



# GCSE Examiners' Report

Subject: Religious Studies (Route B)

Level: GCSE

Summer 2024

## Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.<sup>1</sup>

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

## Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	<a href="https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/">https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/</a>
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a> or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	<p>Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade.</p> <p>For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and component level.</p> <p>For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.</p>	<p>For unitised specifications click here:</p> <p><a href="#">Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)</a></p>

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a>
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/</a>
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a> or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	<a href="#">Become an Examiner   Eduqas</a>

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## Executive Summary

The Route B (Catholic) continues to grow and 24,046 candidates were entered for this route through the GCSE Religious Studies qualification. Generally, most questions were attempted by most candidates and the full range of marks were awarded, demonstrating that the questions were largely accessible but still provided challenge. Many candidates used sources of wisdom and authority well, but some used them in an arbitrary way without direct relevance to the question asked. Religious language was in evidence but there is still room for improvement in the use of the key concepts across questions other than the 'a' The Assessment Objective 2 skills of analysis, discussion and evaluation were often strong, and candidates used very different approaches to these 'd' questions. Fewer candidates appeared to rely on rigid writing frames which often constrain discussion. Even lower scoring candidates were often able to give more than one viewpoint and were awarded marks for doing so. Some candidates planned their responses before starting to answer and whilst this clearly helped with organising their answers, ensuring enough time is available to answer all questions is still an important consideration.

Candidates must recognise that each question type demands a different skill; defining, describing, explaining and discussing. Reading the question carefully is also important as some candidates confused euthanasia with evangelisation. Candidates must not include non-religious responses in the Component 1 'c' questions that explicitly demand two religious responses. However, non-religious responses are required in question 1d and were also relevant in the other 'd' questions on these 2024 papers. In Component 2, a high number of candidates did not attempt the question on the Magisterium, thereby highlighting the need for all specification content to be taught. Extra care is needed with SPaG, as a number of candidates mis-spelt words that were in the actual question.

In terms of the Judaism paper, a sizeable minority of candidates answered certain questions from a Catholic Christian perspective. For example, Jewish views of resurrection were too often answered with a description or an explanation of the resurrection of Jesus. Occasionally, candidates answered from an Islamic perspective. Where Jewish beliefs and practices are the focus of the question, responses from any other religion are not credit-worthy and must be avoided. Religious language and sources of wisdom were often used well, but responses to 'd' questions (2d., in particular), sometimes felt rehearsed and did not always meet the specific demands of the question. Some candidates demonstrated good knowledge, but could not go further in terms of explanation, for example in questions on Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Yom Kippur.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Understanding the skills requirements of each question type	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1603">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1603</a>  <a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=2090">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=2090</a>  <a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1914">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1914</a>	Skills builders  Examples of high achieving responses  Exam walk through

	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1500">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1500</a>	
Using key language	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1611">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1611</a>	'Because' and using religious language
Building evaluative responses	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1125">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1125</a>	Skills builders
	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1613">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1613</a>	
	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=790">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=790</a>	Analysis and evaluation
Judaism revision	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1426">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1426</a>	Judaism knowledge organiser
	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1316">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1316</a>	Judaism revision checklist
	<a href="https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1292">https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/pages/resourcesingle.aspx?riid=1292</a>	

## GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES ROUTE B

### GCSE

Summer 2024

#### COMPONENT 1 - FOUNDATIONAL CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

##### Overview of the Component

##### Which Assessment Objectives are being assessed in this examination?

- Questions (a), (b), and (c) test candidates' AO1 skills - knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.
- Questions (d) test candidates' AO2 skills - analysis and evaluation of aspects of religion and belief.

##### Which aspects of the specification were tested in this examination?

##### Q.1 Origins and Meaning

- (a) (i) Key Concept: 'evolution'.
- (a) (ii) Key Concept: 'omnipotence'.
- (b) (i) Area of Study: Loving and Serving in Catholic Communities in Britain and Elsewhere; Catholic teaching on reconciliation.
- (b) (ii) Area of Study: Symbolism; Symbolism within the 'Tree of Life' apse mosaic.
- (c) (i) Area of Study: Creation; Beliefs about the creation of human beings from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism, or two Christian traditions.
- (c) (ii) Area of Study: Origins and Meaning; Beliefs about the origins of the universe from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism, or two Christian traditions.
- (d) Area of Study: Origins and Meaning; Evaluation of religious and non religious beliefs and attitudes towards abortion.

##### Q.2 Good and Evil

- (a) Key Concept: 'goodness'.
- (b) Area of Study: Sculpture and Statuary; Beliefs about how Catholics use statues in worship.
- (c) Area of Study: Good, Evil and Suffering; Beliefs about the existence of evil from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism, or two Christian traditions.

- (d) (i) Good, Evil and Suffering; Area of Study: Evaluation of religious and non-religious beliefs about the value of suffering.
- (ii) Area of Study: Incarnation; Evaluation of religious and non-religious beliefs regarding Jesus being more than an ordinary man.

### General overview of performance on this paper

There were a significant number of entries for this paper (24,046). Most questions were attempted by most candidates. However, 1bi had quite a high number of non-attempts. A range of marks across the band descriptors were awarded, demonstrating that the questions were accessible but also provided opportunities for stretch and challenge. Many candidates included relevant sources of wisdom and this appears to improve year on year. Religious language was used well by many, including the use of the key concepts across questions. The AO2 skills of analysis and evaluation were demonstrated very well by many candidates, and there was evidence of different, successful approaches to this question. Fewer candidates relied on a rigid writing frame which can sometimes limit responses to open evaluative questions. Even weaker candidates were often able to give more than one viewpoint. Many candidates benefitted from making a brief plan, but care needs to be taken regarding timing. If candidates use the continuation pages, they need to label the questions they are continuing to answer.

### Issues for centres to consider:

- Some candidates wrote in more general terms and failed to focus on the question. Candidates would benefit from being prepared for the different types of questions using the trigger words e.g. define, describe, explain and discuss (using evaluation and analysis).
- A non-religious viewpoint should not be included in c questions. Candidates must read the whole question carefully as some failed to focus on different religious traditions.
- Candidates were more aware of the demands of the 'd' questions where a non-religious view **must** be included in 1d but can also be included in other d questions **where relevant**.
- Although 'a' questions require a definition of key concepts, candidates should also include these concepts in responses to other questions, linking to sources of wisdom and authority where relevant, in order to develop knowledge and understanding.

### Comments on individual questions/sections

#### AO1 'a' Questions

The 'a' questions require a straightforward definition of a key concept. Generally, the 'a' questions performed well. Candidates had either learned the Eduqas definition or gave a valid definition in their own words. A great many supported their definition with an example, which was not necessary, but did serve to demonstrate their understanding of the key concept where their actual definition was quite weak. Very few repeated the key concept or gave the opposite of what it meant. 1ai and 1aii were the most successfully answered, some candidates struggled to define 2a, ('goodness'), and focused on examples of what it was not, which would not gain credit.



## **AO1 'b' Questions**

The 'b' Questions require a description of belief, practice, teaching or view. Generally, the 'b' questions performed quite well and many candidates understood the requirement to describe rather than drift into lengthy explanations. In particular, 1bii and 2b were answered well, where candidates showed good knowledge of the 'Tree of Life' mosaic and the use of statues. However, 1ai was sometimes less successfully answered because candidates lacked knowledge of the influence of the concept of *imago Dei* on Catholic Social Teaching about reconciliation. Instead, some candidates focused on reconciliation as a sacrament and this was credited.

## **AO1 'c' Questions**

The 'c' Questions require explanation of a belief, practice, teaching or view. Generally, responses to the 'c' questions performed well, with many effectively using a range of sources of wisdom and authority. Sometimes, candidates failed to offer a second religious view or gave a non-religious view which would not be credited. This was especially the case in 2c with some candidates explaining the Inconsistent Triad as a way to disprove the existence of God and so losing focus on the question. However, many candidates appeared to understand the requirement to explain, rather than just describe, why different traditions held certain beliefs.

## **AO1 'd' Questions**

The 'd' Questions require a statement to be analysed and evaluated. Generally, performance across these types of questions had further improved from 2023. Knowledge and understanding were not just included but also used effectively to form a discussion that gave different lines of argument. In particular, responses to 1d often demonstrated a sophisticated approach that engaged in a discussion about the validity of abortion and included non-religious viewpoints as required. However, these skills were sometimes lacking in responses that used a very formulaic approach. This was more obvious in 2di where there were some limited responses in evaluating the value of suffering. Some 2dii responses demonstrated an excellent use of sources of wisdom and authority and specialist terminology, resulting in a mature approach to the discussion.

# GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES ROUTE B

## GCSE

Summer 2024

### COMPONENT 2 - APPLIED CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

#### Overview of the Component

#### Which Assessment Objectives are being assessed in this examination?

- Questions (a), (b), and (c) test candidates' AO1 skills - knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.
- Questions (d) test candidates' AO2 skills - analysis and evaluation of aspects of religion and belief.

#### Which aspects of the specification were tested in this examination?

##### Q.1 Life and Death

- (a) Key Concept: 'death'.
- (b) Area of Study: The Magisterium; Catholic beliefs about the extraordinary form of the Catholic Magisterium.
- (c) Area of Study: Death and the Afterlife; Catholic attitudes to euthanasia.
- (d) (i) Area of Study: Death and the Afterlife; Evaluation of religious and non-religious beliefs about the Resurrection of Jesus as the best proof that there is life after death.  
(ii) Area of Study: Prayer Within Catholic Communities in Britain and Elsewhere; Evaluation of religious and non-religious beliefs about prayer as the most important practice for Catholics.

##### Q.2 Sin and Forgiveness

- (a) (i) Key Concept: 'sin'.  
(ii) Key Concept: 'relativism'.
- (b) (i) Area of Study: Crime and Punishment; Catholic beliefs about forgiveness.  
(ii) Area of Study: Mission and Evangelisation in Britain and Elsewhere; Catholic attitudes to evangelisation.
- (c) (i) Area of Study: Sacraments; The meaning and significance of the Eucharist for Catholics.  
(ii) Area of Study: Buildings; Beliefs about how the features of a Catholic church express salvation.

- (d) Area of Study: Mission and Evangelisation in Britain and Elsewhere;  
Evaluation of religious and non-religious beliefs about Britain as a Christian country.

### **General overview of performance on this paper.**

There were a significant number of entries for this paper (24,042). Most questions were attempted by most candidates. However 1b, which focused on the extraordinary form of the Catholic Magisterium, had quite a high number of non-attempts. A range of marks across the band descriptors were awarded, demonstrating that the questions were accessible but also provided opportunities for stretch and challenge. Many candidates included relevant sources of wisdom across their responses, and this appears to improve year on year. Religious language was used well by many, including the use of the key concepts across questions. The AO2 skills of analysis and evaluation were demonstrated very well by many candidates and more than one viewpoint was given by most candidates including in the weaker responses. 'D' questions must include religious belief, but non-religious can be included where relevant to the statement.

### **Issues for centres to consider:**

- When using sources of wisdom and authority, candidates must take care to link these to the requirements of the question. Some candidates wrote in more general terms and appeared to include sources they remembered rather than relevant to the question.
- Centres must ensure that through their teaching all aspects of the specification are covered to enable candidates to understand and be able to respond to all questions.
- Candidates need to take the time to read questions carefully to avoid misconceptions and mixing up of content e.g. euthanasia and evangelisation.
- Candidates should be encouraged to take extra care with the quality of writing for 1d, especially when using words from the actual question, as this offers a further six marks for SPaG.

### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

#### **AO1 'a' Questions**

The 'a' questions require a straightforward definition of a key concept. Generally, the 'a' questions performed well. Candidates had either learned the Eduqas definition or gave a valid definition in their own words. A great many supported their definition with an example, which was not necessary, but did serve to demonstrate their understanding of the key concept where their actual definition was quite weak. Very few repeated the key concept or gave the opposite of what it meant. 1a and 2a were the most successfully answered. 2a, however, had the most not-attempted responses. Candidates would benefit from a fuller understanding of key concepts to support other questions e.g. relativism within 'd' responses.

### **AO1 'b' Questions**

The 'b' questions require description of a belief, practice, teaching or view. Generally, the 'b' questions performed quite well and many candidates understood the requirement to describe rather than drift into lengthy explanations. A limited number of candidates were unable to answer 1b, demonstrating the need for full coverage of the specification. In 2bi, some candidates mixed up evangelisation and euthanasia. However, 2bi and 2bii were generally well answered. In particular, 2bi responses demonstrated excellent knowledge of Catholic beliefs about forgiveness.

### **AO1 'c' Questions**

The 'c' questions require explanation of a belief, practice, teaching or view. Generally, responses to the 'c' questions were developed, particularly 1c explaining Catholic attitudes to euthanasia, which often included a range of sources of wisdom and authority. Generally, 2ci and 2cii were well answered with a very limited number of 2cii candidates who misunderstood the need to focus on the features of a church building and how they expressed salvation, or only included an explanation of salvation. However, many candidates appeared to understand the requirement to explain rather than just describe.

### **AO1 'd' Questions**

The 'd' questions require a statement to be analysed and evaluated. Generally, performance across these types of questions had further improved from 2023. Knowledge and understanding were not just included but also used effectively to form a discussion that gave different lines of argument. In particular, responses to 1di often demonstrated a sophisticated approach that engaged in a discussion about the validity of the statement rather than just giving a few different views about it. Many of these responses used a wide range of sources of wisdom and authority. However, these skills were sometimes lacking in responses that used a very formulaic approach which seemed to limit the candidates' ability to demonstrate evaluation and judgment. This was more obvious in 1dii where some candidates had used the simplistic formula of 'agree/disagree'. In 2d candidates discussed the increase in diverse religious and non-religious beliefs and practices and the benefits this brought to the U.K in the celebration of different festivals, beliefs and cultures, whilst acknowledging that UK laws, festivals and traditions are rooted in the Christian tradition. Responses included a range of ideas and enabled some excellent responses and a mature approach from many candidates.

## GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES ROUTE B

### GCSE

Summer 2024

#### COMPONENT 3 – A STUDY OF A WORLD FAITH - JUDAISM

##### Overview of the Component

##### Which Assessment Objectives are being assessed in this examination?

- Questions (a), (b), and (c) test candidates' AO1 skills - knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.
- Questions (d) test candidates' AO2 skills - analysis and evaluation of aspects of religion and belief.

##### Which aspects of the specification were tested in this examination?

##### Q.1 Beliefs and teachings

- (a) Key Concept: 'Torah'.
- (b) Area of Study: The Nature of God; Jewish beliefs about God as Law-Giver.
- (c) Area of Study: The Afterlife; Jewish beliefs about resurrection.
- (d) Area of Study: Messiah (Mashiach); Evaluation of Jewish beliefs about the Messiah (Mashiach).

##### Q.2 Practices

- (a) Key Concept: 'synagogue'.
- (b) Area of Study: Daily Life; Practices involved in keeping kosher dietary laws.
- (c) Area of Study: Festivals, Practices in Britain and Elsewhere; The importance of Yom Kippur.
- (d) Area of Study: Rituals; Evaluation of the importance of Bar and Bat Mitzvah Ceremonies.

## General overview of performance on this paper

It was pleasing to see that most candidates attempted all questions. A range of marks across the band descriptors were awarded, demonstrating that the questions were accessible but also provided opportunities for stretch and challenge. Many candidates indicated their understanding of the key commands in the questions which often helped a focus on the actual demands of the question. Many candidates used a wide range of religious language in their responses. It is concerning that some candidates explained specific Jewish beliefs, practices and teachings through a Catholic or Muslim lens. This paper focused on Judaism and credit could not be given for references to other religious traditions. The AO2 skills of analysis and evaluation were demonstrated well by many candidates. Some responses did not meet the actual demands of the question and instead appeared to be pre-prepared responses. This was especially the case in 2d. The vast majority of candidates made good use of time with few incomplete scripts.

### Issues for centres to consider:

- References to other religious traditions cannot be credited.
- Candidates should have an understanding of the concepts associated with specification content. For example, the meaning behind specific rituals and festivals. In 'c' questions there is often an over-reliance on description.
- Candidates should ensure that they understand the actual demands of the questions. Underlining key words can often help this focus.
- Although 'a' questions require a definition of key concepts, candidates should also include these concepts in responses to other questions, linking to sources of wisdom and authority where relevant, in order to develop knowledge and understanding.
- If candidates use the continuation pages, they need to label the questions they are continuing to answer.

## Comments on individual questions/sections

### AO1 'a' Questions

The 'a' questions require a straightforward definition of a key concept. The majority of candidates engaged well with these questions and gave accurate definitions.

### AO1 'b' Questions

Generally, the b questions were answered well. Many candidates were able to give coherent description of Jewish beliefs about God as law-giver. Responses often included good use of religious language. In 2b candidates were asked to describe two practices that might be used in order to keep a kosher diet. There were many references to certain meals that would be prohibited e.g. lasagne. A minority of responses disregarded the question and instead focussed on the symbolic foods that might be found on the Seder Plate.

### AO1 'c' Questions

The 'c' questions require an explanation of a belief, practice, teaching or view. There was a wide range of marks awarded for these responses. Some candidates failed to gain any credit in 1c when they focussed all of their response on Christian teachings about Jesus' Resurrection. It was disappointing that many candidates had some understanding of practices at Yom Kippur but not why it is seen as such an important day. There were a significant number of responses which confused Yom Kippur with Pesach or Shabbat.

## **AO1 'd' Questions**

The 'd' questions require a statement to be analysed and evaluated. Generally, performance across these types of questions had further improved from 2023. This was especially the case in 1d when responses focussed on a discussion regarding whether all Jews should believe in the Messiah. There were some excellent responses to 2d which gave an informed analysis and evaluation. A significant minority of responses misinterpreted the question and focused their responses on whether Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the most important ritual and wrote lengthy descriptions of other rituals/festivals that might be more important. There appears to be an increasing awareness that these questions require evaluation and judgement, but sometimes judgements are made with no reference to evidence that has informed those judgements.

## Supporting you

### Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4275

Email: [GCSEReligiousStudies@eduqas.co.uk](mailto:GCSEReligiousStudies@eduqas.co.uk)

Qualification webpage: [GCSE Religious Studies | Eduqas](#)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | Eduqas](#)

### CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

### Regional Rep Team

Our regional team covers all areas of England and can provide face-to-face and online advice at a time which is convenient to you.

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We support our education communities by providing trusted qualifications and specialist support, to allow our students the opportunity to reach their full potential.





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