



Religious Studies Bulletin

SPRING 2009

WELCOME to the fourth issue of the WJEC Religious Studies Bulletin.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- 1 WJEC Anniversary Awards – Religious Studies
- 2 WJEC exam papers to be free of charge
- 3 GCSE Spec B – Advice on Entry Codes
- 4 GCSE news and key dates
- 5 Submission of Coursework Marks for GCE and GCSE–some important changes
- 6 GCE news and key dates
- 7 Entry Level news and key dates
- 8 INSETs Autumn 2009
- 9 Examiner vacancies
- 10 WJEC Website – don't forget to visit regularly!
- 11 WJEC Secure Website
- 12 How to contact us

1. WJEC'S ANNIVERSARY AWARDS – RELIGIOUS STUDIES

On 15 December 2008, **WJEC marked its 60th anniversary** by holding a prestigious Awards Ceremony in Cardiff to celebrate the achievement of WJEC's best A level students in England and Wales. **Alice Evans from Welshpool High School was awarded the A Level subject prize in Religious Studies** for having attained the highest score at A2 in the 2008 examinations series. She received a prize of £100 and a framed certificate to mark her outstanding achievement.

2. WJEC WEBSITE EXAM PAPERS TO BE FREE OF CHARGE

From February onwards, WJEC past papers can be obtained free of charge from the WJEC website. This does not apply to hard copies obtained from the bookshop. Papers dating from summer 2008 and earlier can be downloaded from the <https://www.wjec.co.uk/shop> page. Use the drop down menu options on the left to obtain the question papers required.

It is still possible to purchase hard copies of past examination papers from the bookshop along with other teaching and learning materials. This can be done via our online shop, and in person or by telephoning the WJEC bookshop on 029 2026 5112.

More information on WJEC's Publication Policy can be obtained <http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=90>

3. GCSE SPEC B - ADVICE ON ENTRY CODES

Entry coding arrangements for this Specification has been a source of some confusion and misunderstanding in previous years for certain centres. In order to minimise the scope for error a guidance document entitled Advice on Entry Codes has been placed on to the WJEC website on the GCSE Religious Studies Specification B subject page or by click here <http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/2874.pdf>

4 GCSE NEWS AND KEY DATES

WJECs has gained full approval for both new Specification A and new Specification B. Specifications, Specimen Assessment Materials and Teachers' Guides for both the new specifications A and B are posted on the WJEC web-site and can be downloaded and printed out. 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.

Timescale for the new GCSE specifications

Current Specification ends 2010 (last exam in Summer 2010)
2008-2010 the last cohort of the current (legacy) specification
2009 – First teaching of the new GCSE specification

SPECIFICATION A

2010 – first examination of this new GCSE specification. Specification A has a systematic study of religion. This specification has been thoroughly revised. It includes for the first time two Catholic units and a brand new unit on Philosophy and Ethics. Christianity is for the first time being studied as a world religion.

Assessment for GCSE Religious Studies is untiered, i.e. all units cater for the full range of ability and allow access to grades A*-G for the subject award.

The specification content is prescribed in a series of eight units.

Candidates for the GCSE (Full Course) will be required to study **two** units from those listed below. Candidates for the GCSE (Short Course) and GCSE (Further Short Course) will be required to study **one** of the units listed below.

The units are:

- Unit 1: Christianity
- Unit 2: Christianity through the Gospels
- Unit 3: Roman Catholicism 1
- Unit 4: Roman Catholicism 2
- Unit 5: Christian Philosophy and Ethics
- Unit 6: Hinduism
- Unit 7: Islam
- Unit 8: Judaism

The following combinations of units are **NOT** permitted:

- 1 Roman Catholicism 1 with Christianity
- 2 Roman Catholicism 2 with Christian Philosophy and Ethics
- 3 Christianity Through the Gospels with Christianity

Candidates for the Full Course will be required to sit **two** equally weighted external written examination papers. Candidates for the Short Course and Further Short Course will be required to sit **one**.

Each written paper will be as follows:

Written Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes
100% of Short or Further Short Course; 50% of Full Course

Four compulsory questions, consisting of visual or text stimuli leading to a series of paragraph and extended writing answers testing AO1 and AO2

There will still be the facility for candidates to enter the full course either by end-of-course assessment, or by the entering for one short course first and then by sitting a further short course (usually at the end of Years 10 and 11 respectively). The assessment will be by means of a further short course if the second unit is taken at a different examination sitting from the first. There is no controlled assessment in GCSE Religious Studies.

The WJEC is confident that the new revised specification A will be popular with both students and teachers.

SPECIFICATION B

Specification B involves a thematic study of some central questions and issues in human life and experience and explores 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.

Assessment for GCSE Religious Studies is untiered, i.e. all units cater for the full range of ability and allow access to grades A*-G for the subject award.

The specification content is prescribed in two units.

Candidates for the GCSE (Full Course) will be required to study **both** of the units listed below.

Candidates for the GCSE (Short Course) and GCSE (Further Short Course) will be required to study **one** of the units listed below, either Unit A or Unit B.

The units are:

Unit 1: Religion and Life Issues

Unit 2: Religion and Human Experience

Candidates who have already received a short course award in Unit A may enter for a Further Short Course award in Unit B. Candidates who have already received a short course award in Unit B may enter for a Further Short Course award in Unit A.

Candidates for the Full Course will be required to sit **two** equally weighted external written examination papers. Candidates for the Short Course and Further Short Course will be required to sit **one**.

Each written paper will be as follows:

Written Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes 100%

Four structured questions consisting of visual stimuli used as a basis for a series of paragraph and extended writing answers, testing AO1 and AO2.

There will still be the facility for candidates to enter the full course either by end-of-course assessment or by the entering for one short course first and then by sitting a further short course (usually at the end of Years 10 and 11 respectively). The assessment will be by means of a further short course if the second unit is taken at a different examination sitting from the first.

There is no controlled assessment in GCSE Religious Studies. The main thrust of Specification B will be maintained – as an interesting and stimulating issues based specification. Colour stimulus will still be used throughout the examination paper and the system of having the question paper and answer book combined will continue.

The content remains similar – though there has been some fine tuning.

In Unit A the Topic 'Identity and Belonging' has been removed and content in the other topics have been increased slightly.

In Unit B the topic 'Suffering and Evil has been removed and content in other topics increased slightly.

The subject specific criteria are more demanding and that is the rational for removing one topic in both units to allow students to study in greater depth.

RELIGION AND LIFE ISSUES

- | | | |
|---------|----------------------------|---|
| Topic 1 | Relationships | Issues of love, marriage and divorce |
| Topic 2 | Is it Fair? | Issues of justice and equality |
| Topic 3 | Looking for Meaning | Issues about God, life and death |
| Topic 4 | Our World | Exploring creation and our place in the world |

RELIGION AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE

- | | | |
|---------|--|---|
| Topic 1 | Religion and Conflict | Issues of peace, forgiveness and conflict |
| Topic 2 | Religion and Medicine | Issues of medical ethics and the sanctity of life |
| Topic 3 | Religious Expression | Issues of expressing one's faith |
| Topic 4 | Authority, Religion & State | Issues of law and order in religion and society |

PUBLICATIONS TO SUPPORT NEW GCSE SPECIFICATION B

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

Hodder and Stoughton are in the process of revising their very popular '**Believing and Living**' (Religion and Life Issues) and '**Believing and Experiencing**' (Religion and Human Experience) written by Joy White (Principal Examiner Specification B) and Gavin Craigen (former Chief Examiner for Specification B). Hodder are also developing a student work booklet to accompany the above titles.

Folens are developing a book to support the new Specification B Unit 1 – **Believing and Living**. This is being written by Ina Taylor who is a very successful author of a number of text books. She is a team leader for WJEC Specification B, Option A.

Heinemann, part of the Pearson Group are publishing books to support Specification B, Units 1 (**Religion and Life**) and Unit 2 (**Believing and Experiencing**). They are also producing web based materials as well to support Specification B.

WJEC will be quality assuring all of these new publications before endorsing with them with the WJEC logo. All of the above books and materials once published will be available from WJEC bookshop or directly from the publishers.

Key Dates for legacy GCSE specification 2008-2009

Submission of coursework:	Saturday 2 May 2009
Deadline date for GCSE entries	Saturday 21 February 2009
Deadline date for Entry amendments (without incurring a charge)	Tuesday 31 March 2009
Publication of Results Summer 2008	Thursday 27 August 2009

5. SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK MARKS SOME IMPORTANT CHANGES

Please note some significant changes to WJEC's system for processing coursework marks which are being introduced for the summer 2009 examination series.

You will know that under the current system, a range of coursework documentation has normally been despatched to you each year early in the spring term. Included in this despatch has been a small supply of coursework cover sheets, as well as summary mark sheets which are used by subject teachers when despatching samples to the moderator.

These materials are however also printed within the relevant specifications, and made available for download on the subject pages of the main WJEC website. This is necessary as cover sheets contain both the candidate and teacher authentication statements, and are required for ALL candidates entered for the subject – not just those included in the sample.

For summer 2009 and future series, it is proposed that the separate hard-copy cover sheets and mark sheets for sample candidates will no longer be issued, and subject teachers will need to either copy these from the specification or from the website.

Please contact the office if you require any further clarification.

6. GCE NEWS AND KEY DATES

WJEC provided examinations in all of the legacy GCE units and in all of the new GCE units for the recent January 2009 series. There were entries for all new units. WJEC considered it was important for students to be given the opportunity for being entered for the new units. It will be making available all of the new unit papers and mark schemes in March after the marking and awarding process has been completed. This will be a good opportunity for teachers and students to see the new question papers and associated mark schemes. These papers and mark schemes are also now available on the main WJEC website . Please see section 2 above i.e. *WJEC Exam Papers To Be Free of Charge*.

NEW PUBLICATION

UWIC Press promise to publish their text book on the Contemporary Society unit in March 2009. UWIC are publishing this book via a contact set by the Welsh regulators DCELLS. The Contemporary Society unit is proving to be very popular in centres and attracts a wide following amongst students.

NEW SPECIFICATION DETAILS

GCE Religious Studies is fully approved by QCA and DCELLS. Final versions of the specification and specimen assessment materials have been despatched to centres. Both the specification and specimen assessment materials are available on the WJEC Religious Studies website. A final version of the comprehensive Teachers' Guide has also been posted on the WJEC web-site. The WJEC will not be providing the Teacher' Guide in printed format.

This is an exciting development which will attract more students to study Religious Studies at both AS and A2. The freeing up of the units in AS will give both students and teachers greater choice and freedom.

WJEC Timetable of Introduction of the new GCE Specification

September 2008	New Courses start
January 2009	First examination of new AS units <i>Normal January provision of old AS units</i>
Summer 2009	First Awards of New AS qualification Last full awards of old a level qualification Full provision of old AS units and cash –in
September 2009	Notification required by centres of take-up for last A2 papers (For Jan 2010)
January 2010	Last re-sit opportunity for old A2 units provided on request
Summer 2010	First awards of new a level qualification

Religious Studies is the fastest growing subject at Key Stage 4 and WJEC certainly wants to encourage the same expansion post 16. The full range of units currently offered at AS and A2 will be available in the new specification. All of the content in the new specification has been reviewed and up-dated. The new specification has been set out in a new clear two column format with the topic set out on the left hand side and the issues set out on the right hand side. This will make for greater clarity for both teachers and students alike.

Key Dates for current GCE specification 2008-2009

Release of pre- release material for RS9	Start of Spring Term
Publication of Results Winter 2009	Thursday 12 March 2009
Deadline date for GCE entries (Summer series)	Saturday 21 March 2009
Publication of Results Summer 2009	Thursday 20 August 2009

Please contact WJEC if you have not received a copy of the RS 9 pre-release materials.

7. ENTRY LEVEL NEWS AND KEY DATES

Currently, the WJEC continues to offer both Religious Studies and Religious Education at Entry Level. Entry Level is targeted at lower attaining pupils i.e. broadly speaking those who typically have not reached Level 3 of the National Curriculum at the end of Key Stage 3, and, additionally, for whom GCSE and equivalent vocational qualifications are not deemed appropriate.

The RE course mirrors the GCSE Specification B, Option A Religion and Life course. The Religious Studies course is a more systematic study of religion with nine options.

The WJEC has extended accreditation of the current courses until 2011.

Entry Level RS/RE is used widely in comprehensive schools, special schools, pupil referral units and secure units. The WJEC can also offer direct help through experienced Principal Examiner, David Sharpe. Please contact Tudor Thomas at the WJEC for further details.

Key Dates for Entry Level 2008-2009

Deadline date for Entry amendments (without incurring a charge)	Friday 16 January 2009
Submission of coursework:	Friday 1 May 2009
Publication of results	Thursday 25 June 2009

8. INSETS - AUTUMN 2009

Every year, a number of teachers miss out on INSET provision that is available for this subject because of being unaware of the date(s). INSETs for all Religious Studies subjects *normally* take place in the Autumn of every academic year. Dates for this Autumn's INSETs are in the process of being finalised and will be posted on the WJEC website as soon as possible. When you visit the WJEC website, look under Professional Development for details and to download an application form to register. <http://www.wjec.co.uk/professionaldevelopment>

There will be a charge for all 2009 GCE, GCSE and Entry Level INSETs (charges to be confirmed). INSETs are normally held in the following locations between 10.00 a.m. – 15.30 p.m.

GCE INSETS

London
Carmarthen
Cardiff
Mold

GCSE INSETS

PLEASE NOTE The main focus of the GCSE INSETS will be the New Specifications – though there will be some feed back on the 2009 examinations

ENGLAND GCSE INSETS for New Specification B

London
Grantham
Wigan

WALES GCSE INSETS for new Specification A and B

Please note that the INSETS for both specifications will be run separately but at the same venue.

Carmarthen
Cardiff
Mold

ENTRY LEVEL INSETS

London
Cardiff
Mold

Once 2009 INSET dates are confirmed, this website version of the newsletter will be updated accordingly with the latest details. Watch this space.

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. Alternatively, email the appropriate section for the application form required.

GCE A level: email: rob.reynolds@wjec.co.uk
GCSE email: sandra.hutchings@wjec.co.uk
Entry Level email: chris.quinn@wjec.co.uk

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

10. WJEC WEB-SITE - DON'T FORGET TO VISIT REGULARLY!

Remember, here you can 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.

Please remember to visit our website regularly and especially the Religious Studies web pages for latest news, updates and information. 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.

11. WJEC SECURE WEB-SITE

The WJEC Secure Website can only 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. We 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 up to 10 additional limited access accounts themselves.

12. HOW TO CONTACT US:

Subject Officer for Religious Studies

Tudor Thomas, tel: 029 2026 5122 email tudor.thomas@wjec.co.uk

Subject Support Officer to Tudor Thomas

Paul Bradley tel: 029 2026 5183 email paul.bradley@wjec.co.uk

A Level Section

Kieran McDonnell, Section Head, tel: 029 2026 5148 email kieron.mcdonnell@wjec.co.uk

GCSE Section

Nick Brooks, Section Head, tel: 029 2026 5061 email nick.brooks@wjec.co.uk

Entry Level Section

Chris Quinn, Section Head, tel: 029 2026 5128, email chris.quinn@wjec.co.uk

Entries Section

Caroline McGlynn, Section Head tel: 029 2026 5193 email caroline.mcglynn@wjec.co.uk

Bookshop

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

Did you find this newsletter useful? Could the WJEC Religious Studies web pages be improved? Please let us know. Feedback always welcome! Please email Tudor at tudor.thomas@wjec.co.uk.

Best wishes

Tudor Thomas