue Ethics
- How compatible is Virtue Ethics with a religious approach to ethics?

3. Religious views on sexual behaviour and human relationships

Candidates will be expected to have studied the teachings of **one** of the six major world religions, but, where appropriate, may refer to more than one religion in their answers.

Candidates should note that views should focus upon:

- Scripture-based ideas which are rooted in text
- Institutional-based ideas which have been developed by a particular religious institution
- Individual-based ideas which will have been developed from individual conscience or interpretation of scripture/institutional-based ideas
- Sexual behaviour outside marriage, including pleasure and procreation
- Views on marriage as a sacred event or secular monogamy, polygamy, polyandry, adultery
- Human relationships, respect and responsibility for others, the abuse of power
- Concept of love (different styles: brotherly, physical, Christian agapé), family and children

Issues arising

- Because religious teaching is rooted in history, is it ever relevant to people today?
- Whether sexual behaviour is a matter that religion should concern itself with
- Is modern society setting its own codes of behaviour, and is religion simply trying to adapt to them?

4. Science and technology

- Experimentation (animals and humans) and the role of ethics in decision-making
- Inventions and the role of ethics in the control of their use (e.g. nuclear inventions)
- Scientific and technological advances and decisions about who benefits
- Human rights and the conflict with the use of technology, e.g. surveillance, data storage, cyber crime
- A religious perspective on these issues in science and technology

Issues arising

- Should science be controlled by ethics, and, if so, which ethical system?
- Is it better for ethics to be reactive – to respond to new scientific ideas?
- Can a scientific discovery be ‘undiscovered’?
- How far should society allow religion to control scientific and technological development?

A2 Unit 3B Philosophy of Religion (RST3B)

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Ontological argument and the relationship between reason and faith

- Understanding of the ontological argument as presented by Anselm and Descartes
- Understanding of the key objections to the ontological argument based on: the definition of God; existence as a predicate of God; the possibility of deriving existential claims from definition
- Responses to those objections
- The relationship between faith and reason reflected in the ontological argument, and the value of the argument for faith

Issues arising

- Does the ontological argument have any value for the non-believer?
- Does it successfully challenge disbelief in God?
- How successful is the argument as proof of God's existence?
- Would the success or failure of this argument have any significance for faith?

2. Religious language

- The problems of religious language – meaningfulness and the verification and falsification principles
- Responses to the verification principle, including language as an expression of a 'blik' (R.M. Hare) and eschatological verification (Hick)
- Different views of religious language: religious language as analogical and symbolic; language games; religious language as non-cognitive

Issues arising

- How successfully has religion responded to the challenges of the verification and falsification principles?
- Is it possible to talk meaningfully about God?
- How successful are the various explanations of the nature of religious language?

3. Body, soul and personal identity

- The nature and existence of the soul and the body/soul relationship – differing views
- Personal identity and the possibility of continued personal existence after death – immortality, resurrection, rebirth, reincarnation and replica theory
- Nature of Near Death Experiences and their value as evidence of survival beyond death

Issues arising

- Is the notion of personal *post mortem* existence coherent?
- Do Near Death Experiences provide reasonable grounds for belief in the afterlife?
- Is the notion of soul coherent and are there reasonable grounds for belief in the existence of a soul?

4. The problem of evil

- The concept of evil (natural and moral) and the logical and evidential problem of evil
- Religious responses to the problem of evil. Credit will be given for relevant knowledge of any theodicy, but candidates are expected to be familiar with the following:
 - the main themes of theodicies in the Augustinian tradition
 - the free will defence
 - John Hick's 'vale of soul making' theodicy (from the Irenaean tradition)
 - responses to evil in process thought

Issues arising

- The success of the theodicies as a response to the problem of evil
- What poses the greatest challenge to faith in God – natural evil or moral evil?
- Is free will a satisfactory explanation for the existence of evil in a world created by God?
- The strengths and weaknesses of these responses to the problem of evil

A2 Unit 3C
The History of Christianity
OR Religion and Art
(RST3C)

EITHER

The History of Christianity *The Christian Church in the 20th century*

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Feminist theology

- The rise of feminist theology in the 20th century; its diversity of perspectives
- Its criticisms of patriarchal structures and androcentric language; its critique of Biblical interpretation
- Key ideas in feminist theology: understandings of God, Jesus and of the roles and status of women and men
- Debates over the ordination of women

Issues arising

- The successes and limitations of feminist theology
- The importance of feminist theology
- Evaluation of arguments over the role of women in the ordained ministry

2. The Roman Catholic Church in the second part of the 20th century

- Factors leading to the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) and the main decisions of the Council
- The effects of Vatican II on the life of the Roman Catholic Church
- Liturgical changes
- Relationships with other churches
- Catholic responses to liberation theology

Issues arising

- Assessment of the need for Vatican II
- Assessment of the effects of Vatican II
- Extent to which changes were already in process
- Evaluation of responses to liberation theology
- Assessment of extent of ecumenical involvement

3. New forms of Christian fundamentalism in the second half of the 20th century

- The New Religious Right in America: its identity, characteristics and Biblical focus; its attitude to key moral issues, including abortion, gay rights and sexual permissiveness
- Political impact of Christian neo-conservatism both in America and a worldwide context; support for Israel
- Rise of fundamentalist groups in the United Kingdom (UK)
- Growth of independent evangelical churches

Issues arising

- Evaluation of the attraction of fundamentalism
- Assessment of the association of politics and religion
- Resonance or dissonance with the mood of the age

4. Black-led churches in the United Kingdom (UK) today

- Historical reasons for the rise of black-led churches
- Practices of particular groups, e.g. New Testament Church of God
- Distinctive organisation and styles of worship
- Distinctive theology

Candidates will be expected to show understanding of the diversity of churches which can be classed as 'black-led' and of the factors which led to the rise of these churches. They should be able to describe the particular and distinctive features of the worship in these churches, and to recognise some of the ways in which they relate to more 'mainstream' churches.

Issues arising

- Whether such churches help or hinder social cohesion
- Extent to which their rise was a response to prejudice or a natural development of a distinctive approach
- Extent to which they fit within the 'mainstream' of Christianity in the UK today, especially in terms of worship

OR**Religion and Art (Unit 3C)**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Iconography in the Orthodox Church

- What is an icon? Candidates should be able to refer to examples in their answers
- The symbolism of colour and the understanding of time and light in icons
- Teaching about icons and their use from the 7th Ecumenical Council and the work of St John of Damascus
- The role of icons in worship

Issues arising

- To what extent can icons be described as “more a work of worship than a work of art” or “a theological statement in painting”?
- The significance of icons in the Orthodox Church today
- Is an icon an idol?

2. Protestant art of the Reformation

- The contribution of art to the Reformation – with particular reference to engravings
- Protestant themes in the art of the Reformation
- Protestant responses to pre-Reformation Christian art
- Study of selected works of art – their meaning and significance:

Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the following paintings and with other examples of their own choice.

Lucas Cranach the Elder
(German, 1472–1553)

Christ Blessing the Children,
mid-1540s
Christ and the Adulteress,
mid-1540s

Workshop of
Jan Sanders van Hemessen
(Netherlandish, active by ca. 1524)

The Calling of Matthew

See the *Resources List* for sources of these paintings.

Issues arising

- The implications of Reformation art for society at the time
- Art of the Reformation: a reflection of the changes taking place or a cause of those changes?
- What significance does this art have for today?

3. Catholic art of the Counter-Reformation

- The context: main characteristics of pre-Reformation Christian art and criticisms of it
- Art in the Counter-Reformation: the Council of Trent and the nature and purpose of religious art, and responses to the views of the Council
- Bernini – the nature, purpose and impact of his religious art

Issues arising

- To what extent is this art distinctively Catholic?
- How far is Bernini's art propaganda, and to what extent was it consistent with the teachings of the Council of Trent?
- What significance does this art have for today?

3

4. Pre-Raphaelite religious art

A study of the symbolism and religious significance of major works by William Holman Hunt (1827–1910), with reference to:

- *The Light of the World*
- *The Scapegoat*
- *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*
- *The Shadow of Death*

Holman Hunt's understanding of the nature and purpose of religious art

Issues arising

- How far is it true that art such as this is not so much appreciated as de-coded?
- The significance of Holman Hunt for his time
- The relevance of the works for today

A2 Unit 3D Old Testament (RST3D)

3

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

The use of Bibles, including the Apocrypha, is allowed in the examination. Any version is permitted, provided that it does not contain notes, apart from plain cross-references or translators' footnotes. Centres will be required to ensure that Bibles taken into the examination room are suitable. Questions will be set on the assumption that all candidates will have Bibles before them in the examination room, but candidates will not be given credit for writing out lengthy quotations from the Bible. Biblical quotations used in questions will be taken from the Revised Standard Version. Where appropriate, the source of quotations will be given.

1. Ways of reading the Old Testament

- Christian Old Testament or Jewish Bible?
- The contribution of scholarship and of critical theories, including reader response theories

Passages for Study

Genesis 1–3; 6–9

Exodus 3^{1–12}; 14^{5–15}²¹

Candidates will be expected to be aware of how different forms of criticism may be applied to these passages, and different ways in which the passages may be understood.

Issues arising

- Whether critical approaches help or hinder understanding?
- Reading the Old Testament as history, as theology or as story
- The relative importance and value of various tools of study

2. God and humanity

- Views on the nature of God
- God's relationship to the world
- Views on the nature of the created world
- Views on the human condition, including the Fall
- Views on the nature of God and of the human condition to be found in the Wisdom literature

Passages for Study

Genesis 1–3; 6–9; 11^{1–9}

Exodus 3^{1–12}

Psalms 8, 104, 105

Wisdom 1–5

Ecclesiasticus 17^{1–18}¹⁴; 42^{15–43}³³

Issues arising

- The relevance of these ideas of God in the 21st century
- The relevance of these ideas of humanity and the human condition in the 21st century
- Evaluation of the relative significance/accessibility of different Old Testament views

3. The ways in which people believed they should live their lives

- Views on right living from the Wisdom literature and Law
- The relationship and differences between Wisdom and Law
- Ways in which Wisdom and Law shaped the lives of the people

Passages for StudyExodus 20¹–23¹⁹

Wisdom 1-5

Ecclesiasticus 17¹–18¹⁴; 42¹⁵–43³³**Issues arising**

- The relative importance of Wisdom and Law
- Relative significance/accessibility of material from Wisdom and Law in the 21st century
- Evaluation of the idea of Law as a basis for society

4. How the people coped in times of crisis – suffering and hope

- A people dispersed – the people's experience of, and reactions to, Exile
- The development of prophecy in the Exilic period
- Ways in which this helped people who were experiencing the Exile

Passages for Study

Psalm 137

Isaiah 40; 42¹⁻⁴; 43; 45; 49¹⁻⁶**Issues arising**

- The importance of the Exile for the people – positive or negative?
- The experience of Exile as a theme in human experience
- The extent to which the prophecy of the period would have given hope to the people

A2 Unit 3E New Testament (RST3E)

3

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

The use of Bibles, including the Apocrypha, is allowed in the examination. Any version is permitted, provided that it does not contain notes, apart from plain cross-references or translators' footnotes. Centres will be required to ensure that Bibles taken into the examination room are suitable. Questions will be set on the assumption that all candidates will have Bibles before them in the examination room, but candidates will not be given credit for writing out lengthy quotations from the Bible. Biblical quotations used in questions will be taken from the Revised Standard Version. Where appropriate, the source of quotations will be given.

1. The context of John's Gospel

- The relationship between John and the synoptic gospels
 - The Christian context, the Early Church
 - The Greek and Jewish context from which John draws

Issues arising

- The debate about the relationship between John and the synoptic gospels
- How does an understanding of the background to John's Gospel help an understanding of the gospel?
- How far was John's Gospel written in response to the situation and needs of the Early Church?
- Can John's Gospel be read without knowing about Jewish and Greek thinking and traditions?

2. The nature, role and purpose of the discourses in John's Gospel

The following are examples of discourses, and candidates will be expected to know about these in particular, although they may exemplify their answers from other material in John to support their answers. Much of the role and purpose will focus upon John's portrayal of Jesus and his ministry.

'I am the Bread of Life', John 6³⁰⁻⁵⁸

'I am the Light of the World', John 8¹²⁻¹⁹ and 9¹⁻⁴¹

'I am the Door of the Sheep', and 'I am the Good Shepherd', John 10¹⁻¹⁸

'I am the Resurrection and the Life', John 11¹⁻⁴⁴

'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life', John 14¹⁻⁷

'I am the True Vine', John 15¹⁻¹⁷

Issues arising

- How much of the discourses are John's interpretation of Jesus' teaching?
- Are the issues in the discourses of any relevance to people today?
- Do we really learn very much about the person of Jesus from John's records of the discourses?
- Does an understanding of the discourses require an understanding of Christian theology?

3. The nature, role and purpose of signs in John's Gospel

The following are examples of signs, and candidates will be expected to know about these in particular, although they may exemplify their answers from other material in John to support their answers. Much of the role and purpose will focus upon John's portrayal of Jesus and his ministry.

Water to Wine, John 2¹⁻¹¹

Healing of the Officer's Son, John 4⁴⁶⁻⁵⁴

The Crippled Man, John 5¹⁻¹⁸

The Feeding of the Five Thousand, John 6¹⁻¹⁵

Issues arising

- If John is correct, why would Jesus use signs rather than just telling people?
- Would people at the time have understood the signs as John does?
- Could the signs really have happened and does this matter to John anyway?
- Is an understanding of Christian theology necessary to understand signs?

4. The nature, role and purpose of the passion and resurrection narratives

Candidates will be expected to know the following passages in particular, although they may exemplify their answers from other material in John to support their answers. Much of the role and purpose will focus upon John's portrayal of Jesus and his ministry.

John 18–19 Passion narrative

John 20–21 Resurrection narrative

Issues arising

- Is there any history in John's accounts?
- Is John more interested in the death than in the resurrection?
- Does John see salvation only in these events?
- Are the passion and resurrection narratives really Christian theology?

A2 Unit 3F Religion and Contemporary Society (RST3F)

3

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Religion responding to the challenges facing the world

- Attitudes to, and actions on, war
- Attitudes to, and actions on, poverty
- Attitudes to, and actions on, environmental issues
- Attitudes to, and actions on, trade and aid

Candidates will be expected to have studied these areas in relation to specific teachings of **one or more** religion(s), and to actions and activities within recent history which show the religions' concerns for these matters. They should be able to exemplify their answers with current examples where appropriate.

Issues arising

- Relative importance of the different contemporary issues identified
- Extent to which attitudes relate to central teachings
- Assessment of the effectiveness of the actions in relation to the issues identified
- Extent to which it is appropriate for religions to be involved with the issues identified

2. Challenges to religion in contemporary society

- The concept of secularisation – a range of meanings and interpretations, including institutional decline, the removal of religion from the public to the private realms of life, the loss of a sense of mystery about the physical world, the diversification and fragmentation of religion
- The idea of a secular society
- The challenges posed by divisions within religions

Issues arising

- The extent to which the challenges identified threaten religion or provide it with new opportunities
- The extent to which changing religious structures and new types of religious movement challenge the concept of secularisation
- Whether the challenges identified apply more to Christianity than to other religions
- The extent to which UK society today is secular
- Whether challenges from outside the religion are greater than those from within

3. New forms of spirituality both within and outside religions

- Definitions of spirituality
- Spirituality both within and outside mainstream religious groups
- Work of Religious Experience Research Unit (RERU)
- New interest in forms of spirituality
- Sociological and psychological reasons for this current interest in new forms of spirituality

Candidates will be expected to show understandings of the concept of spirituality, and ways in which recent studies have focussed on spirituality outside as well as within traditional religious contexts (examples can be given from a range of contexts, but candidates will **not** be required to study specific groups outside the mainstream world religions)

Issues arising

- Extent to which spirituality can be seen to exist outside traditional religions
- Whether the rise in interest in spirituality is a natural response to institutional decline in mainstream religion
- Whether the rise in spirituality is a natural response to highly materialistic, commercialised society

3

4. Religion and national identity

Examples of ways in which religion has traditionally been linked to national identity in the United Kingdom (UK), and the ways in which this is found today in:

- The role of the established churches in England and Scotland
- The role and concept of civic religion
- The concept of a secular state

The main focus here is on the UK today, but credit will be given for awareness of relevant issues of religion and national identity in other societies. Candidates should be able to comment on the concept of an established church and to show awareness of the legal implications of this for the two churches listed. They should be able to evaluate the significance of churches holding such a position and contrast it with the position of other similar churches such as the Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland. They should be able to understand the sociological concept of civic religion and give relevant examples of this in national and local life. A contrast with other Western societies will be necessary in order to illustrate fully the notion of the secular state.

Issues arising

- Assessment of the extent to which religion is still linked to national identity in the UK today
- The importance of the role of civic religion and of its relevance in a range of situations
- The relevance of an established church in contemporary society
- The extent to which religion can be related to national identity within a secular state
- Evaluation of the desirability of the UK being seen as a secular state

A2 Unit 3G
World Religions 1:
Buddhism OR Hinduism
OR Sikhism
(RST3G)

EITHER

Buddhism

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Themes in Mahayana Buddhism

- The key similarities and differences between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism
- The bodhisattva, compassion, wisdom and the bodhicitta
- Skill in means, other power and transfer of merit
- The distinctive features of Pure Land Buddhism with particular reference to its Japanese forms

Issues arising

- Is Pure Land Buddhism the 'easy' path of Buddhism in which 'self effort' plays no part?
- How should the relationship between Mahayana Buddhism and the teaching of Gautama Buddha be described?
- Are the differences between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism more apparent than real?

2. Aspects of Buddhist philosophy

- The Tibetan Wheel of Life and the doctrine of paticcasamuppada – dependent origination
- Prajnaparamita and Madhyamaka school: relative and absolute reality; conventional and absolute truth; the identity of samsara and nirvana; sunyata (emptiness) with reference to the teachings of Nagarjuna

Issues arising

- What value, if any, have these ideas for Buddhists?
- Is it true that the teaching of the Madhyamaka school adds nothing to the teaching of the historical Buddha?
- If all words are simply conventions, what is the point of speaking or writing them?

3. Meditation

Aims and methods of meditation with reference to:

- vipassana and samatha, mindfulness and concentration
- metta
- Zen

The implications and importance of these practices for Buddhists

Issues arising

- Are these practices an escapist attempt not to face up to reality?
- Is meditation a religious practice?
- Is meditation an essential part of Buddhist practice?

4. Buddhist ethics

- The purpose of ethical living
- The nature of the five precepts and their application
- The six perfections and their development
- The implications of the ethical teaching of Buddhism for Buddhists today

Issues arising

- Are Buddhist ethics an unrealistic ideal for both individuals and for society today?
- Which is more important in Buddhism, the motive behind an action or the consequences of that action?
- What makes an action right or wrong?

OR**Hinduism (Unit 3G)**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Foundations of Hinduism

- The Indus Valley Civilisation; the nature of the evidence and discoveries; the social and religious aspects; the relationship between this early culture and aspects of Hinduism today
- Vedic religion: the nature of the Vedas; the different kinds of scriptures contained within them
- The difference between sruti and smriti
- The concept of god in the Vedas
- The use of the Vedas and their importance in Hindu life and worship

Issues arising

- Can Hinduism only be understood in relation to its early forms of expression?
- Are the Vedas the only true source of Hindu religious belief?
- Is sruti always superior to smriti as a source of authority?
- Are concepts of god in the Vedas so contradictory that they are incomprehensible?

2. Hindu dharma

- The concept of dharma as a fundamental principle in guiding moral behaviour and social relationships
- The meaning of Sanatana Dharma
- The laws and customs of varnashramadharma
- Hindu understandings of marriage, family life and the role of women

Issues arising

- Is varnashramadharma incompatible with, and contradictory to, Sanatana Dharma?
- Are Hindu understandings of marriage and family life rooted in religious teachings or cultural traditions, and are they out of line with contemporary society?
- Is caste completely outdated or still an integral part of the Hindu way of life?

3. Hinduism and society in the modern world

- Modern reform movements of the 19th and 20th centuries
- Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj, Dayananda Sarawati and the Arya Samaj
- Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission
- Gandhi as a Hindu reformer
- International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) as a contemporary movement in Hinduism

Issues arising

- The view that Hinduism was not in need of reform – this is just a western viewpoint
- Did the Hindu reformers transform Hinduism in the 20th century?
- The success and/or failure of reformers, including Gandhi and the reform movements

4. Hindu philosophy

- Hindu teaching on the nature of human destiny with reference to reincarnation, the law of karma, samsara and moksha
- The main ideas of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy:
 - Advaita Vedanta philosophy of Shankaracharya
 - Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) of Ramanuja

Issues arising

- Is Hinduism a fatalistic religion with no belief in free will?
- Which is more important to Hindus, a 'good' reincarnation or moksha?
- Are the philosophies of Shankaracharya and Ramanuja in conflict or complementary?

OR**Sikhism (Unit 3G)**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Sikh identity, marriage and family life

- Amrit sanskar: its form, meaning and significance
- Sikh identity as expressed in amritdhari, keshdhari, sahadhari, patit
- Anand karaj: its form, meaning and significance
- The importance of marriage and family life

Issues arising

- Whether it is necessary to be amritdhari to be a Sikh
- Whether it is necessary to be keshdhari to be a Sikh
- The importance of the panj kakke
- Assessment of views on marriage and family life

2. Key concepts and beliefs

- Concepts of mukti, nam simran, maya, haumai, karma
- Kirt karo, nam japo, vand kakko, and sewa
- Meaning and uses of the term guru; concept of God; the Mul Mantra

Issues arising

- Relative importance of the key concepts
- How practical is it to live by Sikh values in today's world?
- Does Sikhism have any credible answer to questions about the meaning and purpose of life, and why people suffer?

3. Sikh ethics and conduct

- Rahit Maryada: reasons for its publication; contents; key principles; importance for Sikhs today
- Concepts of miri and piri
- Concepts of sant sipahi (saint-soldier), dharam yudh (just war)

Issues arising

- The relevance of Sikh ethics in the 21st century
- Difficulties of following Sikh ethics in a secular society
- Relationship between concepts
- How far is it possible/realistic to combine spirituality with the use of force?

4. Equality and sewa

- Teachings of the Gurus on gender, caste and religious tolerance
- Practical application of these teachings today, in relation to the role and status of women, marriage and family life, the membership and organisation of gurdwaras, attitudes towards other faiths and towards patit Sikhs
- Contemporary expressions of sewa, for example Khalsa Aid as an expression of sewa

Issues arising

- Extent to which equality of gender and equality of caste are found in Sikhism today, with particular reference to the United Kingdom
- How far Sikh Punjabi cultural traditions support, or conflict with, Sikh religious ideals
- Changing nature and significance of sewa in today's world

A2 Unit 3H
World Religions 2:
Christianity OR Judaism
OR Islam
(RST3H)

3

EITHER**Christianity**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Origins and development of Christian vocation and service

- The origin of Christian vocation and service in the New Testament and the Early Church
- The nature and roles of religious orders today in the Christian churches
- Christian understandings of the lay and the ordained ministries
- The role of the church and the individual Christian in the wider community

Issues arising

- Can religious orders be of any relevance to 21st century Christians?
- Why has lay ministry become so significant in the 21st century?
- Have the Christian churches become irrelevant?

2. Christology

- The central issues of Christology: the debate in Christianity about the person of Jesus from the gospels forward: was he a good man?; was he God in human form?; how easy is it to maintain the Christian doctrine that Jesus was both fully God and fully man?
- Jesus' role as expressed in his ministry and in his death and resurrection
- Different views of Jesus found in the Christian churches today

Issues arising

- Is Jesus only popular today because he is seen as a role model for a good man?
- How convincing are traditional Christian teachings about Christology?
- Is the best solution to see Jesus as God in disguise?

3. Christian action

- Christian teaching and views about the duty of the individual, ranging from church attendance to living a good Christian life, as an example to others
- Concepts of mission from the gospels to the present day, with some examples of different types and styles of mission
- Christian action in the local and international arena, with examples of different types and styles of action from Christian Aid to Easter marches of witness, from the role of Christians in government to the Council of Churches

Issues arising

- Is being a good Christian only about helping others?
- Does Christian mission mean the rejection of all other religions as, at best, lesser and, at worst, wrong?
- Is Christianity an irrelevance to the world as a whole?

4. Christian spirituality

- The different ideas Christians have about spirituality
- The presence and the work of the Holy Spirit
- Spirituality through good work
- Spirituality through prayer
- Spiritual communities, including Taizé, Iona, monastic communities

Issues arising

- Does the Holy Spirit work only through people?
- Is spirituality of any significance for many Christians today?
- Does spirituality demand a rejection of the material world?

OR**Judaism (Unit 3H)**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. Origins and development of Zionism

- The two major styles of Zionism – religious and political
- Religious Zionism: origins of religious Zionism can be seen arising from the time of Moses with the Law and clarification of the nature of Judaism
- Political Zionism: finds its origins in the covenant promise of the Land, now Israel. More formal development in the 19th to 21st centuries
- The central beliefs and claims of religious and political Zionism
- The role of Zionism today for the Jewish community both in Israel and in diaspora

Issues arising

- How far does knowledge of the origins and development help an understanding of Zionism today?
- Is political Zionism the problem today?
- How does Zionism justify violence and even killing?
- How far Zionism reflects the views of, and is supported by, the worldwide Jewish community

2. Holocaust issues and theology

- Issues concerning the Holocaust for Jews; the conflict between the event and ideas about God and the covenant relationship, and the concept of the chosen people
- The determination that the Holocaust will never happen again
- How theology has attempted to provide some answers to these questions; the different types of theology, including views about the following 'solutions':
 - that there is need to review understandings about the nature of God
 - that God has a purpose that humans cannot understand
 - that the Holocaust is a punishment from God
 - that good has arisen from the Holocaust so it was justified
 - that there is a need to revise the Jewish ideas about the covenant and the special relationship with God

Issues arising

- To what extent is the Holocaust still an issue for Jews today?
- Does the 'solution' require a change in views about God and his relationship with the Jews?
- How convincing is each of the responses to the Holocaust?
- Is the Holocaust really about good and evil?

3. Bar/bat mitzvah, marriage and divorce

- The practices of bar/bat mitzvah, marriage and divorce and how they are related to, or reflect, Jewish teaching and ideas
- The distinction between the Orthodox and the Reform views and practices, and why there are differences
- The meaning of each practice for the individual

Issues arising

- Can bar and bat mitzvah be religiously important when they are not scriptural?
- Is the Reform approach to the nature and practice of bar mitzvah, marriage and divorce more relevant today than the Orthodox approach?
- Is Judaism consistent in claiming that marriage is important but also allowing divorce?
- Is Judaism fair to women?

3

4. The Hasidic traditions

- The origins in Spain: Convivencia
- Kabbalah: its nature and influence in Judaism; present day interest in Kabbalah
- The development of Hasidism in eastern Europe; teaching and practices
- Hasidism today: its characteristics; the extent to which it is practised; relationship to other streams of Jewish tradition

Issues arising

- Should Hasidism keep east European traditions?
- Is Hasidism the best example of spirituality in Judaism?
- Is Hasidism outmoded?
- Assessment of the contribution of Hasidism to Judaism

OR**Islam (Unit 3H)**

Four topics are identified for study and there will be one question based on each topic. Candidates must answer **two** questions.

Understanding of any one topic may be informed by a study of the others, and, where relevant, candidates may draw on material from more than one topic in their answer to any question set. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material for study.

Where appropriate, answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied, either within the religion or within the scholarship on that religion.

AO1 questions will be set on the content listed below.

AO2 questions will be focused on the issues surrounding the interpretation of the material studied or on the issues arising from that material identified in the boxes below.

1. The Shari'a and the Muslim way of life

- The nature and authority of the Shari'a – traditional and modernist views
- How the will of God may be known regarding contemporary issues
- Differing understandings of ijihad

Issues arising

- How far may the Shari'a be considered a human, rather than a divine law?
- What is the importance of ijihad (individual reasoning) for Islam today, and who has the authority to use it?
- What is the importance of the Shari'a and of ijihad today?

2. Shi'a Islam

- Distinctive beliefs, with particular reference to the role and importance of religious leaders
- Distinctive practices, with particular reference to the celebration and significance of Ashura, including the importance of suffering, martyrdom and the significance of the death of Husayn
- The Imamate – including the hidden Imam and Mahdi

Issues arising

- The importance and implications of these beliefs and practices today
- To what extent are Sunni and Shi'a Islam both similar and different?
- What is the relationship between the role and importance of Muhammad and the role and importance of the Imam in Shi'a Islam?

3. God and humanity

- Distinctive ideas in the Sufi concept of God and in the Sufi understanding of the relationship between God and human beings
- The immanence and transcendence of God
- Predestination, human free will and the justice of God

Issues arising

- The implications of these ideas for Muslim life
- How far has Islam resolved the tensions between the ideas of the immanence and transcendence of God, and between predestination and human free will?
- How should verses that imply that God 'leads astray whoever he will', e.g. Sura 74 v 34, be interpreted?

4. Women and family life

- Nature, purpose and importance of the family in Islam
- Role and status of women
- Regulations concerning marriage and divorce

Issues arising

- What are the implications of these for Islam today?
- How far is the role and status of Muslim women a cultural or religious matter?
- Equality of gender – is this possible and desirable in Islam?

3.3 A2 Unit 4 Religion and Human Experience

Candidates study **one** unit from a choice of three (Unit 4A, Unit 4B, Unit 4C).

Unit 4A (RST4A)

Two topics are identified for study and there will be **two** questions based on each topic. Candidates must answer **one** question from the topic chosen.

Answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

- Either** Topic I Life, Death and Beyond
Or Topic II Perceptions of Ultimate Reality
Or Topic III Religious Experience

EITHER

Topic I Life, Death and Beyond

- Religious and secular perspectives on the nature and value of human life
 - Religious
 - Nature: e.g. created by God, not perfect, redeemable, dualistic; and/or non-theistic perspectives
 - Value: e.g. in the image of God, life is a gift from God, highest element in creation; and/or non-theistic perspectives
 - Secular
 - Nature: another animal, one aspect of evolution, mortal
 - Value: responsible for preservation of environment, each human is of equal value
- Eschatological and apocalyptic, religious and secular teaching and attitudes, can all be treated together as teaching and attitudes towards the future, especially the end. Within a religious context there are examples of teaching in scriptures; apocalyptic is often associated with scripture in some hidden or coded form. Secular interests in 'the end of the world' or time signs and indications of when this might be
- Religious and secular ideas about the importance of the present life and life after death

Religious views often focused around judgement, either imposed or self-imposed with idea that life on earth is a stage in human existence. Secular view that there is only one life and that is on earth, but this may not lead to egotistical view; view that life after death does not give life on earth a purpose
- Beliefs about death and beyond, both religious and non-religious.

Death sometimes seen as the end; there is nothing beyond; sometimes seen as the end of the present being but with elements moving beyond death, a stage in the existence of a human – a rite of passage

Beyond, a spiritual world, a world which is in suspension awaiting something, a parallel existence either bodily or not, an existence with God; a transition back to another existence; continuity of personal identity

OR**Topic II Perceptions of Ultimate Reality (Unit 4A)**

- The definitions and understandings of God or Ultimate Reality in one or more religions. Differing understandings of the relationship between God or Ultimate Reality and the physical world, including ideas of immanence and transcendence. Distinctions between natural and revealed theology.
- Differing understandings of the human situation in relation to God or Ultimate Reality, including, e.g. dependent, fallen, predestined, servant, soul making and under judgement; or conditioned reality as opposed to unconditioned etc. The impact of such beliefs on the way people live their lives and on their attitude towards life. Secular understandings of role played by a concept of God in human thinking with reference to Marx, Freud and Durkheim, and the effect that a concept of God may have upon society.
- Religious experiences as sources of knowledge about God or Ultimate Reality. The nature of such religious experiences, such as mysticism and revelation, and issues of verification and how anyone would know that they had experienced God / Ultimate Reality. What may be learned further about God / Ultimate Reality through such experiences, especially either personal or public religious experiences.
- Talking about God or Ultimate Reality. Examples of God talk / talk of Ultimate Reality often regarded as religious. Language – its use and importance in religion and beyond. How far can religious language be meaningful? Verification and falsification. How God and ideas of the Ultimate Reality are represented in art and the use of symbols as representations. The significance of religious language, art, and symbol for people today as they seek to know and understand about God or Ultimate Reality.

OR

Topic III Religious Experience

- Ideas about what might in general terms be regarded as a religious experience and what the term might mean. The relationship between definitions of God/gods/Ultimate Reality and any idea of religious experience. Identification of different types and styles of religious experience with particular reference to conversion, visions, revelation, mystical experience. Scholars' definitions with particular reference to characteristics and process of the different types and style of religious experience.
- Influence of religious experience as a source of (i) religious practice (ii) good religious behaviour, in both western and eastern religious traditions. The value of religious experience in particular religions, both as historical events and as ongoing present day experiences.
- Religious experience as a foundation for particular religions. Religious experience as a source of faith for individual religious people, and the contribution religious experience makes to religious faith as a whole.
- Methods for establishing the validity of different religious experiences, both individual and corporate experiences. The verification of religious experience and its place, if verified, in a particular religion the value for the religious community and for an individual.

Unit 4B (RST4B)

Three topics are identified for study and there will be **two** questions based on each topic. Candidates must answer **one** question from the topic chosen.

Answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

- Either** Topic I Religious Fundamentalism
Or Topic II Religion and Contemporary Society
Or Topic III Religion and the Visual Arts

EITHER

Topic I Religious Fundamentalism

- The Nature of Fundamentalism
 - Definitions: the Christian origins of the term; its precise and general meanings; its application to religious movements in other faiths
 - Understanding of fundamentalism as a reaction against scientific rationalism, liberal modernist religious views, and secularism
 - Outline knowledge of historical, social, economic and political factors in its rise and development
- Fundamentalism in its context

Candidates should choose **two** movements and then consider the following:

 - The key beliefs and distinctive practices of the movements studied; their attitude to social, moral and political issues, including education, the role of women, crime and punishment and war.
 - Consideration of the similarities and differences between the chosen movements studied.
 - Ways in which the movements are related to and differ from and influence, the mainstream religious tradition from which they emerged.
 - Ways in which fundamentalist movements seek to reject, challenge, reform or revolutionise society and how far they are successful.

Candidates will be expected to illustrate their answers by reference to specific examples drawn from their knowledge of the origins and key features of **at least two** religious fundamentalist movements. Any movements may be chosen, which may be from the same religion or from different religions. The following are examples of appropriate movements, but others may be used:

- in Christianity – Plymouth Brethren, Elim Pentecostalism, Southern Baptists
- in Islam – Muslim Brethren, Khomeini's revolution, Taliban
- in Judaism – Lubavitch, Haredi, Mizrakhi

N.B. The terms 'Fundamentalism' and 'Fundamentalist' are used throughout this Specification in a technical sense. In popular usage, this term has recently acquired a pejorative nuance concerning the use of aggressive, highly vocal, political or violent action. The identification of a movement here does not imply, nor should such an inference be drawn, that it is fundamentalist in this non-technical sense.

OR

Topic II Religion and Contemporary Society (Unit 4B)

- The challenges posed by the practice of religion today. Issues of freedom of religion, including wearing of religious dress and symbols, time and space to practise religion. Attitudes of non-members of a particular faith to those who are adherents and attitudes of adherents of a particular faith towards non-members. The challenges of practising religion in a secular society or being a minority religion in a religious society. Issues of identity, integration and assimilation, the tension between religious adherence and nationalism.
- Attitudes towards sexual behaviour, marriage and the family. Religious teachings about the role of the family and models of family life. Arranged marriage, roles of children and religious responsibilities, achieving religious adulthood, the significance of the home and family life. Challenges to religious teachings and practices from secular sources or other faiths.
- The structure, nature and role of one faith community within the United Kingdom (UK). How a particular religion is organised from local level (the place of worship) to national (UK) and international level, and the relationship between each different level. The importance of each level of organisation for an individual and for the religion as a whole in the UK. The effect of each level of organisation upon UK society as a whole, local and national.
- Interfaith relations and dialogue. Examples of interfaith relations and dialogue; national and international organisations such as World Congress of Faiths and Inter-Faith Network for the UK. Specific examples of interfaith relations, for example, Council for Christians and Jews working at local level with meetings, discussions and conferences. The impact of interfaith dialogue and relations upon religions involved in such activities and those who are not. The impact of interfaith action and co-operation upon UK society as a whole.

Candidates will be expected to illustrate their answers by reference to specific examples drawn from their knowledge of religion(s) in the United Kingdom (UK) today. They should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the range of practice and attitudes across different groups within the religion(s) concerned.

OR

Topic III Religion and the Visual Arts (Unit 4B)

- The role and importance of the visual arts within **one or more** religions(s). The visual arts chosen should be those relevant to the religion(s), and may include, for example, architecture (especially places of worship), calligraphy (especially scriptures) and use of calligraphy (in places of worship).
- Issues surrounding the presentation of religious figures, especially God or religious leaders. Issues about presenting religious ideas and teachings in art. Issues which a particular religion may have over freedom of expression and censorship in relation to visual arts.
- Specific examples from religious art of the different approaches taken by particular religions towards the portrayal of: divine being(s), demons or evil, judgement, heaven and hell.
- With reference to the works of **two** particular artists, the purpose, symbolism and religious significance of particular works for a specific religion or for religion in general. The impact and continuing relevance of the selected works to the religion and perhaps to a wider audience. The strengths and weaknesses of the works of the **two** chosen artists in terms of their ability to express religious ideas.

Unit 4C (RST4C)

Three topics are identified for study and there will be **two** questions based on each topic. Candidates must answer **one** question from the topic chosen.

Answers should show awareness that there are differing views on the topics and issues studied.

- Either Topic I Religious Authority**
Or Topic II Ways of Moral Decision-Making
Or Topic III Ways of Reading and Understanding Scripture

EITHER

Topic I Religious Authority

- Sources of religious authority: an authority which can be seen to be an authority *per se*; God, religious conscience, ultimate truth. What the authority is in terms of nature and how the authority is exercised
- Types and uses of religious authority; authorities which arise from, or are dependent upon, the source(s), scripture, religious leaders, religious institutions, tradition. How the authority is established and the relationship with the source. The way the authority is used within one or more religion(s)
- Challenges to religious authority and responses to the challenges from within a religion, such as scriptural interpretation / criticism. Secular challenges often from a scientific or philosophical background. Religious responses including: changing to adapt to a challenge; acceptance of a variety of positions, not only one; or the view that religion is totally different and can have a different approach
- Secular authority and challenges to religious authority. Different types of secular authority; the political, scientific, philosophical, the secular world views. How religious authority may be challenged by secular authority; the consequences of such challenges for the authority of the religion, in society, in the worshipping community and for individuals.

OR**Topic II Ways of Moral Decision-Making (Unit 4C)**

- Religious and moral decision-making. The use of religious law(s) both from scripture and from religious institutions. Religious teaching and guidance about behaviour and how to determine good and bad, right and wrong. The use of religious conscience for allowing an individual to determine how to make decisions. The role of religious tradition in determining behaviour.
- The application of religious ethical teaching and systems to **one** of the topics below, either A **or** B.
- Ethical systems, both deontological and teleological, and how these can be used to assist people in making moral decisions; consideration of which style might be more suitable or have fewer weaknesses. Consideration of hybrid styles of ethical systems and whether these are more suitable for moral decision-making in 21st century societies.
- The application of ethical systems to **one** of topics A **or** B, below.
- Candidates should study **one** of the topics (A **or** B) below to support their answers:

A. Medical research and medical developments

The use of embryos, human cells, medical trials on humans. The use of animals for medical research. Brain death, life support systems, limitation of the availability of drugs / medical services for people.

B. Business practice and economics

Moral management of national economies (macro). The moral management of individual companies (micro), ethical investment. The developed economies versus the third world developing economies. Approaches to emerging economies, including China and India.

OR

Topic III Ways of Reading and Understanding Scripture (Unit 4C)

Candidates must choose **one** religion and its scriptures to deal with the following:

- Issues of status and translation: the Word of God or a realisation of Ultimate Reality. The status of translated scriptures. Different types of literature found in the scriptures and the relevance of the differences. The issue of status and historicity. An outline of the history of the scriptures from origin to the 21st century and the relevance of events in the particular history.
- The use and status of scriptures in the religion. Examples of the use of scriptures in worship and how this shows the religion's attitude towards the status of the scriptures. The role of the scriptures in the personal lives of people and in the home.
- Teaching arising from the scriptures. Teaching about God or Ultimate Reality. Teaching about the relationship between God or Ultimate Reality and humankind. Teaching about how and why humans should behave in a particular way in all aspects of their lives. Ideas arising from the scriptures about the future both at a personal level and at a mankind level.
- Approaches to the study of the scriptures. The role of scholars in an understanding or an interpretation of the scriptures. Whether there can be criticism of the scriptures from within the religion and the reaction of the religion to those outside the religion who study and may offer criticisms of the scriptures. The status of personal study of the scriptures and how an individual might seek to gain a full and perfect insight into the scriptures. The relevance of the scriptures for religious people in the 21st century. The role of the scriptures in the religion's mission work.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Aims

This Specification is designed to encourage students to:

- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for a rigorous study of religion and relate it to the wider world;
- treat the subject as an academic discipline by developing knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to a specialist study of religion;
- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion;
- reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their learning.

4.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

The Assessment Objectives are common to AS and A Level. The assessment units will assess the following Assessment Objectives in the context of the content and skills set out in Section 3 (Subject Content).

Candidates will be required to meet the following Assessment Objectives. Knowledge and understanding are closely linked. At A Level, candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in greater depth and over a wider range of content than at AS Level.

- AO1 Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study. In addition, for synoptic assessment, A Level candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the connections between different elements of their course of study.
- AO2 Critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument. In addition, for synoptic assessment, A Level candidates should relate elements of their course of study to their broader context and to aspects of human experience.

Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

In GCE specifications which require candidates to produce written material in English, candidates must:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear;
- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter;
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

In this Specification, QWC will be assessed in all questions and in all units.

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for AS

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)		Overall weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	
AO1	33.3	33.3	66.6
AO2	16.7	16.7	33.3
Overall weighting of units (%)	50	50	100

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A Level

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS and A2 units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)				Overall weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	
AO1	16.7	16.7	15	15	63.3
AO2	8.3	8.3	10	10	36.7
Overall weighting of units (%)	25	25	25	25	100

4.3 National Criteria

This Specification complies with the following.

- The Subject Criteria for Religious Studies
- The Code of Practice for GCE
- The GCE AS and A Level Qualification Criteria
- The Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria

4.4 Prior Learning

There are no prior learning requirements. Any requirements set for entry to a course following this Specification are at the discretion of centres. However, the opportunity is provided to build on

knowledge, understanding and skills gained in Religious Studies at GCSE and in the GCSE Religious Studies Short Course.

4.5 Synoptic Assessment and Stretch and Challenge

Synoptic assessment in Religious Studies is made in the A2 units. In Unit 3, questions will provide an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge and understanding beyond the immediate demands of the question, and to demonstrate evaluative skills. These will be credited where appropriately demonstrated. The main focus of synoptic assessment will be in Unit 4. Candidates will be expected to draw together the knowledge and skills they have developed during the course in a comparative analysis which demonstrates understanding of the links between the central elements of each of their chosen topics at A2 (Units 3 and 4).

The questions in Units 3 and 4 will test candidates' understanding of complex issues and relationships in each topic in conjunction with their skills of critical analysis and reasoned argument. The accessible wording of the questions will enable candidates of differing abilities to be challenged at their own level, but the questions will be open-ended and will allow the most able to show the breadth of their knowledge. The descriptor for the highest Level of Response in the Mark Scheme will ensure that the most able are stretched in a sustained application of their knowledge and skills.

4.6 Access to Assessment for Disabled Students

AS/A Levels often require assessment of a broader range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised AS/A Level qualification and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

Candidates who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all the competences had been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in the future.

5 Administration

5.1 Availability of Assessment Units and Certification

Examinations and certification for this Specification are available as follows:

	Availability of units		Availability of certification	
	AS	A2	AS	A Level
January 2009	✓			
June 2009	✓		✓	
January 2010	✓		✓	
June 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓
January 2011 onwards	✓		✓	✓
June 2011 onwards	✓	✓	✓	✓

N.B. **All** AS units are available in **both** January and June, and **all** A2 units are available in June.

5.2 Entries

Please refer to the current version of *Entry Procedures and Codes* for up to date entry procedures. You should use the following entry codes for the units and for certification.

AS Units 1 and 2

Unit A – RSS01
 Unit B – RSS02
 Unit C – RSS03
 Unit D – RSS04
 Unit E – RSS05
 Unit F – RSS06
 Unit G – RSS07
 Unit H – RSS08
 Unit J – RSS09
 Unit K – RSS10
 Unit L – RSS11

A2 Unit 3

Unit 3A – RST3A
 Unit 3B – RST3B
 Unit 3C – RST3C
 Unit 3D – RST3D
 Unit 3E – RST3E
 Unit 3F – RST3F
 Unit 3G – RST3G
 Unit 3H – RST3H

A2 Unit 4

Unit 4A – RST4A
 Unit 4B – RST4B
 Unit 4C – RST4C

AS certification – 1061

A Level certification – 2061

5.3 Private Candidates

This Specification is available to private candidates. Private candidates should write to AQA for a copy of 'Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates'.

5.4 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

We have taken note of equality and discrimination legislation and the interests of minority groups in developing and administering this specification.

We follow the guidelines in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*. This is published on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk>) or you can follow the link from our website (<http://www.aqa.org.uk>).

Access Arrangements

We can make arrangements so that candidates with disabilities can access the assessment. These arrangements must be made **before** the examination. For example, we can produce a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment.

Special Consideration

We can give special consideration to candidates who have had a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination. Where we do this, it is given **after** the examination.

Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

5.5 Language of Examinations

We will provide units in English only.

5.6 Qualification Titles

Qualifications based on this specification are:

- AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Religious Studies, and
- AQA Advanced Level GCE in Religious Studies.

5.7 Awarding Grades and Reporting Results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A Level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A* candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A Level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of the A2 units.

For AS and A Level, candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

5.8 Re-sits and Shelf-life of Unit Results

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, as long as the specification is still valid.

Candidates may re-sit a unit any number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result for each unit will count towards the final qualification. Candidates who wish to repeat a

qualification may do so by re-taking one or more units. The appropriate subject award entry, as well as the unit entry/entries, must be submitted in order to be awarded a new subject grade.

Candidates will be graded on the basis of the work submitted for assessment.

Appendices

A Performance Descriptions

These performance descriptions show the level of attainment characteristic of the grades at A Level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at the A/B and E/U boundaries at AS and A2. The descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the Assessment Objectives (see Section 4) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

AS Performance Descriptions for Religious Studies

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2
A/B boundary performance descriptions	Knowledge and Understanding Candidates characteristically: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> select accurate and relevant material explain clearly relevant features or key ideas, supported by examples and/or sources of evidence use accurately a range of technical language and terminology show evidence of being familiar with issues raised by relevant scholars, or a variety of views, where appropriate. 	Evaluation Candidates characteristically: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> construct a coherent and well-organised argument supported by examples and/or sources of evidence identify strengths and weaknesses of the argument use accurate and fluent expression.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	Knowledge and Understanding Candidates characteristically: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> select limited but relevant material show basic understanding of relevant features or key ideas, supported by occasional examples and/or sources of evidence show limited accurate use of technical language and terminology. 	Evaluation Candidates characteristically: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate minimal organisation and/or limited coherence offer mainly descriptive answers with little argument, justification or evaluation use language and expression that lacks precision.

A2 Performance Descriptions for Religious Studies

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Knowledge and Understanding Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) address the question specifically and select relevant material b) deploy comprehensive and mostly accurate knowledge, expressed lucidly c) use a range of technical language and terminology accurately and consistently d) competently explain appropriate examples and/or relevant sources/scholars. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment, candidates perform at this level in relation to connections between different elements of their course of study.</p>	<p>Evaluation Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) construct a coherent and well-organised evaluative argument b) demonstrate an informed viewpoint and evidence of own thinking within the context of understanding different arguments and views c) use proficient, fluent and accurate language. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment, candidates show competent analysis of the nature of connections between elements of their course of study, their broader context and aspects of human experience.</p>
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Knowledge and Understanding Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) select limited but relevant material b) deploy limited knowledge, some of which is accurate c) show limited accurate or consistent use of technical terms d) demonstrate basic understanding of key ideas, making occasional reference to examples and sources of evidence. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment, candidates perform at this level in relation to connections between different elements of their course of study.</p>	<p>Evaluation Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate minimal organisation and/or limited coherence b) demonstrate few personal insights, or little convincing argument or justification of a point of view with minimal evaluation c) use language and expression that lacks precision. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment, candidates show limited analysis of the nature of connections between elements of their course of study, their broader context and aspects of human experience.</p>

B Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and Other Issues

European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Environmental Education

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report "Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for

Further and Higher Education" 1993 in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Avoidance of Bias

AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and specimen units to avoid bias of any kind.

C Overlaps with other Qualifications

Candidates entering for this examination are prohibited from entering for any other GCE Religious Studies Specification in the same examination series. This does not preclude candidates from taking AS and A2 units with AQA in the same examination series.

D Key Skills – Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence

Introduction

The Key Skills Qualification requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology.

The units for the 'wider' Key Skills of Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others and Problem Solving are also available. The acquisition and demonstration of ability in these 'wider' Key Skills is deemed highly desirable for all candidates, but they do not form part of the Key Skills Qualification.

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- What you need to know
- What you must do
- Guidance.

Candidates following a course of study based on this specification for Religious Studies can be offered opportunities to develop and generate evidence of attainment in aspects of the Key Skills of:

- Communication
- Application of Number
- Information Technology
- Working with Others
- Improving own Learning and Performance
- Problem Solving.

Areas of study and learning that can be used to encourage the acquisition and use of Key Skills, and to provide opportunities to generate evidence for Part B of the units, are signposted on the next page.

The above information is given in the context of the knowledge that Key Skills at level 3 will be available until 2010 with last certification in 2012.

Key Skills Qualifications of Communication, Application of Number and Information and Communication Technology will be phased out and replaced by Functional Skills qualifications in English, Mathematics and ICT from September 2010 onwards. For further information see the AQA website: <http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/keyskills/com04.php>.

Key Skills Opportunities in Religious Studies

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Communication				
C3.1a	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.1b	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Application of Number				
N3.1				
N3.2				
N3.3				
Information Technology				
ICT3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICT3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICT3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working With Others				
WO3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improving Own Learning and Performance				
LP3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Problem Solving				
PS3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓



GCE Religious Studies (2060) 2009 onwards

Qualification Accreditation Number: AS 500/2505/3 - A Level 500/2506/5

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