

# WJEC GCSE Religious Studies

Approved by Qualifications Wales

## Delivery Guide

Teaching from 2025

For award from 2027



This Qualifications Wales regulated qualification  
is not available to centres in England.

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## Aims of the Delivery Guide

The aim of the Delivery Guide is to give an overview of the qualification and to help teachers understand how we assess the GCSE. It will offer an introduction to the specification, an assessment overview, and will support teachers in better understanding how to prepare their learners for the assessment of the different units. More information on each unit can be found in the separate unit guides.

## Qualification Structure

WJEC GCSE Religious Studies consists of four units:

	<b>Unit title</b>	<b>Type of Assessment</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
<b>Unit 1</b>	Religious and non-religious beliefs, teaching and practices	Written examination	30%
<b>Unit 2</b>	Religion and relationships	Non-examination assessment	20%
<b>Unit 3</b>	Roles, rights and responsibilities	Written examination	30%
<b>Unit 4</b>	Religion and human rights	Non-examination assessment	20%

All units are compulsory.

### Unit 1

The purpose of this unit is to:

- explore key diverse religious and non-religious beliefs, practices and worldviews
- develop understanding of key elements of religious studies to enable conceptual understanding of the nature of belief
- explore sources of authority and ethical systems that shape religious and non-religious perspectives towards morality
- understand how beliefs and teachings shape religious and non-religious views on identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, and belief in life after death.

The unit is divided into four parts:

- Nature of belief – all candidates must study the nature of belief
- Christianity or Catholic Christianity - candidates must study **one** of the following options:
  - a – Christianity
  - b – Catholic Christianity
- World religions – candidates must study **one** of the following options:
  - a – Buddhism
  - b – Hinduism
  - c – Islam
  - d – Judaism
  - e – Sikhism (Sikhi)
- Non-religious perspectives – all candidates must study non-religious perspectives

Non-religious perspectives will be assessed in relation to Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives.

## Unit 2

The purpose of this unit is to:

- develop and apply knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and practices relating to relationships
- explore sources of information about religious and non-religious perspectives on relationships
- analyse and evaluate different religious and non-religious perspectives towards relationships
- reflect on personal values and beliefs relating to relationships.

Learners must complete tasks based on the **two** religions studied in all other units (Christianity or Catholic Christianity and a world religion), and non-religious perspectives.

### Arrangements for non-examination assessment

Each year, WJEC will select two of the following set themes and will provide a statement associated with each theme:

- a) Marriage, adultery, divorce and remarriage
- b) Artificial contraception and natural family planning
- c) Cohabitation and sex before and outside marriage
- d) Same-sex relationships, civil partnerships and same-sex marriage
- e) Interfaith relationships and marriage outside the religious tradition
- f) Roles within family, including gender roles within relationships
- g) Religious upbringing, childhood ceremonies and faith-based schooling.

The themes and associated statements will be set by WJEC annually and available via the WJEC Portal in September during the first year of study and every year thereafter.

Centres will choose one theme and an associated as the focus of the non-examination assessment tasks.

The assessment must be based on the two religions studied in all other units (Christianity or Catholic Christianity and a world religion) and non-religious beliefs.

This assessment contributes to 20% of the overall qualification grade.

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment and will be marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be handwritten and scanned or completed digitally).

## Unit 3

The purpose of this unit is to:

- explore key diverse religious and non-religious beliefs, practices and worldviews
- develop an understanding of the different perspectives and interpretations about what makes us human, caring for the world, animal rights, freedom of religious expression and medical ethics
- explore sources of authority and ethical systems that shape religious and non-religious perspectives towards what makes us human, caring for the world, animal rights, freedom of religious expression and medical ethics.

The unit is divided into three parts:

- Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives  
Choose **one** of the following options:
  - a - Christian perspectives
  - b - Catholic Christian perspectives
- World religion perspectives  
Choose **one** of the following options:
  - a – Buddhist perspectives
  - b – Hindu perspectives
  - c – Islamic perspectives
  - d – Jewish perspectives
  - e – Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives
- Non-religious perspectives – all candidates must study non-religious perspectives

Non-religious perspectives will be assessed in relation to Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives.

#### **Unit 4**

The purpose of this unit is to:

- consider human rights issues from religious and non-religious perspectives
- enable an awareness of the importance of human rights issues in contemporary society through the lens of religious studies
- reflect on personal values and beliefs relating to human rights

Learners must complete tasks based on the **two** religions studied (Christianity or Catholic Christianity and a world religion) in all other units, **and** non-religious perspectives.

#### **Arrangements for non-examination assessment**

Each year, WJEC will select three of the following human rights issues:

- gender equality
- LGBTQ+ rights
- racial equality of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and communities
- the right to education
- the right to freedom from slavery and forced labour
- the right to life and freedom from capital punishment
- the right to seek justice for human rights violations
- the rights of people with disabilities
- the rights of refugee and asylum seekers.

The themes will be set by WJEC annually and available via the WJEC Portal in September of the second year of study and every year thereafter.

Centres will choose two human rights issues as the focus of the non-examination assessment tasks.

The assessment must be based on the two religions studied in all other units (Christianity or Catholic Christianity and a world religion) and non-religious beliefs.

This assessment contributes to 20% of the overall qualification grade.

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment and will be set and marked by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be handwritten and scanned or completed digitally).

Centres must teach:

- **either** Christianity **or** Catholic Christianity

and

- **one** world religion from the following list:

- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism (Sikhi)

and

- non-religious beliefs.

Please note that these choices **must** remain consistent across **all** Units.

## Summary of assessment

<b>Unit 1: Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices</b> <b>Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes</b> <b>30% of qualification</b>	<b>60 marks</b>
Questions requiring objective responses, questions that require short and extended answers.	
<b>Unit 2: Religion and relationships</b> <b>Non-examination assessment: 6 hours</b> <b>20% of qualification</b>	<b>60 marks</b>
Set by WJEC, marked by the Centre and moderated by WJEC. The assessment will be based on one of two set themes and a statement which will be set by WJEC annually. The set theme and statement will be available via the WJEC Portal.	
<b>Unit 3: Roles, rights and responsibilities</b> <b>Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes</b> <b>30% of qualification</b>	<b>60 marks</b>
Questions requiring objective responses, questions that require short and extended answers.	
<b>Unit 4: Religion and human rights</b> <b>Non-examination assessment: 6 hours</b> <b>20% of qualification</b>	<b>60 marks</b>
Set and marked by WJEC. The assessment will be based on two of three set human rights issues which will be set by WJEC annually. The set human rights issues will be available via the WJEC Portal.	

This is a unitised, untiered qualification.

Aside from Unit 1, which is an introductory unit, there is no hierarchy implied by the order in which the other units are presented.

The examinations for Units 1 and 3, will be available for the first time in summer 2026. The submission of Unit 2 will be available in spring 2026. The submission of Unit 4 will be available for the first time in summer 2027.

The first award of the qualification will be 2027.

## Assessment Objectives

### Unit 1

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
15%	8%	7%	0%	30%

### Unit 2

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
0%	5%	10%	5%	20%

### Unit 3

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
5%	11%	14%	0%	30%

### Unit 4

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
0%	10%	5%	5%	20%

## Specification and Assessment Pack

When we develop new qualifications, we produce the following documents:

- Specification – this covers all the information and skills that learners are expected to know by the end of their course.
- Assessment Pack – this contains the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) i.e. sample exam papers and sample NEA tasks, relevant controls for the NEA and mark schemes.

This guide builds upon the information in the specification and assessment pack to help further your understanding of said documents.

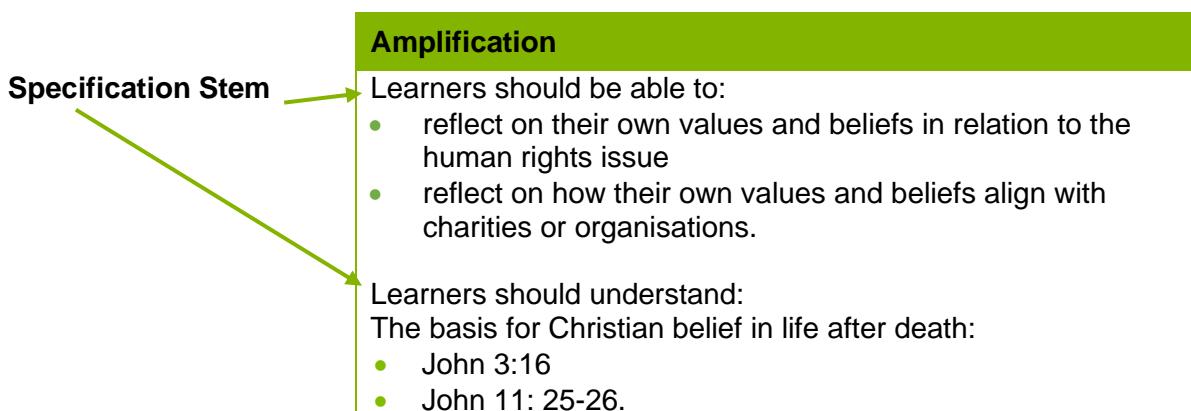
### Understanding the specification amplification

Learners should be made aware of:

- the specification stems
- what the specification stems mean.

### Specification Stems

When you look through the specification you will notice in the amplification column, we use a variety of wording before the list of content learners need to know; we call this a stem:



Each stem is used for a slightly different reason:

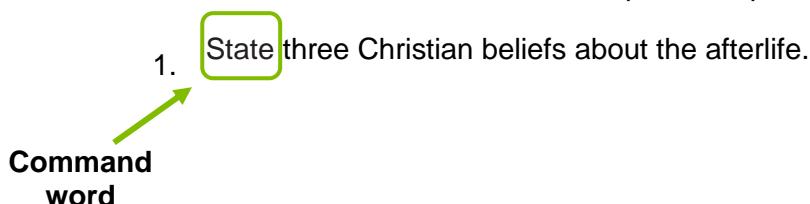
Specification Stem	When it is used
<b>Learners should have a basic understanding</b>	When learners do not need to understand all aspects of the specified content in detail (Please use the accompanying Unit Guides to decide on the depth and breadth to which this content should be taught).
<b>Learners should understand</b>	When learners are required to demonstrate and apply knowledge to familiar or unfamiliar contexts and can synthesise and evaluate information for a given purpose.
<b>Learners should be able to</b>	When learners need to apply their knowledge and understanding to source material or demonstrate application of practical skills and techniques.

## Command words

Learners should be made aware of:

- what command words are
- what each command word means
- what each command word assesses.

Command words are the words and phrases used in assessments that tell learners how they should answer the question or complete the task. Command words direct the learner through the question or task and indicate the nature of the response required.



The following tables are not exhaustive but will give you a good idea of the command words we typically use:

Command words for direct recall	
Command Word	Requirements of response
Account	Give reasons for.
Define	Give the precise meaning of a term.
Describe	Identify distinctive features and give descriptive, factual detail. <i>This is one of the most widely used command words. If an explanation is required then use two command words: 'describe and explain'.</i>
Give	Produce an answer from recall.
Identify/ Tick/ Click / Circle	Point out and name from a number of possibilities.
List	State the factors (with no explanation or elaboration).
Name	Identify or make a list.
Outline	Set out the main characteristics.
State	Express in clear terms.

### Command words for application/ demonstration of skills:

Command Word	Requirements of response
Apply	Use knowledge and understanding of a theory or concept and relate it to a specified context. Put into effect in an appropriate way.
Demonstrate	Exemplify, describe with reference to examples.
Discuss	Present key points.
Explain	Give reasons or causes. Show an understanding of how or why something has occurred.
Explore	Investigate without preconceptions about the outcome.
Suggest	Put forward an idea, reason or course of action.
Summarise	Give a shortened version of something, stating its main points without detail.
Write	Share information by speaking or writing

### Command words for synthesis and evaluation

Command Word	Requirements of response
Analyse	Separate information into components identify their characteristics.
Argue	Present a reasoned case.
Assess	This is an evaluative question, meaning that there are a number of possible explanations/arguments/outcomes. Make an informed judgement. Make a judgement about the quality or value of something.
Compare	Identify <b>similarities</b> .
Consider	Review and respond to given info.
Contrast	Identify <b>differences only</b> .
Criticise	Assess worth against explicit expectations.
Debate	Present different perspectives on an issue.
Discuss	Examine an issue in detail in a structured way, taking into account different ideas.
Distinguish	Identify the differences between two or more factors.
Evaluate	Judge from available evidence.
Examine	Investigate closely.
Judge	To form an opinion/decide upon critically.
Justify	Support case with evidence.

## Mark Schemes

Mark schemes and/or assessment criteria test the intended learning outcomes for a component. They describe the knowledge and skills (and possibly attitude) that a candidate is expected to demonstrate in their responses, and they are then used in marking the work.

### Objective based mark scheme:

For very short answer questions requiring one correct response.

Question	Answer	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total Mark
6.	List the Three Poisons				
	<p>Award <b>one</b> mark for each correct answer up to a maximum of <b>three</b> marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greed</li> <li>• Ignorance</li> <li>• Hatred.</li> </ul>	3			3

### Points based mark scheme

For short answer questions with a range of possible responses.

Question	Answer	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total Mark
7.	Describe how Buddhists may practise vipassana meditation.				
	<p><b>Indicative content:</b></p> <p><b>Award one mark for each basic description of how Buddhists might practise vipassana meditation, up to a maximum of six marks</b></p> <p><b>A basic description could include one of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buddhists may choose a quiet place and time to practice.</li> <li>• Sometimes Buddhists may meditate whilst walking very slowly in an open space.</li> <li>• Buddhists may find a comfortable position, such as sitting on a cushion or chair with their backs straight.</li> <li>• Buddhists may close their eyes and focus on their breathing.</li> <li>• Buddhists may listen to guided recordings to help them meditate.</li> <li>• They may try and practise every day.</li> <li>• This type of meditation does not usually require objects for focus.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award two marks for each developed description of how Buddhists might practise vipassana meditation, up to a maximum of six marks</b></p>	6			6

	<p><b>A developed description could include one of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>As vipassana is insight meditation, they may focus on their thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations but without reacting to them remaining detached from the experience.</li><li>They may consider the arising and the passing away of thoughts, emotions and physical sensation (anicca) reflecting on the impermanent nature of these experiences.</li><li>Vipassana meditation builds on samatha meditation and takes a lot of practice, so Buddhists must be patient and consistent.</li><li>Some Buddhists may attend classes or courses for personalised guidance on how to meditate by experienced teachers who can offer specific techniques.</li></ul> <p>Credit any other valid response.</p>			
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**Levels based mark schemes**

For questions requiring extended responses

2. Explain Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives about abortion.

**Indicative Content**

Answers may refer to the following:

- Christians vary considerably in their perspectives towards abortion.
- Many Christians believe that life begins at conception and immediately the embryo is a fully human person that should not be harmed.
- Christians believe that humans are created by God, in his image and, therefore, all human life is sacred regardless of the stage of life it is at (Genesis 1:26).
- Many Christians argue that the commandment ‘Do not kill’ applies to all human life (Exodus 20:13).
- Christians believe that God has a plan for each human life and that abortion destroys this plan (Jeremiah 1:5).
- Many Christians support adoption as an alternative to abortion because life will not be lost.
- Many Christians are concerned about a ‘slippery slope’ where abortion is so widely accepted that it becomes a method of contraception.
- Some Christians argue that an embryo is not a fully human person until birth and might allow abortion in certain circumstances.
- Some Christians would accept the need for abortion in situations where the mother’s life is at risk or in cases of rape or incest.
- Some Christians would accept the need for abortion if the foetus had severe abnormalities and was likely to be born disabled.
- People who hold non-religious beliefs differ considerably in their perspectives towards abortion. Many are pro-choice, but some are pro-life.
- Many would argue that an embryo is not a fully human person until birth.
- Some argue that the woman should have complete autonomy over her body and that abortion should be free, legal and widely available.
- Many argue that abortion should be available to protect women’s health.
- Many value quality of life as they do not believe in sanctity of life. They would consider the longer-term consequences of having an abortion on the mother and the child.
- Some might also be concerned about a ‘slippery slope’ where abortion is used too freely.
- Adoption may be considered an alternative to abortion, offering infertile individuals or couples the opportunity to become parents while improving the child’s life and creating a loving family environment.

Credit any other valid response.

<b>Band</b>	<b>AO2</b>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>9-10 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent application of knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives about abortion</li> <li>• response comprehensively and effectively explains Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives towards abortion using detailed, relevant examples.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>7-8 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good application of knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives about abortion</li> <li>• response comprehensively explains Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives towards abortion using relevant examples.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>5-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives about abortion</li> <li>• response adequately explains Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives towards abortion using relevant examples.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>3-4 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic application of knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives about abortion</li> <li>• response superficially explains Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives towards abortion using examples.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>1-2 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited application of knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives about abortion</li> <li>• response loosely explains Christian beliefs and teachings and non-religious perspectives towards abortion.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<p><b>0 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• response not creditworthy or not attempted.</li> </ul>

## Learning Experiences

Learners should be encouraged to consider the following learning experiences and skills to further develop their understanding, appreciation and awareness of the subject content. Information in the table below provides opportunities for teachers to integrate the learning experiences into delivery.

Learning Experience	Exemplification of Learning Experience
<p>develop independent thinking and confidence in articulating their own beliefs, values, and convictions with increasing sophistication</p>	<p><b>1.1.1</b> Learners could discuss the different types of belief and decide which one most closely aligns with their own belief system.</p> <p><b>1.5.1</b> Learners could, through the study of the key religious beliefs and teachings, consider their own thoughts around similar topic areas and consider their own beliefs and values. Learners could consider the causes of suffering and what makes someone happy, reflecting on what makes them happy or unhappy.</p> <p><b>1.5.2</b> Learners could, through studying belief in action, consider how they take action to support others within their local community, nationally and internationally. This may inspire them to be more confident in supporting others in social justice issues.</p> <p><b>1.6.2</b> Learners could reflect on whether they believe there is life after death. The articulation of ideas could be done through written explanations of their own ideas or when evaluating the beliefs and teachings of religious and non-religious believers.</p> <p><b>1.7.1</b> Learners could, by studying how religious believers show identity and belonging, consider how they show their own identity and belonging and respond to how others show their identity and belonging.</p> <p><b>2.1.2</b> Learners could explore their own beliefs on relationships and their responses to the beliefs and perspectives of others.</p> <p><b>2.2.3</b> Learners could reflect on their own personal values and beliefs on relationships and justify them as part of their work in task five of the NEA.</p> <p><b>3.1.1/3.4.1</b> Learners could discuss the relationship between humanity and the natural world and explain how important they think attitudes to environmental ethics might be.</p> <p><b>3.1.2/3.4.2</b> Learners could discuss the different religious perspectives on using animals for human benefit and decide which one most closely aligns with their own ideas and values.</p> <p><b>3.2.2/3.5.2</b> Learners could, through studying religious beliefs and teachings on medical ethics, consider their own personal views and beliefs and consider the evidence they would use to support and articulate their views.</p> <p><b>3.3.1/3.6.1</b> Learners could, through the study of issues surrounding freedom of religious expression, consider issues from a local, national, and global perspective and form their own opinions and reasoned</p>

	<p>conclusions.</p> <p><b>3.3.2/3.6.2</b> Learners could, through studying the religious beliefs and teachings on the use of wealth, consider their own personal views and beliefs and consider the evidence they would use to support and articulate their views.</p> <p><b>4.1.1</b> Learners could consider and respond to the views of religious and non-religious believers on a range of human rights issues. By considering the views and beliefs of others, they could develop their own responses to these views and refine their own.</p> <p><b>4.2.1</b> Learners could, through their research into charities and organisations, develop an understanding of why individuals support these charities as well as consider their own responses to these charities and organisations, thus enabling them to make judgements on their own views around the charities and organisations.</p>
explore their own beliefs, values, and convictions, understanding that beliefs can change over time	<p><b>1.2.1</b> Learners could discuss the beliefs and teachings about the nature of God and create a comparison chart with their own ideas of God, considering how these ideas change over time. Learners could also discuss the beliefs and teachings about the nature of human beings and create a comparison chart with their own ideas, considering how these ideas change over time.</p> <p><b>1.2.2/1.5.2</b> Learners could research different ways in which religious believers support the poor in society. They could compare these with their own ways of helping the poor, considering how they are similar or different. Learners could create a list of reasons why people may help others and consider their own reactions and responses, putting their beliefs into action in their lives.</p> <p><b>1.3.2/1.6.2</b> Learners could develop their own beliefs on the matter of life and death and consider whether these beliefs have changed throughout their lives.</p> <p><b>1.4.2/1.7.2</b> Learners could, through the study of morality within religion, consider their own responses on issues of morality and develop an understanding of the beliefs that inspire their responses. Learners could evaluate and explain the importance of these ethical guidelines and draw on their own experiences to explain how they may be comparable to the values and convictions they hold, which may be different now compared to when they were younger or when they are older.</p> <p><b>2.2.3</b> Learners could reflect on their beliefs, values, and convictions to consider how their beliefs on relationships may have changed over time in the UK.</p> <p><b>3.5.2</b> Learners could explore their own views and opinions on issues relating to abortion and euthanasia, reflecting on how these views and opinions may change over time when new evidence becomes available.</p> <p>Learners could also consider the changes in the law regarding these medical ethics issues and discuss the sanctity of life, explaining how important they think life might be when facing medical dilemmas of this</p>

	<p>nature. This could lead them to making decisions on current topics like changes in the law regarding these issues.</p> <p><b>4.3.2</b> Learners could focus on reflection on personal values and beliefs, critically engaging with prior study to understand different views of religious and non-religious individuals and the reasons behind the setting up of charities and organisations to support human rights. Learners could consider how their own beliefs and views have developed and changed whilst studying and preparing for this NEA.</p>
<p>develop empathy, tolerance compassion and curiosity through engagement with different religious and non-religious viewpoints and convictions</p>	<p><b>1.3.1/1.8.1</b> Learners could investigate what different groups of people believe about the meaning of life and assess how this informs their behaviour.</p> <p><b>1.3.3/1.8.3</b> Learners could investigate the different types of funeral services and complete a Venn diagram to show similarities and differences between religious and non-religious approaches.</p> <p><b>1.2.1/1.5.1</b> Learners could develop curiosity about how beliefs influence the actions of religious believers. They could also develop the skills of empathy and compassion as they consider how and why religious believers act as they do due to their beliefs.</p> <p><b>1.5.2e</b> Learners could discuss Sikh beliefs about the selflessness one should show and reflect on whether they believe they can devote aspects of their life to the service of others.</p> <p><b>1.6.1d</b> Learners could develop empathy and curiosity about the duties of a Jewish family.</p> <p><b>1.3.3/1.6.3</b> Learners could research various mourning and funeral customs and consider the value of funerals for religious and non-religious people.</p> <p><b>1.4.1/1.7.1</b> Learners could begin to see how people in the world may choose to express who they are and why this is important to them. They could also relate their own experiences and develop feelings of tolerance, compassion and understanding when encountering people of different religions in their life.</p> <p><b>2.1.1</b> Learners could study differing beliefs on relationships from both a religious and non-religious perspective, engaging with differing viewpoints and developing empathy, tolerance, compassion and curiosity.</p> <p><b>2.1.2</b> Learners could consider the differences and similarities between religious and non-religious perspectives on relationships, which offers the opportunity to develop empathy, tolerance, compassion and curiosity.</p> <p><b>2.2.2 and 2.2.3</b> Learners could make supported judgements on the perspectives of religious and non-religious individuals on relationships, enabling the development of a balanced understanding of different</p>

	<p>viewpoints and convictions.</p> <p><b>3.2.1/3.5.1</b> Learners could develop empathy and curiosity about what makes us human.</p> <p><b>3.2.2/3.5.2</b> Learners could study religious views on medical ethics, developing empathy and tolerance towards the views and beliefs of others. They could also develop curiosity about Hindu viewpoints on medical ethics.</p> <p><b>3.3.1/3.6.1</b> Learners could develop ideas of compassion and tolerance through the study of human rights issues, such as freedom of religious expression, where there is a diversity of views.</p> <p><b>3.3.2/3.6.2</b> Learners could investigate what different groups of people believe about the use of personal wealth and assess how this informs their behaviour. Learners could also consider the range of financial situations people face, along with the barriers they may encounter when dealing with their finances. They could explore potential solutions to such barriers faced by those locally, nationally and internationally.</p> <p><b>3.4.1/3.7.1</b> Learners could develop curiosity about the world they live in and consider their own place within this world through the study of issues about how the natural world should be cared for and how animals should be treated.</p> <p><b>4.1.1 and 4.2.1</b> Learners could study human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the work of charities or organisations to understand challenging global human rights issues. This work could provide opportunities to develop empathy and tolerance towards individuals and communities facing human rights challenges. Learners could also develop curiosity about responses to these human rights issues from religious and non-religious perspectives, as well as how charities or organisations respond.</p>
engage in collaborative working	<p><b>1.2.2</b> Learners could work in groups to research a local or national faith-based charity and create a presentation on its aims and work, including examples of how the charity puts faith into action.</p> <p><b>1.1.1/1.4.1</b> Learners could work in groups to research that place of pilgrimage, and the activities pilgrims may do while visiting there.</p> <p><b>1.5.1e</b> Learners could work together on creating role play of the lives of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh.</p> <p><b>1.2.2/1.5.2</b> Learners could collaboratively work to explore different ideas of faith in action, locally, nationally and globally, and share their findings with each other.</p> <p><b>1.5.2d</b> Learners could collaborate in investigating and presenting the aims and work of Mitzvah Day.</p> <p><b>1.3.3/1.6.3/1.8.3</b> Learners could discuss in pairs or groups to consider the value of funerals for religious and non-religious people.</p>

- 1.4.2/1.7.2** Learners could be directed to discuss different moral issues and consider how people may respond to them due to their beliefs and teachings.
- 3.3.1/3.6.1** Learners could work in groups to research how a religious person can express their faith, including specific examples.
- 3.1.1/3.4.1/3.8.1** Learners could collaboratively work to explore the work of the religious or non-religious charity and share their findings with each other.
- 3.1.2/3.4.2/3.8.2** Learners could work collaboratively by researching various ways in which animals are used by humans and considering a range of viewpoints on whether they agree with their uses or not. Learners could engage in a collective approach to animal rights; either for or against the use of animals being used for medical research. Learners could hold a debate on their approach to the ethical issue.
- 3.2.2/3.5.2/3.8.2** Learners could be directed to discuss different medical ethics on abortion or euthanasia and consider how a religious or non-religious person would respond to them due to their beliefs and teachings. Learners could work collaboratively with other learners to share their views on medical ethics issues.
- 3.6.1d** Learners could work collaboratively to research recent examples of antisemitism.

## Opportunities for embedding elements of the Curriculum for Wales

Curriculum for Wales Strands	Cross-cutting Themes
Local, National & International Contexts	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Local, National and International Contexts in GCSE Religious Studies.</b> These opportunities are important to learners because they help develop a deeper understanding of the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of societies. By exploring beliefs, values and practices across different contexts, learners can build empathy and tolerance while reflecting on their own values and the perspectives of others.</p> <p>Below are some examples of how Local, National &amp; International Contexts can be embedded into teaching and learning:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By studying a range of religious and non-religious beliefs about topics like the meaning of life, life after death and morality, learners can understand how different people approach these questions, promoting empathy and tolerance for varied perspectives on existence and purpose.</li> <li>Learners can examine how religious and non-religious practices, rituals and ethical teachings are enacted in local, national and international contexts, for example, by looking at how believers put their faith into action through local, national or international charity work.</li> <li>Learners can investigate how religious beliefs and teachings about relationships (e.g., marriage, family, gender roles) evolve in response to changing societal values, laws and norms.</li> <li>By studying religious and non-religious views on relationships, learners can explore how different belief systems address issues like equality, marriage and gender in various local, national and international contexts.</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Sustainability in GCSE Religious Studies.</b> These opportunities are important to learners because they help to develop a deeper understanding of how religious beliefs and teachings can influence actions toward environmental stewardship and social responsibility. By exploring sustainability through the lens of religious perspectives, students can engage with ethical issues and the moral responsibility of individuals and communities, developing a sense of global citizenship and empathy for future generations.</p>

	<p><b>Below are some examples of how Sustainability can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p> <p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Unit 3, learners develop knowledge and understanding of how religious and non-religious people have a role and responsibility towards the environment and its care. They learn about views on stewardship and how this might influence a believer or non-believer to act.</li> <li>• They also consider the aims and work of religious and non-religious charities that work to aid sustainability.</li> <li>• Animal rights are also a focus of Unit 3, with learners considering the moral, cultural and religious implications associated with treating animals in certain ways, for example, they consider the use of animal testing for medical purposes.</li> </ul>
Relationships and Sexuality Education	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in GCSE Religious Studies. These opportunities are important to learners because they provide a framework for understanding how religious teachings can shape views on relationships. By discussing topics like marriage, family life, gender equality and sexual ethics from a religious and non-religious perspective, students are encouraged to develop respect for diverse viewpoints, while also guiding them in forming their own informed opinions.</b></p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how RSE can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p> <p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit 2 has a focus on religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives on various topics associated with relationships. They discover how these beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives have altered people's views on these topics over time and how people behave differently based on their beliefs.</li> <li>• Learners will research to find out what religious and non-religious people think about a certain topic relating to relationships, meaning they will use a range of sources to find out real-world attitudes, experiences and perspectives, broadening their understanding of others' views.</li> <li>• Learners will learn about a range of topics for example, marriage (including same-sex marriage and inter-faith marriage), divorce, cohabitation, gender roles and civil partnerships, among others.</li> </ul>

Human Rights Education and Diversity	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Human Rights Education and Diversity in GCSE Religious Studies.</b> These opportunities are important to learners because they provide a platform for understanding how religious teachings advocate for the dignity, equality and rights of all individuals. This encourages empathy, respect and an appreciation for diversity, while helping learners understand the global significance of human rights and how they relate to personal and societal responsibilities. It also empowers students to become active and informed citizens who contribute to a fairer, more inclusive world.</p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how Human Rights Education and Diversity can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p> <p><b><i>Example</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners will explore religious and non-religious perspectives on human rights, understanding how different belief systems and worldviews influence views on human dignity and equality.</li> <li>• Learners will examine specific articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, gaining an understanding of its key principles and the global importance of human rights.</li> <li>• Learners will focus on two human rights issues set annually by WJEC, deepening their knowledge of real-world challenges such as gender equality, racial equality and the rights of marginalised groups.</li> <li>• Learners will develop a broad understanding of the aims and purposes of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, learning how these principles apply to contemporary global issues and individual rights.</li> </ul>
Careers and Work-Related Experiences	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Career and Work-Related Experiences (CWRE) in GCSE Religious Studies.</b> These opportunities are important to learners because they allow students to connect the knowledge and skills gained in Religious Studies to real-world contexts, enhancing their understanding of how religious beliefs and ethical principles can influence various careers and professions. This not only broadens their career aspirations but also helps them develop essential transferable skills, such as critical thinking, communication and ethical reasoning, which are valuable in any career path they choose to pursue.</p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how CWRE can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p>

	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is relevant in Unit 4, where learners engage with fundamental human rights and learning about charities and organisations that support these rights. During their research, learners will consider the work and aims of these charities and/or organisations and will discover opportunities for volunteering for them.</li> <li>• They may also learn about the roles people have in these charities and organisations, as a potential path to a career in the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Cross-curricular Skills - Literacy</b>	
Listening	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Literacy in GCSE Religious Studies. These opportunities are important to learners because they support the development of essential skills, such as reading comprehension, writing and verbal communication, through the exploration of complex texts and concepts. In GCSE Religious Studies, students engage with religious scriptures, ethical debates, and philosophical arguments, which strengthens their ability to analyse, interpret and express ideas clearly and coherently. Additionally, by discussing and reflecting on diverse viewpoints, students enhance their vocabulary, critical thinking and argumentation skills. These literacy skills are not only vital for academic success but also for effective communication in a wide range of personal and professional settings.</b></p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how Literacy can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p> <p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Unit 1, learners may listen to a Buddhist monk explain the concept of rebirth and/or to listen to a convert to Buddhism (Tina Turner) chant the Nam Myoho Renge Kyo.</li> <li>• Learners may watch and listen to various videos on the Humanist UK website to further their understanding of Humanist beliefs and perspectives on topics relevant to the GCSE, such as meaning of life or looking after the environment.</li> </ul>
Reading	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In RS, there are always opportunities to read through sources of wisdom and authority, such as sacred texts, summarise them and explain their meaning for religious believers.</li> <li>• Learners may read key stories associated with the religions studied to understand their foundations and where fundamental religious beliefs originate, such as the story of the Buddha's Four Sights.</li> </ul>

Speaking	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are learning activities in the guidance for teaching documents recommended to improve learners' oral skills, such as 'quiz quiz trade' games, think-pair-share tasks and role play ideas.</li> <li>Through the NEA in unit 2, learners are able to create their own sources to gather information during the research phase. They may choose to question or interview members of the public, increasing their confidence in speaking to others.</li> </ul>
Writing	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are encouraged to write their responses to various tasks throughout their course, and at the end of each unit they will be assessed in a written format, either in an examination or a non-examination assessment.</li> <li>The Assessment Objectives in RS allow learners to develop their knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, evaluation and other skills specific to RS, such as selecting appropriate source material. Most of these are assessed in a written format.</li> </ul>
<b>Cross-curricular Skills - Numeracy</b>	
Learning that statistics represent data and that probability models chance help us make informed inferences and decisions	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Numeracy in GCSE Religious Studies. These opportunities are important to learners because they help develop practical numeracy skills through the analysis of data, patterns and statistics related to religious studies. For example, students may explore census data or other statistics in their NEA units.</b></p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how Numeracy can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p> <p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of their research into charities or organisations in Unit 4, learners could consider the numbers of people that are supported in different ways by the charities or organisations.</li> <li>Learners may also have the opportunity to analyse data on the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers recorded in the UK. They would be able to compare the data to recognise changes in patterns such as the increase or decrease of numbers.</li> <li>In Unit 2, learners may make use of census data or other official data when researching the changing nature of certain topics associated with relationships.</li> </ul>

### Cross-curricular Skills – Digital Competence

	<p>There are many opportunities to include Digital Competence in GCSE Religious Studies. These opportunities are important to learners because they enable students to use digital tools and resources to explore and analyse religious topics in a modern context. Through online research, students can access diverse viewpoints, explore global religious perspectives and engage with up-to-date information. Digital competence also allows students to present their ideas effectively using digital formats, whether through presentations, essays or collaborative projects. These skills are crucial not only for success in GCSE Religious Studies but also for preparing students to navigate an increasingly digital world, enhancing their overall academic and professional readiness.</p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how Digital Competence can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p>
Producing	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners could make use of census data or the Office of National Statistics (ONS) data when considering divorce, marriage and birth rates. This work would support their evaluation and the judgements made within their final submission of work in the Unit 2 NEA.</li> <li>There is also an opportunity to develop and distribute questionnaires on a range of relationship matters. This would enable learners to analyse and evaluate the findings of the questionnaires and to make use of them within their final pieces of work in Unit 2.</li> </ul>
Data and Computational Thinking	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners could make use of data associated with charities and organisations to assist them with understanding their influence and success within the human rights field they focus on in Unit 4.</li> <li>Learners could make use of census data or the Office of National Statistics (ONS) data when considering divorce, marriage and birth rates. This work would support their analysis, evaluation and the judgements made within their final submission of work in Unit 2.</li> <li>There is also an opportunity to develop and distribute questionnaires on a range of relationship matters. This would enable learners to analyse the findings of the questionnaires and to make use of them within their final pieces of work in Unit 2.</li> </ul>

Integral Skills	
Creativity and Innovation	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Creativity and Innovation in GCSE Religious Studies.</b> These opportunities are important to learners because they encourage students to think critically and imaginatively about religious ideas, teachings and practices. Creativity and innovation foster a sense of curiosity and open-mindedness, enabling students to explore diverse religious perspectives and think outside the box when addressing complex ethical, philosophical and theological questions. These skills not only enhance their academic experience but also prepare them for problem-solving and creative thinking in a wide range of careers and life situations.</p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how Creativity and Innovation can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Example</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners will be able to be creative in how they choose to collect and collate the different perspectives of religious and non-religious believers on relationships.</li> <li>• Learners could be creative in how they select and produce sources in the Unit 2 NEA.</li> <li>• Learners could discuss creativity options and the strengths and weaknesses of each to better understand how they could be creative prior to completing the work individually in their NEA units.</li> </ul>
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Critical Thinking and Problem Solving in GCSE Religious Studies.</b> These opportunities are important to learners because they encourage students to analyse, evaluate, and question religious beliefs, practices and ethical issues from multiple perspectives. By engaging with complex topics such as morality, justice and religious teachings, students are prompted to develop well-reasoned arguments, challenge assumptions and consider the implications of different viewpoints. This helps build their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for making informed decisions and navigating the complexities of the modern world.</p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how Critical Thinking and Problem Solving can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p>

	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As learners collect information and use sources in Unit 2, they will have to critically think and problem solve to gather a range of sources. When choosing sources, they will need to critically think about the relevance of the source, its validity and its reliability.</li> <li>• When using data, they will need to problem solve to ensure that enough appropriate data is available and used within their work.</li> <li>• To make judgements on sources, evidence and the views of others there will be a need to critically consider the varying views and opinions.</li> <li>• A model critical thinking task could be completed prior to learners applying critical thinking skills to their chosen sources.</li> <li>• These skills will be similar in Unit 4 when researching charities and organisations for their NEA.</li> </ul>
Planning and Organisation	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Planning and Organisation in GCSE Religious Studies. These opportunities are important to learners because they help students develop essential skills in managing their time, setting priorities and organising tasks effectively. In GCSE Religious Studies, students will need to complete two pieces of NEA, which require careful organisation of information and clear structuring of arguments. By practising these skills, students can improve their ability to approach complex topics methodically, meet deadlines and balance multiple tasks.</b></p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how Planning and Organisation can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p> <p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For both NEA units, learners could discuss the challenges for completing the work to recognise what needs to be done, how it needs to be done and when it needs completing by. They could then apply this to their work prior to its completion.</li> <li>• Initially, teacher modelling on the importance of planning and organising would be an appropriate and useful task for learners.</li> <li>• In order to successfully complete all five tasks within the NEA learners will need to understand the steps required to complete all stages of the work. Planning and organisation will be essential to the success of this work.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners could discuss a plan for completing the work to recognise what needs to be done, such as:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what are the stages needed for completion?</li> <li>what is the timescale?</li> <li>consider creating a workflow diagram or similar.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Personal Effectiveness	<p><b>There are many opportunities to include Personal Effectiveness in GCSE Religious Studies. These opportunities are important to learners because they help students develop self-awareness, resilience, and the ability to reflect on their own values, beliefs and decisions. By engaging with topics such as ethical dilemmas, personal responsibility and the role of faith in daily life, students are encouraged to build confidence in their own views while respecting the perspectives of others.</b></p> <p><b>Below are some examples of how Personal Effectiveness can be embedded into teaching and learning:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Example</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Units 2 and 4, to achieve the desired outcome learners will need to work effectively through the tasks and requirements. Prior teacher support and guidance on the steps needed to be an effective worker would be beneficial.</li> <li>Learners could discuss the challenges for completing the work to recognise what needs to be done, how it needs to be done and by when it needs completing. They could then apply this to their work prior to its completion for the NEA units.</li> <li>Learners can analyse and evaluate differing religious and non-religious perspectives on ethical issues such as stewardship, creation and life after death, fostering their ability to assess arguments, identify biases and form their own reasoned opinions.</li> <li>Opportunities to research topics like pilgrimage or diverse beliefs on the meaning of life using digital resources allow learners to practise responsible online inquiry, evaluate sources and present findings effectively.</li> <li>Group discussions and debates on topics like relationships or medical ethics enable learners to articulate their own views, listen to other and build mutual understanding, enhancing interpersonal and communication skills.</li> </ul>

## Important Dates

First Teaching of WJEC GCSE subject	September 2025
First assessment for Unit 1	Summer 2026
First assessment for Unit 3	Summer 2026
First release of Unit 2	September 2025
First release of Unit 4	September 2026
First submission of 2	March 2026
First submission of 4	Summer 2027
First Certification	Summer 2027