



WJEC GCE AS and A level in RELIGIOUS STUDIES

For teaching from 2016

For AS award from 2017

For A level award from 2018

This specification meets the GCE AS and A Level Qualification Principles which set out the requirements for all new or revised GCE specifications developed to be taught in Wales from September 2016.

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SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

This specification is divided into a total of five units, two AS units and three A2 units. Weightings noted below are expressed in terms of the full A level qualification.

AS Units (both compulsory)

Unit 1: An Introduction to the Study of Religion

Written examination: 1 hour 15 mins

15% of qualification

This unit offers the choice of the study of **one religion** from a **choice of six**:

Option A:	Option B:	Option C:	Option D:	Option E:	Option F:
Christianity	Islam	Judaism	Buddhism	Hinduism	Sikhism

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of four fundamental religious themes: religious figures and sacred texts (part 1), religious concepts, religious life and religious practices that shape religious identity (part 1).

Note: With one exception, for A level learners, the religion chosen for AS Unit 1 must also be studied for A level Unit 3.

The only exception being that learners who study Unit 1 Option A: Christianity for AS can study **either** Unit 3 Option A: Christianity **or** Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament) for A level.

Unit 2: An Introduction to Religion and Ethics and the Philosophy of Religion

Written examination: 1 hour 45 mins

25% of qualification

Section A: An Introduction to Religion and Ethics

This section provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of four fundamental ethical themes: ethical thought (part 1), Aquinas' Natural Law, Fletcher's Situation Ethics and Utilitarianism.

Section B: An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

This section provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of four fundamental philosophical themes: arguments for the existence of God – inductive, arguments for the existence of God – deductive, challenges to religious belief (part 1) and religious experience (part 1).

A level Units (the two AS units studied plus a further three units).

Learners must study:

Units 3, 4 and 5 or, if they have studied Unit 1 Option A: Christianity, **either** Units 3, 4 and 5 **or** Units 4,5 and 6.

Unit 3: A Study of Religion

Written examination: 1 hour 30 mins

20% of qualification

This unit offers the choice of the study of **one religion** from a **choice of six**:

Option A:	Option B:	Option C:	Option D:	Option E:	Option F:
Christianity	Islam	Judaism	Buddhism	Hinduism	Sikhism

Learners will be expected to study the same option they studied in Unit 1.

The only exception being that learners who study Unit 1 Option A: Christianity for AS can study **either** Unit 3 Option A: Christianity **or** Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament) for A level.

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of four fundamental religious themes: religious figures and sacred texts (part 2), significant historical developments in religious thought, significant social developments in religious thought and religious practices that shape religious identity (part 2).

Unit 4: Religion and Ethics

Written examination: 1 hour 30 mins

20% of qualification

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of four fundamental ethical themes: ethical thought (part 2), deontological ethics, determinism and freewill.

Unit 5: Philosophy of Religion

Written examination: 1 hour 30 mins

20% of qualification

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of four fundamental philosophical themes: challenges to religious belief (part 2), religious experience (part 2), religious language (parts 1 & 2).

Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament)

Written examination: 1 hour 30 mins

20% of qualification

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of four fundamental textual study themes relating to New Testament literature: miracles, parables, Letters and Apocalyptic.

This is a unitised specification which allows for an element of staged assessment. Assessment opportunities will be available in the summer assessment period each year, until the end of the life of the specification.

Unit 1 and Unit 2 will be available in 2017 (and each year thereafter) and the AS qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2017.

Units 3, 4, 5 and 6 will be available in 2018 (and each year thereafter) and the A level qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2018.

Qualification Approval Numbers

GCE AS: C00/0792/2

GCE A level: C00/0791/7

GCE AS and A level in RELIGIOUS STUDIES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and objectives

This WJEC GCE AS and A level specification in Religious Studies will enable learners to:

- develop their interest in a rigorous study of religion and belief and relate it to the wider world
- develop knowledge and understanding appropriate to a specialist study of religion
- develop an understanding and appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies
- 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 study.

GCE AS and A level Religious Studies are designed to enable learners to develop their interest in, and enthusiasm for, a study of religion and its place in the wider world.

The AS specification contains two units which include a wide range of topics for consideration, including an in-depth and broad study of one of the six major world religions, religion and ethics and philosophy of religion.

The A level specification allows learners to continue their systematic study of a world religion, religion and ethics, philosophy of religion or textual studies.

The specification is presented in a clear and concise way to ensure that the specification content is accessible, relevant and engaging for both teachers and learners.

1.2 Prior learning and progression

Any requirements set for entry to a course following this specification are at the discretion of centres. It is reasonable to assume that many learners will have achieved qualifications equivalent to Level 2 at KS4. Skills in Numeracy/Mathematics, Literacy/English and Information Communication Technology will provide a good basis for progression to this Level 3 qualification.

This specification builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills established at GCSE. Some learners may have already gained knowledge, understanding and skills through their study of Religious Studies at GCSE.

This specification provides a suitable foundation for the study of Religious Studies or a related area through a range of higher education courses, progression to the next level of vocational qualifications or employment. In addition, the specification provides a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for learners who do not progress to further study in this subject.

This specification is not age specific and, as such, provides opportunities for learners to extend their life-long learning.

1.3 Equality and fair access

This specification may be followed by any learner, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or cultural background. It has been designed to avoid, where possible, features that could, without justification, make it more difficult for a learner to achieve because they have a particular protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The specification has been discussed with groups who represent the interests of a diverse range of learners, and the specification will be kept under review.

Reasonable adjustments are made for certain learners in order to enable them to access the assessments (e.g. candidates are allowed access to a Sign Language Interpreter, using British Sign Language). Information on reasonable adjustments is found in the following document from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational Qualifications*.

This document is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk). As a consequence of provision for reasonable adjustments, very few learners will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

1.4 Welsh Baccalaureate

In following this specification, learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to develop the skills that are being assessed through the Skills Challenge Certificates within the Welsh Baccalaureate Certificate:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Digital Literacy
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Planning and Organisation
- Creativity and Innovation
- Personal Effectiveness.

1.5 Welsh perspective

In following this specification, learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective if the opportunity arises naturally from the subject matter and if its inclusion would enrich learners' understanding of the world around them as citizens of Wales as well as the UK, Europe and the world.

2 SUBJECT CONTENT

At AS Level:

Learners must study both Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Each unit should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies.

Each unit has been designed to encourage learners to demonstrate their ability to:

- reflect on, select and apply specified knowledge
- understand, interpret and evaluate critically religious concepts, texts and other sources
- identify, investigate and critically analyse questions, arguments, ideas and issues arising from within this unit
- construct well informed and reasoned arguments, substantiated by relevant evidence
- engage in debate in a way that recognises the right of others to hold a different view
- present responses to questions which are clear and coherent
- use specialist language and terminology appropriately
- use spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately.

Each unit has been designed to allow learners to acquire and develop knowledge and a critical understanding of:

- religious thought, belief and practice and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies
- how religious texts and/or other relevant sources of wisdom and authority are interpreted and applied
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought, belief and practice within and/or between religion(s).

At A Level:

Learners must study a further 3 units in total.

Units 3, 4 and 5 or, if they have studied Unit 1 Option A: Christianity, **either** Units 3,4 and 5 **or** Units 4,5 and 6.

Each unit should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies.

Knowledge and understanding previously learned in Units 1 and 2 (AS) should be utilised when addressing the content of the units studied. The A level units provide an opportunity to assess both the skills and the knowledge gained in Units 1 and 2, where appropriate. This ensures progression from AS and demonstrates a strong element of synoptic learning in the overall depth of study.

Each unit has been designed to encourage learners to demonstrate their ability to:

- reflect on, select and apply specified knowledge about religion and belief
- account for the influence of social, religious and historical factors on developments in the study of religions and beliefs
- construct well informed and reasoned arguments about religion and belief, substantiated by relevant evidence
- engage in debate in a way that recognises the right of others to hold a different view
- understand, interpret and evaluate critically religious concepts, texts and other sources
- present responses to questions which are clear and coherent
- use specialist religious language and terminology appropriately
- use spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately
- identify, investigate and critically analyse questions, arguments, ideas and issues arising from the study of religion including those of scholars/academics
- analyse the nature of connections between the units they have studied at A level (including those studied at AS).

Each unit has been designed to allow learners to acquire and develop knowledge and a critical understanding/awareness of:

- religious thought, belief and practice and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies
- how religious texts and/or other relevant sources of wisdom and authority are interpreted and applied
- major issues, challenges and questions within and about the study of religion (for example, the role of tolerance, respect and recognition and interreligious dialogue, methods of study, relevance to contemporary society) and responses to these
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought, belief and practice within and/or between religion(s)
- questions, issues and arguments posed by scholars from within and outside religious traditions
- social, religious and historical factors that have influenced developments in the study of religions and beliefs
- connections between the various elements of the units studied at A level (including those studied at AS).

2.1 AS Unit 1

Unit 1: An Introduction to the Study of Religion

Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes

15% of qualification

60 marks

Learners will be assessed on **one** of the following options from a choice of **six**:

Option A: Christianity

Option B: Islam

Option C: Judaism

Option D: Buddhism

Option E: Hinduism

Option F: Sikhism

Note: With one exception, for A level learners, the religion chosen for AS Unit 1 must also be studied for A level Unit 3.

The only exception being that A level learners who study Unit 1 Option A: Christianity for AS can study **either** Unit 3 Option A: Christianity for A level **or** Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament).

This unit provides the opportunity for learners to acquire and develop knowledge and a critical understanding of some of the key features of a world religion, ranging from religious figures to religious practices.

This unit includes the study of the following content:

- sources of wisdom and authority including, where appropriate, scripture and/or sacred texts and how they are used and treated, key religious figures and/or teachers and their teachings
- religious beliefs, values and teachings, in their interconnections and as they vary historically and in the contemporary world, including those linked to the nature and existence of God, gods or ultimate reality, the role of the community of believers, key moral principles, beliefs about the self, death and afterlife, beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life
- practices that shape and express religious identity, including the diversity of practice within a tradition.

The following grids exemplify how the required content has been developed in a clear and concise way into four themes:

Unit 1: Option A – An Introduction to the Study of Christianity

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Jesus – his birth:</p> <p>Consistency and credibility of the birth narratives (Matthew 1:18-2:23; Luke 1:26-2:40); harmonisation and redaction; interpretation and application of the birth narratives to the doctrine of the incarnation (substantial presence and the kenotic model).</p>
B.	<p>Jesus – his resurrection:</p> <p>The views of <i>Rudolf Bultmann</i> and <i>Nicholas T. Wright (N.T. Wright)</i> on the relation of the resurrection event to history; interpretation and application to the understanding of death, the soul, the resurrected body and the afterlife, with reference to Matthew 10:28; John 20-21; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 1:21-24.</p>
C.	<p>The Bible as a source of wisdom and authority in daily life:</p> <p>The ways in which the Bible is considered authoritative: as a source of moral advice (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Luke 6:36-37); as a guide to living (Psalm 119:9-16; Psalm 119:105-112); as teaching on the meaning and purpose of life (Genesis 1:26-28; Ecclesiastes 9:5-9); and as a source of comfort and encouragement (Psalm 46:1-3; Matthew 6:25).</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the birth narratives provide insight into the doctrine of the incarnation. • The relative importance of redaction criticism for understanding the biblical birth narratives. • The nature of the resurrected body. • The historical reliability of the resurrection. • The relative value of the Bible as teaching on the meaning and purpose of life. • The extent to which the Psalms studied offer a guide to living for Christians. 	

Unit 1: Option A – An Introduction to the Study of Christianity

Theme 2: Religious concepts	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Religious concepts – the nature of God:</p> <p>Is God male? The issue of male language about God; the pastoral benefits and challenges of the model of Father; <i>Sallie McFague</i> and God as mother.</p> <p>Can God suffer? The impassibility of God; the modern view of a suffering God illustrated by <i>Jurgen Moltmann</i> (The Crucified Christ).</p>
B.	<p>Religious concepts – the Trinity:</p> <p>The need for the doctrine of the Trinity: the nature and identity of Christ (issues of divinity and pre-existence) and Christ's relationship with the Father (co-equal and co-eternal). The origin of the Holy Spirit: the filioque controversy.</p>
C.	<p>Religious concepts – the Atonement:</p> <p>Three theories of the Atonement (which are not mutually exclusive): the death of Jesus as Christus Victor (with reference to the liberation of humanity from hostile powers); the death of Jesus as a substitution (both the belief that Jesus died as a substitute for humanity, and the belief that only the divine-human Jesus could act as a sacrifice by God for the sake of humanity); the death of Jesus as a moral example (of how to live and die). The underlying assumptions about the need for divine forgiveness and the conflict between the wrath and love of God in theories of the Atonement.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The validity of referring to God as mother. • The theological implications of a suffering God. • The monotheistic claims of the doctrine of the Trinity. • Whether the doctrine of the Trinity is necessary to understand the God of Christianity. • The extent to which the three theories of the Atonement are contradictory. • The extent to which the three theories suggest that the Christian God is cruel. 	

Unit 1: Option A – An Introduction to the Study of Christianity

Theme 3: Religious life	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Religious life – faith and works:</p> <p><i>Martin Luther's</i> arguments for justification by faith alone (with reference to Romans 1:17; 5:1; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16; and <i>Luther's</i> rejection of James 2:24); the Council of Trent as a response to Luther; <i>Ed P. Sanders</i> (<i>E. P. Sanders</i>) and the role of works in justification.</p>
B.	<p>Religious life – the community of believers:</p> <p>The New Testament community of believers as a model for churches today (with reference to Acts 2:42-47); the role of churches in providing worship and sacraments; religious teaching; mission; service and outreach; and fellowship for the community of believers.</p>
C.	<p>Religious life – key moral principles:</p> <p>Selected key moral principles of Christianity: the importance of love of neighbour (Leviticus 19:34; Luke 10:25-28); God's love as a potential model for Christian behaviour (Exodus 34:6-7; 1 John 4:19-21); regard for truth (1 Samuel 12:24; Ephesians 4:25-27); the role of conscience (2 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Timothy 1:5); and the need for forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15; Colossians 3:12-13).</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which both faith and works are aspects of justification. • The extent to which the New Testament letters support arguments for justification by faith alone. • Whether the main role of the church is to provide religious teaching. • The extent to which contemporary Christian churches should follow the New Testament model. • Whether love of neighbour is the most important moral principle in Christianity. • The extent to which God's behaviour towards humans is the basis for Christian morality. 	

Unit 1: Option A – An Introduction to the Study of Christianity

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Religious identity through diversity in baptism:</p> <p>The case for infant baptism by <i>St Augustine of Hippo</i> and <i>Huldrych Zwingli</i> (the role of baptism in salvation; the role and importance of Christian parents); the case for believer's baptism with reference to <i>Karl Barth</i> (the example of Christ; importance of consent).</p>
B.	<p>Religious identity through diversity in Eucharist:</p> <p>The importance of the Eucharist in the life of contemporary Christian communities; selected modern Roman Catholic theories (transignification and transfinalisation); selected Protestant approaches (consubstantiation and memorialism); the similarities in Eucharistic practice in Christian traditions.</p>
C.	<p>Religious identity through diversity in festivals:</p> <p>Christmas The similarities (with reference to the focus on incarnation of Christ) and differences (date of celebration; focus of Advent season; Christmas services) between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches' celebration of Christmas.</p> <p>Easter The similarities (with reference to the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ) and differences (date; liturgical practice at Easter; the diversity within each stream of tradition) between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches' celebration of Easter.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which both infant and adult baptism are just symbolic acts. • The criteria for expressing the commitment to be baptised. • The extent to which there is any common ground within contemporary understandings of the Eucharist. • The extent to which theoretical beliefs about the Eucharist affect the practice of different denominations. • Whether the different emphases and practices mean that Easter is a different celebration in the Eastern Orthodox and Western churches. • The relative importance of Easter and Christmas. 	

Unit 1: Option B - An Introduction to the Study of Islam

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The significance in the development of Islam of both the life and teachings of Muhammad in Makkah following the Night of Power:</p> <p>Life at the time of Muhammad - Jahiliyya (ignorance) and the need for revelation: the main religious, social, political and moral characteristics of pre-Islamic Arabia. The impact of the Night of Power (Sura 97:1-5) upon Muhammad. Muhammad's secretive preaching and early reactions towards his religious experience and teachings. Muhammad's open preaching in Makkah and the nature of this message. The Makkan reaction to Muhammad and its implication for the development of Islam.</p>
B.	<p>The significance in the development of Islam of both the Hijrah and the life and teachings of Muhammad in Madinah:</p> <p>The context of persecution of Muhammad and his followers in Makkah as a major influence of the Hijrah (migration) including verbal abuse, physical abuse and death threats. The Hijrah as an 'escape' and guided by God. The welcome from Madinah and the establishment of the basic tenets of Islam, including the establishment of the first masjid. Muhammad as religious, moral, political and military leader in Madinah.</p>
C.	<p>The Qur'an as a source of wisdom and authority – its use and treatment in Islam:</p> <p>Source of wisdom and authority: The nature of the Qur'an as the final revelation. Specific reference to Sura 15:9, Sura 51:47 and Sura 96:1-5. The divine characteristics of the Qur'an as God-given and not distorted by human messengers. An overview of the compilation of the Qur'an.</p> <p>Use and treatment of the Qur'an: The Qur'an as a guide for humanity for all time. Islamic views about 'translations' of the Qur'an; integrity of the original Arabic; translation as interpretation. The physical treatment of the Qur'an reflecting its status.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of influence of the pre-Islamic Arabian context upon the life and teaching of Muhammad. • The possibility of the failure of the Islamic religion in Makkah. • Whether Madinah is the ideal model for the establishment of Islam. • The merits of Muhammad as a complete leader of the people. • The extent to which the Qur'an is eternally relevant. • Whether the message of the Qur'an can ever be translated with accuracy. 	

Unit 1: Option B - An Introduction to the Study of Islam

Theme 2: Religious concepts	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The concept of Allah – tawhid (oneness) and shahadah (bearing witness):</p> <p>Tawhid as statement of uncompromising monotheism. Tawhid as the nature of God as ‘one’ with reference to Sura 112. God as sole creator, omnipotent and yet merciful. God as beyond words and descriptions. Attributes of God as metaphors and symbols. God as transcendent and imminent. Shirk (attributing partners) as opposition to tawhid.</p> <p>Shahadah as recognition of tawhid. Declaring faith or bearing witness to God’s unity and the unique nature of Muhammad as prophet of God. The power of the shahadah as a public statement of truth as well as a declaration of personal faith. The role of the shahadah in conversion. Shahadah as underlining the meaning and purpose of life in Islam: belief in one God; Muhammad as messenger and an exemplary Muslim.</p>
B.	<p>Muslim beliefs about nabi (prophets), rasul (messenger), nadir (warner) and risalah (the message):</p> <p>The role of a nabi (prophet) as a rasul (messenger) or nadir (warner) - Qur’an 3:144, 4:9. Perceived and popular distinction between nabi and rasul. The associated messages of previous prophets with specific reference to Ibrahim (Sahifa), Musa (Torah), Dawud (Zabur) and Isa (Injil) and their distorted nature. Muhammad as the ‘Seal of the Prophets’ (Qur’an 46:9). Muhammad’s character and uniqueness (Qur’an 33:21).</p>
C.	<p>Malaikah (angels) and Akhirah (the Day of Final Judgement):</p> <p>Malaikah as intermediaries for God. The nature and purpose of angels. The specific roles of Jibril, Mikail and Israfil. God as Judge, and akhirah (Day of Final Judgement). The significance of events from the last trumpet onward. Depictions of heaven and hell with reference to Sura 47:15 and Sura 67:7-10. Akhirah as underlining the meaning and purpose of life: submission and reward.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the Islamic concept of Allah is coherent. • Whether the Shahadah is more to do with private faith than public declaration. • Whether or not the concept of ‘messenger’ has been a success for Islam. • The extent to which Muhammad was the ideal prophet and messenger. • Whether the Day of Final Judgement inspires fear or faith. • The extent to which the concept of Malaikah (angels) is essential for Islam. 	

Unit 1: Option B - An Introduction to the Study of Islam

Theme 3: Religious life	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The role and significance of the following three pillars for Muslim and the Ummah (Muslim community).</p> <p>Salah (prayer) and other forms of prayer:</p> <p>The nature and purpose of different types of prayer in Islam: salah; tahajjud (night prayer) (Sura 17:79); nafila (extra); du'a (cry out); tasbih (glorify) and wird (Sufi prayer). The significance of niyat (intention). Regular prayer times (Qur'an 4:103). The significance of wudu. The role and importance of Jummah prayers for the Ummah (Qur'an 62:10).</p>
B.	<p>Zakah (purification through giving) and Hajj (pilgrimage):</p> <p>The nature and purpose of different types of giving in Islam: zakah; sadaqat (voluntary) and khums (a fifth). The reasons for giving in Islam: obedience; compassion; personal sacrifice; value of benefits gained. The importance of liberationist thinking in Islam and attitudes towards the poor. The impact of giving on the Ummah. The nature and purpose of the Hajj and its role in uniting the Ummah.</p>
C.	<p>The five categories of action as exemplifying the key moral principles for Islam and a framework for Muslim living:</p> <p>The need for guidance as arising from the development of Shari'a. The categories of fard (compulsory), mustahab (neither encouraged nor discouraged, recommended but not essential), halal (blessed, allowed), makruh (disliked, offensive) and haram (forbidden), and their importance as guides for Muslim life. Examples of types of actions associated as fard, mustahab, halal, makruh and haram.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which prayer is simply an act of piety. • Whether or not Jummah prayers are the most important of all prayers. • The extent to which Islam is based in support for the poor. • Whether the Hajj is more than just a personal journey of religious enquiry. • The success of the five categories of ethical action as a guide for Islamic living today. • Whether or not the five categories are, in practice, a recipe for confusion rather than clarity. 	

Unit 1: Option B - An Introduction to the Study of Islam

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The role of the masjid (mosque) in Islam:</p> <p>The importance of the functions of the first masjid in Madinah. The religious, social and political role of masjids today in the UK. The masjid as a place of prostration. The masjid as the hub of the Ummah (community of believers) for men and women: the role of the masjid in religious events; the social and educational functions of the masjid; the masjid as a community centre. The role of the community of religious believers in supporting and maintaining the masjid.</p>
B.	<p>The role of festivals in shaping religious identity, with reference to:</p> <p>Ashura</p> <p>The reasons for celebrating Ashura. The role of Ashura in expressing Shi'a identity. How rituals in Shi'a devotions during Ashura reflect central Shi'a teachings, with specific reference to persecution, suffering and self-harm. The role of the community of believers in ensuring the traditions of the festival are maintained.</p>
C.	<p>Ramadan and Id-ul-Fitr:</p> <p>The religious and moral benefits for a Muslim of Ramadan with reference to: relationship to God; development of Muslim spirituality; the importance of morality in Islam. The role of the community in ensuring the traditions of the Id-ul-Fitr are maintained. The social importance of Id-ul-Fitr for the Muslim community with reference to: empathy with, and support for the poor, unity and 'brotherhood'.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prostration as the most important purpose of the masjid. • Whether the masjid today has maintained its original function as that of the first masjid established by Muhammad in Madinah. • Whether a focus on suffering during Ashura misrepresents Shi'a identity. • Self-harm as excessive religious devotion. • Whether Id-ul-Fitr is treated as a religious celebration or social occasion. • The extent to which fasting benefits the individual more than the community. 	

Unit 1: Option C - An Introduction to the Study of Judaism

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Abraham and the establishment of the covenant of circumcision:</p> <p>Abraham as Father of the Jewish people (Genesis 12:1-3); Abraham's belief in One God as creator of heaven and earth; the nature of the covenant between God and Abraham – the promise of land and offspring (Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17); brit milah (circumcision) as the sign of the covenant (Genesis 17); the significance of Abraham's faith and test of obedience (Genesis 22).</p>
B.	<p>Moses and the establishment of the covenant of law:</p> <p>The nature and significance of the Mosaic covenant both at the time of Moses and today (Exodus 19-20); the recording of the covenant by Moses (Exodus 24:4, Exodus 34:1-2, 27-28); the importance of God's protection for obedience (Exodus 34:10-11).</p>
C.	<p>The Torah as a source of wisdom and authority:</p> <p>The receiving of the Torah at Sinai and the significance of the written law (Exodus 19-20). The nature and purpose of Torah in Orthodox/Reform Judaism. The pre-existent and eternal relevance of Torah.</p> <p>Use and treatment of the Torah:</p> <p>Sefer Torah; Torah reading (in the synagogue and home), Torah study at a yeshiva (institute for Tanakh and Talmudic studies) and the role of the oral Torah. The care and respect shown for the Torah – ark, mantle, yad (pointer) and burial.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of covenant's universality. • Covenant as a privilege or a responsibility. • Whether covenant is a method of religious control. • How far covenant is of legal value. • The extent to which the Torah remains the main authority within Judaism today. • Whether the Torah has become a religious icon. 	

Unit 1: Option C - An Introduction to the Study of Judaism

Theme 2: Religious concepts	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Beliefs about the nature of God/concept of God:</p> <p>Absolute monotheism; God as One; God as Creator; God as incorporeal; God as neither male nor female; God as eternal. Characteristics: omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent, Holy, Just, Perfect, Merciful. God's presence as both kavod and shekinah. <i>Moses Maimonides</i> on the attributes of God.</p>
B.	<p>Beliefs about God and humanity, the meaning and purpose of life:</p> <p>Humanity (the self) created in the divine image; nefesh (life) as a divine gift; pikuach nefesh (the sanctity of life); nature of humanity - yetzer hara (evil inclination) and yetzer hatov (good inclination).</p> <p>The Shema: the content of Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; and Numbers 15:37-41). The nature of Shema as an aid to faith and remembering; Shema as a reinforcement of covenant relationship and the meaning and purpose of life.</p>
C.	<p>Beliefs about judgement - the Messiah and the afterlife:</p> <p>The Messiah in Judaism – The Anointed One and Judge who brings peace and goodwill to humanity (Isaiah 2:1-4); the establishment of a new world order. Death; resurrection of the dead (Daniel 12:2); the final judgement; olam ha-ba (the afterlife); the Pittsburgh Platform (paragraph 7) and Reform views about the afterlife.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether it is possible to know God. • Whether God's characteristics are meaningful today. • Whether the Shema contains the most important beliefs within Judaism. • The extent to which the Shema is precise enough to guide Jewish belief and practice. • Whether Jewish beliefs about judgement and the afterlife are relevant for Jews today. • Whether the concept of Messiah is a serious religious belief for all Jews today. 	

Unit 1: Option C - An Introduction to the Study of Judaism

Theme 3: Religious life	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The diversity of views within Judaism with regards to mitzvot (commandments):</p> <p>The role of the Jewish community of believers (Orthodox, Reform, Hasidic) in understanding the relevance of the 613 mitzvot with reference to: their interpretation today, literal or otherwise; their application today; their importance today.</p>
B.	<p>Jewish teachings about tefillah (prayer) with reference to the Amidah and teachings about tzedakah (charity):</p> <p>Tefillah as spiritual self-reflection in relation to God; reasons for tefillah; the structure and content of the Amidah; the use of the Amidah in daily prayers; minyan (congregation) and the diversity of practice of prayer within Judaism. The importance of tzedakah within Judaism; <i>Moses Maimonides</i> and the 'ladder of tzedekah'.</p>
C.	<p>Key moral principles: the importance of the Ten Sayings (Aseret ha-D'ibrot) or Ten Commandments for Judaism:</p> <p>The Ten Sayings in the context of the 613 mitzvot; the Ten Sayings as a basis for religious and ethical life; the 'Aseret ha-Dibrot' in rabbinical understanding as the ten categories of mitzvot.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the concept of mitzvot is divisive within Judaism. • Whether mitzvot contribute effectively to spirituality in Judaism. • The extent to which the Amidah is an encapsulation of the most important beliefs, values and teachings of Judaism. • Whether prayer has become a spiritually ineffective ritual. • Whether the Ten Sayings are an effective guide for ethical living. • The extent to which the Ten Sayings adequately summarise religious belief. 	

Unit 1: Option C - An Introduction to the Study of Judaism

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Diversity of Jewish practices that shape and express religious identity, with reference to:</p> <p>The role of the synagogue in Judaism</p> <p>The origins of the synagogue as a permanent institution in Babylonian captivity. The role of the ark in reminding Jews of the Jerusalem temple. Its social role: as meeting place for the Jewish community - bet k'nesset (house of meeting); the synagogue as a place of study and Torah reading - bet midrash (house of study) or 'school' (shul). The religious role of the synagogue: its central role in Jewish festivals; as a place of prayer; and, a place for ritual - some contain a mikveh (pool) for religious and physical cleanliness. The synagogue's legal status and role: use as a rabbinical court or bet din (house of judgement).</p>
B.	<p>The role of festivals in shaping religious identity</p> <p>Pesach:</p> <p>The significance of the 'Passover' event for Jewish identity with reference to: the popularity of observing Pesach amongst Jews today reflecting redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt; the redemption of the world under God's command; the importance of Exodus 12-15; the symbolism of the seder plate and the use of the Haggadah; the role of the Jewish community of believers in remembering and maintaining Jewish identity; hope for the future ("next year in Jerusalem"); the coming of Elijah to announce the arrival of the Messiah.</p>
C.	<p>Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:</p> <p>The origins of the rituals of these festivals and their significance; the extent to which these festivals are observed; the impact and purpose of their observance; the challenge of a 25 hour fast and its value. The significance of the shofar horn in the Hebrew scriptures; the meaning and significance of tashlikh. The importance of the machzor; Kol Nidre and the amendments to the Amidah as confirming unity and identity of the Jewish people.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the synagogue has a main 'use' or 'purpose' within Judaism. • The extent to which the synagogue is the heart of a Jewish community. • The extent to which Pesach is the central festival within Judaism. • Whether the notion of redemption has any relevance for Judaism today. • Whether Jewish festivals are effective in reinforcing Jewish identity. • Whether the regular acknowledgement of sins and penitence for them is an admission of failure in spiritual development. 	

Unit 1: Option D - An Introduction to the Study of Buddhism

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Accounts of the birth of the historical Buddha and the Four Sights:</p> <p>The ways in which Buddhists read these narratives. Hagiographical and mythological interpretations of the conception dream of Maya, events surrounding the birth, the prophecy and early life. The biographical impact of the Four Sights and wider religious interpretations of their meaning in terms of dukkha (unsatisfactoriness), anicca (impermanence), anatta (insubstantiality/no-self).</p>
B.	<p>The Awakening/Enlightenment of the Buddha:</p> <p>The main features of the events culminating in the Buddha's Awakening under the Bodhi Tree; including knowledge of past lives, knowledge of the role of karma in the lives of all beings, the path to the cessation of dukkha, meanings of the Mara/temptation narratives, and the earth touching mudra.</p>
C.	<p>Buddhist texts as sources of wisdom and authority – their use and treatment in daily life:</p> <p>The Patimokkha as one of the sources of wisdom and authority for the Theravada monastic sangha. Its use and treatment as a recited text. The seriousness of the Four Parajikas 'defeats', leading to expulsion from the sangha.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of the biography of the historical Buddha for Buddhists today. • The relative significance of different ways in which the biography may be interpreted. • The significance of the Awakening/Enlightenment of the Buddha in Buddhism. • The difficulty of articulating Awakening, as an experience beyond language. • The relative importance and value of the Patimokkha. • Critical comparison of ancient text-based rules and contemporary issues for the sangha. The relevance of the Parajikas today. 	

Unit 1: Option D - An Introduction to the Study of Buddhism

Theme 2: Religious concepts	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The nature of ultimate reality:</p> <p>The three lakshanas (three marks of existence): dukkha, anicca and anatta:</p> <p>The concepts of dukkha and anicca: with reference to the <i>Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta</i>. The concept of anatta with reference to Section 1 Chapter 1 of the Chariot Passage of the <i>Questions of King Milinda</i>.</p>
B.	<p>The nature of ultimate reality:</p> <p>Pratityasamutpada, karma and rebirth:</p> <p>The notions of pratityasamutpada and rebirth: with reference to the iconography of the bhavachakra. The notion of karma: with reference to the <i>Dhammapada</i>, Chapter 1 'The Pairs' and Chapter 9 'Evil'. The importance of rooting out of greed, hatred and delusion and not speculating about the existence of God and other metaphysical questions (Parable of the Poisoned Arrow – <i>Majjhima Nikaya</i> 63).</p>
C.	<p>Arhat and bodhisattva: Theravada and Mahayana teachings:</p> <p>Four stages of Awakening: stream-winner, once-returner, non-returner, arhat (worthy one). Characteristics of bodhisattvas: Six or ten paramitas (perfections), bhumis (stages), the vow to bring all suffering beings to Awakening and the interrelationship between wisdom and compassion.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three lakshanas as representative of reality. • The three lakshanas as the most important teachings of Buddhism. • The teachings of pratityasamutpada, karma and rebirth as representative of reality. • The legitimacy of rejecting questions about the existence of God. • The concept of bodhisattva and arhat as an essential feature of Buddhism. • The relative legitimacy of concepts of bodhisattva and arhat. 	

Unit 1: Option D - An Introduction to the Study of Buddhism

Theme 3: Religious life	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The Four Noble Truths:</p> <p>The three types of dukkha - dukkha-dukkha (painful experience); viparinama-dukkha (changing nature of existence); sankhara-dukkha (the contingent nature of existence); the medical metaphor (the Buddha as a physician, diagnosing the symptoms, identifying cause and providing a prescription) and the notions of tanha (thirst), nirodha (cessation) and magga (the path).</p>
B.	<p>The Eightfold Path – key moral principles:</p> <p>The Threefold Trainings: wisdom, morality and meditation. The relationship of the Eightfold Path with the Middle Way. The Eightfold Path within the context of the diversity of Buddhism. Exemplification of ways in which the Eightfold Path is practised and its significance for Buddhist morality.</p>
C.	<p>The dasa sila (ten precepts) – key moral principles:</p> <p>Exemplification of the application of the dasa sila (ten precepts) within the community of believers: lay people and the monastic sangha. The different complementary roles of the lay and monastic sanghas. The notion of the precepts as training aspirations rather than commandments for the community of believers and the role of the monastic sangha in keeping precepts on behalf of the wider sangha.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Four Noble Truths as essential for all Buddhists. • The Four Noble truths as accurate accounts of reality. • The usefulness of the Eightfold Path as a moral guide for all Buddhists affecting every aspect of life. • The relationship between behaviour and Awakening. • The relative importance of the dasa sila (ten precepts) as a means of regulating the sangha. • The contemporary relevance of precepts and monastic life. 	

Unit 1: Option D - An Introduction to the Study of Buddhism

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Going for refuge:</p> <p>A consideration of the chanting practice of going for refuge three times, the meanings of each (Buddha, dharma and sangha) for both heritage and convert Buddhists. The three refuges in the context of other possible refuges in the modern world: with reference to materialism, relationships, secular values and political beliefs.</p>
B.	<p>Meditation:</p> <p>The importance of meditation in Buddhism and awareness of specific features of different traditions of meditation: vipassana (insight/clear seeing), samatha (calmness), metta bhavana (loving kindness) and zazen (just sitting). How these practices are used for accessing the true nature of reality, and for cultivating qualities which lead to awakening.</p>
C.	<p>The role and importance of dana (giving) and punya (merit):</p> <p>The role and importance of selfless generosity/giving or sharing of time/money/possessions. The role of the Buddhist community in supporting those both inside and outside the community. The role and importance of punya – the concept of the merit gained and accumulated as a result of good deeds, acts, or thoughts and which carries over throughout life or in subsequent rebirths, and may be transferred to others.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevance of going for refuge in the modern world. • The relative value of each of the three refuges. • The value and relevance of meditation for all Buddhists today. • The relative importance of different traditions of meditation. • The significance of the practice of dana in its relationship to the notion of punya. • The relative importance of dana and punya compared with other Buddhist teachings. 	

Unit 1: Option E - An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Sources of authority - the origins of Hinduism:</p> <p>The Indus Valley civilisation and its features; the Aryans and their culture; vedic practices – the vedic sacrifice and the structure of Vedic society; the origins controversy – conflicting definitions of the word Hinduism; conflict between theories on Indus and Aryan origins.</p>
B.	<p>Krishna and Arjuna:</p> <p>The teaching on dharma and varnadharma; the conflict which can arise from following personal dharma. The wisdom of Samkhya, nature of religious practices; different paths to liberation – jnana yoga, karma yoga and bhakti yoga. Bhagavad Gita - 2:31; 3:4-5; 3:19; 9:23; 9:26-28; 9:32; 11:54; 14:23-26; 16:1-3; 18:46; 18:47.</p>
C.	<p>Hindu texts as sources of wisdom and authority - their use in daily life:</p> <p>A comparison of status and importance of shruti and smriti. The significance of differences in terms of authority and use - the Vedas in ritual ceremonies and the Ramayana and Mahabharata for ethical teachings. The role of the Ramayana in teaching the importance of righteous behaviour, selfless caring, courage, friendship and devotion. The role of the Mahabharata in teaching the importance of doing one's duty. The role of the community of believers in interpreting and implementing the wisdom and authority of Hindu texts.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The controversy over the origins of Hinduism. • The relationship between modern Hinduism and Indus Valley and Aryan traditions. • The relationship between Krishna and Arjuna as a central feature of Hinduism. • The relative importance of different paths to liberation. • The relative importance of Hindu texts in Hinduism. • The relevance of Hindu texts in the modern world. 	

Unit 1: Option E - An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism

Theme 2: Religious concepts	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Exploring Hindu teachings concerning self, death, afterlife and meaning and purpose of life with reference to:</p> <p>Brahman and atman</p> <p>The relationship between: Brahman as sat, chit, ananda (being, consciousness and bliss), macrocosmic (universal) spirit and atman as micro cosmic (personal). Difference between jiva-atman (individual soul) and paramatman (supreme self – God); Monist (belief that God and the soul are one) and Monotheist (belief that god and the soul are different); Shankara (proponent of Advaita Vedanta which emphasises an impersonal view of the divine) and Madhva (proponent of Dvaita Vedanta.)</p>
B.	<p>Trimurti:</p> <p>Relationship and importance to Hindu understanding of Saguna Brahman (God with characteristics) – Brahma – creator, Vishnu – preserver, Shiva - destroyer and Hindu vision of time as cyclic – returning to life in a new form; link to liberation – the breaking of the eternal wheel of samsara - creation, preservation and destruction. The key features of Vaishnavism and Shaivism as religious traditions.</p>
C.	<p>Key moral principles of karma and reincarnation:</p> <p>Karma in the context of samsara and the importance of eternal and universal order; different aspects of karma (accumulated, fruit-bearing and karma in the making) and their influence on types of reincarnation. The relationship between samsara and moksha and the significance within samsara of human rebirth. Bhagavad Gita 2:13. The significance of karma and reincarnation in the context of the meaning and purpose of life in Hinduism – achieving Moksha.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the relationship between Brahman and atman. • Whether it is possible to worship an impersonal God. • The relative importance of Trimurti in Hinduism in comparison with the other concepts studied. • Whether Vaishnavism and Shaivism can be regarded as religions in themselves. • The impact of teachings about karma and reincarnation upon the lifestyle of Hindus. • The comparative importance in Hinduism of the present life and the next life. 	

Unit 1: Option E - An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism

Theme 3: Religious life	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Key moral principles of Varnashramadharma:</p> <p>Mythical origins of the system in the Purusha Sukta – Rig Veda 10:90 11-12 the concept of Varnashramadharma – sometimes referred to as Catuvarnashramadharma – catu – four – defines duties for the individual according to their position in the four varnas of society – brahmanas (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), vaishyas (merchants) and sudras (labourers).</p> <p>The four ashramas, brahmacharya (student stage), grihastha (householder stage), vanaprastha (retirement stage) and sannyasin (renunciation). Relationship with bhakti; links and differences with Sanatana dharma (Bhagavad Gita 18:47).</p>
B.	<p>The status of the Dalits:</p> <p>Their status within the varna system – position outside the four varnas – excluded from mainstream society; comparison between Gandhi – who opposed untouchability but supported the varna system and Ambedkar – who wanted to eradicate the varna system altogether; contemporary status of Dalits – through the Bahujan Samaj Party and the development and improvement of their social standing – success in business and public life.</p>
C.	<p>Key moral principle - the concept of ahimsa:</p> <p>The Jainian origins of the concept and its application – meaning radical non-violence founded on the belief that all living beings are worthy of respect and therefore all Jains are vegetarian; traditional concept within Hinduism; and its application; Gandhi's reinterpretation and use of the concept as a political concept; relationship with satyagraha – truth force; implications for racial equality Manu 5:38. Its practicality in the modern world.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which Hinduism can be described as a religion of duty. • The relevance of the ashramas in Hindu lifestyle today. • The relevance and practicality of varna in today's world. • Whether criticisms of the varna system are justified. • The ideal of ahimsa as a relevant and viable standard to live by in the modern world. • Whether truth has an inherent force. 	

Unit 1: Option E - An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The diversity of Hindu practices that shape and express identity, with reference to:</p> <p>Puja in the home and the mandir:</p> <p>Nature of puja in the home and mandir – compare and contrast; importance of relationship between individual devotee and deities; receiving of darshan; mandir rituals such as circumambulation and accepting prashad; comparative importance of personal and congregational worship.</p>
B.	<p>The role of festivals in shaping religious identity – with reference to:</p> <p>Holi:</p> <p>Representing the story of Holika and Prahlada in some Hindu traditions; the story of Krishna and Radha in others; spiritual significance of these events - blessing of babies by Agni; the god of Fire, the virtue of love; confirming and strengthening faith; good overcoming evil, benevolence of the Gods; reminds devotees of aims and duties in life - to help others. The role of the community of believers in ensuring the traditions of the festival are maintained.</p>
C.	<p>Durga Puja:</p> <p>Representing the story of Rama, Sita and Durga; spiritual significance of these events - thanksgiving, helping others; importance of avatars; Durga as divine mother; impurity and sin; it confirms and strengthens faith; good overcomes evil, importance of worship and prayer; reminds devotees of aims and duties in life – to lead a life free from impurity, sin and weakness. The role of the community of believers in ensuring the traditions of the festival are maintained.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relative importance of puja in the home and in the mandir. • Whether puja can be described as a religious experience. • The extent to which festivals are a necessary expression of Hindu identity. • Whether celebrating mythical or historical events on festival days is meaningful. • The value of Hindu festivals as community occasions. • The relative importance of Durga in Hinduism. 	

Unit 1: Option F - An Introduction to the Study of Sikhism

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The life and teachings of Guru Nanak:</p> <p>Influence of background and socio-religious ideas of his time on key teachings: Invasion of Mughal army and Mughal persecution; influence of Sufism; influence of Lalla; north-Indian sant tradition; Monotheism in Islam; use of devotional songs; status/role of women in Islam and caste in Hinduism – Adi Granth 150 and Adi Granth 91.</p> <p>Relationship between key events in his life and specific teachings: Guru Nanak's horoscope at his birth and the acknowledgement of One Formless Lord. His experience of God's court, his teaching that God is neither Hindu nor Muslim; his mission to reveal the message of God's name to the world. His meeting with Sajjan and his teaching of what true religion is - the jannam sakhi episodes. Guru Nanak's teaching against the caste system; raising the status of women; foundation of the institution of the guru; rejection of the sacred thread ceremony and Hindu rituals; his establishment of community at Kartapur based on Sikh principles.</p>
B.	<p>Guru Gobind Singh's contribution to the development of Sikhism:</p> <p>The relationship of his actions with Nanak's vision – both as protector and restorer; his defence of Sikhism in the face of attacks and persecution; his development of Sikhism as a religion with a strong identity - prepared to defend its beliefs and principles; and community orientation – founded the Khalsa; introduced the amrit ceremony as initiation and wearing of 5Ks; the adoption of names Singh and Kaur; welcomed women and members of all castes into the community; contributed to the compilation and content of Dasam Granth; interpretation and new concept of Guru – the Guru Panth; the development of the Guru Granth Sahib.</p>
C.	<p>The Guru Granth Sahib as a source of wisdom and authority – its use and treatment in worship and daily life:</p> <p>Its legal and theological status – regarded as living Guru with full authority of Gurus' teaching and treated with same devotion and respect; all decisions taken in presence of Guru Granth; all ceremonies and rites of passage to be completed in its presence; it is the basis of all sermons and the authority as the basis of Sikh teaching on the nature of God, faith and salvation the difference between Adi Granth and Guru Granth; role of Muslim and Hindu writings within its pages - <i>Sheik Farid</i> - Guru Granth Sahib – 448, 1384; <i>Bhagat Ramanand</i> – Guru Granth Sahib – 1195; creation of gurmukhi script; its role as more than a visible focal point for Sikh devotions – taking the place of living Gurus; it guides Sikhs in daily life – vak lao (taking advice).</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which Guru Nanak was a religious innovator. • The relative importance of Guru Nanak's background and other key events in his life on his teaching. • The extent to which Guru Gobind Singh changed or developed the Sikhism of Guru Nanak. • The influence of Guru Gobind Singh on Sikh identity. • The relevance of the Guru Granth Sahib for Sikhs today. • The extent to which the Guru Granth Sahib can be viewed as an object of worship for Sikhs. 	

Unit 1: Option F - An Introduction to the Study of Sikhism

Theme 2: Religious concepts	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Exploring Sikh teachings concerning self, death, afterlife and meaning and purpose of life, with reference to:</p> <p>Philosophical understanding of the Sikh concept of God:</p> <p>God is the one, the only one and the one without a second; symbolism of Ik Onkar (Adi Granth 929,1035,1037); God as personal – Adi Granth 784, 1190; God as nirguna (without attributes) and saguna (with attributes); God as omnipotent and omniscient; God as creator and sustainer of life – Adi Granth 25, 684,700; God as immanent and transcendent.</p>
B.	<p>The soul:</p> <p>Nature of the soul - divine spark of Waheguru, ethereal and non-material; union with Waheguru. The aim of breaking cycle of rebirth; journey of the soul through many life forms to attain this aim; stages of development on the path of enlightenment including stage of Saram Khand, the realm of effort and realm of grace; monist and monotheistic understanding of the relationship between God and the soul.</p>
C.	<p>Karma, rebirth and mukti:</p> <p>Philosophical understanding of the path of liberation – replacement of ignorance by spiritual enlightenment affected by God's Grace – it is the meaning and purpose of life; the role of karma and transmigration of the soul; union with God – Adi Granth 1127, 905, 275 as the meaning and purpose of Sikh life.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevant importance of the Sikh concept of God in relation to other concepts. • Whether the most important Sikh teaching about God is that God is personal. • The impact of Sikh teachings about the soul on the Sikh view of humanity. • The relationship between God and the soul in Sikhism – monist or monotheistic. • The relevance of Sikh beliefs about rebirth and mukti for Sikhs today. • The influence of belief in karma on Sikh lifestyle. 	

Unit 1: Option F - An Introduction to the Study of Sikhism

Theme 3: Religious life	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The role and significance of the following teachings/key moral principles for the Sikh community:</p> <p>The concept of sewa:</p> <p>Its influence on personal morality – recognising no barriers of religion, caste or race; relationship with teaching of Guru Granth Sahib and principles of Sarbat da bhala; importance of state of mind – selfless and desire-less action – physical service, mental service, material service; its material and spiritual value within the Sikh community – part of a Sikh's spiritual life leading to spiritual liberation. Bhai Gurdas, Varan 6:12. The role of the community of believers in demonstrating selfless action to God and others. Sewa's significance to Sikh identity.</p>
B.	<p>Kirat Karo and Vand Chakko:</p> <p>Teaching of Guru Gobind Singh; understanding of concept of Kirat Karo (earning money righteously and honestly) in relation to Naam Japo (remembrance of God by repeating and focusing the mind on his name) and Vand Chakko (sharing wealth with others); relationship with teaching on karma; the pursuit of grace; influence on sangat (community).</p>
C.	<p>The concepts of Sant Sipahi (saint-soldier)/Dharam Yudh (just war):</p> <p>Understanding of the concept of Sant Sipahi in the context of the development of Sikhism by Guru Harbogind and Guru Gobind Singh; philosophical meaning of the term; duties associated with sant; meaning in relation to dharam; rules of the Khalsa in relation to the general Sikh principle of Dharam Yudh.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relative importance of sewa in Sikh life compared to other teachings. • The practicality of the concept of sewa for Sikhs today. • The relative importance of the virtues of Kirat Karo and Vand Chakko in Sikhism. • The relationship between spiritual and material values in Sikhism. • Whether it is possible to combine spirituality with the use of force (Sant Sipahi and Dharam Yudh). • The significance of the sant tradition for Sikhs today. 	

Unit 1: Option F - An Introduction to the Study of Sikhism

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The expression of Sikh identity through the role of the gurdwara:</p> <p>Representation of the principle of freedom of worship – no restrictions on who may lead the worship in terms of caste or sex, as long as they are competent to do so; fulfilment of religious and social needs – spiritual guidance and material fulfilment in terms of the langar as an expression of sewa; B40 Janam Sakhi, Adi Granth 1068; worship as a reflection of Sikh identity – the importance of Guru Granth Sahib; expression of Sikh beliefs such as equality.</p>
B.	<p>Diwali:</p> <p>Representing the story of Guru Hargobind and his release from prison; focuses attention on spiritual matters – freedom and deliverance; it confirms and strengthens faith - good overcomes evil; light overcomes darkness; reminds Sikhs of aims and duties in life; focuses on the importance of unity within the community; the role of the community of believers in maintaining the traditions associated with the festival.</p>
C.	<p>Vaisakhi:</p> <p>New Year's Day in the Punjab; remembers Guru Gobind Singh's founding of the Sikh brotherhood; focuses attention on spiritual matters – Sikh identity, sacrifice, virtues of Sikh living; it confirms and strengthens faith – reminds Sikhs of aims and duties in life – protecting the truth, standing up for the oppressed; creates a feeling of belonging to a community – the Khalsa; the role of the community of believers in maintaining the traditions associated with the festival.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which the gurdwara is an essential part of the Sikh religion. • The comparative importance of practices within the gurdwara. • The relative importance of Diwali and Vaisakhi. • The extent to which festivals are a necessary expression of Sikh identity • The value of Sikh festivals as community occasions. • Whether celebrating historical events on festival days is meaningful. 	

2.2 AS Unit 2

Unit 2: An Introduction to Religion and Ethics and the Philosophy of Religion.

Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes
25% of qualification
120 marks

Section A: An Introduction to Religion and Ethics

This section provides the opportunity for learners to acquire and develop knowledge and a critical understanding of key ethical concepts and theories, ranging from moral absolutism to Utilitarianism.

This Section includes the study of the following content:

- ethical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in religion and ethics
- three normative ethical theories such as deontological, teleological or character based ethics (at least two of which must be religious approaches)
- the application of ethical theory to two personal, societal or global issues of importance, including religious ethical perspectives.

Section B: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion.

This section provides the opportunity for learners to acquire and develop knowledge and a critical understanding of some of the key features of fundamental philosophical themes, ranging from arguments for the existence of God to religious experience.

This Section includes the study of the following content:

- philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief including at least three contrasting arguments about the existence or non-existence of God, gods or ultimate reality
- philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in the philosophy of religion
- challenges to religious belief such as the problems of evil and suffering
- the nature and influence of religious experience.

The following grids exemplify how the required content has been developed in a clear and concise way into four themes:

Unit 2: Section A - An Introduction to Religion and Ethics

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Ethical Thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Divine Command Theory</p> <p>Meta-ethical theory - God as the origin and regulator of morality; right or wrong as objective truths based on God's will/command, moral goodness is achieved by complying with divine command; divine command a requirement of God's omnipotence; divine command as an objective meta-physical foundation for morality. <i>Robert Adams</i>' 'Modified Divine Command Theory' (divine command based on God's omnibenevolence).</p> <p>Challenges: the Euthyphro dilemma (inspired by <i>Plato</i>); arbitrariness problem (divine command theory renders morality as purely arbitrary); pluralism objection (different religions claim different divine commands).</p>
B.	<p>Virtue Theory</p> <p>Ethical system based on defining the personal qualities that make a person moral; the focus on a person's character rather than their specific actions; <i>Aristotle</i>'s moral virtues (based on the deficiency; the excess and the mean); Jesus' teachings on virtues (the Beatitudes).</p> <p>Challenges: virtues are not a practical guide to moral behaviour; issue of cultural relativism (ideas on the good virtues are not universal); virtues can be used for immoral acts.</p>
C.	<p>Ethical Egoism</p> <p>Normative agent focused ethic based on self-interest as opposed to altruism; ethical theory that matches the moral agent's psychological state (psychological egoism); concentration on long term self-interests rather than short term interests; <i>Max Stirner</i>, self-interest as the root cause of every human action even if it appears altruistic; rejection of egoism for material gain; union of egoists.</p> <p>Challenges: destruction of a community ethos; social injustices could occur as individuals put their own interests first; a form of bigotry (why is one moral agent more important than any other?).</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether morality is what God commands. • Whether being a good person is better than just doing good deeds. • Whether virtue theory is useful when faced with a moral dilemma. • The extent to which ethical egoism inevitably leads to moral evil. • The extent to which all moral actions are motivated by self-interest. • Whether one of the theories - divine command theory, virtue theory or ethical egoism is superior to the other theories. 	

Unit 2: Section A - An Introduction to Religion and Ethics

Theme 2: Aquinas' Natural Law - a religious approach to ethics	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p><i>St Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law: laws and precepts as the basis of morality</i></p> <p>Aquinas' four levels of law (eternal, divine, natural and human); Natural Law derived from rational thought; based on a belief in a divine creator (the highest good as being the rational understanding of God's final purpose). Natural Law as a form of moral absolutism and a theory which has both deontological and teleological aspects. The five primary precepts (preservation of life, ordered society, worship of God, education and reproduction of the human species) as derived from rational thought and based on the premise of 'doing good and avoiding evil'; the secondary precepts which derive from the primary precepts; the importance of keeping the precepts in order to establish a right relationship with God and gain eternal life with God in heaven.</p>
B.	<p><i>Aquinas' Natural Law: the role of virtues and goods in supporting moral behaviour</i></p> <p>The need for humans to be more God-like by developing the three revealed virtues (faith, hope and charity) and four cardinal virtues (fortitude, temperance, prudence and justice). Aquinas' definition of different types of acts and goods: internal acts (the intention of the moral agent when carrying out an action) and external acts (the actions of a moral agent); real goods (correctly reasoned goods that help the moral agent achieve their telos) and apparent goods (wrongly reasoned goods that don't help the moral agent achieve their God given purpose).</p>
C.	<p><i>Aquinas' Natural Law: application of the theory</i></p> <p>The application of Aquinas' Natural Law to both of the issues listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. abortion 2. voluntary euthanasia
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which human law should be influenced by Natural Law. • The extent to which the absolutist and/or deontological nature of Natural Law works in contemporary society. • The strengths and weaknesses of Natural Law. • A consideration of whether Natural Law promotes injustice. • The effectiveness of Natural Law in dealing with ethical issues. • The extent to which Natural Law is meaningless without a belief in a creator God. 	

Unit 2: Section A - An Introduction to Religion and Ethics

Theme 3: Situation Ethics – a religious approach to ethics	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p><i>Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics: his rejection of other forms of ethics and his acceptance of agape as the basis of morality</i></p> <p>Fletcher's rejection of other approaches within ethics: legalism, antinomianism and the role of conscience; Fletcher's rationale for using the religious concept of 'agape' (selfless love) as the 'middle way' between the extremes of legalism and antinomianism; the biblical evidence used to support this approach: the teachings of Jesus (Luke 10:25:37) and St Paul (1 Corinthians 13). Situation Ethics as a form of moral relativism, a consequentialist and teleological theory.</p>
B.	<p><i>Fletcher's Situation Ethics: the principles as a means of assessing morality</i></p> <p>The boss principle of Situation Ethics (following the concept of agape); the four working principles (pragmatism, relativism, positivism and personalism); the six fundamental principles (love is the only good, love is the ruling norm of Christianity, love equals justice, love for all, loving ends justify the means and love decides situationally).</p>
C.	<p><i>Fletcher's Situation Ethics: application of the theory</i></p> <p>The application of <i>Fletcher's</i> Situation Ethics to both of the issues listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. homosexual relationships 2. polyamorous relationships
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which agape is the only intrinsic good. • Whether Situation Ethics promotes immoral behaviour. • The extent to which Situation Ethics promotes justice. • The effectiveness of Situation Ethics in dealing with ethical issues. • Whether agape should replace religious rules. • The extent to which Situation Ethics provides a practical basis for making moral decisions for both religious believers and non-believers. 	

Unit 2: Section A - An Introduction to Religion and Ethics

Theme 4: Utilitarianism – a non-religious approach to ethics	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Classical Utilitarianism - <i>Jeremy Bentham's</i> Act Utilitarianism: happiness as the basis of morality</p> <p>Bentham's theory of 'utility' or 'usefulness'; ultimate aim is to pursue pleasure and avoid pain; principle of utility ('the greatest happiness for the greatest number'). The hedonic calculus as a means of measuring pleasure in each unique moral situation; by considering seven factors: intensity, duration, certainty, remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent. Act Utilitarianism as a form of moral relativism, a consequentialist and teleological theory.</p>
B.	<p><i>John Stuart Mill's</i> development of Utilitarianism: types of pleasure, the harm principle and the use of rules</p> <p><i>Mill's</i> idea that not all pleasure is the same - 'higher pleasures' (intellectual) are superior to 'lower pleasures' (basic physical pleasure). Development of the 'Harm Principle': the actions of individuals should be limited to prevent harm to other individuals. Every action does not need to be assessed and actions are right if they conform to an historical rule that has demonstrated that it fulfils the principle of utility (now known as 'Rule' Utilitarianism). <i>Mill's</i> Utilitarianism as a teleological/deontological hybrid.</p>
C.	<p>Utilitarianism: application of the theories (Act and Rule).</p> <p>The application of <i>Bentham's</i> Act Utilitarianism and <i>Mill's</i> Rule Utilitarianism to both of the issues listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. animal experimentation for medical research 2. the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which pleasure can be seen as the sole intrinsic good. • The extent to which Utilitarianism works in contemporary society. • The extent to which Rule Utilitarianism provides a better basis for making moral decisions than Act Utilitarianism. • Whether Utilitarianism promotes immoral behaviour. • The extent to which Utilitarianism promotes justice. • The extent to which Utilitarianism provides a practical basis for making moral decisions for both religious believers and non-believers. 	

Unit 2: Section B - An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Arguments for the existence of God - inductive	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Inductive arguments - cosmological</p> <p>Inductive proofs; the concept of '<i>a posteriori</i>'.</p> <p>Cosmological argument: <i>St Thomas Aquinas</i>' first Three Ways - (motion or change; cause and effect; contingency and necessity).</p> <p>The Kalam cosmological argument with reference to <i>William Lane Craig</i> (rejection of actual infinities and concept of personal creator).</p>
B.	<p>Inductive arguments – teleological:</p> <p><i>St Thomas Aquinas</i>' Fifth Way - concept of governance; archer and arrow analogy.</p> <p><i>William Paley</i>'s watchmaker - analogy of complex design.</p> <p><i>Fredrick R. Tennant's (F. R. Tennnant)</i> anthropic and aesthetic arguments - the universe specifically designed for intelligent human life.</p>
C.	<p>Challenges to inductive arguments:</p> <p><i>David Hume</i> - empirical objections and critique of causes (cosmological).</p> <p><i>David Hume</i> - problems with analogies; rejection of traditional theistic claims: designer not necessarily God of classical theism; apprentice god; plurality of gods; absent god (teleological).</p> <p>Alternative scientific explanations including Big Bang theory and <i>Charles Darwin</i>'s theory of evolution by natural selection.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether inductive arguments for God's existence are persuasive. • The extent to which the Kalam cosmological argument is convincing. • The effectiveness of the cosmological/teleological argument for God's existence. • Whether cosmological/teleological arguments for God's existence are persuasive in the 21st Century. • The effectiveness of the challenges to the cosmological/teleological argument for God's existence. • Whether scientific explanations are more persuasive than philosophical explanations for the universe's existence. 	

Unit 2: Section B - An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

Theme 2: Arguments for the existence of God - deductive	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Deductive arguments - origins of the ontological argument</p> <p>Deductive proofs; the concept of 'a priori'. <i>St Anselm</i> - God as the greatest possible being (Proslogion 2). <i>St Anselm</i> - God has necessary existence (Proslogion 3).</p>
B.	<p>Deductive arguments - developments of the ontological argument:</p> <p><i>Rene Descartes</i> - concept of God as supremely perfect being; analogies of triangles and mountains/valleys. <i>Norman Malcolm</i> - God as unlimited being: God's existence as necessary rather than just possible.</p>
C.	<p>Challenges to the ontological argument:</p> <p>Gaunilo, his reply to <i>St Anselm</i>; his rejection of idea of a greatest possible being that can be thought of as having separate existence outside of our minds; his analogy of the idea of the greatest island as a ridicule of <i>St Anselm's</i> logic. <i>Immanuel Kant's</i> objection - existence is not a determining predicate: it cannot be a property that an object can either possess or lack.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which 'a priori' arguments for God's existence are persuasive. • The extent to which different religious views on the nature of God impact on arguments for the existence of God. • The effectiveness of the ontological argument for God's existence. • Whether the ontological argument is more persuasive than the cosmological/teleological arguments for God's existence. • The effectiveness of the challenges to the ontological argument for God's existence. • The extent to which objections to the ontological argument are persuasive. 	

Unit 2: Section B - An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

Theme 3: Challenges to religious belief (part 1) - the problem of evil and suffering	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The problem of evil:</p> <p>The types of evil: moral (caused by free will agents) and natural (caused by nature). The logical problem of evil: classical (Epicurus) - the problem of suffering. <i>John L. Mackie's (J. L. Mackie's)</i> modern development - the nature of the problem of evil (inconsistent triad). <i>William Rowe</i> (intense human and animal suffering) and <i>Gregory S. Paul</i> (premature deaths).</p>
B.	<p>Religious responses to the problem of evil:</p> <p>Augustinian type theodicy: Evil as a consequence of sin; evil as a privation; the fall of human beings and creation; the Cross overcomes evil, soul-deciding; challenges to Augustinian type theodicies: validity of accounts in Genesis, Chapters 2 and 3; scientific error - biological impossibility of human descent from a single pair (therefore invalidating the 'inheritance of Adam's sin'); contradiction of perfect order becoming chaotic - geological and biological evidence suggests the contrary; moral contradictions of omnibenevolent God and existence of Hell; logical contradiction of perfect creation being susceptible to change.</p>
C.	<p>Religious responses to the problem of evil:</p> <p>Irenaean type theodicy: Vale of soul-making: human beings created imperfect; epistemic distance; second-order goods; eschatological justification; challenges to Irenaean type theodicies: concept of universal salvation unjust; evil and suffering should not be used as a tool by an omnibenevolent God; immensity of suffering and unequal distribution of evil and suffering.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the classical form of the problem of evil is a problem. • The degree to which modern problem of evil arguments are effective in proving God's non-existence. • Whether Augustinian type theodicies are relevant in the 21st Century. • The extent to which Augustine's theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of Classical Theism. • Whether Irenaean type theodicies are credible in the 21st Century. • The extent to which Irenaeus's theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of Classical Theism. 	

Unit 2: Section B - An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

Theme 4: Religious Experience (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The nature of religious experience with particular reference to:</p> <p>Visions - sensory; intellectual; dreams Conversion – individual/communal; sudden/gradual Mysticism – transcendent; ecstatic and unitive Prayer – types and stages of prayer according to Teresa of Avila.</p>
B.	<p>Mystical experience:</p> <p>William James' four characteristics of mystical experience: ineffable, noetic, transient and passive.</p> <p>Rudolf Otto – the concept of the numinous; <i>mysterium tremendum</i>; the human predisposition for religious experience.</p>
C.	<p>Challenges to the objectivity and authenticity of religious experience:</p> <p>With reference to <i>Caroline Franks Davis</i> (description-related; subject-related and object-related challenges). Claims of religious experience rejected on grounds of misunderstanding; claims delusional - possibly related to substance misuse, fantastical claims contrary to everyday experiences.</p> <p>Challenges: individual experiences valid even if non-verifiable; claims could be genuine - integrity of individual; one-off experiences can still be valid even if never repeated.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of religious experiences upon religious belief and practice. • Whether different types of religious experience can be accepted as equally valid in communicating religious teachings and beliefs. • The adequacy of <i>James'</i> four characteristics in defining mystical experience. • The adequacy of <i>Otto's</i> definition of 'numinous'. • The extent to which the challenges to religious experience are valid. • The persuasiveness of <i>Franks-Davis'</i> different challenges. 	

2.3 A level Unit 3

Unit 3: A Study of Religion

Written examination: 1 hour 30 mins

20% of qualification

90 marks

Learners will be assessed on **one** of the following options from a choice of **six**:

Option A: Christianity

Option B: Islam

Option C: Judaism

Option D: Buddhism

Option E: Hinduism

Option F: Sikhism

Note: With one exception, for A level learners, the religion chosen for AS Unit 1 must also be studied for A level Unit 3.

The only exception being that learners who study Unit 1 Option A: Christianity for AS can study **either** Unit 3 Option A: Christianity **or** Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament) for A level.

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of their chosen religion covering themes ranging from religious figures and sacred texts to practices that shape religious identity.

This unit includes the study of the following content:

- religious beliefs, values and teachings, in their interconnections and as they vary historically and in the contemporary world, including those linked to the nature and existence of God, gods or ultimate reality, the role of the community of believers, key moral principles, beliefs about the self, death and afterlife, beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life
- sources of wisdom and authority including, where appropriate, scripture and/or sacred texts and how they are used and treated, key religious figures and/or teachers and their teachings
- practices that shape and express religious identity, including the diversity of practice within a tradition
- significant social and historical developments in theology or religious thought including the challenges of secularisation, science, responses to pluralism and diversity within traditions, migration, the changing roles of men and women, feminist and liberationist approaches
- a comparison of the significant ideas presented in works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of religion and belief
- two themes related to the relationship between religion and society
 - religion, equality and discrimination
 - religious tolerance, respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims
- how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical, studies of religion and/or by textual interpretation.

The following grids exemplify how the required content has been developed in a clear and concise way into four themes:

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option A: A Study of Christianity

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The Bible as a source of wisdom and authority:</p> <p>How the Christian biblical canon was established. Diverse views on the Bible as the word of God: different understandings of inspiration (the objective view of inspiration; the subjective view of inspiration; <i>John Calvin's</i> doctrine of accommodation).</p>
B.	<p>The early church (in Acts of the Apostles):</p> <p>Its message and format: the kerygmata as presented by <i>Charles H. Dodd (C. H. Dodd)</i>, with reference to Acts 2:14-39; 3:12-26. The challenges to the kerygmata (with reference to the historical value of the speeches in Acts and the work of Rudolf Bultmann). The adapting of the Christian message to suit the audience.</p>
C.	<p>Two views of Jesus:</p> <p>A comparison of the work of two key scholars, including their views of Jesus with reference to their different methods of studying Jesus: <i>John Dominic Crossan</i> and <i>Nicholas T. Wright (N. T. Wright)</i>.</p> <p><i>Crossan</i>: Jesus the social revolutionary; using apocryphal gospels; seeing Jesus as product of his time; what the words of Jesus would have meant in Jesus' time.</p> <p><i>Wright</i>: Jesus the true Messiah; critical realism; texts as 'the articulation of worldviews'; seeks to find the best explanation for the traditions found in the Gospels.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the Bible can be regarded as the inspired word of God. • Whether the Christian biblical canonical orders are inspired, as opposed to just the texts they contain. • The extent to which the kerygmata (within the areas of Acts studied) are of any value for Christians today. • Whether the speeches in Acts have any historical value. • The validity of using critical realism to understand Jesus. • The validity of using apocryphal gospels to understand Jesus. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option A: A Study of Christianity

Theme 2: Significant historical developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Challenges from secularisation:</p> <p>The conflicting religious and non-religious views on Christianity in the UK (the value of Christian faith schools; whether the UK can be called a 'Christian country'); beliefs conflicting with laws of country; perceived challenges to Christianity (decline of role and status of Christianity; reduced impact in public life; restricted religious liberty).</p>
B.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Challenges from science:</p> <p><i>Richard Dawkins'</i> and <i>Alister McGrath's</i> contrasting views on the relationship between religion and science, and the nature of proof; the limits of science; the 'God of the gaps' argument.</p>
C.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Challenges from pluralism and diversity within a tradition:</p> <p>Difference between religious pluralism and tolerance of religious diversity; the exclusivist and inclusivist views expressed in the Christian Bible (Deut 6:5; Joshua 23:16; John 14:6; Acts 4:12); the contribution of <i>John Hick</i> and <i>Karl Rahner</i> to Christian inclusivism (and the difference between their positions); the differences between Christian universalism and pluralistic universalism.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of the Christian response to the challenge of secularism. • The extent to which the UK can be called a Christian country. • The extent to which a scientist must be an atheist. • Whether science has reduced the role of God in Christianity. • The extent to which it is possible to be both a committed Christian and a religious pluralist. • The extent to which the Christian Bible promotes exclusivism. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option A: A Study of Christianity

Theme 3: Significant social developments in religious thought

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

A.	<p>Attitudes towards wealth:</p> <p>The dangers of wealth (with reference to Mark 10:17-25; Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:33-34, 1 Timothy 6:10); apparent contradiction between biblical teaching on stewardship and the ascetic ideal; the prosperity gospel of the Word-Faith movement.</p>
B.	<p>Migration and Christianity in the UK:</p> <p>The challenges of Christian migration to, and within the UK, with reference to assimilation, provision of worship, style of worship and issues of culture. The reverse mission movement to the UK.</p>
C.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: religion, equality and discrimination.</p> <p>Feminist theology and the changing role of men and women:</p> <p>The contribution of <i>Mary Daly</i> and <i>Rosemary Radford Ruether</i> to feminist theology. The changing role of men and women with reference to the issue of the ordination of women priests and bishops; the impact on the lives of believers and communities within Christianity today.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which wealth is a sign of God's blessing. • Whether the ascetic ideal is compatible with Christianity. • The extent to which the UK is a modern mission field. • The relative ease of assimilation of Christian migrants into Christian churches in the UK. • Whether men and women are equal in Christianity. • The extent to which feminist theology impacts modern Christian practice. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option A: A Study of Christianity

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 2)

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

A. Religious identity through unification:

The development of the Ecumenical Movement since 1910 (World Missionary Conference); the World Council of Churches, its rationale, its mission and its work in three main areas: Unity, Mission, and Ecumenical Relations; Public Witness and Diakonia; and Ecumenical Formation.

Synoptic links - how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical studies of religion.

B. Religious identity through religious experience:

The development of the Charismatic Movement post-1960; main beliefs; implications for Christian practice in the experience of believers and Christian communities; philosophical challenges to charismatic experience (verification and natural explanation).

C. Religious identity through responses to poverty and injustice:

The basis (political, ethical and religious) of South American liberation theology with reference to *Gustavo Gutierrez* and *Leonardo Boff*, Roman Catholic Church responses to South American liberation theology.

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:

- Whether the work of the World Council of Churches can be viewed as a success or a failure.
- The extent to which the non-membership of the Roman Catholic Church affects the aims of the World Council of Churches.
- The strengths and weaknesses of the Charismatic Movement.
- Whether a natural explanation for charismatic experiences conflicts with the religious value of the experience.
- Whether the political and ethical foundations of liberation theology are more important than any religious foundations.
- The extent to which liberation theology offered a cultural challenge to the Roman Catholic Church.

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option B: A Study of Islam

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Sources of shari'a (the way): Qur'an; sunna (clear trodden path) and hadith (report); qiyas (analogy); ijma (consensus)</p> <p>The significance of sunna for Muslims and the development of hadith. The different categories of hadith in relation to the overall reliability of text and chain of transmission. The development of qiyas and ijma. The work of <i>Al-Shafi</i> in devising a methodology for fiqh (deep understanding) of shari'a. The establishments of the major law schools in applying fiqh within Islam.</p>
B.	<p>The role of shari'a and its importance for Muslims:</p> <p>Different understandings of the term shari'a and the different ways in which it is applied by Muslims throughout the world today with reference to: shari'a as civil law; shari'a as religious law and shari'a as a moral guide. The role of the mujtahid (jurist) and taqlid (imitation). Specific reference to the debates surrounding ijthihad (intellectual struggle) and contrasting views from within Sunni and Shi'a Islam on ijthihad. A comparison of the approaches taken by Salafi scholar <i>Rashid Rida</i> and modernist Islamic scholar <i>Tariq Ramadan</i>.</p>
C.	<p>Muslim understandings of jihad:</p> <p>The different meanings of jihad (struggle) both greater and lesser. The importance and significance of greater jihad as a personal spiritual struggle for every Muslim. The historical context and the specific conditions of lesser jihad. The problems in applying lesser jihad today with specific reference to modern warfare.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The divine nature of the shari'a. • The extent to which human interpretation may impair understanding of shari'a. • The extent to which a description of shari'a as law is misleading. • Whether or not the doors to ijthihad are closed. • The extent to which the term jihad is misunderstood. • The relevance today of the teachings about lesser jihad. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option B: A Study of Islam

Theme 2: Significant historical developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>The concept of a state governed according to Islamic principles and the political and social influence of religious institutions as a challenge to secularisation:</p> <p>The religious, social, moral and political structure of Madinah as the model or ideal for any state governed according to Islamic principles and the impact of the Constitution of Madinah. The role of shari'a law within a state governed according to Islamic principles. The challenge of shari'a law within a non-Islamic secular state.</p>
B.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>The challenges to Islam from scientific views about the origins of the universe:</p> <p>Islamic teachings about creation and their compatibility with modern scientific theories such as the Big Bang, the Steady State and Expanding/Oscillating Universe theories. Reference should be made to Sura 3:26-27, Sura 23:12-14 and Sura 51:47.</p>
C.	<p>Western perceptions of Islam:</p> <p>Issues of bias, misrepresentation, inaccuracy and Islamophobia throughout the Western world with a particular focus on Britain. Examples may be drawn from: political views; views from media sources (television, radio or newspapers) and/or online media.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The compatibility of Islam with democracy. • The extent to which shari'a is an adequate guide for all aspects of a society. • The effectiveness of Islamic responses to the challenges of scientific views about the origins of the universe. • Whether or not Islam is compatible with science. • The extent to which the media influences Western perceptions of Islam. • Whether or not Islam is accurately presented in Britain today. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option B: A Study of Islam

Theme 3: Significant social developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Islamic attitudes towards pluralism:</p> <p>The diversity in Muslim attitudes towards other religions, including People of the Book. The teachings found in Sura 42:13, Sura 2:136 and Sura 2:256. The importance of religious freedom in the history of the Islamic religion. Conversion in Islam.</p>
B.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: religion, equality and discrimination.</p> <p>The importance of family life for the Muslim religion:</p> <p>The role of the family and the Muslim home as foundational for Islamic principles. The changing role of men and women in Islam with reference to family life. The role and status of women in Islam with reference to feminism: the pioneering work of Professor Aisha Abd Al Rahman (<i>aka "Bint ash shati"</i>); a contemporary feminist view <i>Haleh Afshar</i>.</p>
C.	<p>Islam and migration: the challenges of being a Muslim in Britain today:</p> <p>An examination of the problems created by segregation and assimilation for Muslim communities and individuals living in Britain today with a focus on food, dress, practice of religion and, education. The role of the Muslim Council of Britain.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of Islamic responses to pluralism. • Whether or not there is a coherent approach to conversion in Islam. • The extent to which the Muslim family is central to the Islamic religion. • Whether or not women are equal to men in Islam. • The possibility of assimilation into a secular society for Muslims in Britain. • The effectiveness of the Muslim Council of Britain. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option B: A Study of Islam

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief (part 2)

A.	<p>Diversity within Islam:</p> <p>Beliefs and practices distinctive of Shi'a Islam:</p> <p>Specific Shi'a interpretations of the Five Pillars. The significance of the historical dispute that gave rise to Shi'a Islam with reference to: the succession of Ali; the death of Hussein and martyrdom. Beliefs about the Imam; Mahdi (occultation); pilgrimage; muta (temporary marriage) and taqiyya (concealing belief).</p>
<p>Synoptic links - how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical studies of religion.</p>	
B.	<p>Islam and change - the development and influence on religious belief and practice within Islam of:</p> <p>Sufi philosophical thought about the nature of God and religious experience:</p> <p>The Qutb (Sufi spiritual leader). The role of the teacher, the use of parables and the direct personal relationship of teacher to pupil. The role of asceticism. The role of personal, mystical religious experience as a way of experiencing God. The variety of sufi devotional practices including dhikr (remembrance), muraqaba (Sufi meditation) and sama (spiritual listening, specifically whirling).</p>
C.	<p>Ethical debate about crime and punishment (including arguments posed by scholars from within and outside the Islamic tradition):</p> <p>Traditional Muslim views about punishment for crime. Categories of punishment: qisas; hudud; tazir. A comparison of different views about the death penalty: a modernist scholarly view - <i>Tariq Ramadan</i>; a traditionalist Islamic scholar - <i>Sheikh Ahmad Ash-Sharabasi</i>; the response of <i>James Rachels</i> (non-Islamic scholar).</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islam as a divided or united religion. • The extent to which Shi'a is a unique form of Islam. • The possibility of a personal mystical union with God in Islam. • The religious validity of Sufi devotional practices. • The effectiveness of Islamic ethical teachings as a guide for living for Muslims today. • The extent to which Islamic teachings on punishment can be applied today. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option C: A Study of Judaism

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The structure and development of the Talmud and its importance within Judaism:</p> <p>The differences between the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds. The nature of the Mishnah: content, style and importance for study in Judaism. The nature of the Gemara: content, style and importance for study in Judaism.</p>
B.	<p>Midrash in Judaism: the distinction between Halakhah and Aggadah:</p> <p>The meaning and purpose of midrash. Midrashic method: peshat (plain, literal); remez (hint); derash (homily); sod (hidden). The Halakhah and the 613 mitzvot; Halakhah as the revealed will of God – Orthodox and Reform views. The purpose and role of Aggadah in midrash.</p>
C.	<p><i>Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (Rashi) and Moses Maimonides:</i></p> <p><i>Rashi's</i> importance in the history of Talmudic study. <i>Rashi's</i> approach to midrash: close reading, forensic exegesis and the goal of clarity through peshat (literal interpretation).</p> <p><i>Maimonides'</i> significance in the history of Jewish studies. The approach taken by <i>Maimonides</i> to midrash: philosophy and reason.</p> <p>A comparison of the views of <i>Rashi</i> and <i>Maimonides</i> concerning an understanding of the creation text in Genesis 1.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mishnah as the most important element of the Talmud. • The relative importance of the Gemara. • The importance of Halakhah versus the importance of Aggadah for Judaism. • Whether or not midrash is an imprecise science. • The relative importance of <i>Rashi</i> and <i>Maimonides</i> for understanding Hebrew scriptures. • The extent to which <i>Maimonides</i> is the most complete Jewish scholar. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option C: A Study of Judaism

Theme 2: Significant historical developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>The challenge of secularisation:</p> <p>The origins of Religious Zionism with reference to Amos 9:14–15 and “Zion theology” found in the Hebrew Bible. The rise of nationalism in response to anti-Semitism in the 19th century. Political Zionism and the developing idea of a national identity amongst Jews with reference to: the Dreyfus affair; the work of <i>Theodor Herzl</i> and the international Zionist movement; the First Zionist Conference in 1897 and the establishment of political and legal claims; revival of the Hebrew language in its modern spoken form. Labour Zionism and the development of kibbutz. The development of the Zionist Movement and the establishment of the secular state of Israel. Migration to Israel; the challenge of secularisation with reference to the specific response by Haredi Judaism.</p>
B.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>The challenge of science:</p> <p>Diversity of responses within Judaism to the philosophical issues relating to both the nature of God and to the creation event with reference to bereshit (in the beginning); evolution and different Jewish understandings of the creation process; the debate about the age of the universe.</p>
C.	<p>Holocaust theology:</p> <p>Key theological responses to the Holocaust with reference to: the meaning of <i>Richard Rubenstein’s</i> “death of God”; <i>Elie Wiesel’s</i> “The Trial of God”; <i>Ignaz Maybaum’s</i> view of Israel as the “suffering servant” and the Holocaust as “vicarious atonement”; <i>Eliezer Berkovitz</i> and “the hiding of the divine face” and free will; <i>Emil Fackenheim’s</i> proposal of the Holocaust as a new revelation experience of God by way of a 614th commandment.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The validity and strength of the links between Zionism and Judaism. • Whether or not Zionism is specifically a Jewish movement. • The success of Judaism in meeting the challenges posed by science. • Whether or not Judaism is compatible with science. • The success of Holocaust theologies in addressing the challenges raised by the Holocaust. • Whether or not any Holocaust theology is legitimate. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option C: A Study of Judaism

Theme 3: Significant social developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>The development of Reform Judaism and Jewish attitudes to pluralism:</p> <p>The role and legacy of the Pittsburgh Platform with reference to: attitudes towards liberationist thought (concern for the poor) and Tikkun Olam (repair of the world); attitudes towards other religions; the diversity of views in Reform and Orthodox Judaism towards interfaith dialogue.</p>
B.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: religion, equality and discrimination.</p> <p>Jewish family life, including diversity of views within Judaism about gender equality:</p> <p>The role of the family and the Jewish home as foundational for Jewish principles. The changing role of men and women in Judaism with reference to family life. The role and status of women in Judaism with reference to feminism: debates about agunah (chained); debates about minyan; the contributions of <i>Judith Plaskow</i> and <i>Margaret Wenig</i> to Jewish feminism.</p>
C.	<p>Judaism and migration: the challenges of being a religious and ethnic minority in Britain with reference to key features of aspects of Jewish life</p> <p>An examination of the problems created by segregation and assimilation for Jewish communities and individuals living in Britain today with a focus on: kashrut (purity); dress; practice of religion and education. The role of the Jewish Leadership Council.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of Jewish responses to pluralism. • The effectiveness of the Pittsburgh Platform in relation to the plight of the poor. • Family life as the main strength of Judaism. • Whether or not women can be equal to men in Judaism. • The possibility of assimilation into a secular society for Jews in Britain. • The extent to which assimilation equates to a loss of identity. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option C: A Study of Judaism

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief (part 2)	
A.	<p>Beliefs and practices distinctive of Hasidic Judaism:</p> <p><i>Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer (aka Baal Shem Tov)</i> and the opposition of the Mitnagdim; adoption of new prayer rite; modified liturgy; influence of the rebbe; miraculous healing; charismatic approach to worship; life of piety; emphasis on worship rather than traditional study.</p>
<p>Synoptic links - how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical studies of religion.</p>	
B.	<p>Philosophical understandings of the nature of God and religious experience found in Kabbalah:</p> <p>Esotericism: meditation, visual aids, art and magic. Role of the Zohar. The focus on the experience of God and trying to penetrate God's essence: En Sof (infinite); Sefirot (emanations); Devekut (clinging on); and Tikkun (repair).</p>
C.	<p>Ethical debate within Judaism about embryo research, including arguments posed by scholars from within and outside the Jewish tradition:</p> <p>Jewish contributions to the debate about embryo research with particular reference to: the relationship between stem-cell research and pikuach nefesh (the sanctity of life); somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT); pre-implantation embryo research; a comparison of the views proposed by <i>Rabbi J. David Bleich</i> and <i>Rabbi Moshe David Tendler</i>; the views and work of <i>Professor Clare Blackburn</i>.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether Hasidism contributed to the survival of Judaism. • The extent to which Hasidism divides Judaism. • The possibility of a personal mystical union with God in Judaism. • The value of aids to worship in Kabbalah. • The effectiveness of Jewish ethical teachings as a guide for living for Jews today. • The extent to which pikuach nefesh is compatible with embryo research. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option D: A Study of Buddhism

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The Pali Canon: its role in Buddhism as a whole:</p> <p>The Tipitaka. The authority of the Vinaya for the Theravada sangha the wider authority and significance of the Sutta Pitaka, the relevance of the Abidhamma for the commentarial development of Buddhism. The importance of the Pali Canon as a source of wisdom.</p>
B.	<p>The main themes and concepts in two Mahayana texts:</p> <p>The Heart Sutra - the philosophical content regarding the mutual identity of emptiness and form. The Parable of the Burning House in the Lotus Sutra - exemplifying the concept of skilful means and the provisional nature of the teachings.</p>
C.	<p>The contribution made to the development of Buddhist thought by the work of contemporary Buddhist teachers:</p> <p>A comparison of the background and work of the Fourteenth <i>Dalai Lama</i> and <i>Thich Nhat Hanh</i>: their practical interpretation of Buddhist teachings for life in the West: with reference to <i>Thich Nhat Hanh's</i> emphasis on simple practices (smiling, breathing and walking) and the <i>Dalai Lama's</i> emphasis on acts of kindness; both teachers' views about compassion and non-harming.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relative importance of the Pali Canon in Buddhism. • The significance of the Vinaya for the sangha. • The teachings in Mahayana Sutras as representative of reality. • Skillful means as a key to understanding Buddhism's diversity. • The relative success of <i>Dalai Lama</i> and <i>Thich Nhat Hanh</i> in ensuring the relevance of Buddhism in the modern world. • The extent to which the <i>Dalai Lama</i> and <i>Thich Nhat Hanh</i> have developed new and innovative expressions of Buddhism. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option D: A Study of Buddhism

Theme 2: Significant historical developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Historical development of Buddhism in Japan:</p> <p>The development of key Buddhist traditions in Japan - Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren, with particular reference to the central practices of koan (paradoxical statement used as a practice in Zen traditions), nembutsu (going for refuge in Amida/Amitabha Buddha in Pure Land traditions) and daimoku (mantra used in Nichiren traditions).</p>
B.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Responses to the challenges from science:</p> <p>The tension between presentations of Buddhism as avoiding 'blind faith', emphasising the realisation of truth in experience (with reference to the Kalama Sutta v.9 & 10) and Asian Buddhist worldviews populated with a diversity of beings and realms. The <i>Dalai Lama's</i> assessment of the value of science.</p>
C.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Responses to the challenges from secularisation:</p> <p>Buddhism's frequent presentation in the West as a secular philosophy, with reference to <i>Stephen Batchelor</i> (a Buddhist Atheist) and his presentation of Buddhism as a rational philosophy and way of life, and <i>David Brazier</i>, who claims Buddhism is a religion.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which Japanese Buddhism is unique. • The importance of koan, nembutsu and daimoku as expressions of Buddhist teachings. • The extent to which there is a close relationship between Buddhism and science. • Ways in which scientific worldview and Buddhism are incompatible. • The legitimacy of Western presentations of Buddhism as atheistic and secular. • The question of whether Buddhism is a religion. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option D: A Study of Buddhism

Theme 3: Significant social developments in religious thought

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

A.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Responses to the challenges of pluralism and diversity:</p> <p>Emphasis within Buddhism on the individual testing the teachings and staying true to experience, even if that means following a path different to Buddhism (with reference to the Kalama Sutta v. 9 & 10 and Majjhima Nikaya 56.16 - the Buddha's conversation with Upali). In Mahayana Buddhism the teachings are sometimes considered to be only provisional, different upaya (skilful means) to suit different listeners. The idea that religions contain truth/goodness that all can learn from, as evidenced in the Edicts of Emperor Ashoka: Rock Edict Nb7 and Rock Edict Nb12.</p>
B.	<p>Historical development of Buddhism in Britain:</p> <p>Buddhism in Britain, distinguishing between 'heritage' Buddhism (the Buddhism of those whose relatives were born in Buddhist countries and migrated to Britain) and 'convert' Buddhism. Possible reasons for the popularity of Buddhism in Britain.</p>
C.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: religion, equality and discrimination.</p> <p>The changing roles of men and women including feminist approaches within Buddhism:</p> <p>Different views in Buddhism about whether women can be nuns or attain awakening. The Buddha ordained women, after persuasion. The Lotus Sutra presents a range of teachings: all equally possess the potential to attain Buddhahood; the Dragon King's daughter (Chapter 12) transforms into a man before attaining awakening. Buddhism's commitment to the end of suffering may be seen as inherently feminist (as indicated by <i>Rita Gross</i>). Cultural stereotypes of the roles of men and women have no universal application within Buddhism.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which Buddhism's openness means it is in danger of losing its own identity. • The value of experience compared to other potential sources of authority in Buddhism. • The unique nature of British Buddhism in comparison with Buddhism found in other countries. • The comparative legitimacy of 'convert' Buddhism with 'heritage' Buddhism. • The comparative significance of features which contribute to the popularity of Buddhism in Britain. • The extent to which Buddhism aligns with feminism. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option D: A Study of Buddhism

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Beliefs and practices of Tibetan Buddhist traditions with reference to mudra, mandala and mantra:</p> <p>The relationship of Buddhism with pre-Buddhist Bon religion as part of the context for the development of these distinctive practices associated with Vajrayana Buddhism - mudra, (ritual bodily movements, often hand gestures) mandala (cosmic diagrams) and mantra (sacred sounds).</p>
<p>Synoptic links - how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical studies of religion.</p>	
B.	<p>Buddhism and change – the development and influence on religious belief and practice within Buddhism of:</p> <p>The Mindfulness Movement:</p> <p>Philosophical understandings of the nature of reality and religious experience found within the contemporary Mindfulness movement. The use of mindfulness in health care, education and business – examples drawn from pain management, treatment for stress, depression and anxiety, cancer-management, addiction treatment, mindfulness in schools, mindfulness in large corporations and businesses. The response of <i>Slavoj Žižek</i> - that by encouraging stress-release, mindfulness serves capitalism rather than challenges it.</p>
C.	<p>Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB): ‘liberationist’ traditions</p> <p>Reasons for the development of Socially Engaged Buddhism. The primary drive to combat suffering (not just on achieving a positive rebirth or awakening for oneself). Thich Nhat Hanh’s Mindfulness Trainings. The Dalai Lama’s support of non-violent protest with regards to Tibet. Sakyadhita and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship as key SEB organisations. The scholarly contribution of <i>Joanna Macy</i> and <i>Damien Keown</i>.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unique nature of Vajrayana Buddhism. • The centrality of practices as expressions of Buddhist ideas. • The extent to which the contemporary Mindfulness movement can be considered to be Buddhist. • The extent to which the contemporary Mindfulness movement offers an antidote to suffering. • Social justice as a requisite for the observance of Buddhist teachings. • Social engagement as a distraction on the path to Awakening. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option E: A Study of Hinduism

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Nature and significance of the Upanishads:</p> <p>Origin and background of the Upanishads; teaching of the gurus - significant teaching on the relationship between Brahman and atman; achievement of jnana and the concept of yajna. Reference should be made to: Katha Upanishad – dialogue between Yama the god of death and his disciple Chela 2:8; 2:24; 2:16; 3:6; 3:12; 3:15; 4:3; 5:2; 5:7; Chandogya Upanishad 6:13:1-3.</p>
B.	<p>A comparison of the contributions made to Hinduism by <i>Mahatma Gandhi</i> and <i>Shri Paramahansa Ramakrishna</i>:</p> <p><i>Gandhi</i>:</p> <p>Conviction and belief in Advaita Vedanta, satyagraha and bramacharya; their interpretation and application. The interaction between his political stance and religious beliefs; self-rule for India; opposition to the Partition, opposition to 'untouchability'; belief in a universalist religion. Bhagavad Gita: 18:52-53.</p>
C.	<p><i>Shri Paramahansa Ramakrishna</i>:</p> <p>The influence of mystical experiences on his thought. Development of Advaita - his role in promoting Hinduism and developing neo-Vedanta thought; the importance of Vivekananda and Ramakrishna mission in the development of Hinduism – interpretation of thinking of <i>Ram Mohan Roy</i> and <i>Ramakrishna</i>; creation of popular discourse of Hinduism in the West; development of neo-vedanta; importance of tolerance and respect towards all spiritual paths; unity of spiritualism and materialism; development of Hinduism as world religion; influence on Hindu identity; influence on attitudes to caste and worship of idols.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of the Upanishads for Hindus today. • The relative importance of the Katha Upanishad within the Upanishads • The extent to which <i>Gandhi's</i> achievements were more political than religious. • The individual successes and failures of <i>Gandhi / Shri Paramahansa Ramakrishna</i>. • The extent to which <i>Ramakrishna</i> was influenced by Western ideas. • The relative influence of <i>Vivekananda</i> and the <i>Ramakrishna</i> mission in the development of Hinduism as a world religion. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option E: A Study of Hinduism

Theme 2: Significant historical developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The reasons for the development and growth of ISKCON:</p> <p>With special reference to A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada; religious and cultural reasons for growth; key practices - regulation of life an austere code of behaviour; key beliefs, e.g. importance of bhakti for Krishna consciousness; Prabhupada's life and influence.</p>
B.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>The challenges to Hinduism from secularisation and science:</p> <p>The relationship between Hinduism and science in vedic literature - Saankhya yoga classifies matter; Hindu rishis as philosophers, mathematicians and scientists – Charaka and Aryabhatta. Hinduism's acceptance of scientific advancements – a legitimate but incomplete step towards knowing and understanding reality; the diversity of views – conservative and liberal. Hindutva response to secularisation in context of India as a secular state; influence of secularisation in India; orthodox Hindus view history as pre-ordained and therefore accept aspects of secularisation.</p>
C.	<p>Hindu liberationist thinking as defending the poor and oppressed:</p> <p>The importance of the four purusharthas – the four aims of human life - dharma - righteousness, artha - wealth, kama – pleasure and moksha – liberation to the Hindu attitude to wealth and poverty and the relationship between them; their influence on the guidance of artha shastras; influence of Vinoba Bhave. Manu 4:12, Manu 4:15. Rig Veda 10:117.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISKCON as a 'deviation' from 'traditional' Hinduism. • The relative importance of <i>Prabhupada</i> in the development and growth of ISKCON. • The extent to which the only effective response to secularisation is the Hindutva response. • The effectiveness of Hindu responses to the challenges of science. • Relevance and practicality of Hindu attitude to wealth and poverty in today's world. • The extent of <i>Vinoba Bhave's</i> influence on Hindu attitudes to social welfare. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option E: A Study of Hinduism

Theme 3: Significant social developments in religious thought

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

A.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Difference between diversity and pluralism:</p> <p>Hinduism can be viewed as a pluralist tradition; many religious and cultural variations tolerated within Hinduism itself; historical origins of Hindu attitudes - <i>Mahatma Gandhi's</i> Sarvodaya (universal uplift or welfare of all). The conflict between exclusivism and pluralism; Hindu attitudes towards other faiths – concept of <i>ishdateva</i> (God honoured under many names and forms); a person's choice which is the focus of their religious quest; celebration of divine under one name does not imply exclusion of celebration under another name or form.</p>
B.	<p>The impact of migration on Hindu identity and the challenges of being a religious and ethnic minority in Britain:</p> <p>The meaning of Hindu identity in terms of belief, practice, lifestyle, worship and conduct; possible conflict of traditional Hinduism with popular culture; difficulties of practising Hinduism in a non-Hindu society.</p>
C.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: religion, equality and discrimination.</p> <p>The changing roles of men and women in Hinduism (including different views within the religion):</p> <p>Religious and cultural views on the rights of women. Traditional views on the role of men and women in Hinduism; development of the role of women with reference to <i>Indira Gandhi</i>; contemporary views on the role of women and feminism, with reference to <i>Madhu Kishwar</i>; how these ideas have impacted on the role of men.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which Hinduism is an exclusivist or inclusivist tradition. • The relative influence of <i>Mahatma Gandhi's</i> Sarvodaya on Hindu attitudes to other religions. • The possibility of assimilation into a secular society for Hindus in Britain. • The extent to which there is a Hindu identity in Britain. • Changing roles of men and women in Hinduism. • The extent to which feminism is an issue in Hinduism today. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option E: A Study of Hinduism

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 2)

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

A.	<p>Bhakti Movement:</p> <p>Origin and background of movement; different types of bhakti – bhakti marga (way of loving devotion); Vaishnava bhakti (loving devotion towards Vishnu); Shaiva bhakti (loving devotion towards Shiva); yatra (pilgrimage) as part of bhakti; Bhagavad Gita 9:26-28, 9:32, 16:1-3.</p>
<p>Synoptic links - how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical studies of religion.</p>	
B.	<p>Hinduism and change – the development and influence on religious belief and practice within Hinduism of:</p> <p>Philosophical understandings of the nature of reality and religious experience found in Samkhya yoga and Advaita Vedanta:</p> <p>Development of Samkhya philosophy; three forms of Brahman – ishvara, prakriti and atman; the three gunas – sattva, rajas and tamas; influence of Patanjali and ashtanga yoga. Maitri Upanishad 18-19, Shvetashvatara Upanishad 5:7, 12-13. Meaning of Advaita; understanding of Brahman as nirguna; influence of <i>Shankara (aka Shankaracharya)</i> and his teaching; the three levels of reality – illusory, mundane and ultimate; idea of adhyasa – superimposition.</p>
C.	<p>Hindu bioethics:</p> <p>Infertility – relevant Hindu teaching and concepts; consideration of the views of <i>Swasti Bhattacharya</i> and <i>S. Cromwell Crawford</i> on 'Assisted Reproductive Technology' - IVF, sperm donation and embryonic transfer.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bhakti as a less spiritual expression and path of Hinduism. • The relative importance of the bhakti movement within Hinduism. • The relative successes of Samkhya and Advaita Vedanta philosophies in explaining the true relationship between God and humanity. • The extent to which Brahman can be understood as nirguna. • The social and historical limitations of Hindu ethical teachings you have studied. • The extent to which IVF is compatible with Hindu teaching. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option F: A Study of Sikhism

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Role and significance of the texts of Mul Mantra and the Japji of Guru Nanak:</p> <p>The Mul Mantra and the Japji of Guru Nanak – a study of their philosophical content: liberating and awesome presence of God – evil thoughts can only be cleansed through God’s name; interpretation and application in worship; personal meditation and initiation – use in the amrit ceremony; preparation for worship in the gurdwara; epilogue to gurdwara services; summary of Sikh beliefs about God.</p>
B.	<p>The contribution made to the development of Sikh thought through the works of:</p> <p>Guru Arjan - a period of Sikh growth:</p> <p>Guru Arjan’s missionary journeys to Manjha region; expansion of Jat influx into Sikh panth; fight against Mughal tyranny; His example of the temporal and spiritual teaching of Sikhism; authorship of the Sukhamni (hymn of peace); safeguarding and developing principles of Guru Nanak; development of tithing within Sikhism. His building of Harmandir at Amritsar – architectural features reflecting Sikh beliefs, such as humility before God and all castes being equal. Compilation of Adi Granth to promote truth, peace and contemplation; his vision for Sikhism (Adi Granth 396 and Adi Granth 1136).</p>
C.	<p>Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the founding of the Sikh empire:</p> <p>His background and early life; the founding of the Khalsa; political sovereignty in the Punjab; his success in creating a golden age for Sikhism; features of the secular empire - no discrimination and religious freedom.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relative importance of the Mul Mantra and the Japji of Guru Nanak in Sikh worship. • The relative importance of the Japji of Guru Nanak and the Mul Mantra as statements of faith within Sikhism. • The relative merits of the contributions to Sikhism of Guru Arjan. • The extent to which the status of the Gurus is over exaggerated in Sikhism. • The extent to which the Sikh empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was religious. • The extent to which Maharaja Ranjit Singh can be regarded as more important in the development of Sikhism than Guru Arjan. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option F: A Study of Sikhism

Theme 2: Significant historical developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The aspiration for Khalistan:</p> <p>An understanding of the political background; 1919 Vaisakhi Massacre; partition of Punjab in 1947; Operation Bluestar 1984; role of persecution in Sikh identity and aspiration; diversity of views on self-rule.</p>
B.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: religion, equality and discrimination.</p> <p>Changing role of men and women in Sikhism:</p> <p>Teaching of Guru Nanak – Adi Granth 62, 473; example of Guru Gobind Singh; marriage monogamous and a religious ceremony; widow’s right to be head of the family; equal rights in education and worship; gender equality – Guru Granth Sahib – 473; importance of women’s views; equal religious opportunities and roles; equality in dress of men and women. Guru Amar Das - his appointment of women teachers. The views of Dr Mohinder Kaur Gill; Dr Gurnam Kaur and Kanwaljit Kaur Singh. Relationship of feminism with Sikh religious philosophy – recognition of men and women as equal, but with different souls.</p>
C.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>Difference between diversity and pluralism:</p> <p>Historical origins of Sikh attitudes – conflicts with Islam and Hinduism; the teaching of Guru Granth Sahib; conflict between exclusivism and inclusivism; Sikh attitudes to interfaith dialogue – Sikhism no longer a missionary religion; Sikh attitudes to other faiths – enlightenment mediated through all theistic religious systems. Diversity between Khalsa and non-khalsa Sikhs.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of persecution in shaping Sikhism. • The relative importance within Sikhism as a whole of the aspiration for Khalistan, Punjabi language and culture. • The extent to which feminism has always been part of Sikhism. • Whether men and women are equal in Sikhism. • The extent to which Sikhism can be regarded as a non-missionary religion. • The extent to which Sikhism is an exclusivist or inclusivist tradition. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option F: A Study of Sikhism

Theme 3: Significant social developments in religious thought	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The relationship between religion and society: respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims.</p> <p>The challenges to Sikhism from science and its responses to secularisation:</p> <p>Relationship of Sikhism with science – no conflict with scientific view of Big Bang, continuous creation and evolution – Guru Granth Sahib – 1163;8276. Secularisation: Sikh emphasis on social obligations and social reforms; duties as a citizen; freedom and equality of religion; compatibility of Sikh beliefs with secular democracy. Sikh responses to secularisation.</p>
B.	<p>Origins and development of the Sikh community in Britain:</p> <p>Migration from Punjab and East Africa; distribution of Sikh population in Britain; perceived difficulties encountered; adoption of Sunday; development of gurdwara as a social centre. Conflict of traditional Sikh values with popular culture.</p>
C.	<p>The challenges of being a religious and ethnic minority in Britain with reference to miri and piri:</p> <p>Origins of concept of miri (temporal) and piri (spiritual); development of tegh and deg – sword and cooking pot; Sikh liberationist thinking as defending the poor and oppressed; practical implications of concept of protecting the oppressed and feeding the hungry material and spiritual needs; wearing of the kirpan.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of Sikh responses to the challenges of science. • The possibility of assimilation into a secular society for Sikhs in Britain. • Whether Sikh responses to the challenges of secularisation are effective. • The extent to which the distribution of the Sikh population in Britain has hampered its development. • The relationship between miri and piri in Sikh daily life. • Relevance and practicality of Sikh attitudes to defending the poor and oppressed in today's world. 	

Unit 3: A Study of Religion - Option F: A Study of Sikhism

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>The status and importance of Rahit Maryada and Rahit Namas:</p> <p>Origins of the Rahit Maryada; relationship between values, principles and practices - influence on personal life and relationship with God and establishment of distinctive Sikh practices; importance in terms of beliefs and conduct and influence on Sikh identity – definition of Sikhs and non-Sikhs and influence on uniformity of Sikh practice worldwide; interpretation and reform – self-discipline; organisation of practices in the gurdwara; relationship between Rahit Maryada and Rahit Namas.</p>
<p>Synoptic links - how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical studies of religion.</p>	
B.	<p>Sikhism and change - the development and influence on religious belief and practice within Sikhism of:</p> <p>Philosophical understandings of the nature of God and religious experience found in the names of God:</p> <p>Quintessence of Sikh spirituality and the practice of Naam Japo (true name of God). Naam as a controlling force, attributes of naam, the 5 Shabads (God as word) and the 5 Khands (five stages of spiritual progress leading to the Ultimate Truth).</p>
C.	<p>Sikhism and bioethics – infertility;</p> <p>Sikh teaching and concepts; consideration and comparison of the views of Sikh scholars - <i>D.S. Chahal; Dr Jodh Singh</i> and <i>W.O. Cole</i> as a scholar outside the Sikh faith. Their views on 'Assisted Reproductive Technology' - IVF, sperm donation and embryonic transfer.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of the Rahit Maryada or Rahit Namas as a guide to Sikh living. • The relative importance of the Rahit Maryada in the context of Sikh identity. • The practice of Naam Japo as evidence of a personal mystical union with God. • The relative importance of the five stages of spiritual liberation. • The effectiveness of Sikh ethical teachings you have studied as a guide for living for Sikhs today. • The extent to which IVF is compatible with Sikh teaching. 	

2.4 A level Unit 4

Unit 4: Religion and Ethics

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

20% of qualification

90 marks

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of fundamental ethical themes, ranging from ethical language and thought to freewill and determinism.

This unit includes the study of the following content:

- ethical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in religion and ethics
- three normative ethical theories such as deontological, teleological or character based ethics (at least two of which must be religious approaches)
- the application of ethical theory to two personal, societal or global issues of importance, including religious ethical perspectives
- how ethical language in the modern era has changed over time; including a study of meta-ethical theories and significant ideas in religious and moral thought such as free will, conscience or authority
- a comparison of the significant ideas presented in the works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of religion and ethics, and developments in the way these ideas are applied to significant issues in religion and belief
- how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices, the philosophy of religion and/or textual interpretation.

The following grids exemplify how the required content has been developed in a clear and concise way into four themes:

Unit 4: Religion and Ethics

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Ethical Thought (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>Meta-ethical approaches: Naturalism</p> <p>Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings, moral terms can be understood by analysing the natural world; ethical statements are cognitivist and can be verified or falsified; verified moral statements are objective truths and universal. <i>Francis H. Bradley (F.H. Bradley)</i> - ethical sentences express propositions; objective features of the world make propositions true or false; meta-ethical statements can be seen in scientific terms.</p> <p>Challenges: <i>David Hume</i> - <i>Hume's Law</i> (the is-ought problem); <i>George E. Moore's (G.E. Moore's)</i> Naturalistic Fallacy (moral language is indefinable); the Open Question Argument (moral facts cannot be reduced to natural properties).</p>
B.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>Meta-ethical approaches: Intuitionism</p> <p>Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings; moral truths can be discovered by using our minds in an intuitive way; intuitive ability is innate and the same for all moral agents; intuition needs a mature mind so not infallible; allows for objective moral values. <i>Harold A. Prichard (H. A. Prichard)</i> - 'ought to do' has no definition; recognise what we 'ought to do' by intuition; two ways of thinking (general and moral).</p> <p>Challenges: no proof of moral intuition exists; intuitive 'truths' can differ widely; no obvious way to resolve conflicting intuitions.</p>
C.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>Meta-ethical approaches: Emotivism</p> <p>Theory that believes objective moral laws do not exist; a non-cognitivist theory; moral terms express personal emotional attitudes and not propositions; ethical terms are just expressions of personal approval (hurrah) or disapproval (boo); explains why people disagree about morality. <i>Alfred J. Ayer (A.J. Ayer)</i> - ethical statements are neither verifiable nor analytic; made to express joy or pain (emotion); expressed to be persuasive; emotivism is not subjectivism.</p> <p>Challenges: no basic moral principles can be established; ethical debate becomes a pointless activity; there can be no universal agreement that some actions are wrong.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether ethical and non-ethical statements are the same. • The extent to which ethical statements are not objective. • Whether moral terms are intuitive. • The extent to which moral terms are just expressions of our emotions. • Whether one of Naturalism, Intuitionism or Emotivism is superior to the other theories. • The extent to which the different meta-ethical theories encourage moral debate. 	

Theme 2: Deontological Ethics	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices and the philosophy of religion.</p> <p><i>John Finnis' development of Natural Law:</i></p> <p>Development of the seven basic human goods (life, knowledge, friendship, play, aesthetic experience, practical reasonableness and religion); distinction between theoretical / practical reason; Nine Requirements of Practical Reason (view life as a whole, prioritise certain goods over others, basic goods apply equally to all, do not become obsessed with a particular project, use effort to improve, plan your actions to do the most good, never harm a basic good, foster common good in the community and act in your own conscience and authority); the common good and the need for authority.</p>
B.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices and the philosophy of religion.</p> <p><i>Bernard Hoose's Proportionalism:</i></p> <p>As a hybrid of Natural Law, a deontological / teleological ethic; <i>Hoose's</i> proportionalist maxim ('it is never right to go against a principle unless there is a proportionate reason which would justify it'); distinction between an evil moral act (an immoral act) and a pre-moral/ontic evil act (a bad act that in itself is not immoral); distinction between a right act (an act that follows the moral rule) and a good act (an act that is not a right act, but creates the lesser of two evils); proportionality based on agape.</p>
C.	<p><i>Finnis' Natural Law and Hoose's Proportionalism: application of the theory</i></p> <p>The application of <i>Finnis' Natural Law</i> and <i>Hoose's Proportionalism</i> to both of the issues listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. immigration 2. capital punishment
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether <i>Finnis' Natural Law</i> is acceptable in contemporary society. • The extent to which <i>Hoose's Proportionalism</i> promotes immoral behaviour. • Whether <i>Finnis</i> and/or <i>Hoose</i> provide a basis for moral decision making for believers and/or non-believers. • The strengths and weaknesses of <i>Finnis' Natural Law</i> and/or <i>Hoose's Proportionalism</i>. • The effectiveness of <i>Finnis' Natural Law</i> and/or <i>Hoose's Proportionalism</i> in dealing with ethical issues. • The extent to which <i>Finnis' Natural Law</i> is a better ethic than <i>Hoose's Proportionalism</i> or vice versa. 	

Unit 4: Religion and Ethics

Theme 3: Determinism	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices and the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>Religious concepts of predestination, with reference to the teachings of:</p> <p><i>St Augustine:</i> Doctrine of Original Sin: role of concupiscence, humanity as "a lump of sin" (massa peccati), an essentially 'free' human nature (liberum arbitrium), the loss of human liberty (libertas) to our sinful nature, God's grace and atonement for the elect / saints.</p> <p><i>John Calvin:</i> Doctrine of Election: the absolute power of God, the corrupted nature of humans, the Elect and the Reprobates, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the elect.</p>
B.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices and the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>Concepts of determinism:</p> <p>Hard determinism: philosophical (<i>John Locke</i> - free will is an illusion, man in bedroom illustration), scientific (biological determinism - human behaviour is controlled by an individual's genes), psychological (<i>Ivan Pavlov</i> - classical conditioning). Soft determinism: <i>Thomas Hobbes</i> (internal and external causes), <i>Alfred J. Ayer</i> (<i>A.J. Ayer</i>) - (caused acts v forced acts).</p>
C.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices and the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>The implications of predestination / determinism:</p> <p>The implications of determinism (hard and soft) on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value, the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts, the usefulness of normative ethics.</p> <p>The implications of predestination on religious belief: the link between God and evil, the implications for God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence, the use of prayer and the existence of miracles.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consideration of whether religious believers should accept predestination. • To what extent does God predestine humanity. • To what extent do philosophical, scientific and/or psychological determinism illustrate that humanity has no free will. • Strengths and weaknesses of Hard and/or Soft Determinism. • Whether moral responsibility is an illusion. • To what extent does predestination influence our understanding of God. 	

Unit 4: Religion and Ethics

Theme 4: Free Will

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

A.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices and the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of:</p> <p><i>Pelagius:</i> The role of original sin; humanity maturing in God's image and accepting the responsibility of free will; free will as used to follow God's laws; the role of grace in salvation.</p> <p><i>Arminius:</i> Denial of predestination, the effect of original sin on free will, God's 'prevenient' grace (the Holy Spirit) in allowing humans to exercise free will; the Elect and the possibility of rejecting God's grace; the election of believers being conditional on faith.</p>
B.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>Concepts of libertarianism:</p> <p>Philosophical (<i>Jean Paul Sartre</i>: man is not free not to be free, waiter illustration), scientific (<i>Angela Sirigu</i>: free floating DNA in the brain allows for free will), psychological (<i>Carl Rogers</i>: humanist approach, self-actualisation).</p>
C.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices and the philosophy of religion.</p> <p>The implications of libertarianism and free will:</p> <p>The implications of libertarianism on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value, the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts, the usefulness of normative ethics.</p> <p>The implications of free will on religious belief: the link between God and evil, the implications for God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence, the use of prayer and the existence of miracles.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How convincing are religious views on free will. • To what extent does an individual have free choice. • The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological views on libertarianism inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism. • To what extent should free moral agents follow a normative ethic. • The degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant. • The degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with beliefs about predestination. 	

2.5 A level Unit 5

Unit 5: Philosophy of Religion

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

20% of qualification

90 marks

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of fundamental philosophical themes, ranging from arguments for the existence of God to the use of religious language.

This unit includes the study of the following content:

- philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief about the existence or non-existence of God, gods or ultimate reality
- the nature and influence of religious experience
- challenges to religious belief
- philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in the philosophy of religion
- how views of religious language have changed over time; the challenges posed by the verification/falsification debate and language games theory over whether religious language should be viewed cognitively or non-cognitively; and a consideration of at least two different views about religious teachings being understood symbolically and analogically
- a comparison of the significant ideas presented in works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of the philosophy of religion, and developments in the way these ideas are applied to issues in religion and belief
- how the philosophy of religion has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices, ethics or textual interpretation.

The following grids exemplify how the required content has been developed in a clear and concise way into four themes:

Unit 5: Philosophy of Religion

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: Challenges to religious belief (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>Religious belief as a product of the human mind – <i>Sigmund Freud</i>: religion as an illusion and/or a neurosis with reference to collective neurosis; primal horde; Oedipus complex; wish fulfilment and reaction against helplessness.</p> <p>Supportive evidence including reference to redirection of guilt complexes and reference to instinctive desires deriving from evolutionary basis (<i>Charles Darwin</i>).</p> <p>Challenges including lack of anthropological evidence for primal horde; no firm psychological evidence for universal Oedipus complex; evidence basis too narrow.</p>
B.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>Religious belief as a product of the human mind - <i>Carl Jung</i>: religion necessary for personal growth with reference to: collective unconscious; individuation; archetypes; the God within.</p> <p>Supportive evidence including recognition of religion as source of comfort and promotion of positive personal and social mindsets arising from religious belief.</p> <p>Challenges including lack of empirical evidence for Jungian concepts and reductionist views regarding religious belief arising from acceptance of Jung's ideas.</p>
C.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>Rejection of belief in deities; the difference between agnosticism and atheism; the rise of New Atheism (antitheism); its main criticisms of religion: non-thinking; infantile worldview; impedes scientific progress.</p> <p>Religious responses to the challenge of New Atheism: rejection by religious groups of New Atheist claims regarding incompatibility of science and religion; increase in fundamentalist religious activity relating to morality and community; increase in religious apologists in media.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far religious belief can be considered a neurosis. • The adequacy of <i>Freud's</i> explanation of religious belief. • The extent to which <i>Jung</i> was more positive than <i>Freud</i> about the idea of God. • The effectiveness of empirical approaches as critiques of Jungian views on religion. • The success of atheistic arguments against religious belief. • The extent to which religious responses to New Atheism have been successful. 	

Unit 5: Philosophy of Religion

Theme 2: Religious experience (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>The influence of religious experience on religious practice and faith:</p> <p>Value for religious community including: affirmation of belief system; promotion of faith value system; strengthening cohesion of religious community.</p> <p>Value for individual including faith restoring; strengthening faith in face of opposition; renewal of commitment to religious ideals and doctrines.</p>
B.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>Miracles – the definitions of:</p> <p><i>St Thomas Aquinas</i> (miracles different from the usual order), <i>David Hume</i> (transgression of a law of nature), <i>Roy F. Holland (R. F. Holland)</i> (contingency miracle), <i>Richard Swinburne</i> (religious significance).</p> <p>Consideration of reasons why religious believers accept that miracles occur: evidence from sacred writings; affirmation of faith traditions; personal experience.</p>
C.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>A comparative study of two key scholars from within and outside the Christian tradition and their contrasting views on the possibility of miracles:</p> <p><i>David Hume</i> – his scepticism of miracles including challenges relating to testimony based belief; credibility of witnesses; susceptibility of belief; contradictory nature of faith claims.</p> <p><i>Richard Swinburne</i> – his defence of miracles, including definitions of natural laws and contradictions of Hume's arguments regarding contradictory nature of faith claims and credibility of witnesses.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of religious experiences upon religious belief and practice. • Whether religious communities are entirely dependent on religious experiences. • The adequacy of different definitions of miracles. • How far different definitions of miracles can be considered as contradictory and therefore unsupportive of religious traditions. • The effectiveness of the challenges to belief in miracles. • The extent to which <i>Swinburne's</i> responses to <i>Hume</i> can be accepted as valid. 	

Unit 5: Philosophy of Religion

Theme 3: Religious language (part 1)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Inherent problems of religious language:</p> <p>Limitations of language for traditional conceptions of God such as infinite and timeless; challenge to sacred texts and religious pronouncements as unintelligible; challenge that religious language is not a common shared base and experience; the differences between cognitive and non-cognitive language.</p>
B.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in ethics.</p> <p>Religious language as cognitive, but meaningless:</p> <p>Logical Positivism – Verification by <i>Alfred J. Ayer (A.J. Ayer)</i> – religious ethical language as meaningless; there can be no way in which we could verify the truth or falsehood of the propositions (e.g. God is good, murder is wrong); falsification nothing can counter the belief (<i>Antony Flew</i>).</p> <p>Criticisms of verification: the verification principle cannot itself be verified; neither can historical events; universal scientific statements; the concept of eschatological verification goes against this.</p> <p>Criticisms of falsification: <i>Richard Hare</i> – bliks (the way that a person views the world gives meaning to them even if others do not share the same view); <i>Basil Mitchell</i> – partisan and the stranger (certain things can be meaningful even when they cannot be falsified); <i>Richard Swinburne</i> – toys in the cupboard (concept meaningful even though falsifying the statement is not possible).</p>
C.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>Religious language as non-cognitive and analogical:</p> <p>Proportion and attribution (<i>St Thomas Aquinas</i>) and qualifier and disclosure (<i>Ian Ramsey</i>).</p> <p>Challenges including how far analogies can give meaningful insights into religious language. A consideration of how these two views (<i>Aquinas/Ramsey</i>) can be used to help understand religious teachings.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The solutions presented by religious philosophers for the inherent problems of using religious language. • The exclusive context of religious belief for an understanding of religious language. • The persuasiveness of arguments asserting either the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of religious language. • How far Logical Positivism should be accepted as providing a valid criterion for meaning in the use of language. • To what extent do the challenges to Logical Positivism provide convincing arguments to non-religious believers. • Whether non-cognitive interpretations are valid responses to the challenges to the meaning of religious language. 	

Unit 5: Philosophy of Religion

Theme 4: Religious language (part 2)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
A.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>Religious language as non-cognitive and symbolic:</p> <p>Functions of symbols (<i>John Randall</i>); God as that which concerns us ultimately (<i>Paul Tillich</i>).</p> <p>Challenges including whether a symbol is adequate or gives the right insights. A consideration of how these two views (<i>Randall/Tillich</i>) can be used to help understand religious teachings.</p>
B.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>Religious language as non-cognitive and mythical:</p> <p>Complex form of mythical language that communicates values and insights into purpose of existence.</p> <p>Supportive evidence – different forms of myths to convey meaning: creation myths; myths of good against evil; heroic myths. Myths help to overcome fears of the unknown; myths effective way of transmitting religious, social and ethical values.</p> <p>Challenges: problem of competing myths; meanings of myths change over time as they reflect the values of society as societal constructs; demythologisation of myths results in varying interpretations, myths often incompatible with scientific understanding of the world.</p>
C.	<p>Synoptic link: how the study of philosophy has, over time, influenced and has been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices.</p> <p>Religious language as a language game:</p> <p>Meaningful to people who participate in same language game (<i>Ludwig Wittgenstein</i>).</p> <p>Supportive evidence – non-cognitive form of language provides meaning to participants within language game; consider use of language not meaning; language games fit with coherence theory of truth; religious language as expressions of belief.</p> <p>Challenges, including rejection of any true propositions in religion that can be empirically verified; does not allow for meaningful conversations between different groups of language users; does not provide adequate meaning for the word 'God'.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of the terms non-cognitive, analogical and mythical as solutions to the problems of religious language. • The relevance of religious language issues in the 21st Century. • The extent to which language games provide a suitable way of resolving the problems of religious language. • Whether symbolic language can be agreed as having adequate meaning as a form of language. • How far the works of <i>Randall</i> and <i>Tillich</i> provide a suitable counter-challenge to logical positivism. • Whether the strengths of language games outweigh the weaknesses. 	

2.6 A level Unit 6

Unit 6: Textual Studies – New Testament

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

20% of qualification

90 marks

A level learners who study Unit 1 Option A: Christianity for AS can study **either** Unit 3 Option A: Christianity for A level **or** Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament).

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of issues ranging from modern scholarship's views on the biblical accounts of the miracles of Jesus to their views on Apocalyptic literature.

This unit includes the study of the following content:

- selected texts in translation from a particular religious work, corpus of sacred text or scripture:
 - examining the meaning of the material, its social and historical context,
 - its literary features, authorship and audience
 - its relationship with other texts and/or sources of wisdom and authority from the religion
- modern critical scholarship and commentary including different contemporary approaches, religious and non-religious, to the primary text or corpus, and the religious, cultural or intellectual assumptions that underpin them
- issues that arise from the formation, transmission, interpretation and translation of the texts
- methods and methodology in interpretation
- the scientific and historical-critical challenges to the authority of texts and religious responses to these
- how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophy of religion, ethics or religious thought (as set out above for systematic study of religion)

The following grids exemplify how the required content has been developed in a clear and concise way into four themes:

Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament)

Section 1.5 noted that in following this specification learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective.

Theme 1: New Testament Literature - Parables	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
<p>The set texts for study for this theme are the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32); the parable of the great banquet (Matthew 22:1-10; Luke 14:16-24); and the parable of the sower (Mark 4:1-20).</p>	
A.	<p>Parables – types and characteristics:</p> <p>The types of New Testament parables (<i>John Dominic Crossan, The Power of Parable: How fiction by Jesus became fiction about Jesus</i> – classification of parables as riddle parables, example parables, attack parables, and challenge parables); the main literary characteristics of the parables (parables are concise; have a single perspective and minimal descriptions; features repetitions; place the emphasis at the end of the story; and involve the audience with a verdict); how the set texts for study can be categorised.</p>
B.	<p>Parables – purposes and interpretations:</p> <p>The purposes of New Testament parables (<i>Robert H. Stein, An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus</i> – parables use earthly stories to reveal heavenly moral truths effectively. (Synoptic link: how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in ethics or religious thought.)</p> <p>Jesus used parables to conceal his teaching from those ‘outside’; Jesus used parables to disarm his audience so they would listen). The methods of interpretation of the parables (allegorically, metaphorically, literally); how these methods can be applied to the set texts for study. (Synoptic link: how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophy of religion.)</p>
C.	<p>Close study of New Testament texts (parables):</p> <p>A close study of the set texts, analysing historical origins; structure; key words or phrases of the parables; and the possible theological messages of the parables.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) can be called an ‘example parable’. • Whether a parable needs to feature all the main characteristics to be considered a parable. • The extent to which the parables are more about belief and hope than moral behaviour. (Synoptic link: how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in ethics or religious thought.) The extent to which Jesus’ parables should be interpreted. • The extent to which the parables are the work of the early Christian community as opposed to the historical Jesus. • Whether the parables have theological value today. 	

Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament)

Theme 2: New Testament Literature - Miracles	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
<p>The set texts for study for this theme are the healing of the centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10); the story of the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-20); and the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17).</p>	
A.	<p>Miracles – types and characteristics:</p> <p>Types of miracles (exorcisms; healings; raising from the dead; nature miracles; miracles of knowledge); characteristics of New Testament miracle accounts (the miracles are immediately effective; are often performed publicly; may result in the subject glorifying God; do not always require the subject to have faith; and were acknowledged by Jesus' enemies); how New Testament miracle accounts meet philosophical definitions of miracles. (Synoptic link: how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophy of religion.)</p>
B.	<p>Miracles – purposes and interpretations:</p> <p>The purpose of the New Testament miracles/miracle texts (with reference to <i>Keith Warrington, Miracles in the Gospels: What do they teach us about Jesus?</i> – miracles as represented by the New Testament show Jesus' status and his authority to reinstate outcasts, and that Jesus has initiated God's kingdom and offers a relationship with God); the interpretation of the miracle accounts (literally or metaphorically). (Synoptic link: how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophy of religion.)</p>
C.	<p>Close study of New Testament texts (miracles):</p> <p>A close study of the set texts, analysing literary setting; the possible theological messages of the miracle texts; and the historical challenges to the miracle reports (with reference to <i>Bart Ehrman, Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium</i>).</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether there is a difference between the New Testament 'works', 'signs', 'powers' and 'wonders', and modern understandings of 'miracles'. • The extent to which the miracles studied demonstrate the main characteristics of miracles. • Whether the miracle accounts should be interpreted literally. • The extent to which miracles were an important part of Jesus' ministry. • The historical validity of the reports of Jesus' miracles. • The extent to which Jesus' miracles were a radical statement. 	

Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament)

Theme 3: New Testament Literature - The Letters (1 Peter)	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
The set texts for study for this theme are 1 Peter 1:1-2; 2:11-25; 3:1-6; 4; 5:12-14.	
A.	<p>The Letters (1 Peter) – authorship and readership:</p> <p>Different positions on the authorship of 1 Peter and the role of Silvanus (<i>Wayne A. Grudem, 1 Peter – the apostle Peter wrote the letter and Silvanus bore it; David G. Horrell, 1 Peter – the letter was likely written by Silvanus or a Petrine or later Christian group</i>) and the reasons for them; the arguments for and against a Jewish Christian readership (as opposed to a Gentile Christian or mixed readership).</p>
B.	<p>The Letters (1 Peter) – purpose and place in the New Testament:</p> <p>Different suggestions for the purpose of 1 Peter (to encourage the audience to grow in trust in, and obedience to, God; to help the audience deal with suffering; to encourage the audience to be submissive); the similarities and differences between 1 Peter and other New Testament letters.</p>
C.	<p>Close study of New Testament texts (1 Peter):</p> <p>A close study of the set texts, analysing historical origins; structure; key words or phrases of the letter; and the possible theological messages of the letter.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether doubts about the authorship of 1 Peter affect the letter's message. • Whether the author of 1 Peter was writing for Jewish Christians. • The extent to which 1 Peter is unique as a New Testament letter. • Whether the messages of submission in 1 Peter are problematic for modern readers. • Whether the main theme of 1 Peter is suffering. • The extent to which 1 Peter relies on imagery and wording from the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh/ Old Testament). 	

Unit 6: Textual Studies (New Testament)

Theme 4: New Testament Literature - Apocalyptic	
Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief	
The set texts for study for this theme are Revelation 1, 6, 21.	
A.	<p>Apocalyptic literature – definitions and characteristics:</p> <p>The definition of ‘apocalyptic literature’; the category ‘apocalyptic prophecy’; the categorisation of Revelation as apocalyptic (with reference to <i>Richard Bauckham, The Theology of the Book of Revelation</i> [especially chapter 1]); the characteristics of New Testament apocalyptic literature (divine disclosure of secret information; view solution to problem as coming from outside human history; differences between apocalyptic and eschatological).</p>
B.	<p>Apocalyptic literature – purposes and interpretations:</p> <p>Possible purposes of New Testament apocalyptic literature (to describe the future; to offer hope to believers; to act as catharsis); whether New Testament apocalyptic literature should be understood literally, metaphorically, or allegorically. (Synoptic link: how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophy of religion.)</p> <p>The moral issues in interpreting Revelation (with reference to <i>David L. Barr, Reading the Book of Revelation</i>). (Synoptic link: how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in ethics or religious thought.)</p>
C.	<p>Close study of New Testament texts (Revelation):</p> <p>A close study of the set texts, analysing historical origins; literary setting; genre; key words or phrases; and the possible theological messages of the text.</p>
<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the Book of Revelation can be regarded as apocalyptic. • Whether there is a clear distinction between apocalyptic and eschatological literature. • The extent to which Revelation can be understood as a revenge fantasy. • Whether violent apocalyptic literature poses ethical problems. (Synoptic link: how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in ethics or religious thought.) • The extent to which Revelation’s form as a circular letter to a specific audience affects its message. • The extent to which the apocalyptic literature of the New Testament has value for Christians today (with reference to Revelation). 	

3 ASSESSMENT

3.1 Assessment objectives and weightings

Below are the assessment objectives for this specification. Learners must demonstrate their ability to:

AO1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:

- religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching
- influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies
- cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

AO2

Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

For each series, writing accurately will be assessed in all responses (with every question requiring extended writing) throughout Units 1-6.

Writing accurately takes into account the candidate's use of specialist language. It also takes into account the candidate's spelling, punctuation and grammar.

AS TWO compulsory units = Unit 1 + Unit 2

A level THREE units in total = either Units 3,4 or 5 or Units 4,5 & 6

The table below shows the weighting of each assessment objective for each component and for the qualification as a whole.

Overall qualification level percentages split across each unit:

	Weighting	AO1	AO2
AS Unit 1 (compulsory)	15%	18.8%	18.8%
AS Unit 2 (compulsory)	25%	31.2%	31.2%
Total for AS units only	40%	50%	50%
A level Unit 3 (optional)	20%	11.1%	22.2%
A level Unit 4 (compulsory)	20%	11.1%	22.2%
A level Unit 5 (compulsory)	20%	11.1%	22.2%
A level Unit 6 (optional)	20%	11.1%	22.2%
Total for A level units only	60%	33.3%	66.7%
Final Total A Level	100%	40%	60%

4 TECHNICAL INFORMATION

4.1 Making entries

This is a unitised specification which allows for an element of staged assessment.

Assessment opportunities will be available in the summer assessment period each year, until the end of the life of the specification.

Unit 1 and Unit 2 will be available in 2017 (and each year thereafter) and the AS qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2017.

Unit 3, 4, 5 & 6 will be available in 2018 (and each year thereafter) and the A level qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2018.

Candidates may re-sit units **ONCE ONLY** prior to certification for the qualification, with the better result contributing to the qualification. Individual unit results, prior to the certification of the qualification, have a shelf-life limited only by that of the qualification.

A candidate may retake the whole qualification more than once.

The entry codes appear overleaf.

The current edition of our *Entry Procedures and Coding Information* gives up-to-date entry procedures.

There is no restriction on entry for this specification with any other WJEC AS or A level specification.

	Title	Entry codes	
		English-medium	Welsh-medium
AS Unit 1	An Introduction to the Study of Religion (Option A: Christianity)	2120UA	2120NA
	An Introduction to the Study of Religion (Option B: Islam)	2120UB	2120NB
	An Introduction to the Study of Religion (Option C: Judaism)	2120UC	2120NC
	An Introduction to the Study of Religion (Option D: Buddhism)	2120UD	2120ND
	An Introduction to the Study of Religion (Option E: Hinduism)	2120UE	2120NE
	An Introduction to the Study of Religion (Option F: Sikhism)	2120UF	2120NF
AS Unit 2	An Introduction to Religion and Ethics and the Philosophy of Religion	2120U2	2120N2
A2 Unit 3	A Study of Religion (Option A: Christianity)	1120UA	1120NA
	A Study of Religion (Option B: Islam)	1120UB	1120NB
	A Study of Religion (Option C: Judaism)	1120UC	1120NC
	A Study of Religion (Option D: Buddhism)	1120UD	1120ND
	A Study of Religion (Option E: Hinduism)	1120UE	1120NE
	A Study of Religion (Option F: Sikhism)	1120UF	1120NF
A2 Unit 4	Religion and Ethics	1120U4	1120N4
A2 Unit 5	Philosophy of Religion	1120U5	1120N5
A2 Unit 6	Textual Studies (New Testament)	1120U6	1120N6
AS Qualification cash-in		2120QS	2120CS
A level Qualification cash-in		1120QS	1120CS

4.2 Grading, awarding and reporting

The overall grades for the GCE AS qualification will be recorded as a grade on a scale A to E. The overall grades for the GCE A level qualification will be recorded as a grade on a scale A* to E. Results not attaining the minimum standard for the award will be reported as U (unclassified). Unit grades will be reported as a lower case letter a to e on results slips but not on certificates.

The Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) is used in unitised specifications as a device for reporting, recording and aggregating candidates' unit assessment outcomes. The UMS is used so that candidates who achieve the same standard will have the same uniform mark, irrespective of when the unit was taken. Individual unit results and the overall subject award will be expressed as a uniform mark on a scale common to all GCE qualifications. An AS GCE has a total of 200 uniform marks and an A level GCE has a total of 500 uniform marks. The maximum uniform mark for any unit depends on that unit's weighting in the specification.

Uniform marks correspond to unit grades as follows:

Unit Weightings	Maximum unit uniform mark	Unit grade				
		a	b	c	d	e
AS Unit 1 Compulsory (15% Weighting)	75	60	53	45	38	30
AS Unit 2 Compulsory (25% Weighting)	125	100	88	75	63	50
A level Unit 3 Compulsory (20% Weighting)	100	80	70	60	50	40
A level Unit 4 <i>Optional</i> (20% Weighting)	100	80	70	60	50	40
A Level Unit 5 <i>Optional</i> (20% Weighting)	100	80	70	60	50	40
A level Unit 6 <i>Optional</i> (20% Weighting)	100	80	70	60	50	40

The uniform marks obtained for each unit are added up and the subject grade is based on this total.

	Maximum uniform marks	Qualification grade				
		A	B	C	D	E
GCE AS	200	160	140	120	100	80
GCE A level	500	400	350	300	250	200

At A level, Grade A* will be awarded to candidates who have achieved a Grade A (400 uniform marks) in the overall A level qualification and at least 90% of the total uniform marks for the A2 units (270 uniform marks).