

Key Stage 4 and Post-16

14-19 The Awarding Stage

14 - 19 is the awarding stage in that the central means of assessing students' learning in RE will be through accredited courses (mainly GCSE and AS/A level). It is both a legal requirement and an entitlement that all students (other than those withdrawn by parental request) study RE at Key Stage 4. RE is also statutory post-16 for students in school sixth forms. It is expected that all students who are capable of achieving an approved qualification in RE are given the opportunity to do so. At Key Stage 4 students are encouraged to take accredited courses which link with the designated programmes of study and give a particular emphasis to the study of complex philosophical and ethical issues and the ability of students to develop thoughtful, well substantiated conclusions to their learning in RE.

Characteristics of Learning

Throughout this phase, students analyse and interpret a wide range of religious, philosophical and ethical concepts in increasing depth. They investigate issues of diversity within and between religions and beliefs, and the ways in which religion and spirituality are expressed in philosophy, ethics, science and the arts. They expand and balance their evaluations of the impact of religions on individuals, communities and societies, locally, nationally and globally. They understand the importance of dialogue between and among different religions and beliefs. They gain a greater understanding of how religions and beliefs contribute to community cohesion, recognizing the various perceptions people have regarding the role of religion in the world.

Programmes of Study

- **Key Stage 4**

Introduction

At Key Stage 4, the programme of study will focus on Christianity and at least ONE other religion, which may have been studied at Key Stage 3. **Over Key Stages 3 and 4 as a whole**, illustrative examples should be taken from Buddhism and Sikhism. In addition, any programme of study should include issues related to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

At Key Stage 4, pupils' knowledge and understanding should focus particularly on the concepts, beliefs and values of religions in relation to their own. There should be less emphasis on knowing outward elements of religion - the objects used in worship, buildings, festivals, etc., except with reference to a religion not previously encountered. Pupils should develop an understanding of how the beliefs, values and concepts are exemplified through the elements of religion. Pupils should also be comparing the teachings of religions on key moral and metaphysical questions.

Examination and Certification

Key stage 4 pupils should follow at least one of the following courses:

- GCSE Full Course in Religious Studies;

- GCSE Short Course in Religious Studies;
- Entry Level Certificate in Religious Studies.

Alternatively, where appropriate (in particular for special schools), pupils may follow one of the following courses:

- The Award Scheme of the Development and Accreditation Network, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6UX (ASDAN – Bronze/Silver or Gold Award – Beliefs and Ethics Unit);
- OCR Accreditation for Life and Living Skills (ALL) certificate for pupils who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Teachers should ensure in ALL cases that the Key Stage 4 requirements in this syllabus are being met, in particular, the requirement for Key Stage 4 students to study Christianity plus at least ONE other religion.

Programmes of Study

- **Post-16**

Introduction

The aims of RE given in the Introduction to this Syllabus apply to post-16 provision. Post-16 RE needs to be carefully planned take account of the need for breadth and balance, differentiation, assessment and reporting, progression (especially from Key Stage 4), and the promotion of important skills and positive attitudes and contribution to broader learning opportunities, e.g., critical thinking.

It should also take account of the following:

- the wide range of ability, interests and experience of post-16 students;
- the fact that these students are in post-compulsory education;
- the variety of one-year and two-year courses being followed;
- the availability of a wide range of examination courses in RE and Religious Studies (RS) (e.g. A Level, A/S level, Full and Short-Course GCSE), Philosophy (e.g. with philosophy of religion options), General Studies, Psychology and Sociology (giving the opportunity to look at the psychology or sociology of religion);
- specific extension topics which may be suitable for post-16 students, e.g., Spirituality and Belief, Religion and Philosophy, Religion and the Media, Religion in the Community, which contribute to other qualifications (General Studies, Critical Thinking Skills);
- GNVQ & BTEC courses may also allow for the delivery of some aspects of RE;
- the potential of RE to enhance and broaden the post-16 curriculum and to support and complement other subjects (see table – LINK – to be added).

Post-16 RE provides opportunities for discussion of spiritual, philosophical and ethical issues. It should therefore contribute to the spiritual and moral development of students.

Legal Requirements

The legal requirement is that all registered pupils in Community and Voluntary Controlled schools are to receive RE in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus. This includes schools with post-16 students. Voluntary Aided schools should follow the advice of their religious authorities.

Students now have the right to withdraw themselves from RE.

To meet the expectations of this agreed syllabus schools and colleges will need to provide the equivalent of two to three days per year (10-15 hours).

This allocation is significantly lower than that given for Key Stages 1-4 and takes account of the particular situation of post-16 students. Appropriate staffing and resources will still be required.

There are a number of ways in which post-16 RE might be delivered. The expectations of the Agreed Syllabus will be fulfilled if a student is following an examination course in religious studies at A level. Further provision could be made through:

- discrete RE courses such as those listed for Key Stage 4 pupils [above], or A/S level in Religious Studies;
- self-supported study in non-contact or tutor time linked to a religious education theme;
- an ongoing investigation, with a summative presentation or product;
- RE units within Complementary/Enrichment/Vocational Studies (which might be specifically designed to support examination courses in other subjects);
- General Studies courses which include sufficient religious education to meet the requirements;
- RE study days/post-16 conferences.

Consideration might be given to the potential benefits of the following within the above: lively and relevant course content; interesting course titles; variety and choice of options; provision of notes to maximise time for discussion; flexible timetabling; a wide variety of stimuli including visiting speakers; the involvement of staff from other disciplines; consultation with students to discover topics of interest.

Wherever possible reporting of student attainment in RE should be undertaken. For example, through a tutor's report on a student's presentation following an investigative project. It is recognised that if all RE provision is made, for example, through conference days, it would be difficult to comment on the attainment of each individual student. However, it would be possible to report on the experience which students have received and their participation. It may also be possible to comment on particular contributions by some students.

Planning should take into account the six Areas of Enquiry in RE which inform the Agreed Syllabus.