



religious education

16 - 19



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 16-19

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FOREWORD

In June 1994, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) published model syllabuses for religious education. The model syllabuses are not statutory, but as intended as guidance to those involved in developing local agreed syllabuses. The models covered the period of statutory schooling from 5-16. Since that time, SCAA has received many requests for similar guidance on teaching religious education in the sixth form where the subjects is statutory in the school curriculum.

This document is designed as guidance for Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) and agreed syllabus conferences who intend publishing a section on religious education 16-19 in their syllabus, and also for non-denominational sixth form colleges where religious education is provided for students who wish to receive it.

I believe that religious education can make a real contribution to the spiritual, moral, cultural and intellectual development of 16-19 year olds, and hope that this document will encourage more schools and colleges to make worthwhile provision for the subject. I also believe that, for students in this age group, religious education raises profound issues which, presented in ways appropriate to individual students groups, will command their interest and assist their development as human beings.

Sir Ron Dearing

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The legal requirement

Schools

All registered pupils in county school shall received Religious Education (RE) in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus. These syllabuses must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in this country'.

- Aided (and equivalent grant maintained) schools shall provide RE for all registered pupils in accordance with the school's trust deed.
- Funding arrangements for city technology colleges require them to provide RE 'broadly in line with that in maintained schools'.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE.

Sixth form colleges

- Sixth form colleges which were under school regulations until 30 September 1992 are required to provide RE for all students who wish to receive it (Further and Higher Education Act 1992; section 45). A college governing body will be deemed to be performing this duty if RE is provided when it is convenient for the majority of full-time students to attend.
- It is for the governing body of a sixth form college to determine the content of the RE provided (ie a sixth form college does not have to follow a locally agreed syllabus).
- The RE provided must, however, reflect the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, while reflecting the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- In the case of a sixth form college which previously had voluntary aided status, the RE must be taught in accordance with the provisions of the trust deed affecting the institution.

1.2 Funding RE in sixth form colleges

Sixth form colleges are funded by the Further Education Funding Council. Funding is based on *units of activity* based on three elements of the learning programme. The element which includes RE is the *on-programmes element* which includes specified courses of study. The tariff for an A/AS level or GCSE course automatically includes a percentage which is meant to cover *complementary studies*. This term covers a wide range of activities lying outside the directly accredited courses, and would include non-examinable RE. Examinations courses in Religious Studies (RS) are funded in the usual way.

1.3 Education 16-19: general considerations

Students

Students at this stage will represent a wide range of ability, interests, experience and background. For many of them, later adolescence brings encounters with increasingly complex situations which raise questions relating to ethical and spiritual values and personal responsibility. It is a time for idealism, of searching for meaning, evaluating diverse experiences so that, whether consciously recognised or not, a philosophy of life is emerging. It can also be a time of stress as final examinations approach.

Curriculum

A wide range of courses are available for students in post-16 education. It is not unusual to find students specialising in specific curriculum areas such as the sciences, technology and modern languages, or in broad vocational areas such as hospitality and catering or engineering. Traditionally, students have chosen between two pathways. The academic path usually involves following A/AS courses and may lead to university entrance. The vocational path leads to various levels of qualifications, which at advanced level may also qualify students for university entrance.

2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 16-19 BASIC CONTENT AND AIMS

2.1 The current state of RE provision in county maintained schools

Evidence from OFSTED, SACREs and examination boards indicates that:

- 'In most schools, sixth form provision for RE was inadequate and very many made no provision at all. Where appropriately challenged, sixth form pupils showed interest and made good responses; (*RE and Collective Worship* – OFSTED, 1994);
- there is a shortage of specialist RE staff in some schools: many schools do not teach in the sixth form;
- a relatively small number of students follow A/AS courses in Religious Studies (about 10,000);
- while some centres enter large numbers (over 50 a year) for A/AS, many centres have no candidates at all.

2.2 The contribution of RE to the post-16 curriculum

RE has much to offer students at this age, both intellectually and personally. RE courses can broaden and enhance the curriculum by giving students the opportunity to consider a wide range of religious, philosophical and ethical issues and to develop their own codes of belief. In order to meet the wide range of needs, interests and aptitudes of students, schools and sixth form colleges should be encouraged to provide an appropriate varied RE programme.

2.3 RE at post-16 should be planned as carefully as in the statutory period of schooling, and should give due consideration to:

- breadth and balance of knowledge, understanding and skills;
- differentiation to meet the needs and abilities of the full range of students;
- the spiritual and moral development of students;
- preparation for work and adult life;
- progression and continuity from Key Stage 4 and through the sixth form;
- assessment and accreditation wherever possible.

2.4 Progression in the RE curriculum at post-16

RE in the sixth form should build on the knowledge, understanding and skills developed from age 4/5-16. During these years, most pupils will have been taught RE following a locally agreed syllabus. The following aims, building on those in the model syllabuses, may be helpful to agreed syllabus conferences and to sixth form colleges as a basis of the RE curriculum in the sixth form. The aims reflect the attainment targets for RE identified in the model syllabuses: 'Learning about Religions' and 'Learning from Religion'.

Throughout the sixth form, students should have increased opportunities to:

Learn about religions by:

- a) furthering their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and philosophies through:
 - studying the beliefs and practices of one or more religions or an aspect of religion in depth;
 - recognising the diversity within religions and the implications of diversity;
 - exploring the nature of religion and religious belief;
 - interpreting portrayals of religious belief through the creative arts and the mass media;
 - analysing a variety of views on religious and moral issues.
- b) furthering their understanding of the influence of religion through:
 - investigating the relationship between belief and behaviour for the individual and the community;

- learning to make distinctions between secular and religious interpretations of life in modern society;
- assessing the implications of belonging to a faith;
- considering the effect of religious belief on the cultural identity of groups.

Learning from religion by:

- c) enhancing their own spiritual and moral development by:
 - reflecting on beliefs and their impact on individual behaviour;
 - identifying the impact that religion and culture have on each other;
 - recognising religious and moral issues when they arise in relation to all subjects in the curriculum;
 - evaluating and developing their own responses to life's issues, and realising that life poses questions which cannot easily be answered;
 - developing the confidence to consider religious questions.
- d) developing reasoned attitudes towards other people and their right to hold different beliefs by:
 - recognising the diversity of religious belief and experience;
 - recognising implications of membership of minority groups;
 - realising that beliefs and practices of individuals and communities may evolve;
 - developing an ability to articulate their own beliefs and engage in dialogue with others.

3. EXAMINATION COURSES

- 3.1** An agreed syllabus conference can stipulate that following an external examination course may exempt students from certain sections of the agreed syllabus requirements.

3.2 Advanced level Religious Studies

Most examining boards in England and Wales offer A Level Religious Studies which is recognised as an academic qualification by employers and as a qualification for university entrance. Most boards offer the following from which candidates choose two options.

- Biblical studies;
- Church history
- world religions
- philosophy of religion
- ethics.

Two boards offer modular as well as non-modular courses.

3.3 Advanced supplementary Religious Studies

The AS qualification is awarded at the same standard and uses the same grades as A level. Students taking AS offer only one of the A level papers or, in the case of modular syllabuses, half the number of modules required for the full A Level. AS offers an opportunity for students to deepen and broaden their curriculum, extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and gain extra accreditation.

3.4 GCSE

Some students who have not followed a full GCSE course in Religious Studies at Key Stage 4 may choose to do so in the sixth form. This offers students an opportunity to follow a rigorous RE course and gain an extra qualification. A wide range of courses is available including:

- world religions
- Biblical studies
- perspectives on personal and social/moral issues

From September 1996 GCSE (short course) syllabuses in Religious Education will be available. These courses could also be taught to sixth form pupils.

3.5 General Studies A level

A range of A level General Studies courses is available, many of which offer opportunities for some work on religious and moral issues.

3.6 Other accredited courses

Other courses are available in varying degrees of depth and standard. These include the NEAB Certificate of Extended Education in Religious Studies and the Westhill post-16 award in religions and values.

4. COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

4.1 For the purposes of this document the term ‘complementary studies’ refers to non-examination courses, which are taken alongside courses leading to an accreditation. Given the relatively small number of students taking A/AS level in Religious Studies, the majority of students in schools will be receiving statutory RE through complementary studies, and for many students this will be their only experience of RE. RE is the only statutory subject for schools post-16, and it is important that agreed syllabus conferences give careful thought as to how this unique position might be put to best use.

4.2 Large numbers of students opt for complementary studies courses in RE, even in sixth form colleges where RE only has to be provided if students require it. Where the subject attracts large numbers of students, teachers recommend the following strategies as contributing towards this:

- lively course content of intrinsic interest to the student;
- interesting course titles;
- enthusiastic teaching;
- variety and choice of options;
- using opportunities to make an input into other subject courses;
- involving staff from other disciplines;
- flexible timetabling to provide courses at times when students are ‘free’;
- using a wide variety of stimuli, including outside speakers;
- attractive décor and environment;
- careful preparation;
- provision of notes to maximise the time for discussion;
- consultation with students to discover topics of interest.

4.3 Two types of RE provision often co-exist within complementary studies:

- a) distinct RE courses;
- b) RE units which are specifically designed to support examination courses in other subjects.

5. DISTINCT RE COURSES

Provision for RE through a combination of:

- weekly sessions;
- modules in a cycle of complementary studies units;
- day conferences

(See Appendices A-C for examples)

5.1 A survey of course currently offered in schools and colleges indicates that the subjects fall into nine broad categories. In the interests of providing a broad and balanced experience of RE, it may be helpful to require students to select courses from different categories. Coverage of the topics should reflect the mainly Christian heritage of this country, as well as drawing on other principal religions. The balance between these will also take account of the local area and the pupil population.

5.2 Principal religions of the world, including Christianity

- Development of earlier study of Christianity
- Development of earlier study of a world religion
- Introduction to world religion(s) not studied previously
- Orthodoxy and heresy

5.3 Traditional and contemporary Christian Theologies

- Eastern Orthodox
- Protestant
- Roman Catholic

5.4 Philosophy of Religion

- Existence of God
- Problem of Evil
- Death and the after-life
- Religious language
- Religious Knowledge

5.5 Sacred texts

- The study of a sacred text in its original language
- The use of the reliability and authenticity of sacred texts
- Ways of interpreting sacred texts

5.6 Aspects of religious life

- Nature of religious discipleship and experience
- Prayer in world religions
- Mysticism in world religions
- Monastic lives and other forms of asceticism

5.7 Religion and Ethics

- Ethical principles
- Utilitarianism
- Situation ethics
- Medical ethics

5.8 Religion and Science

- The relationship between religion and science
- Origins and creation
- The nature of miracles
- Uses of language in science and religion

5.9 Other aspects of religion

- Religion and psychology
- Religion and politics
- Religion as a force for division or healing
- Religion and the arts

6. ENRICHMENT OF EXAMINATION COURSES THROUGH RE

One effective way of giving students the opportunity to benefit from an RE element in the curriculum is for the RE department to provide classes which support examination courses. These classes may be planned by the RE staff in conjunction with colleagues from other disciplines, who may themselves be prepared to teach classes with appropriate support from the RE department.

This method should not be the only provision for statutory RE curriculum in schools, since it is unlikely to be capable of delivering the agreed syllabus adequately.

The classes may take the form of:

- one or two sessions which contribute to students' knowledge and understanding of an aspect of the subject studies (eg understanding the Christian doctrine of the Fall in relation to 'Paradise Lost')
- a short series of lessons in which students might investigate key issues and questions arising in relation to the whole subject (eg investigating ethical issues relating to modern applications of technology).

6.1 Examples of enrichment courses

SUBJECT	RE CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING (examples)	RE – KEY ISSUES AND QUESTIONS (examples)
Economics and business studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious attitudes to economic systems Islamic attitude to usury and its effect on economic systems Christian teaching on stewardship – effects on local economic systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World poverty Business ethics Justice and development
Expressive arts (art, drama, music)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressions of faith through the expressive arts, eg expressions of Tawhid through Islamic art The art of the requiem (from Mozart to Lloyd-Webber) Religious themes in set plays Architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artistic expressions of sacred and secular understandings of the human being Censorship, propaganda and advertising – ethical dimensions
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The influence of religion on demographics The impact of religion on residential patterns in cities Religion and international migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious perspectives on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> world development issues the use and abuse of the Earth's resources
Health and Social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of ethnic/religious minorities Sensitivity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of the family Birth and death rituals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious perceptions of wholeness and healing The duty to care
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insights into religious motivation, eg politics and social action Religion and the state Impact of religious ideas in the period studied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theological perspectives on the nature and course of history, ultimate purpose and destiny
Language and Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious concepts and allusions in literature and drama set texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of inspiration Theology, poetry and literature as metaphor
Law and Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence of religion on law making Views of the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority Human rights Visions of justice

SUBJECT	RE CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING (examples)	RE – KEY ISSUES AND QUESTIONS (examples)
<i>Leisure and tourism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of local buildings, customs and traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The importance of understanding of local religious issues and sensitives
<i>Mathematics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Symbolism of number and shape in religious philosophy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ways in which mathematics and religion express reality
<i>Science and technology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use and abuse of technology (eg medical ethics) ▪ Cosmology – creation and evolution ▪ Religion and modern physics (eg quantum theory) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Truth claims – nature of evidence in science and religion ▪ Authority, rationality and experience – scientific and religious perceptions.

7. CONCLUSION

This document offers a variety of suggestions as to how provision might be made for the teaching of RE, and on appropriate content for this age group. RE is likely to be of most value to students in schools and colleges which offer a variety of RE courses, and where lessons are stimulating and challenging.

One head of RE in a sixth form college writes about his department's success.

'I teach in a sixth form college where some three-hundred students each week choose to take one of the twenty four non-examination RE courses we offer. Approximately ninety students follow A level courses in RS. This is a direct result of the introduction of non-examination RE which has seized their interest. A variety of factors have contributed to our success, including research into areas of interest to the students, a bright colourful teaching environment, and arresting course titles and descriptions. For example, a course on the nature of evil is called "Who is Satan and where is hell"?. We run a popular course on beliefs in the after-life entitled, "Dying a grave experience". It attracts student interest. But these would count for little without enthusiastic and stimulating teaching.'

APPENDICES

The following appendices contain examples of planning.

APPENDIX A

EXAMPLES OF RE COURSES OFFERED AS PART OF A REGULAR TIMETABLE.

(i) Investigating religious experience (taught over twelve one-hour sessions)

Objectives

Students are given the opportunity to gain insights into the nature of religious experience through:

- studying accounts of the experiences of others, and, if appropriate discussing their own experiences
- evaluating the truth claims of religious experiences
- evaluating the impact of religious experience on peoples' lives
- considering the explanations suggested for religious experiences
- considering each experience against the background (political, religious, social) of the person involved.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	LEARNING EXPERIENCES a) learning about religions	LEARNING EXPERIENCES b) learning from religion
<p>Students are given opportunities to study a range of accounts of religious experience, eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Judaism (prophetic visions of Isaiah, Amos etc) ▪ Christianity (eg the conversion of Paul, St Francis' experience of the stigmata, Mother Julian) ▪ Islam (the Prophet's night journey) ▪ Hinduism (the use of mantras) ▪ Buddhism (meditation and emptiness) ▪ Sikhism (Guru Nanak's disappearance) ▪ Experiences with no specific faith context (eg experiences related by David Hay) ▪ Near death experiences ▪ Claims to experience of reincarnation 	<p>Learning might take place through reading accounts, talking to believers about their experiences, watching excerpts from films, dramatic or operatic presentations.</p> <p>Students should be encouraged to ask questions of the experienced eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was the recollection of the experience ▪ How was the experience understood especially taking into account the context of the person's life ▪ How did the experience affect their lives (if at all)? ▪ Are there any common features across these experiences? ▪ In what ways do these experiences contrast? 	<p>Students could be encouraged to discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Similar experience in their own lives or the lives of friends and how these were understood ▪ 'Happenings that changed my life' ▪ Moments of insight ▪ Questions raised by studying other peoples' experiences

(ii) **Creation and evolution** (taught over ten one-hour sessions)

CREATION AND EVOLUTION	
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To explore developments in scientific theory about the origins of the universe and the origin of human life▪ To explore the relationship between those theories and religious belief in God as Creator
Starting points/input	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Written and audio-visual material introducing the 'big bang' theory and resulting stellar evolution, eg clips from TV documentaries▪ Theories about the big bang and the introducing evolutionary theory and its development▪ Creation accounts in the Bible and other religious texts▪ Critiques of evolutionary theory▪ Religious responses to Darwinian theory, e.g. theistic evolution, creationism▪ Exploration of the relationship between scientific theories and belief in a creator, originator, sustainer (eg the works of Paul Davies, Richard Dawkins, J.D. Polkinghorne, A.E. Wilder-Smith)
Questions/issues arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ How do science and religion test their claims to truth?▪ What is the difference between questions of mechanism and meaning?▪ Are scientific and religious ideas and beliefs in conflict or compatible?▪ What is the nature of the human being? (Made in the image of God?)▪ How does God relate to the physical universe?

(iii) **Film and faith** (taught in six one-hour sessions)

FILM AND FAITH	
Objectives	
The module should enable students to	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Gain insights into ways of expressing important religious ideas▪ Understand the influence of religion in art/film.▪ Consider the influence of religion in art/film▪ Consider the value of religious imagery▪ Identify the religious ideas being portrayed in film extracts▪ Evaluate the realism and impact of particular portrayals of founders and leaders▪ Assess the value and effectiveness of the film in communicating the essence of religion	
Stimulus, eg	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 'Jesus of Nazareth' – dire. Zefiorelli▪ 'The message' (the life of the Prophet Muhammad)	
Learning experiences	
Students should consider a number of extracts	
1. 'Jesus of Nazareth'	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ How is Jesus portrayed?▪ Is the portrayal compatible with Biblical accounts of the episode?▪ How much interpretation has been applied by the director?▪ How does this film compare with other attempts to portray Jesus on film?	
2. 'The Message'	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Why does the Prophet not appear in the film? How does this contribute to our understanding of shirk in Islam?▪ What is the artistic impact of the absence of the main character?▪ How close is the film to accounts of the life of the Prophet?▪ Does the film add anything to our understanding of the life and message of the Prophet?	
Knowledge and understanding	
How these films enhance knowledge and understanding of	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Jesus as human and divine▪ Jesus as an object of worship in Christianity▪ Events in the life of Jesus▪ The place of the prophet Muhammad in Islam	

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF ONE-DAY RE CONFERENCES

Advantages of one-day conference

- Conferences can function as a community event for the whole sixth form.
- The participation of a large audience makes possible the best use of speakers, visits, theatre companies, etc.
- Conferences can enable an RE department to use a wider team of staff whose expertise in other subjects can add to the breadth of the day.
- The conference can facilitate co-operation between colleges and schools.

A whole-conference offering a range of activities with a focus on an aspect of RE is an opportunity for in-depth work in RE for a whole year group or the whole sixth form. Examples here are drawn from a number of schools which have made successful use of this model of managing the RE curriculum.

Conference topics

- *The relevance of Christianity today* - a series of workshops led by visiting speakers exploring the relevance of Christianity through a variety of perspectives including the law, education, politics, social values and the arts;
- *Face Value* – an exploration of expressions of faith in language and literature, dance, drama, art and music;
- *Conflict* – a day of study looking at the involvement of religious people in conflicts, as peacemakers or as participants, referring to religious ideas about violence, warfare and pacifism;
- *Feasting and fasting* – religious and ethical perspectives on food related issues such as vegetarianism, world development, ritual and food, celebrations;
- *Saving the world* – global, environmental and developmental issues through the work of religious and secular charities and pressure groups.

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF STUDY VISITS WITHIN A COURSE

	EXAMPLES OF A SUITABLE FOCUS	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES
1.	Focus study of a religion through a) Local religious trail, eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Christian beliefs expressed through architecture, art, and liturgy ▪ Introduction to Sikhism or b) A local Jewish community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visits to churches of different denominations within the local area ▪ Visit an area with a high Sikh population (eg Southall, Coventry, Bradford) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - visit the Gurdwara - talk to believers - explore shops and restaurants ▪ A tour of Jewish London to study the sequence of migration ▪ Visit the Jewish museum
2.	Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Placement in organisations with a strong religious or moral dimension eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shadowing religious leaders - working in a hospice - working for a charity
3.	A visit to a retreat centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflection, discussion, encountering other life-styles, team building, counselling, workshops
4.	Cultural visits (eg to art galleries, concerts, theatre, cinema; mystery play)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A visit to an art gallery to consider the influence of Christianity on art