



Religious Studies Bulletin

Autumn 2013

WELCOME. We hope you will find this bulletin useful.

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1 **Message from Tudor Thomas** **WJEC Religious Studies Subject Officer**

Changes to GCE, GCSEs and Entry Level in England and Wales PLUS CPDs

Please look at the important information below regarding GCE, GCSE and Entry Level Religious Studies which will have an effect on all Specifications. These changes are being introduced by the regulators Ofqual in England and the Welsh Government in Wales and will affect all awarding bodies in England and Wales. Please sign up to our **Subscribe** (see 3) in order to be kept up to date with on-going developments and the changes taking place in both England and Wales. Changes are also taking place with CPD provision for the future.

Ofqual have announced changes to GCSE qualifications which will be of interest to schools registered with WJEC in England and in Wales.

The summer series has gone well. The assessment of SPaG turned out to be less problematic than anticipated. WJEC spent some considerable time in establishing working rules for the assessment of SPaG in the four GCSE subjects which now include the assessment of SPaG. In RS the senior team and myself spent some considerable time in establishing ground rules for the assessment of SPaG which were then shared with examining teams.

At the moment it is unclear what is happening at GCSE and GCE level regarding RS and revision. I hope the picture will be clearer in the autumn. I will ensure that centres in both England and Wales are kept informed of any changes. Again please subscribe to keep up to date with developments.

The regulators in both England and Wales have forbidden any 'face to face CPD' with centres which involves senior examiners or subject officers who have access to 'live' examination papers. WJEC in RS will not be able to have any events like in this in 2013/14. Neither will WJEC be able to organise events in centres again using senior examiners who have had access to the following year's examination papers in RS. I have always made efforts to speak to centres on the telephone and via email. I intend to continue with this service as will my colleagues Eira Morgan and Paul Bradley. I am

looking at ways of increasing our availability via phone and email. As always if you have any issues or concerns please contact me.

2 Religious Studies Consultant

Eira Morgan was appointed earlier this year as a Religious Studies Consultant to Tudor Thomas. In addition to taking responsibility for Entry Level Religious Studies, Eira will soon be assuming responsibility for GCSE Religious Studies Specification A. As part of Eira's role she has set up a Twitter account for WJEC Religious Studies in both English and Welsh to provide news, updates and general information to Religious Studies teachers and students in both languages. Follow WJEC Religious Studies on Twitter: @WJEC_RS and CBAC_AstCref.

3 Subscribe to Religious Studies updates

RS teachers are encouraged to join the SUBSCRIBE system which can be found on the Religious Studies page on the WJEC website. Subscribers will automatically be updated about changes and any new resources support available.

Alternatively email Paul Bradley at paul.bradley@wjec.co.uk stating your name, centre name and number and confirm the level of Religious Studies that you are interested in i.e. GCE level, GCSE Spec A, GCSE Spec B or Entry Level.

4 Follow us on Twitter

In addition to subscribing to Religious Studies for updates and developments you can now also follow us on Twitter. WJEC's Religious Studies Twitter feeds are: https://twitter.com/WJEC_RS

5 GCSE NEWS on Spec A and Spec B

WJEC will continue to meet the needs of both Wales and England across the full spectrum of our GCSE qualifications. The subject content of the current WJEC GCSE specifications remain unchanged.

Changes to GCSEs in England

Ofqual, regulator for qualifications in England, announced changes to GCSEs for candidates starting two-year courses in September 2012.

For awards in summer 2014 onwards, linear assessment will be compulsory for candidates in England. They will sit all their examinations at the end of their GCSE course, rather than having the possibility of taking them at different stages during the course as they do at present. This will have an impact on centres in England who have used the 'staged assessment' pattern provided by WJEC in GCSE Religious Studies for both Specification A and Specification B.

Further details of the changes are available on www.ofqual.gov.uk

GCSEs in Wales

In Wales, the Department for Education and Skills has confirmed that schools will be able to choose from two options from September 2012 onwards. **Either** they will be able to enter candidates for the new linear qualifications, where they sit all their exams at the end of the course, as in England, or they can enter candidates for separate units taken at stages during the course as they do now.

England and Wales and SpaG at GCSE

In GCSE English Literature, Geography, History and Religious Studies, additional marks will be awarded for the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar in questions that require extended answers in examination papers.

KEY DETAILS FOR SPECIFICATION A AND SPECIFICATION B

Specification A has a systematic study of religion, **and** Specification B, involves a thematic study of some central questions and issues in human life and experience exploring the relevance of religious beliefs, values and traditions to these questions and issues.

Specification B has the added advantage of allowing schools to meet the statutory requirements of both the 1944 Education Act and the 1996 Education Act. The 'staged assessment' (i.e. one short course in year 10 followed by a further short course in year 11, which is aggregated to give a full course result) offered in both specifications will be maintained in Wales only.

KEY DATES FOR CURRENT GCSE SPECIFICATION 2014

Deadline date for GCSE entries	Friday 21 February 2014
Deadline date for Entry amendments (without incurring a charge)	Monday 31 March 2014
Publication of Results Summer 2014	Thursday 21 August 2014

GCSE SPECIFICATION A

Full details relating to this specification can be found on the WJEC website by clicking on the link provided below.

<http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?subject=98&level=>

WJEC has now published on the WJEC website a complete set of resources for Specification A, with the exception of resources for Unit 7 Islam which will be published in the autumn. These resources can be found on the WJEC website under Resources for Teachers.

GCSE SPECIFICATION B

Full details relating to this specification can be found on the WJEC website by clicking on the link provided below.

<http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?subject=99&level=>

PUBLICATIONS TO SUPPORT NEW GCSE SPECIFICATION B

There are exciting developments on the resources being developed to support Specification B.

Hodder and Stoughton have revised their very popular '**Believing and Living**' (Religion and Life Issues) and '**Believing and Experiencing**' (Religion and Human Experience) written by Joy White and Gavin Craigen. Hodder have also developed a student work booklet to accompany the above titles. For further details please click

<http://hoddereducation.co.uk/SearchResults?text=WJEC GCSE Religious Studies>

Oxford University Press have two publications to support the new Specification B Unit 1 – Religion and Life Issues and Unit 2 Religion and Religious Experience. This is written by Ina Taylor who is a very successful author of a number of text books. For further details please click

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/secondary/series/qcse-religious-studies/?view=ProductList®ion=uk>

Heinemann, part of the Pearson Group have published books to support Specification B, Units 1 (**Religion and Life**) and Unit 2 (**Believing and Experiencing**). Significant contributions are authored and included from practising teachers Chris Owens, Tanya Long, Helen Bartley and Laura Burrige. Heinemann have also produced web based materials as well to support Specification B. For further details please click

<http://www.pearsonschoolsandcolleges.co.uk/Secondary/ReligiousEducationandCitizenship/14-16forWJEC/14-16forWJEC.aspx>

All of the above books and materials are now published and are available from WJEC bookshop or directly from the publishers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Units 1 and 2: All Topics Question (d)

The question has been raised as to whether this question ‘Explain from **two** religious traditions.....’ can be answered from two traditions within the same religion.

ANSWER: Please refer to

2.1 Number and Combination of Religions to be Studied (page 7) of the Specification which states:

For each topic of the specification questions will be set requiring candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, practices, values and traditions of:

either (i) Christianity and one other principal religion

or (ii) a Christian tradition within the broader context of Christianity.

In alternative (ii) candidates will be expected to study one Christian tradition throughout all four topics and be able to place the tradition within the broad context of the Christian faith so that the study is balanced in terms of breadth and depth. They will be required to answer questions on each topic which will anticipate a knowledge and understanding of two Christian traditions.

Candidates can therefore answer from two branches of Christianity and should state which ones they are referring to in the space marked ‘religious tradition 1’. It may be that there is little or no difference between the two traditions, e.g. Roman Catholicism and Anglican. If this is the case, candidates must write everything in full twice. ‘Roman Catholics believe the same thing.’ will score no marks.

Candidates must be aware that in either Unit Paper: Unit 1 (Religion and Life Issues) or Unit 2 (Religion and Human Experience) they may be asked for the viewpoint from **one** religious tradition only. There will be sufficient specification content for candidates to gain the full marks.

6 GCE RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

In England the regulators have decided that with effect from 2015 AS examination opportunities will not be offered in January. **Therefore WJEC will not be able to accept entries from centres in England for AS RS for January 2014 and in subsequent years.**

In Wales WJEC will be offering AS examinations in January 2014 in Wales for the last time.

The Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove has announced that in England linear specifications will be introduced in 2015 for first examination in summer 2017. In Wales modular GCE courses will continue for the foreseeable future.

AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS

RS3 CS: Studies in Religion and Contemporary Society

RS3 ETH: Studies in Religion and Ethics

RS3 PHIL: Studies in Philosophy of Religion

RS3 CHR: Studies in Christianity

RS1/2 CS: Introduction to Religion in Contemporary Society

RS1/2 ETH: Introduction to Religion and Ethics

RS1/2 PHIL: Introduction to Philosophy of Religion.

All of these GCE resources may be downloaded and copied free of charge from the WJEC Secure Website by all WJEC registered centres.

Illuminate Publishing have recently published WJEC AS Religious Studies, Philosophy of Religion and Ethics by Karl Lawson and Andrew Pearce which has been endorsed by WJEC for use alongside the Specification in supporting the teaching of AS Philosophy of Religion and Religion and Ethics.

In addition to this Illuminate has also published a study and revision guide for A2 Philosophy: WJEC A2 Religious Studies, Studies in Philosophy by Delyth Ellerton-Harris, which has also been endorsed by WJEC for use alongside the Specification in supporting the teaching of A2 Philosophy of Religion

KEY DATES FOR CURRENT GCE SPECIFICATION 2014

Release of pre- release material for RS4	Start of Spring Term 2014
Publication of Results – Winter 2014 series	Thursday 6 March 2014
Deadline date for GCE entries (Summer series)	Thursday 21 March 2014
Publication of Results Summer 2014	Thursday 14 August 2014

7 ENTRY PATHWAYS – HUMANITIES

Entry Pathways-Humanities has now been approved by the regulators Ofqual in England and DFES in Wales. Please refer to the statement on the Entry Pathways Humanities website page and details of forthcoming CPDs.

Please click on the attached link for more information:

<http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?subject=71&level=203>

The subject offered under the Humanities Pathways include: History, Geography, Religious Studies, Humanities and French. These subjects are offered at Entry level 2 and Entry 3 only. Centres will be able to choose to study units all in one subject area for example Religious studies, or mix and match from any other subject within the Humanities Pathway or a unit from another Pathway can be included in the Award or Certificate for Humanities e.g. Working as part of a group or a Religious Studies unit for example, can be included in another pathway such as personal and Social development. All Entry Level Pathway units are internally assessed and externally moderated (through scripts). Assessment will be criteria based rather than mark based.

If you have enquiries about Entry Level Pathways please contact Alison Doogan on 029 2026 5022 or email alison.doogan@wjec.co.uk , or Robert Williams on 029 2026 5327 or email robert.williams@wjec.co.uk.

8 ENTRY LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

IMPORTANT NEWS

The regulators have allowed award bodies to continue to offer Entry Level Religious Studies for the foreseeable future. This does not apply to Religious Education which has now been discontinued.

KEY DATES FOR ENTRY LEVEL 2014

Deadline date for Entry amendments (Without incurring a charge)	Thursday 16 January
Submission of coursework:	Saturday 4 May
Publication of results	Thursday 3 July

9 Examiner Vacancies

There is always a need for examiners in this subject at all levels, especially in GCSE Religious Studies Specification B. If you are interested in examining for us, please apply online by downloading an application form from the WJEC home page.

GCE A level: and GCSE

email: helen.donovan@wjec.co.uk

email: rob.reynold@wjec.co.uk

Entry Level: *email: martyn.stallard@wjec.co.uk*

When there are no vacancies, then your application will be kept in our Reserve bank and referred to as and when vacancies occur.

10 WJEC SECURE WEB-SITE

The WJEC Secure Website can be accessed by authorised staff at Centres that work with WJEC. This is often the Examinations Officer within the Centre. Once a Centre is registered, access is available to a range of resources including circulars, past papers and marking schemes. There is also the facility for entry/amendment file uploads and the ability to make online post-results enquiries.

If your Centre is not registered, please send an email to securewebsite@wjec.co.uk stating centre number, centre name, contact name and contact email address. Only the centre examinations officer should send this email. WJEC will then get a letter of registration out to your centre as soon as possible (normally within two working days). Please indicate on your email if your registration is urgent. Once registered, the examinations officer can then register other members of teaching staff additional limited access accounts themselves.

11 CPD ON-LINE EXAMINATION REVIEW

The way WJEC offers feedback on examinations has changed. Examination review will be provided online, in line with revised regulator guidelines. To show teachers what we are planning for autumn 2013 WJEC have prepared a presentation to explain how we will be offering this feedback. This presentation can be found here: <http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=155>. The online examination review will be available in Welsh and English, with examples of examination papers in both languages.

Online Results Analysis

Following feedback from teachers, we have improved the way we present item level data to teachers to make it easier for them to compare the performance of their students to that of all WJEC candidates. We have prepared a presentation to guide you through the system. This presentation can be found here: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/18346.pdf>

12 WJEC WEB-SITE Home Pages with useful links

Please visit the Homepages of Religious Studies.

You will find useful links have been added. You can also download specifications, past question papers, examiner reports, coursework/assessment and resource materials etc. If there are any ideas or suggestions on how you think the Religious Studies web pages could be improved please let us know.

The address to visit is: <http://www.wjec.co.uk/religiousstudies>

When you have arrived at the WJEC Home Page, look to the column on the left hand side and you will see the Subject and underneath Level box menus. First, click on the Subject drop down menu and select Religious Studies. Secondly, click on the Level drop menu and select the appropriate level required. Once done, click Go. This will take you to the Religious Studies Home Page for the appropriate level selected.

On the right hand-side you will see a column and the category "Documents". Scroll down to see "View full list of documents". Click this link to access the many source materials related to this subject level.

Don't forget to visit WJEC website regularly!

13 HOW TO CONTACT US:

SUBJECT OFFICER FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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BOOKSHOP

Caroline Redman, Bookshop Manager tel: 029 2026 5042 email caroline.redman@wjec.co.uk

Feedback is always welcome!



Tudor Thomas
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