

## Eduqas Newsletter – Summer 2026

# GCSE Religious Studies

### General News

Welcome Back! We hope you had an enjoyable break and are looking forward to the last term of this academic year. It's a busy time of year but this newsletter contains a few reminders, so it's worth a read.

Each year, the exam papers and mark schemes are uploaded to the password-protected area of the website: the portal. This is so that teachers can use these as mock examinations without students being able to access these on the public website. If you need access to this, please contact your Exams Officer at your centre and they can provide you with a login. Exemplar material is also stored on this part of the website, so you can access annotated examples of candidate work.

After Results Day, if you are looking for results for your centre, log in to the portal and click on the 'Results' tab. You may need to discuss with your Exams Officer to ensure you have the right access.

We have also had a few queries recently about the order in which to teach components. We do not prescribe a particular order so centres can plan their curriculum in the way that works best for them.

We have also had some queries about when the new specifications will be launched, following the Curriculum and Assessment Review. Currently, we do not have an answer to this. When we know the timeline for changes, we will communicate them via these newsletters.

### Assessment Reminders and Updates – Included in last newsletter but with a slight change to the new AO2 'd' rubric

The following is a quick reminder of the structure of how we assess each Assessment Objective (AO) in our exams. The wording will be adapted slightly for summer 2026 to make all assessments more accessible for learners with Special Educational Needs. These changes will benefit all learners as sentence structures will be easier to comprehend and will reduce the cognitive load on learners in exams.

#### Assessment Objective 1 – 'a' questions

These are taken from the listed key concepts in the specification. (Note – the Route A Full Course and Short Course concepts may differ.) Candidates are expected to briefly define the key concept, either using the definition in our glossary or their own words. They do not need an example but sometimes an example helps candidates receive a mark if their definition isn't quite accurate. An accurate example by itself with no definition will receive 1 mark. Accurate one-word answers will be awarded 1 mark.

#### Assessment Objective 1 – 'b' questions

These start with the command word 'Describe' and assess candidates' knowledge and understanding. They can be phrased in a variety of ways, such as: 'Describe how ...', 'Describe why ...', 'Describe two ...'. It is worth candidates practicing responding to these different varieties of question stems in their learning and exam preparation. Changes to the phrasing of this question are shown in the example below:

Current: Describe, from **one** religion, attitudes to divorce.

New: Describe attitudes to divorce for **one** religion.

## Assessment Objective 1 – ‘c’ questions

These start with the command word ‘Explain’ and assess candidates’ knowledge and understanding. As with a ‘b’ question, they could be phrased in a variety of ways. The most important thing to remember here is that in Component 1 Route A, they will always ask candidates to explain from two religions or two religious traditions, meaning Humanism or any other non-religious philosophy will **not** be creditworthy. In recent years we have seen an increase in candidates making this mistake. In Route B, candidates are asked to explain from either Catholic Christianity and Judaism or two Christian traditions..., showing Humanism and any other religious or non-religious tradition will **not** be creditworthy. An example of the new wording is given below:

Current Route A: Explain, from **either two** religions **or two** religious traditions, beliefs about the role of women in worship.

New Route A: Explain beliefs about the role of women in worship. Refer to **either two** religions **or two** religious traditions in your answer.

Current Route B: Explain, from **either** Catholic Christianity and Judaism **or two** Christian traditions, teachings about abortion.

New Route B: Explain teachings about abortion. Refer to **either** Catholic Christianity and Judaism **or two** Christian traditions.

There will also be a separation in the lines given for candidates to answer this question. This is to make it clearer that they must write from two perspectives.

## Assessment Objective 2 – ‘d’ questions

AO2 ‘d’ questions assess candidates’ skills of analysis and evaluation. Candidates’ responses have been stronger in recent years, but we still sometimes see candidates using structures that force them to give arguments ‘for’ and ‘against’ the statement, so it is worth noting here that this is **not** necessary. Candidates need to give ‘alternative or different viewpoints’ – these do not need to be contrasting viewpoints. Several arguments ‘for’ **or** ‘against’ the statement is creditworthy.

Current: Discuss this statement, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

New:

Discuss this statement.

Show that you have considered more than one point of view.

Refer to religious beliefs and teachings in your answer.

New Route A C1 2d / Route B C1 1d:

Discuss this statement.

Show that you have considered more than one point of view.

Refer to religious beliefs and teachings in your answer.

Refer to non-religious beliefs, such as those held by Atheists and Humanists, in your answer.

**Note: There has been a slight change in the above wording since the last newsletter. The above is the correct new wording that will be on the 2026 papers and future papers.**

## What is a 'Review of Marking' (ROM)? Previously included in Summer 2025 newsletter

As exam season begins, some teachers may be starting to think ahead to Results Day 2026. On that day, teachers and school leaders celebrate students' successes but, at times, they may also share in the disappointment experienced by some students. Before centres ask for a review of marking, it is important to consider what it is, and more importantly, what it isn't.

A review of marking for GCSE exams refers to the process by which a candidate's exam script is checked after the initial marking. This process is usually initiated when a student, parent, or school believes that the grade awarded does not accurately reflect the student's ability. Students must give permission for this process, as it is possible for marks to go up or down. The school applies for it and either the school or parent/carer pays for it. This process can be followed for one or more papers.

**The review does not involve re-marking the entire script from scratch but focuses on ensuring the original marking was fair and consistent with the mark scheme.** This means that one of the only reasons a mark may change is if the mark scheme was applied incorrectly, for example, a 2-mark definition question being given 0 marks when the definition is correct (or conversely, a 2-mark question being given 2 marks when the answer was incorrect).

The review is conducted by a different examiner than any who marked the script originally, to ensure the process is fair. If the grade changes, the fee is refunded.

There are usually around 4-5 weeks within which centres can apply for a review of marking on a candidate's behalf, with the deadline usually being close to the end of September.

The review of marking ensures fairness and transparency in the grading process, giving students confidence in their results. However, it is important to note that the review process only identifies and corrects procedural, administration or marking errors; it does not involve subjective reassessment of the candidate's performance, so it is important to carefully consider any application to review marking.

## Resources

Just a quick reminder that there are many useful resources on our website: [Eduqas Digital Educational Resources](#)

## Resources (useful but not endorsed)

Era.org.uk is an educational website that has a wide range of videos for different topics within Religious Education. This comes highly recommended by one of our Principal Examiners who uses it with her students frequently.

<https://bod.org.uk/issue-areas/education/> is the website for the Board of Deputies of British Jews and it contains resources and information for people teaching Judaism. Our Principal Examiner for Judaism recommends taking a look!

## Get in touch

If you are new to Eduqas GCSE RS, are considering switching to us, want more information on anything in this newsletter or have some great ideas for things you would like to see in future newsletters, please get in touch!

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Thank you for reading and have a fantastic term.