



**Cambridge Assessment
International Education**

Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSE™ Religious Studies 0490

Use this syllabus for exams in 2025, 2026 and 2027.
Exams are available in the November series.



Version 1

Please check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/0490 to see if this syllabus is available in your administrative zone.]

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**Cambridge
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Important: Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2025, 2026 and 2027, go to page 43.



1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

Cambridge IGCSE is the world's most popular international qualification for 14 to 16 year olds, although it can be taken by students of other ages. It is tried, tested and trusted.

Students can choose from 70 subjects in any combination – it is taught by over 4500 schools in over 140 countries.

Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

Cambridge IGCSE Religious Studies develops a set of transferable skills. These include a reflective understanding of values, opinions and attitudes. It also develops the ability to present and analyse various viewpoints and the concepts and values they are based on.

Our approach in Cambridge IGCSE Religious Studies encourages learners to be:

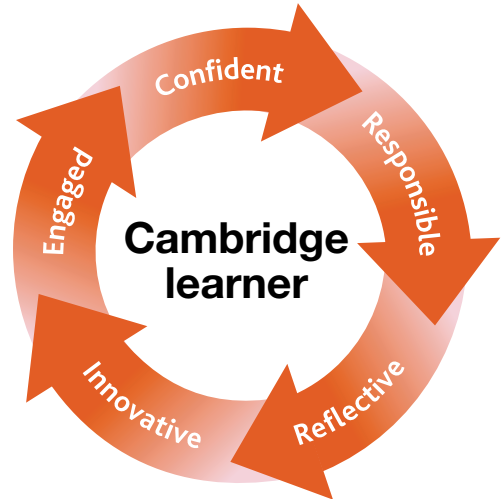
confident, exploring ideas, understanding social, religious and moral concepts, and expressing views

responsible, recognising the complexity and sensitivity of issues that give rise to religious debate, including challenges to religious belief and practice in today's world

reflective, recognising there are many different viewpoints and considering ways in which they are supported and justified

innovative, exploring different religious understandings of the world, including views that may be different from their own personal views

engaged, with the diversity of understandings of religious belief and practice, studied in their cultural context.



School feedback: ‘The strength of Cambridge IGCSE qualifications is internationally recognised and has provided an international pathway for our students to continue their studies around the world.’

Feedback from: Gary Tan, Head of Schools and CEO, Raffles International Group of Schools, Indonesia

International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge IGCSE Religious Studies gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level Divinity and Islamic Studies.

Cambridge IGCSEs are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge IGCSEs or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

UK NARIC*, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge IGCSE and found it to be comparable to the standard of the GCSE in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge IGCSE qualifications are accepted as equivalent to UK GCSEs by leading universities worldwide.

* Due to the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, the UK NARIC national recognition agency function was re-titled as UK ENIC on 1 March 2021, operated and managed by Ecctis Limited. From 1 March 2021, international benchmarking findings are published under the Ecctis name.

Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition

School feedback: ‘Cambridge IGCSE is one of the most sought-after and recognised qualifications in the world. It is very popular in Egypt because it provides the perfect preparation for success at advanced level programmes.’

Feedback from: Managing Director of British School of Egypt BSE

Supporting teachers

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Support for Cambridge IGCSE			
Planning and preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schemes of work Specimen papers Syllabuses Teacher guides 	Teaching and assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsed resources Online forums Support for coursework and speaking tests 	Learning and revision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example candidate responses Past papers and mark schemes Specimen paper answers 	Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidate Results Service Principal examiner reports for teachers Results Analysis

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2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to enable students to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of religion, studied in a social context
- develop an enquiring and sensitive approach to the study of religion and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies
- identify and explore the religious, moral and cultural questions raised in the material they study
- explore the ways in which belief is reflected in practice and application in the lives of religious people
- develop their interest and enthusiasm for the study of religion.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



Content overview

Candidates study two religions from:

- Christianity
- Islam
- Judaism

The syllabus content for each religion is divided into two papers: Paper 1 and Paper 2. Candidates must study content on two of the three religions for both Papers 1 and 2.

The content for each religion differs according to the traditions, beliefs and practices of the religion. The broad areas for teaching about the two chosen religions are shown below.

The subject content is organised into six sections for each of the three religions:

Paper 1

1 Worship

- The church/mosque/synagogue as a centre for worship and as the centre of the religious community
- Key features of a church/mosque/synagogue in different religious communities and its meaning and importance
- Artefacts used in worship in different religious communities, their use, meaning and importance
- Public/communal and private/individual worship in different religious communities
- The roles and significance of leaders in different religious communities.

2 Beliefs and scriptures

- Key teachings from the Bible/Qur'an/Torah specified in the subject content section.

3 Sacred places - places of pilgrimage and of religious importance

- The importance of going on pilgrimage
- Places of pilgrimage and/or of religious importance.

Paper 2

4 Festivals and fasts

- Key festivals/fasts from Christianity/Islam/Judaism specified in the subject content
- Their meaning and significance and how they are celebrated/practised today.

5 Rites of passage; religion and the family

- Key rites of passage from Christianity/Islam/Judaism specified in the subject content section, including birth rites, marriage ceremonies and funerals
- Christian/Muslim/Jewish beliefs about family life in different religious communities
- Tradition and change: traditional family roles for men and women, old and young; reasons to maintain or change them.

6 Religion and social action

- Religious laws, and moral and ethical codes
- Teachings about love and concern for others
- Stewardship of the environment
- Christian/Muslim/Jewish organisations that relieve poverty.

Assessment overview

All candidates take two components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A* to G.

All candidates take:

Paper 1 1 hour 45 minutes
Worship, Beliefs, Scriptures and Sacred Places 50%
80 marks

- Tests the Paper 1 subject content.
- This paper consists of three sections:
A Christianity
B Islam
C Judaism
- Candidates answer questions in **two** of these sections.
- Each section contains three structured questions worth 20 marks each.
- Candidates answer **two** questions in the sections they have chosen.

Externally assessed

and:

Paper 2 1 hour 45 minutes
Festivals, Fasts, Family Life and Social Action 50%
80 marks

- Tests the Paper 2 subject content.
- This paper consists of three sections:
A Christianity
B Islam
C Judaism
- Candidates answer questions in **two** of these sections.
- Each section contains three structured questions worth 20 marks each.
- Candidates answer **two** questions in the sections they have chosen.

Externally assessed

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, practices, teachings and traditions, and how these are linked.

AO2 Evaluation

Evaluate the significance of religious beliefs, practices, teachings and traditions, using evidence and reasoned discussion of different points of view.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in IGCSE %
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	60
AO2 Evaluation	40
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	60	60
AO2 Evaluation	40	40
Total	100	100

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

Christianity

Paper 1 content

C1 Worship

C1.1 Worship in the church

- (a) The church building as a centre for Christian worship and as the centre of the Christian community.
- (b) The church as the people/community as well as the building.

C1.2 Key features of church buildings in different Christian communities; the meaning and importance of these features

- (a) Altar; holy table
- (b) Sanctuary (holy area in a church)
- (c) Lectern (reading stand)
- (d) Pulpit (raised platform for addressing the congregation)
- (e) Baptistry (pool for total immersion); font (container of holy water)
- (f) Representations: statues, images and decorations
- (g) Differing views in Christian denominations/traditions on the importance of these key features.

C1.3 Artefacts used in worship in different Christian communities; the use, meaning and importance of these features

- (a) Copies of the Bible
- (b) Cross and crucifix (cross with image of Jesus on it), their symbolic meaning and uses
- (c) Paten (plate for Communion) and chalice (cup for Communion)
- (d) Missal (Catholic book of liturgy), Book of Common Prayer (Anglican books of liturgy) and other denominational service books
- (e) Lectionary (scriptural readings for specific days or events).

C1 Worship (continued)

C1.4 Public/communal and private/individual worship in different Christian communities and in the home

- (a) Eucharist, known as Holy Communion, Mass, or the Lord's Supper; key features and meaning in different denominations
- (b) Sunday or Sabbath worship services (Sabbath could be Saturday or Sunday)
- (c) Daily services
- (d) Acts of devotion, confession and reconciliation
- (e) Prayer for thanksgiving, adoration, intercession, petition and confession; content and meaning of The Lord's Prayer
- (f) Contemplation and meditation
- (g) Different views about the role and importance in Christianity of each of these forms of worship
- (h) Different views on the use and importance of the Bible in Christian public worship and in private prayer and study
- (i) Respectful treatment of the Bible.

C1.5 The roles and significance of leaders in the church and in different Christian communities

- (a) The Pope, bishops in some denominations
- (b) Priests, ministers, pastors, or equivalent in other denominations
- (c) Reasons why some denominations have no ordained clergy.

C2 Beliefs and scriptures

C2.1 Christian beliefs about God

- (a) The Apostles' Creed as a statement of Christian beliefs
- (b) The Trinity (three persons in one being): Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the existence of non-trinitarian Christian belief
- (c) The virgin birth and the Incarnation (God taking on human form)
- (d) Different Christian views on the importance of these beliefs
- (e) The impact of these beliefs on the daily life of Christians.

C2.2 Christian beliefs about Jesus

- (a) The Gospel accounts of Jesus' birth, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and the promise of the Holy Spirit
- (b) The role of Jesus in salvation and forgiveness of sins, as the Messiah or 'Chosen One', creating the New Covenant (new relationship between God and people)
- (c) The institution of the Eucharist; the Last Supper, the washing of the disciples' feet and Jesus' predictions of his own death and betrayal
- (d) The events in Gethsemane: the passion (suffering) of Jesus, his prayer and arrest following the betrayal by Judas
- (e) Jesus' trials, death and burial
- (f) The significance of Mary, mother of Jesus
- (g) Different views on the importance of these beliefs and events
- (h) The impact of these beliefs and events on the daily life of Christians.

C2.3 Christian beliefs about the Holy Spirit

- (a) The Spirit of God on Earth
- (b) God's power given to believers
- (c) The fruits of the Holy Spirit
- (d) The gifts of the Holy Spirit
- (e) Different views on the importance of these beliefs
- (f) The impact of these beliefs on the daily life of Christians.

C2.4 Christian beliefs about the Bible; different ways in which Christians understand and interpret the Bible

- (a) As a source of authority
- (b) As a revelation from God
- (c) As a source of moral principles: requirements (things Christians should do) and restrictions (things Christians should not do) in the Ten Commandments, and in the Beatitudes
- (d) The importance of these views in Christian life.

C3 Sacred places – places of pilgrimage and of religious importance

C3.1 The importance of going on pilgrimage for some Christians

- (a) The spiritual and physical goals of pilgrimage
- (b) The spiritual and physical challenges and effects of the journeys themselves on the pilgrims.

C3.2 Places of pilgrimage for Christians

- (a) The importance to some Christians of Lourdes as a place to seek healing and spiritual comfort; rituals at the Lourdes Grotto
- (b) The importance to some Christians of Rome as the burial place of St Peter and the residence of the Pope, St Peter's Basilica, Papal audiences and Papal appearances in St Peter's Square
- (c) The importance of Bethlehem and Nazareth as the places of Jesus' birth and upbringing; the Church of the Nativity, the Church of the Annunciation and the Church of St Joseph
- (d) The importance of Jerusalem, the Way of the Cross, Gethsemane and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Paper 2 content

C4 Festivals and fasts**C4.1 Easter and Holy Week**

- (a) Palm Sunday: the importance of Palm Sunday as celebrating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and looking ahead to the end of Holy Week; customs of procession and giving out palm crosses
- (b) Maundy/Holy Thursday: the importance of Maundy/Holy Thursday in commemorating the events of the Last Supper and the betrayal in Gethsemane; Eucharist/Holy Communion services and the custom of foot-washing
- (c) Good Friday: the importance of Good Friday in commemorating the death and crucifixion of Jesus; services of ecumenical witness and the Stations of the Cross
- (d) Holy Saturday: the importance of Holy Saturday as the beginning of resurrection celebrations; Easter Vigil ceremonies
- (e) Easter Sunday: the importance of Easter Sunday as celebrating Jesus' resurrection; sunrise services, processions and a time of feasting
- (f) The religious reasons for observing Easter and Holy Week (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (g) The social significance of observing Easter and Holy Week
- (h) Different ways Easter and Holy Week are observed.

C4.2 Christmas

- (a) Christmas as a celebration of the Incarnation
- (b) Features of Christmas celebrations in churches, such as Midnight Mass and other Christmas services
- (c) The religious reasons for observing Christmas (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (d) The social significance of observing Christmas
- (e) Different ways Christmas is observed.

C4.3 Epiphany

- (a) Epiphany as the revelation of Christ to the world
- (b) Epiphany as the visit of the Magi to see the infant Jesus
- (c) Epiphany being marked by traditions such as the King cake and chalking the doors
- (d) The religious reasons for observing Epiphany (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (e) The social significance of observing Epiphany
- (f) Different ways Epiphany is observed.

C4.4 Ascension

- (a) The meaning and significance of Ascension as celebrating Jesus' going up into heaven
- (b) Ascension customs like extinguishing the Paschal candle, processions and an all-night vigil
- (c) The religious reasons for observing Ascension (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (d) The social significance of observing Ascension
- (e) Different ways Ascension is observed.

C4 Festivals and fasts (continued)

C4.5 Pentecost

- (a) Pentecost as celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the twelve Apostles
- (b) Events in the story of Pentecost involving tongues of fire, a rush of wind and speaking in tongues
- (c) Pentecost customs like wearing red and Kneeling Prayers services
- (d) The religious reasons for observing Pentecost (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (e) The social significance of observing Pentecost
- (f) Different ways Pentecost is observed.

C4.6 Lent

- (a) Lent as a time for remembering Jesus' time in the wilderness; as preparation for Easter
- (b) Lent as a time of fasting and giving up luxuries, money or time in service of others
- (c) Ways Lent is marked in churches, including services on Ash Wednesday
- (d) The religious reasons for observing Lent (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (e) The social significance of observing Lent
- (f) Different ways Lent is observed.

C4.7 Advent

- (a) Advent as preparation for both the Second Coming and Jesus' birth at Christmas
- (b) Advent as a time of fasting, prayer and charity
- (c) Ways Advent is marked in churches, including Advent services
- (d) The religious reasons for observing Advent (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (e) The social significance of observing Advent
- (f) Different ways Advent is observed.

C4.8 Changes to festivals and fasts

- (a) Changes in traditional religious practices for festivals and fasts, and changes in ways of observing them in the modern world
- (b) Commercial aspects to Christmas and Easter in some countries
- (c) How people with different Christian beliefs might feel about these changes.

C5 Rites of passage; religion and the family

C5.1 Baptism: key features of different types of baptism, and their importance in different Christian communities

- (a) Infant baptism, adult baptism, dedication or believers' baptism in different Christian denominations
- (b) The importance of godparents and sponsors in baptism
- (c) The rituals that might be performed in baptism and their meaning.

C5.2 Coming of age: key features of different coming of age ceremonies, and their importance in different Christian communities

- (a) Confirmation in some denominations that practise infant (and adult) baptism; the significance of affirmation of belief and the importance of sponsors in confirmation
- (b) First Communion ceremonies in some denominations
- (c) The rituals that might be performed in confirmation and First Communion, and their meaning
- (d) The importance of becoming a full member of a church community.

C5.3 Marriage ceremonies: key features of marriage ceremonies, and their importance in different Christian communities

- (a) Marriage rites with or without a Eucharistic celebration; the meaning of the wedding vows that are exchanged and the wearing of rings or crowns by the couple in some denominations
- (b) The significance of the words and actions associated with marriage, and its significance as a sacrament in some denominations.

C5.4 Funeral rites: key features of funeral rites, and their importance in different Christian communities

- (a) The importance of Last Rites as a sacrament in some Christian denominations; preparation for death by a minister or priest
- (b) Rituals at the interment or cremation of a dead person; their significance in acknowledging the death of a loved one and supporting the bereaved.

C5.5 Christian beliefs about family life in different Christian communities

- (a) Religious teaching on the roles and responsibilities of men and women
- (b) Religious teaching on nurture of the young and care of the elderly
- (c) Different attitudes to marriage, divorce and remarriage in Christianity.

C5.6 Tradition and change

- (a) Traditional family roles, and the reasons some Christian communities maintain them
- (b) Changing family roles, and the reasons some Christian communities support change
- (c) Emotional and spiritual challenges involved in social change for some Christians.

C6 Religion and social action

C6.1 Christianity as a religion that shows concern for others

Teachings about love, compassion and concern for others:

- (a) the concept of agape (unconditional) love, as found in the gospels
- (b) following Jesus' teaching about love of God and love of neighbour as the Two Greatest Commandments
- (c) service of others through personal giving of time, work and money.

C6.2 Christian stewardship of the environment

- (a) The concept of humanity as being stewards of the Earth for God
- (b) The belief that God created everything and that humanity has the responsibility to care for the Earth that God created.

Note: The focus is Christian stewardship of the environment; ethical debates on treatment of animals are **not** included.

C6.3 Christian organisations that relieve poverty

- (a) Tearfund, Caritas, Christian Aid
- (b) Groups and organisations particular to any country that relieve poverty within the national/local community
- (c) The concern of different Christian groups for the spiritual as well as physical needs of those suffering from poverty or natural disasters
- (d) How Christian missionary activity and organised Christian charity work are motivated by Christian religious teachings.

Islam

Paper 1 content

I1 Worship

I1.1 Worship in the mosque

- (a) The mosque (masjid, 'place of prostration') as a centre for Muslim worship
- (b) The mosque as the centre of the ummah.

I1.2 Key features of a mosque in different Muslim communities; the meaning and importance of these features

- (a) Minaret ('site of light', the tower of the mosque)
- (b) Dome (a symbolic representation of the vault of heaven)
- (c) Qiblah (direction of Makkah)
- (d) Mihrab (niche in the qiblah wall)
- (e) Minbar (stepped platform for the delivery of sermons)
- (f) Musalla (prayer hall)
- (g) Separate areas for men and women to pray, and the reasons for this
- (h) Architecture and calligraphy; the absence of pictures or representations of humans or animals.

I1.3 Artefacts used in worship in different Muslim communities; the use, meaning and importance of these artefacts

- (a) Copies of the Qur'an
- (b) Compass
- (c) Prayer mat
- (d) Turbah (prayer stone)
- (e) Misbahah (prayer beads).

I1 Worship (continued)

I1.4 Public/communal and private/individual worship in different Muslim communities

- (a) The adhan (call to prayer)
- (b) The performance of wudu (ablution) and its significance
- (c) Salah (formal prayer), and the five prayer times
- (d) The times and sequence of the rak'ahs (movements in prayer) and their significance
- (e) Jum'ah prayer (Friday midday prayer) and its special significance
- (f) Du'a (private prayer) and reference to preparation for du'a and content
- (g) Dhikr (remembrance); its significance as a devotional practice
- (h) Different views about the use and importance of the Qur'an in public worship and in private prayer and study
- (i) Respectful treatment of the Qur'an.

I1.5 The roles and significance of leaders in the mosque and in different Muslim communities

- (a) Imam (Muslim religious leader)
- (b) Mu'azzin (official who calls Muslims to prayer).

I2 Beliefs and scriptures

I2.1 The Six Articles of Faith

- (a) Tawhid (oneness of God)
- (b) Risalah (prophets)
- (c) Akhirah (life after death)
- (d) Mala'ikah (angels)
- (e) Qadar (predestination)
- (f) Kutub (holy books)
- (g) Different views on the importance of these beliefs
- (h) The impact of these beliefs and events on the daily life of Muslims.

I2.2 The five roots of Usul ad-Din

- (a) Tawhid (oneness of God)
- (b) 'Adl (divine justice)
- (c) Risalah (prophets)
- (d) Imamah (authority of the imams)
- (e) Mi'ad (Day of Resurrection)
- (f) Different views on the importance of these beliefs
- (g) The impact of these beliefs and events on the daily life of Muslims.

I2.3 The Five Pillars of Islam

- (a) Shahadah (declaration of faith)
- (b) Salah (prayer five times a day)
- (c) Sawm (fasting during the month of Ramadan)
- (d) Zakah (obligatory charity)
- (e) Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah)
- (f) Different views on the importance of these beliefs and practices
- (g) The impact of these beliefs and events on the daily life of Muslims.

I2.4 Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

- (a) The early life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his trustworthy character
- (b) His first revelation in the cave of Hira' and the significance of this experience
- (c) Reasons for his persecution in Makkah
- (d) The hijrah (flight to Madinah) and its importance for Islam today
- (e) The significance of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as God's final messenger and the Seal of the Prophets.

I2 Beliefs and scriptures (continued)

I2.5 The development of Islam; origins of Sunni and Shi'ah

- (a) Sunni views about Caliph Abu Bakr as the successor of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the leader of Islam
- (b) Sunni views about Caliphs 'Umar and 'Uthman as successors after Caliph Abu Bakr
- (c) Shi'ah views about Caliph 'Ali as the successor of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the leader of Islam
- (d) Shi'ah beliefs about the Twelve Imams.

I2.6 The Qur'an; different ways in which Muslims understand and interpret it

- (a) As a source of authority
- (b) As a revelation from God
- (c) As a source of moral principles: requirements (things Muslims should do) and restrictions (things Muslims should not do) in Surah Al-An'am 6 (151–153), and in Surah Isra' 17 (23–39)
- (d) The importance of these views in Muslim life.

I3 Sacred places – places of pilgrimage and of religious importance

I3.1 The importance of going on Hajj

- (a) The spiritual and physical goals of pilgrimage
- (b) The spiritual and physical challenges and effects of the journey itself on the pilgrims.

I3.2 Performance of Hajj: the meaning and importance of places, actions and stages in the Hajj

- (a) Wearing ihram
- (b) Makkah; the Ka'bah, including the tawaf and sa'y
- (c) The hills of Safa and Marwa
- (d) The well of Zamzam
- (e) Muzdalifah
- (f) Mina and stoning the pillars
- (g) 'Arafat and the stand on the plain
- (h) Mount of Mercy.

I3.3 'Umrah

- (a) Similarities and differences between Hajj and 'Umrah.

I3.4 Makkah and Madinah as places of historic importance for Muslims.

- (a) Makkah: birthplace of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh); persecution of early Muslims; hijrah
- (b) Madinah: destination of the hijrah; establishment of the first Muslim community; site of the first mosque; the place that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) died.

Paper 2 content

I4 Festivals and fasts**I4.1 'Id al-Adha (feast of sacrifice)**

- (a) 'Id al-Adha as the celebration at the end of Hajj
- (b) 'Id al-Adha's connection to the testing of Ibrahim (AS)
- (c) The importance of sacrifice in the lives of Muslims
- (d) The religious reasons for observing 'Id al-Adha (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (e) The social significance of observing 'Id al-Adha
- (f) Different ways 'Id al-Adha is observed.

I4.2 The observance of the fast of Ramadan

- (a) The rules relating to observance of Ramadan, exemptions from fasting and compensations for not fasting
- (b) The spiritual benefits of fasting
- (c) Iftar (to break the fast), its physical and spiritual importance
- (d) Suhur (predawn meal), its importance as preparation for fasting
- (e) The purpose and importance of the fast for Muslims individually and as part of the ummah
- (f) I'tikaf (spiritual retreat or seclusion during the last ten days of Ramadan); Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power); how it is celebrated, its meaning and significance
- (g) Giving sadaqah (voluntary contributions) and the significance of giving at Ramadan
- (h) The religious reasons for observing the fast of Ramadan (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (i) The social significance of observing the fast of Ramadan
- (j) Different ways Ramadan is observed.

I4.3 'Id al-Fitr (the end of Ramadan)

- (a) 'Id al-Fitr as the celebration to mark the end of Ramadan
- (b) The features of 'Id al-Fitr, such as special 'Id prayers and greetings that are said; 'Id food that is prepared and enjoyed with friends and family; new clothing that is worn in community celebrations; presents and charity that are given
- (c) The religious reasons for observing 'Id al-Fitr (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (d) The social significance of observing 'Id al-Fitr
- (e) Different ways 'Id al-Fitr is observed.

I4.4 Changes to festivals and fasts

- (a) Changes in traditional religious practices for festivals and fasts, and changes in ways of observing them in the modern world
- (b) How people with different Muslim beliefs might feel about these changes.

I5 Rites of passage; religion and the family

I5.1 Birth rites: the key features and importance of birth rites in Islam

- (a) The recitation of the adhan (call to prayer) and iqamah (command to worship) into the baby's ears, rubbing something on the baby's gums, circumcision and tasmiyah (naming ritual)
- (b) Head shaving and aqiqah (sacrifice).

I5.2 Marriage ceremonies: the key features and importance of marriage ceremonies in Islam

- (a) The nikah (marriage), aqd nikah (marriage contract), mahr (dowry) and walimah (wedding feast)
- (b) The role of the witnesses and the meaning of customs and rituals performed before, during and after the ceremony.

I5.3 Funeral rites: the key features and importance of funeral rites in Islam

- (a) Views about the purpose of life, and belief in the sovereignty of God and belief in akhirah
- (b) Rituals and customs that take place at the end of life and at the burial and their meaning
- (c) Differences within Islam regarding mourning periods and the reasons for these differences.

I5.4 Muslim beliefs about family life in different Muslim communities

- (a) Rules about what is halal or haram and the application of these rules to food and clothing
- (b) Religious teaching on the roles and responsibilities of men and women
- (c) Religious teaching on nurture of the young and care of the elderly
- (d) Different Muslim attitudes to marriage, divorce and remarriage; khul' (a woman's right to initiate divorce).

I5.5 Tradition and change

- (a) Traditional family roles and the reasons some Muslim communities maintain them
- (b) Changing family roles and the reasons some Muslim communities support change
- (c) Emotional and spiritual challenges involved in social change for some Muslims.

I6 Religion and social action

I6.1 The ummah

- (a) The role and importance of the ummah for different Muslim communities.

I6.2 Shari'ah ('straight path') as a code of behaviour and ethics for Muslims; as a legal system

- (a) Sources of Shari'ah: the Qur'an and the sunnah
 (b) The aim of fiqh ('understanding', jurisprudence), understanding God's law
 (c) Ijtihad (intellectual struggle), the exercise of independent judgement
 (d) Ijma' (consensus), the agreement of qualified legal authorities
 (e) Qiyas (reasoning through analogy), consideration of similar circumstances
 (f) The concepts of halal (permitted) and haram (forbidden) as thoughts and actions that govern behaviour, derived from Shari'ah.

I6.3 Islam as a religion that shows concern for others in the home and the community

Teachings about love, compassion and concern for others:

- (a) zakah (obligatory charity) and sadaqah (voluntary contribution) and what both can and cannot be used for
 (b) recognition that wealth is ultimately loaned by God and that humans will be judged according to their treatment of others.

I6.4 Khalifahs of the environment

- (a) The concept of humanity as being khalifahs (stewards) of the Earth for God
 (b) The belief that God created everything and that humanity has the responsibility to care for the Earth that God created

Note: The focus is Muslim stewardship of the environment; ethical debates on treatment of animals are not included.

I6.5 Muslim organisations that relieve poverty

- (a) Muslim Aid, the Red Crescent
 (b) Groups and organisations particular to any country that relieve poverty within the national/local community
 (c) The concern of different Muslim groups for the spiritual as well as physical needs of those suffering from poverty or natural disasters
 (d) Muslim religious teachings as a motivation for organised charity work.

Judaism

Paper 1 content

J1 Worship

J1.1 Worship in the synagogue

- (a) The synagogue ('to bring together' or 'house of assembly') as a centre for Jewish worship
- (b) The synagogue as the centre of the Jewish community.

J1.2 Key features of a synagogue in different Jewish communities; the meaning and importance of these features

- (a) Aron ha-kodesh (Holy Ark)
- (b) Sefer Torah (Torah scrolls)
- (c) Bimah (raised reading desk)
- (d) Ner tamid (eternal light)
- (e) Ten Commandments (two tablets of the Law)
- (f) Menorah (seven-branched candlestick)
- (g) Magen David (Star or Shield of David)
- (h) The absence of any representations of G-d, statues of humans or pictures
- (i) Arrangements for the seating of women and men in different Jewish traditions.

J1.3 Artefacts used in worship in different Jewish communities; the use, meaning and importance of these artefacts

- (a) Copies of the Sefer Torah
- (b) Shabbat candles
- (c) Challah (plaited bread)
- (d) Kiddush cup
- (e) Mikvah
- (f) Mezuzah, with reference to the Shema.

J1.4 Ritual dress: the importance and symbolism of Jewish ritual dress

- (a) Tallit (prayer shawl), with six hundred and thirteen tzitzit (tassels)
- (b) Tefillin (phylacteries)
- (c) Kippah/yarmulke (skull cap)
- (d) Views in different Jewish traditions about when ritual dress is worn and who wears ritual dress.

J1 Worship (continued)

J1.5 Public/communal and private/individual worship in different Jewish communities

- (a) The minyan (number of people required for public prayer)
- (b) Communal prayer in the synagogue and the home
- (c) Daily private prayer in the synagogue and the home; prayer as a devotional practice
- (d) Different views about the role and importance of public worship and private prayer
- (e) Study of the Torah in the synagogue and the home
- (f) Different views about the use and importance of the Torah in public worship and in private prayer and study
- (g) Respectful treatment of the Torah scrolls.

J1.6 Celebration of Shabbat (the Sabbath) in the synagogue and the home; the meaning and importance of Shabbat celebrations

- (a) Synagogue services; the Kiddush and recitation of other blessings, reading the portion from the Sefer Torah (Sidrah), prayers and sermon
- (b) The Friday evening meal: preparation, welcoming in Shabbat, the Kiddush and other blessings and the challah bread
- (c) The Havdalah (division) ceremony in the synagogue and at home.

J1.7 The role and significance of leaders in the synagogue and in different Jewish communities

- (a) Rabbi (Jewish scholar or teacher)
- (b) Chazan (leads the people in singing in Jewish worship).

J2 Beliefs and scriptures

J2.1 Jewish beliefs about G-d's nature

- (a) G-d is one
- (b) G-d is merciful and just
- (c) G-d is the creator and sustainer of all things
- (d) G-d has no body
- (e) G-d is omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing) and omnipresent (everywhere)
- (f) Different Jewish views on the importance of these beliefs
- (g) The impact of these beliefs on the daily life of Jews.

J2.2 G-d's establishment of covenants (agreements) with G-d's people

- (a) The covenant of circumcision with Abraham; G-d's promise of land and offspring and the requirement of belief in the one G-d
- (b) The covenant of law with Moses; G-d's promise of protection for obedience to the covenant, the giving of the commandments to Moses by G-d, and the recording of the covenant by Moses
- (c) The importance of these two covenants for Jews in establishing their relationship with G-d as 'the chosen people' and a complete way of life
- (d) Different Jewish views on the importance of these beliefs and events
- (e) The impact of these beliefs and events on the daily life of Jews.

J2.3 Jewish beliefs about the Torah; different ways in which Jews understand and interpret the Torah

- (a) As a source of authority; the mitzvot (the commandments)
- (b) As a revelation from G-d
- (c) As a source of moral principles: positive mitzvot (things Jews should do) and negative mitzvot (things Jews should not do) in the Ten Commandments, and in the Noahide laws
- (d) The importance of these views in Jewish life.

J3 Sacred places – places of pilgrimage and of religious importance

J3.1 The importance of going on pilgrimage for some Jews

- (a) The spiritual and physical goals of pilgrimage
- (b) The spiritual and physical challenges and effects of the journeys themselves on the pilgrims.

J3.2 Places of pilgrimage for Jews: the historic sites of Jerusalem

- (a) The Western Wall
 - Its historical significance as the last remaining fragment of the Temple
 - The importance for some Jews of visiting the site of the Temple
 - Jewish practices at the Wall.
- (b) Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial)
 - Its roles as a memorial to the Holocaust and as a source of information and education
 - Reasons why some Jews use the term 'Shoah' and the importance of remembering the events for Jews today
 - Sites of great significance; the cattle car, children's memorial, Hall of Remembrance, Hall of Names, Janusz Korczak Square, Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations.

J3.3 Ways in which the memory of the Temple is kept alive in Judaism in the modern world

- (a) Visiting the Western Wall
- (b) The importance given to the Ark and the significance of the ner tamid in the synagogue
- (c) Daily prayers in Jewish communities today following the same pattern as worship in the Temple.

Paper 2 content

J4 Festivals and fasts**J4.1 Rosh Hashanah ('Head of'/New Year)**

- (a) The importance of the Ten Days of Awe (also called Days of Repentance)
- (b) First of the Ten Days; celebrates G-d's Creation
- (c) The significance of the Book of Life and the Shofar blowing in synagogue services
- (d) Special foods eaten, and reasons why
- (e) Tashlikh (casting away)
- (f) The religious reasons for observing Rosh Hashanah (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (g) The social significance of observing Rosh Hashanah
- (h) Different ways Rosh Hashanah is observed.

J4.2 Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

- (a) Yom Kippur as the last of the Ten Days and the holiest day of the year
- (b) How repentance is shown through fasting, prohibitions and wearing white
- (c) Reconciliation and new resolutions on Yom Kippur
- (d) Key features of the synagogue services for Yom Kippur
- (e) The religious reasons for observing Yom Kippur (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (f) The social significance of observing Yom Kippur
- (g) Different ways Yom Kippur is observed.

J4.3 Pesach (Passover)

- (a) Pesach as celebrating G-d's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt through the final Egyptian plague and the Exodus
- (b) The Seder ('order') meal; the meaning of the foods on the Seder plate and other items on the table, the Haggadah and the four Seder questions
- (c) The religious reasons for observing Pesach (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (d) The social significance of observing Pesach
- (e) Different ways Pesach is observed.

J4.4 Sukkot (Booths/Tabernacles)

- (a) Celebrating the gathering in of the harvest and G-d's protection of the Israelites during the wilderness wanderings
- (b) Building and using sukkah; its meaning and significance
- (c) The waving of the lulav – four species of plant: lulav, etrog, hadass, aravah
- (d) The religious reasons for observing Sukkot (origins, purpose and symbolism)
- (e) The social significance of observing Sukkot
- (f) Different ways Sukkot is observed.

J4 Festivals and fasts (continued)

J4.5 Changes to festivals and fasts

- (a) Changes in traditional religious practices for festivals and fasts, and changes in ways of observing them in the modern world
- (b) How people with different Jewish beliefs might feel about these changes.

J5 Rites of passage; religion and the family

J5.1 Birth rites: the key features and importance of birth rites in different Jewish communities

- (a) Brit Milah (the covenant of circumcision); the roles of the mohel (circumciser) and sandek (on whose knee the baby is put), and the meaning of the rituals performed in the ceremony
- (b) Naming ceremonies.

J5.2 Coming of age ceremonies: the key features and importance of coming of age ceremonies in different Jewish communities

- (a) Bar/Bat Mitzvah (son and daughter of the commandment), the purpose of lessons prior to the ceremony and the main elements of the synagogue service
- (b) Bat Chayil (daughter of valour).

J5.3 Marriage ceremonies: the key features and importance of marriage ceremonies in Judaism

- (a) Kiddushin (betrothal) as the first stage of the marriage ceremony
- (b) The actual marriage ceremony; the significance of the chuppah (canopy), ketubah (marriage contract), smashing of the glass and other rituals performed in the ceremony.

J5.4 Funeral rites: the key features and importance of funeral rites in Judaism

- (a) Funeral rites: the significance of lighting a candle and of the rituals relating to the preparation of the body, burial and recitation of the Kaddish
- (b) Mourning rituals: the three stages of mourning, and the significance of the rituals performed at shiva (the first seven days of mourning) and at the anniversary of the death
- (c) The role of the Chevra Kaddisha (sacred society).

J5 Rites of passage; religion and the family

J5.5 Kashrut (the laws of kosher/‘fit’) and treyfah (‘forbidden’)

- (a) The source of the kashrut laws in the Torah
- (b) The application of kashrut laws to food; rules for a Jewish kitchen, separation of meat and dairy, methods of slaughter and food preparation
- (c) The application of kashrut laws to clothing and ritual objects
- (d) Different views within Judaism on the observance, significance and relevance of the kashrut laws.

J5.6 Jewish beliefs about family life in different Jewish communities

- (a) Religious teaching on the roles and responsibilities of men and women
- (b) Religious teaching on nurture of the young and care of the elderly
- (c) Different Jewish attitudes to marriage, divorce and remarriage.

J5.7 Tradition and change

- (a) Traditional family roles, and the reasons some Jewish communities maintain them
- (b) Changing family roles, and the reasons some Jewish communities support change
- (c) Emotional and spiritual challenges involved in social change for some Jews.

J6 Religion and social action

J6.1 Judaism as a religion that shows concern for others

Teachings about love, compassion and concern for others:

- (a) following the teaching of the Torah on kindness to others
- (b) tzedakah (righteous giving), pushkes (collection boxes) and gemilut hasadim (kind actions).

J6.2 Jewish stewardship of the environment

- (a) The concept of humanity as being stewards of the Earth for G-d
- (b) The belief that G-d created everything and that humanity has the responsibility to care for the Earth that G-d created
- (c) The concept of tikkun olam ('repair the world') and its application to stewardship of G-d's gift of the environment.

Note: The focus is Jewish stewardship of the environment; ethical debates on treatment of animals are not included.

J6.3 Jewish organisations that relieve poverty

- (a) Tzedek, Jewish Care and World Jewish Relief
- (b) Groups and organisations particular to any country that relieve poverty within the national/local community
- (c) The concern of different religious groups for the spiritual as well as physical needs of those suffering from poverty or natural disasters
- (d) Jewish religious teachings as a motivation for organised charity work.

4 Details of the assessment

Paper 1 – Worship, Beliefs, Scriptures and Sacred Places

Written paper, 1 hour 45 minutes, 80 marks

This paper assesses topics 1, 2 and 3 in the subject content for each religion (see Section 3):

- Paper 1 Christianity topics: C1, C2, C3
- Paper 1 Islam topics: I1, I2, I3
- Paper 1 Judaism topics: J1, J2, J3.

In Paper 1, candidates answer **four** questions in total, taken from **two** sections:

- Section A Christianity: candidates answer **two** questions (out of a choice of three)
- Section B Islam: candidates answer **two** questions (out of a choice of three)
- Section C Judaism: candidates answer **two** questions (out of a choice of three).

Paper 2 – Festivals, Fasts, Family Life and Social Action

Written paper, 1 hour 45 minutes, 80 marks

This paper assesses topics 4, 5 and 6 in the subject content for each religion (see Section 3):

- Paper 2 Christianity topics: C4, C5, C6
- Paper 2 Islam topics: I4, I5, I6
- Paper 2 Judaism topics: J4, J5, J6.

In Paper 2, candidates answer **four** questions in total, taken from **two** sections:

- Section A Christianity: candidates answer **two** questions (out of a choice of three)
- Section B Islam: candidates answer **two** questions (out of a choice of three)
- Section C Judaism: candidates answer **two** questions (out of a choice of three).

Structure of Papers 1 and 2

Paper 1 and Paper 2 have the same format.

Candidates will **not** be penalised for using a different version of the spelling to the one used in the syllabus, so long as it is clear which word they are referring to.

Below is a summary of the structure of the papers and the types of question and marking.

Sections A, B and C

Candidates answer **two** out of three structured questions in **two** of these sections. Candidates answer **all** the parts of the chosen questions.

All questions on the papers have **20 marks** and are divided into three:

- Part (a): 6-mark short-answer question assessing AO1 Knowledge and understanding. This question is made up of two sub-parts (i) and (ii). Part (a) questions test candidates' knowledge and understanding and usually require factual knowledge. One mark is awarded for each relevant point made in part (a) questions. Teachers should encourage candidates to consider the number of marks available when responding.
- Part (b): 6 marks assessing AO1 Knowledge and understanding. The part (b) questions usually require a more detailed description and/or explanation in answer to the question. Marks are awarded against the levels of response marking grid for AO1 Knowledge and understanding.
- Part (c): 8 marks assessing AO2 Evaluation linked to the same overall topic as the other parts. The part (c) question requires a longer, structured response that evaluates different points of view and gives a judgement in answer to the question. Marks are awarded against the levels of response marking grid for AO2 Evaluation.

Advice for candidates answering Part (c) Evaluation questions

In the part (c) evaluation questions, candidates are required to evaluate different points of view. These evaluation questions take a range of formats, depending on the use of command word, but they all present an issue for discussion where different points of view can be held and considered by candidates. More than one point of view can often mean two opposing points of view (e.g. 'agree' and 'disagree') but all that is required is views that are different to each other.

Candidates are required to present their response using well-structured continuous prose and are required to provide a clear and well-reasoned judgement on the question.

Candidates' answers should be structured in paragraphs. Each paragraph should state and then consider a possible point of view or argument in answer to the question. Candidates should support a point of view with evidence. Answers should not be descriptive. The focus should be on the specific question, rather than on broad themes linked to the question.

The part (c) evaluative responses should provide a firm and clear judgement on the question asked so that the examiner can clearly see the position the candidate has taken on the issue. The judgement should be well reasoned, rather than simply stated, and should build on the evidence that precedes it.

Part (c) Evaluation questions are based on the content for the relevant paper. Candidates are encouraged to draw on material from across the syllabus to present a range of arguments and reach their own evaluation and judgement.

The levels of response marking grids for AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Evaluation are published in the specimen mark schemes which accompany the syllabus. These are available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/0490 and our School Support Hub.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exams. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Assess	make an informed judgement
Comment	give an informed opinion
Compare	identify / comment on similarities and/or differences
Describe	state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features
Discuss	write about issue(s) or topic(s) in depth in a structured way
Evaluate	judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount, or value of something
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things clear / say why and / or how and support with relevant evidence
Give	produce an answer from a given source or recall / memory
Identify	name / select / recognise
Outline	set out the main points
State	express in clear terms

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Before you start

Previous study

We do not expect learners starting this course to have previously studied Religious Studies.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses to require about 130 guided learning hours for each subject. This is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable.

This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones. To find out about availability check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/0490

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

You can enter candidates in the November exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge O Level Biblical Studies 2035
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) and Cambridge O Level syllabuses are at the same level.

Group awards: Cambridge ICE

Cambridge ICE (International Certificate of Education) is a group award for Cambridge IGCSE. It allows schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of learners who pass exams in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge ICE at www.cambridgeinternational.org/cambridgeice

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to an administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make your entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

Cambridge International works to avoid direct or indirect discrimination. We develop and design syllabuses and assessment materials to maximise inclusivity for candidates of all national, cultural or social backgrounds and candidates with protected characteristics; these protected characteristics include special educational needs and disability, religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity. In addition, the language and layout used are designed to make our materials as accessible as possible. This gives all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding and helps to minimise the requirement to make reasonable adjustments during the assessment process.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements (including modified papers) are the principal way in which Cambridge International complies with our duty, as guided by the UK Equality Act (2010), to make 'reasonable adjustments' for candidates with special educational needs (SEN), disability, illness or injury. Where a candidate would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a candidate with no SEN, disability, illness or injury, we may be able to agree pre-examination access arrangements. These arrangements help a candidate by minimising accessibility barriers and maximising their opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in an assessment.

Important:

- Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working at school; this is in line with the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- For Cambridge International to approve an access arrangement, we will need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment, involves reasonable cost and timeframe and does not affect the security and integrity of the assessment.
- Availability of access arrangements should be checked by centres at the start of the course. Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- Please contact us at the start of the course to find out if we are able to approve an arrangement that is not included in the list of standard access arrangements.
- Candidates who cannot access parts of the assessment may be able to receive an award based on the parts they have completed.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades A*, A, B, C, D, E, F or G indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge IGCSE.

A* is the highest and G is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade G. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge IGCSE is shown as INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (IGCSE).

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge IGCSE has two purposes:

- 1 to measure learning and achievement
The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement candidates awarded particular grades are likely to show. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

Grade descriptions for Cambridge IGCSE Religious Studies will be published after the first assessment of the syllabus in 2025.

Changes to this syllabus for 2025, 2026 and 2027

The syllabus has been reviewed and revised for first examination in 2025.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Changes to syllabus content

- The subject content section has been updated to include more detail. Although the wording is longer, the content to teach remains largely the same.
 - Some content has been added or removed in response to subject expert guidance.
 - A new topic, Stewardship of the environment, has been added to all three religions (note that ethical debates on treatment of animals are **not** included).
 - A new topic, The five roots of Usul ad-Din, has been added to the Islam content.
 - Some Christianity content has been removed: the difference between a bishop and an archbishop; the types of literature in the Bible: history, myth, psalms, songs and prophecy; tithing.
 - Some Islam content has been removed: Jihad (greater and lesser).
 - Some Judaism content has been removed: knowledge of the Tenakh, Mishnah and Talmud; the festivals of: Simchat Torah (rejoicing the Torah), and Shavuot (Feast of Weeks).
 - The subject content has been divided between Paper 1 and Paper 2 for assessment.
 - In the Judaism section, God will be spelt as G-d.
 - The names of some subject content sections have changed slightly.
 - Learner attributes have been added to the syllabus.
-

**Changes to assessment
(including changes to
specimen papers)**

- The aims have been updated.
 - The assessment objectives have been updated and reduced to two, with Understanding and Interpretation integrated into the other AOs.
 - The weighting of the assessment objectives has changed, with a higher weighting on Evaluation (40%) for reaching a judgement after considering different points of view.
 - Paper 1 and Paper 2 have new component titles, reflecting the content assessed.
 - The number of optional questions has changed: Paper 1 allows a choice, like Paper 2.
 - Paper 1 has short-answer questions (i) and (ii) for part (a), as in Paper 2.
 - The number of marks for each part question has changed; part (a) questions are worth 6 marks, part (b) questions are worth 6 marks and part (c) questions are worth 8 marks.
 - Paper 1 no longer includes a stimulus image or quotation in each section.
 - Question papers will no longer include English in brackets for Arabic/Hebrew/Greek/Latin religious terms; the meaning of terms listed in the subject content will be tested.
 - The command words and question phrases have been revised.
 - The mark schemes for both papers have been revised.
 - The specimen assessment materials have been updated.
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In addition to reading the syllabus, you should refer to the updated specimen assessment materials. The specimen papers will help your students become familiar with exam requirements and command words in questions. The specimen mark schemes show how students should answer questions to meet the assessment objectives.

School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

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