

# Pearson response to the Ofqual Consultation on GCSE, AS and A level Religious Studies, Conditions and Guidance

April 2015

---

## Organisation details

---

**Name**

Lesley Davies

**Position**

Vice President, Quality, Standards and Research

**Organisation name (if applicable)**

Pearson

**Address**

190 High Holborn  
London WC1V 7BH

**Email**

lesley.davies@pearson.com

**Telephone**

020 7190 4292

**Would you like us to treat your response as confidential?\***

If you answer yes, we will not include your details in any list of people or organisations that responded to the consultation.

Yes  No

**Is this a personal response or an official response on behalf of your organisation?\***

Personal response (Please answer the question 'If you ticked 'Personal views')

Official response (Please answer the question 'Type of responding organisation')

**If you ticked 'Personal views' which of the following are you?**

Student

Parent or carer

Teacher (but responding in a personal capacity)

Other, including general public (Please state below)

If you ticked "Official response from an organisation/group", please respond accordingly:

**Type of responding organisation\***

- Awarding organisation
- Local authority
- School or college (please answer the question below)
- Academy chain
- Private training provider
- University or other higher education institution
- Employer
- Other representative or interest group (please answer the question below)

**School or college type**

- Comprehensive or non-selective academy
- State selective or selective academy
- Independent
- Special school
- Further education college
- Sixth form college
- Other (please state below)

**Type of representative group or interest group**

- Group of awarding organizations
- Union
- Employer or business representative group
- Subject association or learned society
- Equality organisation or group
- School, college or teacher representative group
- Other (please state below)

**Nation\***

- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Other EU country
- Non-EU country

**How did you find out about this consultation?**

- Our newsletter or another one of our communications
- Our website
- Internet search
- Other

**May we contact you for further information?**

- Yes  No

### Question 1

---

**Do you have any comments on the draft Conditions for new religious studies GCSEs?**

Yes  No

### Question 2

---

**Do you have any comments on the draft guidance on comparability of optional routes for new religious studies GCSEs?**

Yes  No

*If yes, please provide them here:*

In the Guidance on comparability of optional routes on page 8, the word 'maximum' in the penultimate sentence in the final paragraph should be replaced with 'appropriate control' as we will ensure there are appropriate controls in place around the comparability of standards between different routes at all points within the cycle of setting and marking assessments, and awarding the qualification and small entry routes are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged.

### Question 3

---

**Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to spelling, punctuation and grammar, and the use of specialist terminology in new religious studies GCSEs?**

Yes  No

### Question 4

---

**Do you have any views on the draft guidance on assessment objectives for new religious studies GCSEs?**

Yes  No

### Question 5

---

**Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to limiting the amount of recall awarded by new religious studies GCSEs?**

Yes  No

*If yes, please provide them here:*

Pearson agrees with the 20% limit on 'knowledge in isolation' across the qualification if the marks that reward candidates for showing 'knowledge in isolation' within items targeting higher order skills (eg explanation, and extended evaluative type questions) are not included as part of this 20%. If these are included within the 20% then this is not sufficient enough as this limit won't allow us to appropriately design assessments that reliably and validly assess the content. Given the prescribed nature of the DfE Religious Studies GCSE Subject content document, Annexe A Part One (much of which would need to be assessed in heavily knowledge-in-isolation biased ways), and the fact this is an untiered GCSE that must be accessible to the full ability range. For us to ask an appropriate number of different question types (from straight recall, through explanation, up to extended evaluative questions) we recommend that a limit of 25% for knowledge in isolation would be more appropriate, and would reflect the large amount of factual content in Annexe A which makes up 50% of the qualification content.

### Question 6

---

**Do you have any comments on the draft Conditions for new religious studies A levels and AS levels?**

Yes  No

### Question 7

---

**Do you have any comments on the draft guidance on comparability of optional routes for new religious studies A levels and AS levels?**

Yes  No

*If yes, please provide them here:*

In the Guidance on comparability of optional routes on page 15, the word 'maximum' in the penultimate sentence in the final paragraph should be replaced with 'appropriate control' as Pearson will ensure there are appropriate controls in place around the comparability of standards between different routes at all points within the cycle of setting and marking assessments, and awarding the qualification and small entry routes are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged.

### Question 8

---

**Do you have any comments on the draft guidance on assessment objectives for new religious studies A levels and AS levels?**

Yes  No

### Question 9

---

**We have not identified any ways in which our proposals would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic<sup>14</sup> (beyond those we have considered in earlier consultations). Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?**

Yes  No

### Question 10

---

**Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?**

Yes  No

### Question 11

---

**Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?**

Yes  No