

AQA GCSE Religious Studies

Curriculum Aim:

The AQA GCSE Religious Studies course aims to provide students with a comprehensive and balanced understanding of the beliefs, teachings, and practices of Christianity and Islam, as well as an in-depth exploration of key philosophical and ethical themes relevant to contemporary society. The curriculum is designed to develop students' knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious perspectives, encouraging them to engage critically with questions of belief, morality, and the impact of religion on individuals and communities. Through studying core doctrines, forms of worship, and moral teachings, students will learn to analyse, evaluate, and compare different viewpoints, fostering skills in critical thinking, empathy, and reasoned argument. The course also prepares students for assessment through extended writing, discussion, and the application of subject-specific vocabulary, supporting their academic progress and personal development as informed and reflective citizens.

Link to Prior Learning:

This GCSE curriculum builds directly on the knowledge and skills developed throughout Key Stage 3 Religious Education, where students have explored the major world religions, ethical dilemmas, and philosophical questions. In Years 7 to 9, students have engaged with foundational concepts such as belief, worship, morality, and social justice, and have practiced skills in analysis, evaluation, and debate. The AQA GCSE course extends this learning by deepening students' understanding of Christianity and Islam, introducing more complex theological and ethical issues, and requiring greater sophistication in argument and evaluation. This progression ensures that students are well-prepared for the demands of GCSE assessment and for the wider application of religious and ethical understanding in their lives and further studies.

Rationale of Sequencing:

The sequence of the AQA GCSE Religious Studies curriculum is structured to provide a logical and coherent progression through the core content areas, supporting both knowledge acquisition and skill development. The course begins with Christian beliefs and practices, establishing a foundation in key concepts such as the nature of God, the Trinity, salvation, and forms of worship. This is followed by a parallel exploration of Muslim beliefs and practices, enabling students to compare and contrast the two traditions and to understand their influence on adherents' lives. The curriculum then moves to thematic studies, covering Relationships and Families, Religion and Life, Peace and Conflict, and Human Rights and Social Justice. These themes are selected to reflect the most pressing ethical and philosophical issues facing society today and to enable students to apply religious teachings to real-world contexts.

By sequencing the curriculum in this way, students first gain a secure understanding of core religious beliefs and practices before applying this knowledge to broader ethical debates and contemporary issues. The final phase of the course is dedicated to revision, comparative religion, and exam preparation, ensuring that students have the opportunity to consolidate their learning, refine their skills, and achieve their full potential in the final assessments. This structure supports the development of both subject knowledge and transferable skills, preparing students for success in GCSE Religious Studies and beyond.

AQA GCSE RE Long Term Plan 2025 - 2027

Unit	Lessons	Vocabulary
1. Christian Beliefs	1. The Nature of God 2. The Trinity 3. Creation 4. The Incarnation 5. Jesus, the Son of God 6. The Crucifixion 7. The Resurrection 8. The Ascension 9. Sin and Original Sin 10. Salvation and Atonement	omnipotent, omnibenevolent, just, immanent, transcendent, Trinity, creation, incarnation, Messiah, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, sin, original sin, salvation, grace, law, atonement, repentance
2. Christian Practices	1. Forms of Worship 2. Prayer 3. Baptism 4. Holy Communion (Eucharist) 5. Pilgrimage: Lourdes and Iona 6. Christian Festivals: Christmas and Easter 7. The Role of the Church in the Community 8. Mission and Evangelism	worship, liturgical, non-liturgical, prayer, Lord's Prayer, baptism, sacrament, Eucharist, pilgrimage, festival, Church, community, mission, evangelism, reconciliation, food banks, street pastors

3. Muslim Beliefs	1. The Nature of Allah 2. Tawhid (Oneness of God) 3. Angels 4. Predestination (Al-Qadr) 5. Life After Death (Aakhirah) 6. Prophethood (Risalah) 7. Holy Books 8. The Imamate in Shi'a Islam	Allah, Tawhid, immanence, transcendence, omnipotent, merciful, shirk, angel, Jibril, Mika'il, predestination, Akhirah, judgement, paradise, hell, Risalah, prophet, Muhammad, Qur'an, Hadith, Imamate, Shi'a, Sunni
4. Muslim Practices	1. The Five Pillars of Islam 2. Shahadah 3. Salah 4. Sawm 5. Zakah 6. Hajj 7. Jihad 8. Islamic Festivals: Id-ul-Adha, Id-ul-Fitr, Ashura 9. The Mosque and Community	Five Pillars, Shahadah, Salah, Sawm, Zakah, Hajj, declaration of faith, prayer, rak'ah, wudu, fasting, Ramadan, charity, almsgiving, pilgrimage, Ka'aba, Jihad, festival, mosque, ummah, community
5. Theme A: Relationships & Families	1. Human Sexuality 2. Sexual Relationships Before and Outside Marriage 3. Contraception and Family Planning 4. Marriage 5. Divorce and Remarriage 6. The Nature and Purpose of Families 7. Gender Equality and Discrimination	sexuality, heterosexual, homosexual, adultery, chastity, contraception, family planning, marriage, vows, divorce, remarriage, family, procreation, nurture, gender equality, discrimination, prejudice, roles
6. Theme B: Religion & Life	1. Origins of the Universe 2. Value of the World 3. Stewardship and Dominion 4. Pollution and Environmental Issues 5. Use and Abuse of Animals 6. Origins of Human Life 7. Abortion 8. Euthanasia 9. Death and Afterlife Beliefs	creation, Big Bang, stewardship, dominion, environment, pollution, animal rights, experimentation, evolution, sanctity of life, abortion, euthanasia, quality of life, afterlife, soul, heaven, hell, judgement
7. Theme D: Peace & Conflict	1. Violence, Protest, and Terrorism 2. Reasons for War 3. Just War Theory 4. Holy War 5. Weapons of Mass Destruction 6. Pacifism 7. Peacemaking 8. Victims of War 9. Forgiveness and Reconciliation	violence, protest, terrorism, war, just war, holy war, pacifism, peace, reconciliation, forgiveness, weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons, peacemaking, victims, aid, justice, martyrdom
8. Theme F: Human Rights & Social Justice	1. Human Rights 2. Social Justice 3. Prejudice and Discrimination 4. Religious Freedom 5. Wealth and Poverty 6. Exploitation 7. Charity 8. Racial Equality 9. Gender Equality	human rights, social justice, prejudice, discrimination, equality, religious freedom, poverty, charity, exploitation, fair pay, trafficking, racial equality, gender equality, stewardship, Zakah, Sadaqah

9. Revision & Exam Prep	1. Christianity Beliefs & Practices Revision 2. Islam Beliefs & Practices Revision 3. Theme A Revision 4. Theme B Revision 5. Theme D Revision 6. Theme F Revision 7. Comparative Religion 8. Exam Technique and Practice 9. Targeted Revision and Feedback	All above
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