



RELIGIOUS STUDIES GCSE SPECIFICATION AT A GLANCE

Exam Board: AQA

For the full GCSE, candidates will pursue a course leading to the award of a GCSE 9-1 qualification at the end of Year 11.

AQA Religious Studies Full Course

UNIT 1: The Study of Religions: Beliefs, Teachings and Practices

Written Paper – 1 hour 45 min – 50% of GCSE

Students will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and Islam.

UNIT 2: Students will study four out of the six religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes on offer.

The themes that we studied with our most recent cohort are indicated with an asterisk, but these are subject to change for each cohort:

Theme A: Relationships and families*

Theme B: Religion and life

Theme C: The existence of God and revelation*

Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict*

Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment*

Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice

Written Paper – 1 hour 45 min – 50% of GCSE

Supporting trips and activities:

- Visit to religious buildings – Ely Cathedral and Cambridge Central Mosque
- Visiting speakers linked to ethical studies
- Competitions with national associations and universities

Should my child study religious studies?

Religious Studies is a rigorous academic subject in which all students are given the opportunity to develop as theological and philosophical thinkers with the ability to explain and critically analyse different religious beliefs and worldviews from an objective viewpoint. Students will also be able to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in light of what they have learnt. Religious Studies seeks to teach about the world and understand it better. It is about people, their lives, and the issues they will face when they leave school and go into the multi-ethnic, multi-faith society which is the UK. It is not 'religious instruction' and is therefore not about making a person 'religious'. Many students go on to study Religious Studies and related topics at A-Level, such as Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology. The philosophical and ethical nature of Religious Studies also complements topics like science for students following a medical route.

Where will religious studies take my child?

Universities all accept Religious Studies, welcoming the evidence that an applicant is able to approach issues in a clear and open-minded manner. Prospective employers appreciate the emphasis on critical thinking, especially in careers that require an understanding of others and the ability to relate to people of different backgrounds. Religious Studies can be beneficial to many different careers, ranging from the arts, medicine, law, civil services, the military, journalism, project management etc.

Career examples:

Science, health and medicine - Religious Studies has very close links with several branches of scientific study. The Religion and Life unit considers difficult subjects around life's most controversial ethical issues – from abortion and euthanasia, to the creation of the universe and climate change. Any piece of scientific research must meet moral and ethical standards – in Religious Studies, we explore these ethical issues and what different groups of people feel about them.

Policing, law and the criminal justice system - Religious Studies is crucial in understanding human rights, where our laws stem from and why we should abide by them. Religious Studies also explores instances where laws might be considered unjust, and therefore, should be challenged. It is also essential to understand how crime and punishment is carried out in this country, in comparison to other countries around the world, and why that is.

Further reading/suggested revision materials:

AQA Religious Studies Specification A
AQA Religious Studies A Islam
AQA Religious Studies A Christianity

For further information, please contact:

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