

GCSE



WJEC GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Q: Is there a set order in which to teach the units?

A: Unit 1 is an introductory unit and so must be taught first as it gives the foundation in religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices. The other units can be taught in any order.

Q: Will there be a text book to support the delivery of the course?

A: No the WJEC is not producing a text book for this specification. Instead, we are creating Blended Learning modules and Knowledge Organisers for all taught content. These will be available before first teaching in September 2025. To enable centres to continue using the textbook for the legacy specification, we have mapped its content against the new specification content so that you will know which parts are still relevant. This content map will be available in English and Welsh in the spring term 2025.

Q: As NEA is new to GCSE RS, some teachers have not delivered NEA before. Will examples of work be published for teachers to model good practice?

A: Yes - we will produce some exemplars for the internally assessed unit ahead of the first assessment in 2026, to help centres prepare to assess candidate work. We will build on this bank of exemplars after the first live series when we will have more candidate work to use.

Guidance documents on NEA are now available. NEA Walk-throughs will also be available in summer 2025. Professional Learning events on preparing to assess internally marked NEA will be available in the autumn term 2025.

Q: Will all resources be available in Welsh as soon as they are in English?

A: Yes - resources on the website (Guidance for Teaching, Blended Learning, Options Evening Flyers, Knowledge Organisers) will be made available in Welsh at the same time as English.

Q: How long should it take to deliver the qualification?

A: Page 7 of the specification states:

GCSE Religious Studies has been designed to be delivered within 120 – 140 guided learning hours. The qualification has been primarily designed as a 2-year programme for learners in years 10 and 11.

The quantity of content is comparable to the current GCSE. The subject content amplification in the specification is included to make it easier for teachers to see what exactly needs to be taught. The Guidance for Teaching documents further aid teachers' understanding of the depth of content to be covered.

Q: Is WJEC planning to write progression maps for KS3 to GCSE so teachers can be clear about what prior knowledge is required to be best prepared for the next key stage?

A: No – as the curriculum for Wales is designed to give teachers flexibility in what they deliver prior to commencing GCSE. As schools deliver Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) in a variety of ways, they are best placed to map progression from RVE to GCSE in their own setting.

Q: Is it possible to have a Short Course GCSE option?

A: No - decisions around which GCSEs are offered in Wales rest with Qualifications Wales. They currently have no plans to provide a short course.

Q: Will there be further guidance on the expectation around pluralism both between and within a worldview? Will WJEC provide further clarity around non-religious worldviews to support pluralism and critical engagement with 'non-religious philosophical convictions'?

A: Yes, this guidance is available in the Guidance for Teaching documents.

Q: Will WJEC credit and support the use of more local examples to support Cynefin within the Curriculum?

A: Yes, absolutely! Where the word 'including' is mentioned in the specification, this content must be taught. Where the phrase 'such as' is mentioned, these are examples that can be substituted to provide an opportunity for schools to select examples which suit their own setting.

Q: Will the WJEC develop processes for cross school moderation?

A: No – whilst schools are only required to undertake internal standardisation prior to submission of NEA. This will ensure that all marking within the centre is to the same standard. However, there is no requirement to cross-moderate with other centres. WJEC's moderation process will ensure that all centres are assessed accurately and fairly.

Q: Can WJEC support schools by signposting resources (local/national and international) to support with the NEAs, and will these be available in Welsh?

A: Not all no - guidance for the NEA will be produced by WJEC. Whilst we do not endorse any other resources beyond these in either English or Welsh we do provide links to useful websites and online resources are mentioned in the Guidance for Teaching documents. WJEC's published resources will be available in Welsh as well as English.

Q: Would WJEC consider amending the units to allow for a more accessible first unit?

A: WJEC has worked to ensure that the specification content for unit 1 reflects Qualifications Wales' approval criteria and the needs of learners across Wales. Once the assessment has been sat for the first time, it will be kept under review, but it is not expected that it will require major changes. It should be noted that we are not able to make changes to any qualification without going through an amendment process with Qualifications Wales. Any changes we do make would have a lead in time as centres also require notice of any proposed changes.

The content for unit 1 has some similarities to the current specification, including the inclusion of non-religious beliefs. Therefore, it is hoped that this will be accessible to learners who have been taught RVE in Years 7-9.

Q: Would WJEC consider delaying the first teaching of the new specification due to the delays with publication?

A: This is a regulatory decision, and the timing is determined by Qualifications Wales. The specification is for first teaching in September 2025. First assessment of Units 1, 2 and 3 will be available in summer 2026 and Unit 4 will first be assessed in summer 2027. There will be Blended Learning resources with detailed content and learning activities available before September 2025 along with Knowledge Organisers. Guidance for Teaching documents for each unit are already available. This will aid planning significantly.

Q: Will there be a possibility in the future for learners to ‘fast track’ the GCSE in one year, possibly to support students who attend college to build up their academic profile.

A: The specification has been designed to be taught over two years. However, all units will be available annually from 2027 and it is possible for centres to enter students as soon as they have covered the specification content and completed the NEAs.

Q: Will a shared area be made available for teachers to share resources?

A: We have an area [here](#) where teachers have been able to share their own resources. This space is for teachers who wish to share and exchange resources. All of the resources in this area are free to download; none of the content in this area of the website is monitored, reviewed or endorsed by WJEC. This space will remain available for teachers to upload and download resources.

Q: What are the dates for NEA submission?

A: Submission dates have not yet been finalised; centres will be notified when these are available.

Q: Will there be a November series to allow candidates an opportunity to re-sit?

A: There will be no November series but candidates could re-sit in the following summer series.

Q: Will the inauthentic examples of Unit 2 NEA discussed on the PL events in spring 2025 be marked by the Principal Moderator and shared to aid marking?

A: No, this won't be marked because it is inauthentic and not written by a pupil, so is not representative of a real NEA piece of work.

Q: Can the Unit 3 exam be sat in summer 2026?

A: Yes, Unit 1, 2 and 3 will be available in the academic year 25/26. The 40% terminal rule means that 40% of the qualification must be sat in the year that the final grade is awarded. This means that though units 1-3 will be available in 2026, two units will need to be sat by candidates in 2027 to satisfy the terminal rule.

Q: Will the NEA themes be sent to centres online or in the post?

A: The NEA themes and statement for Unit 2, and themes for Unit 4, will be made available on the [portal](#) each September (Unit 4 beginning in September 2026).

Q: Does each NEA task have to be completed in one block or can it be split up?

A: Each task can be split up into chunks as long as the materials are collected and stored securely between sessions.

Q: Where can I find the Unit 2 and 4 SAMs?

A: These are currently on the portal but are likely to move on to the public website in May 2025.

Q: Can the NEA tasks be collated into one booklet for students to work through?

A: For both Unit 2 and Unit 4, they could be collated after Task 3 as Tasks 4 and 5 allow access to Tasks 1-3 as permitted materials. As Tasks 1-3 do not allow access to previous tasks, a booklet would not be suitable for these tasks.

Q: How do we find information on what is acceptable use of AI in NEA?

A: The JCQ AI use in assessments guidance document provides this information and can be accessed here: [AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

Q: Will the Assessment Objectives be written next to the number of marks shown for each question on the exam papers?

A: Yes, we will be adding these to the exam papers.

Q: Will 'Discuss' be used as an AO2 or AO3 command word, or both?

A: Discuss will only be used as an AO3 command word in Religious Studies GCSE.

Q: Will the split of AO marking for mixed AO questions be shown in the Item Level Data (ILD) shared with centres after each exam series?

A: Yes, separate marks for each Assessment Objective will be given to centres.

Q: Will an AO3 question requiring a conclusion always be worth 10 marks?

A: Yes, an AO3 question requiring a conclusion will always be worth 10 marks.

Q: We have the command words 'analyse and evaluate' together; could we have 'compare and contrast' together?

A: We would not ask 'compare and contrast' together as these are contrasting command words whereas 'analyse and evaluate' are similar and complement each other.

Q: Will the name of the second religion be shown on the front of the exam paper as it is currently?

A: Yes.

Q: If a candidate needs to re-sit an NEA unit, will they need to do a different topic?

A: If they re-sit the following year they will need to do the new topics for that academic year. They cannot resubmit what they have done before.

Q: Is a grade or part-grade awarded at the end of Y10 if candidates sit some of the units that year?

A: A grade for each unit sat will be awarded at the end of Year 10.