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Diploma Programme

World religions guide

First examinations 2013

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IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

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Purpose of this document

This publication is intended to guide the planning, teaching and assessment of the subject in schools. Subject teachers are the primary audience, although it is expected that teachers will use the guide to inform students and parents about the subject.

This guide can be found on the subject page of the online curriculum centre (OCC) at http://occ.ibo.org, a password-protected IB website designed to support IB teachers. It can also be purchased from the IB store at http://store.ibo.org.

Additional resources

Additional publications such as teacher support materials, specimen papers and markschemes, and internal assessment guidance can also be found on the OCC.

Teachers are also encouraged to check the OCC for additional resources created or used by other teachers. Teachers can provide details of useful resources, for example: websites, books, videos, journals or teaching ideas.

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The Diploma Programme

The Diploma Programme is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

The Diploma Programme hexagon

The course is presented as six academic areas enclosing a central core (see figure 1). It encourages the concurrent study of a broad range of academic areas. Students study: two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language); a humanities or social science subject; an experimental science; mathematics; one of the creative arts. It is this comprehensive range of subjects that makes the Diploma Programme a demanding course of study designed to prepare students effectively for university entrance. In each of the academic areas students have flexibility in making their choices, which means they can choose subjects that particularly interest them and that they may wish to study further at university.

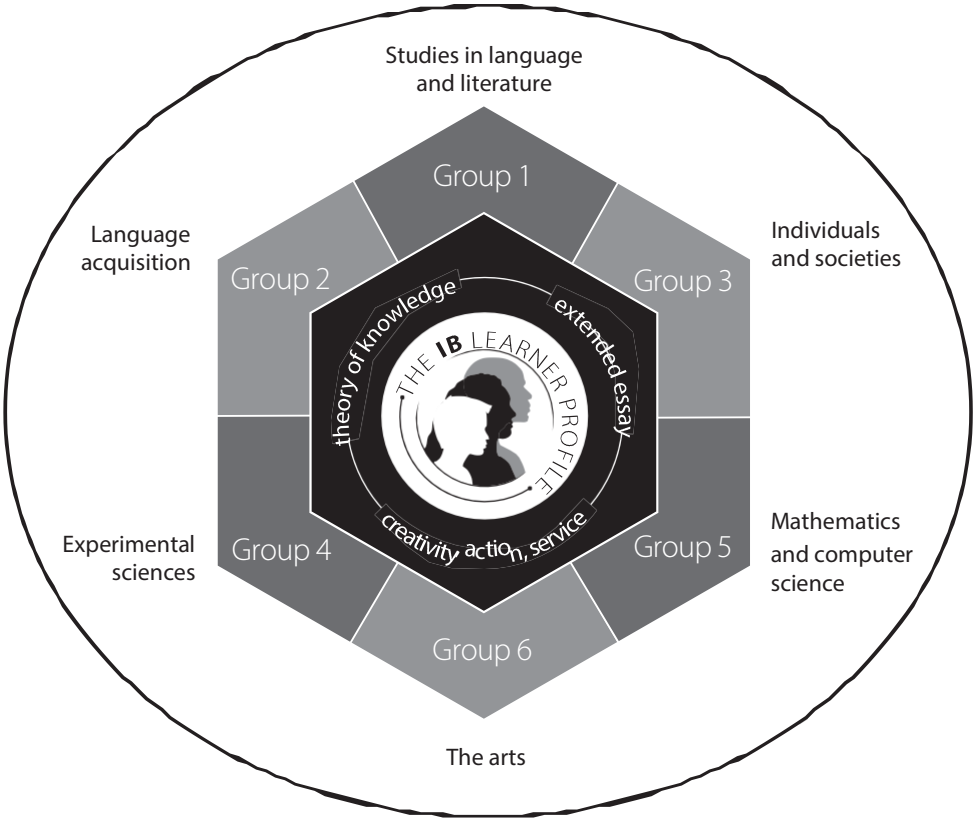

Figure 1
Diploma Programme model

Choosing the right combination

Students are required to choose one subject from each of the six academic areas, although they can choose a second subject from groups 1 to 5 instead of a group 6 subject. Normally, three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 240 teaching hours for HL subjects and 150 hours for SL. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL.

At both levels, many skills are developed, especially those of critical thinking and analysis. At the end of the course, students' abilities are measured by means of external assessment. Many subjects contain some element of coursework assessed by teachers. The course is available for examinations in English, French and Spanish.

The core of the hexagon

All Diploma Programme students participate in the three course requirements that make up the core of the hexagon. Reflection on all these activities is a principle that lies at the heart of the thinking behind the Diploma Programme.

The theory of knowledge course encourages students to think about the nature of knowledge, to reflect on the process of learning in all the subjects they study as part of their Diploma Programme course, and to make connections across the academic areas. The extended essay, a substantial piece of writing of up to 4,000 words, enables students to investigate a topic of special interest that they have chosen themselves. It also encourages them to develop the skills of independent research that will be expected at university. Creativity, action, service involves students in experiential learning through a range of artistic, sporting, physical and service activities.

The IB mission statement and the IB learner profile

The Diploma Programme aims to develop in students the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to fulfill the aims of the IB, as expressed in the organization's mission statement and the learner profile. Teaching and learning in the Diploma Programme represent the reality in daily practice of the organization's educational philosophy.

Nature of the subject

Students of group 3 subjects study individuals and societies. This means that they explore the interactions between humans and their environment in time, space and place. As a result, these subjects are often known collectively as the "human sciences" or "social sciences".

Humankind has been concerned throughout recorded history with religious questions, such as the existence of God, the meaning and purpose of life and death, and the sense we make of our lives. In the contemporary world, religion has a significant influence on individuals and societies across the globe. The power of religion to both unite and divide affects believers and non-believers alike. Therefore, religion in its varied forms is a distinctive realm of human experience that demands academic inquiry.

In the context of the mission statement of the IB it is most appropriate to study a number of living world religions in a scholarly, open-minded and objective way.

The Diploma Programme world religions course is a systematic, analytical yet empathetic study of the variety of beliefs and practices encountered in nine main religions of the world. The course seeks to promote an awareness of religious issues in the contemporary world by requiring the study of a diverse range of religions.

The religions should be studied in such a way that students acquire a sense of what it is like to belong to a particular religion and how that influences the way in which the followers of that religion understand the world, act in it, and relate and respond to others.

The course consists of an introductory unit, exploring five of the nine living world religions that form the basis of the syllabus. This is complemented by an in-depth study of two religions chosen from six world religions. This part of the syllabus is guided by themes, key concepts and key questions. The final component is the investigative study, which provides opportunities for individual research of an aspect of the religious experience, practice or belief of a group and/or individual adherents.

In the study of world religions, the experiential dimension to learning is of great importance, and it is hoped that the course will be a catalyst for visits to and from members of different faith communities. Where this is not possible, imaginative teaching, combined with the use of a range of resources, should enable the students to come to know what it means to be a follower of a particular religion.

World religions and the international dimension

The Diploma Programme world religions course seeks to promote respect for the diversity of religious beliefs, both locally and globally, with the aim of enhancing international and inter-religious understanding. The course provides a very different perspective in this area. Students should be encouraged to look at contemporary national and international issues regarding religion and how these may impact on ethical and legal issues.

World religions and prior learning

No particular background in terms of specific subjects studied for national or international qualifications is expected or required, and no prior knowledge of world religions is necessary for students to undertake this course of study.

Links to the Middle Years Programme

The Middle Years Programme explores concepts and skills that are further developed in the Diploma Programme world religions course. Key concepts of the Middle Years Programme of time, place and space, change and global awareness are extended into the specific demands of the Diploma Programme world religions syllabus. The Middle Years Programme also develops analytical skills, decision-making skills and investigative skills, all of which are required for a study of world religions.

World religions and theory of knowledge

As with other areas of knowledge, there is a variety of ways of gaining knowledge in group 3 subjects. Archival evidence, data collection, experimentation and observation, inductive and deductive reasoning, for example, can all be used to help explain patterns of behaviour and lead to knowledge claims. Students in group 3 subjects are required to evaluate these knowledge claims by exploring knowledge issues such as validity, reliability, credibility, certainty, and individual as well as cultural perspectives.

The relationship between group 3 subjects and theory of knowledge is of crucial importance and is fundamental to the Diploma Programme. Having followed a course of study in group 3, students should be able to critically reflect on the various ways of knowing and on the methods used in human sciences, and in so doing become "inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people" (IB mission statement).

In the teaching of IB world religions, a number of issues will arise that highlight the relationship between theory of knowledge and world religions. Some of the questions that could be considered during the course are identified below.

- What is a religion? To what extent is religion distinguishable from culture or ideology?
- Are religions created, discovered or revealed? What are the implications for religious knowledge?
- To what extent is religious belief rational? Are reason and emotion necessarily opposed in religious belief?
- Do people of differing religious convictions necessarily have different world views?
- Does the concept of religion exist in every society? If so, what are the implications of this knowledge?
- Who claims to possess religious knowledge and on what basis?
- What implications do religious beliefs have for other areas of knowledge? How do these vary from religion to religion?
- What implications does Nietzsche's statement pose for morality when he says "God is dead"?
- What might Einstein have meant when he said "Religion without science is blind. Science without religion is lame"?
- In what ways does religious language differ from everyday language, and what does this tell us about religious knowledge?
- What is the role of intuition as a source of religious belief?
- What is the role of empirical evidence as a source of religious belief?

Aims

Group 3 aims

The aims of all subjects in **group 3, individuals and societies** are to:

1. encourage the systematic and critical study of: human experience and behaviour; physical, economic and social environments; the history and development of social and cultural institutions
2. develop in the student the capacity to identify, to analyse critically and to evaluate theories, concepts and arguments about the nature and activities of the individual and society
3. enable the student to collect, describe and analyse data used in studies of society, to test hypotheses and interpret complex data and source material
4. promote the appreciation of the way in which learning is relevant both to the culture in which the student lives, and the culture of other societies
5. develop an awareness in the student that human attitudes and opinions are widely diverse and that a study of society requires an appreciation of such diversity
6. enable the student to recognize that the content and methodologies of the subjects in group 3 are contestable and that their study requires the toleration of uncertainty.

World religions aims

In addition, the aims of the Diploma Programme **world religions** course are to enable students to:

7. promote an inquiring, analytical and empathetic approach to the study of religion
8. develop an informed understanding of the diversity of world religions
9. foster a respectful awareness of the significance of the beliefs and practices for the faith member
10. develop an understanding of how religion affects people's lives
11. encourage a global appreciation of the issues surrounding religious and spiritual beliefs, controversies and movements in the world today
12. promote responsible and informed international citizenship.

Assessment objectives

There are four assessment objectives (AOs) for the Diploma Programme world religions SL course. Having followed the course, students will be expected to do the following.

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified content
   - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of five world religions chosen for the introductory unit
   - Define, understand and use concepts associated with particular world religions
   - Demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of two religions reflecting different traditions
   - In internal assessment, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a specific world religions investigative study
2. Demonstrate application and analysis of knowledge and understanding
   - Demonstrate how the key concepts of a religion are expressed in the behaviour of believers
   - Demonstrate application and analysis of concepts
   - Research, select and analyse material from both primary and secondary sources
3. Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation
   - Evaluate concepts associated with world religions
   - Synthesize by integrating evidence and critical commentary
4. Select, use and apply a variety of appropriate skills and techniques
   - Select, use and apply the prescribed world religions skills in appropriate contexts
   - Demonstrate the ability to organize ideas into a clear, logical, coherent and balanced account
   - Evaluate the reliability of evidence and the chosen method of research for the internal assessment

Syllabus outline

Syllabus component	Teaching hours
	SL only
Part 1: Introduction to world religions **Five** world religions to be studied from a choice of nine, at least **one** to be chosen from each of the three columns in the chart of world religions, Part 1: Introduction to world religions. Guided by three fundamental questions	50
Part 2: In-depth studies **Two** world religions to be studied from a choice of six, each chosen from a different column (p 17) Guided through themes	80
Part 3: Internal assessment Investigative study	20
Total teaching hours	**150**

Approaches to the teaching of world religions

Students and teachers are reminded that the world religions course is an academic study of the chosen world religions. Individual views or beliefs should not undermine the objectivity of the approach to study.

Constructing a course of study

The world religions syllabus consists of three parts: Part 1: Introduction to world religions; Part 2: In-depth studies; and Part 3: Internal assessment. All three parts must be completed for world religions SL.

Suggested starting approaches

- Map of the world with the pattern of religious adherents and world religions timelines.
- Use of a visual stimulus—video/film or artifact.
- How does the visual stimulus chosen reflect the practices and beliefs of the particular religion?

Part 1: Introduction to world religions

The teacher should begin with the students' prior understanding of the nature of religion and the context in which religions exist. Some time should be taken to explore religious terminology (for example, terminology associated with God: omnipotent, transcendent) and forms of language used in the study of religion and by religions (for example, the sacred, myth, ritual, symbolism, use of metaphor).

Five world religions must be selected for study, at least one from each of the three columns. The intention is to provide students with an understanding of the religions through the exploration of the three fundamental questions, in order to understand the different ways in which the religions view the world (see "Fundamental questions" in "Part 1: Introduction to world religions"). Resources for this section of the course might include secondary sources, such as introductory textbooks, primary sources, such as short extracts from religious texts (to prepare students for the paper 1 examination), and a variety of other resources, for example, artifacts, films, visual and audio materials. This section of the syllabus would normally be taught first, but if two of the introductory religions are also to be covered as in-depth studies they could be taught at the beginning of each study.

Part 2: In-depth studies

Two religions should be chosen, each from a different column. It is recommended that these two religions are also studied in Part 1, but if teachers want to cover two different religions from those studied in the introductory unit, this is also permitted. It is expected that students will take the time to explore in depth the two religions chosen, through the key concepts and themes. In order to do this they will be expected to consult a wide range of resources including primary (which include the sacred texts) and secondary sources. This should include, where possible, contact with faith representatives and visits to religious communities/places of worship.

Part 3: Internal assessment

The internal assessment requires students to undertake an investigative study of an aspect of the religious experience, practice or belief of a group and/or individual adherents. Teachers are encouraged to plan visits to sacred places or buildings and make contact with religious adherents to stimulate an interest in the practice of a range of religions. These might well lead on to the selection of an individual study. Time should be spent with the whole class reviewing the nature of the internal assessment task, advising on the importance of a key research question, working on research methodology and explaining how the assessment criteria are applied to the task. Teachers should also give some individual time to students to supervise the progress of their written analysis.

Dealing with sensitive issues

Representation

It is important that the representation of religions is evidence based, balanced and neutral, as opposed to stereotypical and biased. Generalizations that fail to reflect the internal diversity of belief and practice within major religious traditions should be avoided. A critical awareness of sources, especially media and internet sources, with regard to reliability, accuracy and perspective is required and could be related to the theory of knowledge course. In the internal assessment task, the authority and appropriateness to the research project of individual interview subjects must be considered. Care should be taken not to misrepresent interviewees when using material gained from fieldwork, for example, by quoting them out of context. At the same time, material should not be used uncritically.

Part 1: Introduction to world religions

Introduction to the study of religion

The following questions should be considered as an introduction to the subject.

- What is religion?
- How do we study religion? Insider/outsider approaches.
- Which sources do we use and how do we interpret them?
- What makes an experience religious?

Chart of world religions

Students should be introduced to a range of world religions reflecting different traditions, beliefs and practices. **Five** religions must be selected, at least **one** from each of the three columns (approximate teaching time is 50 hours, that is, 10 hours for each religion).

Hinduism	Judaism	Taoism
Buddhism	Christianity	Jainism
Sikhism	Islam	Bahá'i Faith

Context for the study of world religions

The starting point for the study of the five religions is the decision of the teacher. Taking account of historical, social, cultural and geographical features of the religions would be appropriate, as well as the religious backgrounds of the students.

Fundamental questions

The following three questions underpin the study of all world religions.

- What is the human condition?
- Where are we going?
- How do we get there?

The syllabus specification focuses on core beliefs, but these should not be seen to exclude or restrict the diversity of beliefs and practices that are present within religions. When applicable, at least two different interpretations from different denominations and schools of thought should be applied to the questions in order for students to investigate the diversity of thought and practice that exists within a particular religion.

Core beliefs and practices for the introductory unit

Bahá'i Faith

1. What is the human condition?

Bahá'is believe that each child is born pure and holy. God created humans with immortal souls and a dual nature: an animalistic and a selfish (evil) side, and a spiritual side (soul) with reason to develop their divine attributes and pursue God's plan for humanity.

2. Where are we going?

- To paradise (not a place but a state of perfection and in harmony with God's will)
- To hell (a state of imperfection, far removed from God and in conflict with his will), by denying God and his plan, and performing evil acts

3. How do we get there?

We achieve salvation by:

- acknowledging the oneness of God and the unity of the manifestations of God (prophets)
- developing our divine attributes (reason) and being involved in God's plan for the whole of humanity
- aligning our lives with the teachings, laws and obligations as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Buddhism

1. What is the human condition?

Buddhists believe humans are caught in samsara: the endless cycle of existence, characterized by maya (illusion), tanha/trishna (craving) and hatred/aversion, leading to dukkha/dukha (suffering or unsatisfactoriness).

2. Where are we going?

- To a favourable or unfavourable rebirth after death
- To Enlightenment through entering nibbana/nirvana
- To Buddhahood
- To bodhisattvahood (Mahayana Buddhism)

3. How do we get there?

We achieve Enlightenment by:

- acknowledging the Three Jewels: Buddha, dhamma/dharma, and sangha, by joining the sangha
- accepting the Four Noble Truths
- following the Middle Way/the Noble Eightfold Path
- following the precepts consistent with a lay or monastic way of life
- following the path of the bodhisattva
- developing wisdom and compassion.

Christianity

1. What is the human condition?

God created humankind in God's own image. God gave humans free will but, through disobedience, humans are separated from God by original sin. This is expressed in the Bible through the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall. God provided a means of salvation through Jesus Christ.

2. Where are we going?

- To heaven: eternal union with God
- To purgatory: a staging post between this world and heaven
- To hell: separation from God

3. How do we get there?

We achieve salvation by:

- believing in the presence of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- believing in Jesus Christ as Saviour
- living by the teachings of Jesus
- participating in the sacraments, as appropriate to the denomination.

Hinduism

1. What is the human condition?

Hindus believe humans are caught in samsara: the atman (soul) is condemned to an endless cycle of reincarnation as a result of karma (actions). Bad karma has a corrupting effect on the universe.

2. Where are we going?

- To a favourable or unfavourable reincarnation after death
- To moksha (liberation) from samsara and the consequences of karma

3. How do we get there?

We achieve liberation by:

- **either** performing actions pertinent to the dharma (law or teachings) of Hinduism or to the law or teachings of jati (one's caste): that is, the varnashramadharma (pertinent to higher castes)
- **or** following one of the yogic paths, for example, Jnana (path of knowledge), Bhakti (path of devotion), or Karma (path of action).

Islam

*Please note that the word "*Allah*" is used to mean "God".

1. What is the human condition?

Humans must strive to submit themselves to the will of *Allah* for, without divine guidance, they are likely to stray from the path of prescribed and prohibited actions that *Allah* has set out in order to prevent moral error.

2. Where are we going?

- For the faithful, to eternal janna (paradise), by obedience to *Allah's* will
- By disobedience to *Allah's* will, to jahannam (hell), which is reserved for those whom *Allah* has decided to punish for a time for committing grave sins and not repenting

3. How do we get there?

We attain salvation via submission to *Allah's* will. This may be achieved by:

- acknowledging tawhid (the oneness of *Allah*) and submitting to his will, as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and his prophets
- believing in *Allah*, the scriptures, angels, jinns and **akhirah** (life after death)
- living according to the Qur'an and the divinely inspired sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
- practising the Five Pillars of Islam, the obligations prescribed in the Qur'an for individual Muslims.

Jainism

1. What is the human condition?

Jains believe humans are caught in samsara: the endless cycle of life, death and rebirth, characterized by ignorance and suffering. The jiva (soul) is condemned to samsara and, as a result of the collecting of karma, is weighed down within ajiva (the world of matter).

2. Where are we going?

- To a favourable or unfavourable rebirth after death
- To moksha (liberation) of the jiva from the ajiva

3. How do we get there?

We achieve liberation by:

- following the teachings of Mahavira, and the Five Great Vows (including ahimsa: not harming any living being)
- practising asceticism
- attaining kevala (a pure, omniscient consciousness)
- practising the Twelve Great Vows (for monks and nuns).

Judaism

1. What is the human condition?

God created humans in his image and endowed them with free will, which leads to a constant choice between yetzer ha-ra (bad inclinations) and yetzer ha-tov (good inclinations).

2. Where are we going?

Judaism emphasizes observance in this life rather than elaborating on the hereafter. There is, however, the expectation of a Messianic age of peace and justice for humankind in this world and a belief in Olam Ha-Ba (the world to come).

3. How do we get there?

We accomplish this through living a life in accordance with God's will and in readiness for the coming of the Messianic Age. This will be achieved by:

- being the House of Israel or Chosen People
- obeying all the mitzvot (commandments) of the Covenant that God has revealed in the Torah
- living according to the Shema.

Sikhism

1. What is the human condition?

All living beings were created by God. Through maya (illusion) and haumai (ego-centredness), jot (the divine spark) is not realized and therefore human beings remain focused on their "human" or baser emotions summarized in the five vices of kam (lust), lobh (covetousness), moh (attachment), krodh (anger) and ahankar (pride). The condition is known as manmukh (the follower of the ego), as opposed to gurmukh (one who is focused on God and lives by the teachings of the gurus).

2. Where are we going?

- Born into a favourable or unfavourable rebirth after death based upon the karma of the previous life
- To be taken into the sach khand (realm of truth) where God is

3. How do we get there?

We achieve liberation and union with God through:

- living beings becoming gurmukh (God-centred) through God's grace and living by the teachings of the gurus
- practising nam japna (continual meditation on God's name)
- following the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib
- earning a living honestly and giving a proportion of what we earn to those in need
- sewa (altruistic service) to God and humanity, regardless of birth or gender.

Taoism

1. What is the human condition?

Tao, the Way, is our original nature. Nothing is evil, but things are out of balance because humans departed from the Way. Civilization has tried to improve on nature; as a result we have created conflict and chaos.

2. Where are we going?

- We are already there, but we have to realize it by becoming fully in accord with the Tao
- Everything flows out of Tao, and will return to Tao: this is the fu (invariable law of nature that ensures everything returns to a balanced state)

3. How do we get there?

We achieve living the Way by:

- living a contemplative life in nature
- taking no action, that is, not interfering with wu-wei (nature)
- balancing yin with yang: yin being female, dark and receptive; yang being male, bright and assertive
- reconciling opposites on a higher level of consciousness or intuitive level
- releasing Ch'i, the life force.

Part 2: In-depth studies

Introduction to in-depth studies

Two in-depth studies should be chosen, each from a different column (approximate teaching time is 80 hours, that is, 40 hours for each in-depth study). It is recommended that the two religions studied in depth should be taken from the five chosen for the introductory section of the syllabus.

Hinduism	Judaism
Buddhism	Christianity
Sikhism	Islam

In-depth studies should be approached through the **themes** using the **key questions** to focus on analysis rather than description: this is achieved by an understanding and application of the **key concepts** and the specific content for each religion.

Each theme should be taught using a range of resources, as noted in the **approaches to teaching** section. The religions studied should be placed in their historical, social, political and cultural contexts, though the emphasis should be on contemporary practice. The diversity of expression and experience within religions should be emphasized in connection with such issues as sectarian differences, migration, conversion and adaptation. Not all key questions or sub-sections will apply to all religions. All syllabus content for each in-depth study should be covered but the themes do not need to be studied in the order in which they are presented in the guide. The content given in each in-depth study is detailed in order to provide thorough information to enable students to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of the two religions chosen.

Themes and key questions

Theme	Approaches to teaching and key questions
1. Rituals • Lifetime rituals/rites of passage • Worship • Festivals • Gender and ritual • Society and ritual	**Approaches to teaching** This theme should be studied through visits to holy places, artifacts, films, texts, cultural contexts. **Key questions** • What are the purposes of specific rituals? • How are specific rituals and doctrines linked? • How are specific rituals linked to a foundational figure? • To what extent does ritual shape communal identity? • How does ritual shape daily life? • What gender issues might be raised by the way rituals are performed? • To what extent are rituals affected by the social, political or cultural contexts?

Theme	Approaches to teaching and key questions
2. Sacred texts • Composition • Collation • Development • Interpretation • Language	**Approaches to teaching** This theme should be approached through the study of sections of texts and commentaries on texts. **Key questions** • What gives authority to different texts? • Who can interpret sacred texts, and why? • What are the links between sacred texts and key figures? • How are developments within a religion reflected in interpretations of its sacred texts? • What is the relationship between developments in a religion and the introduction of new sacred texts? • Does translation affect the authority of a sacred text?
3. Doctrines/beliefs • Where the doctrines came from • Statements of belief • Eschatology • Cosmogony and cosmology • Authority • Schools of thought	**Approaches to teaching** This theme should be approached through the study of primary and secondary written texts or sources, art, architecture, iconography, ritual and practices, media sources, and through visiting speakers. **Key questions** • To what extent do doctrines unite, or create divisions, within a religion? • What is the relationship between doctrine and organizational structure, for example, the authority of priests, monks, gurus and jurists? • How do art and architecture express the beliefs and nourish the believers of a religion? • What is the link between specific doctrines and rituals? • To what extent are core doctrines affected by different social, political or cultural contexts?
4. Religious experience • Group/individual experience • Conversion (reversion in Islam) • Reaffirmation • Meditation/worship/prayer • Gender and religious experience	**Approaches to teaching** This theme should be approached, where possible, through visiting faith speakers, visits to places of worship, the study of biographies, autobiographies, videos, films or poetry. **Key questions** • To what extent does gender, age or status affect religious experience? • What part does conversion/reaffirmation play in relation to a particular religion? • What is the place of music, singing and dance in religious experience? • How far can language express religious experience? • How far does doctrine shape individual or collective religious experience? • To what extent is religious experience affected by social, political or cultural contexts?

Theme	Approaches to teaching and key questions
5. Ethics and moral conduct • Interpretation/authority • Ethical practice and legal issues	**Approaches to teaching** This theme should be investigated through case studies. No more than three case studies should be chosen. Each case study should focus on a different contemporary national or international issue. These studies can be approached through texts, commentaries, contemporary writings, media and visiting speakers. Case studies could focus on issues such as war and conflict, medical ethics, human and animal rights, marriage and divorce, food, dress. Each study should reflect the interplay between secular and religious perspectives. **Key questions** • What are the core ethical teachings of a religion, and what significant interpretations of them exist? • Can core ethical teachings in a religion conflict, and, if so, can they be resolved in relation to a contemporary issue, for example, euthanasia: sanctity of life and compassion? • To what extent are ethics and moral conduct affected by social, political or cultural contexts? • What are the consequences of transgression, and what sanctions do religions apply, for example, in relation to blasphemy? • How and why do religious and secular laws or customs sometimes clash? • To what extent do dietary laws or rules on dress reflect or inform communal identity? • What is a religion's ethical stance on war, and how is this applied to a specific conflict? • How compatible are a religion's ethics with human rights, for example, freedom of expression?

In-depth study 1: Buddhism

The in-depth study of Buddhism should be based on an understanding and application of the following key Buddhist concepts. These should inform the study of each of the themes and the key questions, rather than being taught separately. All key concepts are given in Pali/Sanskrit (where only one word is given the spellings are the same in both languages). **This section should be studied with emphasis on the themes and key questions found in the "Themes and key questions" in the "Part 2: In-depth studies" section**.

Key concepts

• **Dukkha/Dukha** (suffering) • **Tanha/Trishna** (craving) • **Anicca/Anitya** (change) • **Anatta/Anatman** (lack of permanent self)	• **Buddha** (enlightened or awakened one) • **Bodhisatt** (one intent on becoming, or destined to become, a Buddha) • **Bodhisattva** (a being destined for Enlightenment who postpones final attainment of Buddhanhood in order to help living beings)

• **Nibbana/Nirvana** (enlightenment) • **Arahant/Arhat** (enlightened person) • **Samsara** (cycle of life) • **Kamma/Karma** (action leading to a state of rebirth) • **Maya** (illusion)	• **Sangha** (community—monastic and lay) • **Dhamma/Dharma** (teachings of Buddha, also the truth) • **Bhavana** (mental discipline or meditation/ formal training) • **Karuna** (compassion) • **Panna/Prajna** (wisdom) • **Sila** (ethical conduct) • **Upaya** (skillfulness/skill in means)

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Lifetime rituals/rites of passage	Attention should be paid to how and why rituals/rites of passage, worship and festivals vary with branches of a religion according to doctrinal, cultural and gender factors. In Buddhism ritual/rites of passage, worship and festivals are influenced by the status and roles accorded to Buddha(s), bodhisattvas, monks and laity and the teachings of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana and cultural and geographic locations. Lifetime rituals/rites of passage were originally based on the Buddha's teachings and the practices he laid down, especially for monks in the Vinaya. Later variations and additions to these emerged in different schools following the influence of teachers in those branches of Buddhism. • Recitation of the Three Jewels—Buddha, dhamm/dharma and sangha. Following the Five Precepts. Puja (daily devotion), meditation, pilgrimage and funeral rites, punna/punya (transfer of merit ceremonies) • Theravada Buddhists: no birth or marriage ceremonies, but there are death and funeral ceremonies; pirit ceremony for illness or new homes. Initiation ceremony for males entering the sangha (monastery) and ordination ceremony on becoming a bhikkhu/bhikshu (monk) • Mahayana Buddhism: more lay-oriented sangha, initiation ceremonies for monks. Both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists have pilgrimages. More elaborate ceremonies for funerals—especially Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhism **Possible resources** • Buddha statues with different mudras (choreographed symbolic hand movements to assist in meditation), prayer beads, prayer flags, prayer wheel, Tibetan wheel of life, thangkas (Tibetan religious cloth painting), mandalas (sand paintings and diagrams) • For rites of passage: films of initiation, photos of ceremonies
Worship	• Focus on veneration—living the Five Precepts, reciting the Three Jewels, puja, following the Noble Eightfold Path • Vajrayana Buddhism: mudras, thangkas (rupas) and mandalas (tupas) **Possible resources** • Films on meditation, leaflets or web pages from Buddhist organizations, guest speakers or interviews with monks and nuns, Buddha statues, thangkas, mandalas, photos of Buddha statues looking at different mudras
Festivals	• Theravada Buddhism: Wesak (Vesak) (full moon in May, celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death); Asala (celebrating the Buddha's conception, renunciation and first sermon) • Mahayana Buddhism: celebrates the above and also a New Year festival in the spring • Kathina (giving of robes to monks); Vassa/Varsa (rain retreat); Obon Matsuri (homage to the dead) in Japan

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Gender and ritual	• Theravada Buddhism: traditionally bhikkhus (male monks) are superior to bhikkhunis (nuns) • Mahayana Buddhism: bodhisattva involves females. Humans are seen as exemplifying both feminine and masculine principles so are given identical meditation exercises
Society and ritual	• Individual meditation at home or collectively at a temple • Festivals involve puja at home and attendance at a temple

Theme 2: Sacred texts	Specified content
Composition	• Theravada Buddhism: the Pali Canon or Tipitaka/Tripitaka (Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka). The Sutta Pitaka contains the Dhammapada. Buddha—Siddhartha Gotama (Sakyamuni) • Mahayana Buddhism: focus on scriptures about the many Buddhas. Prajnaparamita literature—the Diamond Sutra and Heart Sutra, and the Sukhavati Sutras—the Lotus Sutra describes the "Pure Lands" in which the Buddhas reside
Collation	• Theravada Buddhism: the Pali Canon or Tipitaka/Tripitaka passed down orally from the Buddha to the five arahats/arhats (his original followers and now enlightened persons) to the monastic order • Mahayana Buddhists argue that the Pali Canon was recited by the arhats, but other scriptures are attributed to the bodhisattvas and all are the words of the Buddha
Development	• Theravada Buddhism: the Pali Canon was passed down through the monastic order. Scriptural knowledge and wisdom (panna/prajna) are important pursuits • Mahayana Buddhism: shastras and agamas • Vajrayana Buddhism: tantras
Interpretation	• See the "Collation" section above
Language	• Two languages, Pali and Sanskrit, represent different interpretations

Theme 3: Doctrines/ beliefs	Specified content
Where the doctrines came from	• Theravada Buddhism: Siddhartha Gotama • Mahayana Buddhism: The historical Buddha, prominent bodhisattvas

Statements of belief	• The Three Jewels, the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts according to Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism and way of life • The Three Marks of Existence: anicca/anitya, dukkha/duhkha, anatta, and their relationship with each other. The skandhas and the chain of dependent origination. The Three Poisons: ignorance, desire and aversion
Eschatology	• Theravada Buddhists do not claim that there is a creator god. There is birth, death and rebirth into samsara (the cycle of life). Desires cause suffering, karma and rebirth. Enlightenment extinguishes maya (illusion) and frees one from samsara: what we call "the body" composed of five khandas/skandhas (aggregates) • Mahayana Buddhism: bodhisattva—attainment of nirvana, not for oneself, but Buddhahood for the sake of others (see examples of bodhisattvas: Avalokiteshvara, Amitabha, Manjushri and the Taras)
Cosmogony and cosmology	• Theravada Buddhism: cycle of existence • Mahayana Buddhism: Buddhas in other realms • Lokas (31 planes of existence within 3 realms)
Authority	• Theravada Buddhism: more authority given to monks. Lay people aim for punna (merit) to ensure a good rebirth, but monks aim for nibbana • Mahayana Buddhism: emphasis on monks but all can aim for nirvana and the higher goal of Buddhahood • Vajrayana Buddhism: system of lamas
Schools of thought	• Theravada Buddhism: "Way of the Elders" (original form) • Mahayana: "The Great Vehicle", offshoots of Mahayana: Ch'an Buddhism in China, Zen and Pure Land Buddhism in Japan, and Vajrayana Buddhism—"The Diamond Vehicle" in Tibet • The spread of Buddhism and adaptations in the West

Theme 4: Religious experience	**Specified content**
Group/individual experience	• Theravada Buddhism: all boys are required to spend some time in a monastery; monastic life is the ideal • Mahayana Buddhism: daily puja; service to monks • Vajrayana Buddhism: learning from lamas **Possible resources and artifacts** • Biographies, autobiographies, films, poetry, visits to places of worship • Rupas (Buddha statues), artwork of temples, mandalas and thangkas
Conversion	• Realization that all is maya (illusion), practising non-attachment, and movement towards nirvana
Meditation/worship/prayer	• The monks meditate but most Buddhists do not meditate; they venerate the Buddha

Theme 4: Religious experience	Specified content
Gender and religious experience	• Theravada Buddhism: Buddha—male in previous lives • Women are sometimes presented in scripture negatively: reproduction—links to samsara and sexuality, which leads to desire and suffering. Bhikkhunis (nuns) are subservient to bhikkhus (monks). Change is occurring in contemporary modern society • Mahayana Buddhism: lay community of both genders, female bodhisattvas—the Taras • Females have an essential role in Tibetan tantric rituals involving sex, which leads to liberation (union of wisdom and compassion)

Theme 5: Ethics and moral conduct	Specified content
Interpretation/authority	• Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama as an Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion • Abolition of the caste system by Siddhartha Gotama, but little is said on the role or treatment of women • Scriptures • The differences between lay and monastic morality • Nuns and monks, who teach monastic practices • Priests in some forms of Mahayana Buddhism • Founders of schools and denominations in Buddhism
Ethical practice and legal issues	• Karuna (compassion for all) • The Five Precepts—especially ahimsa (non-violence)—and the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path as a response to war and conflict • The different vinaya—rules of the monastery for both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists • Transgression: receiving bad karma and being expelled from the monastery • Attempts to reclaim Tibet from China • The role of karma in ethical action and intention

In-depth study 2: Christianity

The in-depth study of Christianity should be based on an understanding and application of the following key Christian concepts. These should inform the study of each of the themes and the key questions, rather than being taught separately. **This section should be studied with emphasis on the themes and key questions found in the "Themes and key questions" in the "Part 2: In-depth studies" section**.

Key concepts

- **Trinity** (the three-fold nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit—a Christian expression of monotheism)
- **Incarnation** (Jesus as God incarnate)
- **Church** (the whole community of the Church and individual congregations , also one name for the buildings in which many Christians worship)
- **Salvation** (all believers will be saved and live in God's presence)
- **Kingdom of God** (both an earthly and heavenly closeness to God)
- **Atonement** (reconciliation between God and humanity through Christ)
- **Sin** (act or acts of rebellion against the will of God)
- **Resurrection** (Jesus Christ's rise from the dead, and that of believers)
- **Redemption** (Jesus Christ as redeemer through his death on the cross)
- **Repentance** (recognition of the need to be saved from sin by God's love)
- **Reconciliation** (uniting of believers with God through the sacrifice of Jesus)
- **Grace** (God's love for humanity and the means to salvation through faith in Jesus)
- **Logos** (the Word of God incarnate as Jesus Christ)
- **Agape** (the love of God for humanity)
- **Sacrament** (an outward visible sign of an inward invisible grace)

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
	Attention should be paid to how and why rituals/rites of passage, worship and festivals vary with branches of a religion according to doctrinal, cultural and gender factors. In Christianity ritual and worship are influenced by the status and role accorded to priests, ministers, pastors, laity and women and the teachings of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches.
Lifetime rituals/rites of passage	• Lifetime rituals/rites of passage: baptism/dedication of an infant, believer's baptism or Communion, confirmation, conversion, marriage, funeral rites • Sacraments: seven for Roman Catholics and the Orthodox Church: baptism, reconciliation, Eucharist/Communion, confirmation/ chrismation anointment with holy oil to confirm entrance in the Christian Church, holy orders, marriage, the anointing of the sick (the last rites). Other denominations acknowledge all seven but emphasize only a few or even none
Worship	• Public worship: Eucharist/Mass/the Lord's Supper, non-liturgical worship, charismatic worship • Private worship: individual/family prayers, Bible reading, meditation, fasting • Ministers: pope/patriarch, bishop, priest, vicar, deacon, pastor,lay minister

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
	• Places of worship and their artifacts and furnishings • Pilgrimages and retreats **Possible resources for rituals and worship** • The Bible, the crucifix, the rosary, baptismal candle and baptismal robe, icons (for Eastern Churches, both Orthodox and Catholic), sacred vessels, sacred vestments, recordings of sacred music, replicas and miniatures of saints and holy shrines, bottles of holy water, reliquaries, order of service booklet
Festivals/holy days	• The liturgical seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time (denominational variations) • Holy days: Pentecost, Ascension, Saints' days
Gender and ritual	• The issue of authority • Ordination of women

Theme 2: Sacred texts	Specified content
Key texts	• Extracts from the Old and New Testaments • Papal encyclicals (Roman Catholic) • The Apocrypha • Sermons and books
Composition	• The Old Testament prophecies of Jesus (Isaiah) • Foundational laws • The Ten Commandments (Exodus) • Prophetic books • The New Testament: the four Gospels • Acts of the Apostles • Letters of Paul and others • The Book of Revelation
Collation	• The establishment of the Canon
Development	• Variations according to denominations • The authority of the Canon and its importance for Christians • Its use in public worship and private devotion
Interpretation	• Literalism—adherence to the exact letter or the literal sense of the Bible as the Word of God • Biblical criticism (exegesis and interpretation) • Individual interpretation

Theme 2: Sacred texts	Specified content
Language	• Old Testament—originally in Aramaic and Hebrew • New Testament—originally in Greek, aimed at different audiences; translated into the vernacular • Different versions of the Bible: the King James version, the Jerome Bible and contemporary versions

Theme 3: Doctrines/ beliefs	Specified content
Where the doctrines came from	• The Ten Commandments; Matthew 5: the Beatitudes, and other teachings of Jesus; the two great commandments; the Lord's Prayer; the acts and teachings of Paul; the Councils, the papal bulls and encyclicals
Statements of belief	• The Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; incarnation; Christ: Saviour and Redeemer; the Resurrection (physical or allegorical interpretation) and Ascension; the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed • Sin, the Devil/evil, judgment, forgiveness, salvation, eternal life, the Virgin Mary and Virgin Birth
Eschatology	• The second coming of Christ, apocalypse, judgment, hell/purgatory, heaven, salvation/eternal life
Cosmogony and cosmology	• Biblical cosmogony (Genesis 1 and 2), creation: loving and personal God: immanent and transcendent • Creationism versus evolution
Authority	• Divine authority: God and Jesus • Authority of foundational figures/prophets/saints • Church hierarchy and the authority of the person in different denominations—see "Worship" in the "Theme 1: Rituals" table
Schools of thought	• Mainstream (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, Methodist, and so on), Fundamentalism, Charismatic, Pentecostal, non-denominationalism

Theme 4: Religious experience	Specified content
Group/individual experience	• Vocation: marriage, family life, work or consecrated religious life (clergy, monks, nuns); daily private devotions; communal prayer, service to others; stewardship, grace, evangelism, mysticism
Conversion	• Personal revelation through experience of God in the Bible, history, nature, people, the Church and Jesus, adult baptism
Meditation/worship/ prayer	• Meditation and contemplation; writers on spirituality (see also "Worship" in the "Theme 1: Rituals" table)

Gender and religious experience	• Ordination of women in various denominations, and women mystics

Theme 5: Ethics and moral conduct	**Specified content**
Interpretation/authority	• The authority of the Bible, the authority of the Church, ecumenism, the role of conscience
Ethical practice and legal issues	• Peace and conflict; pacifism and "just war" theory; crime and punishment • Medical issues: euthanasia, embryo research, genetic engineering, abortion • Focus on poverty • Environment: stewardship, animal rights • Homosexuals in ministry; same-sex marriages • Family law • Ethical banking and business practice • Church and state • Blasphemy laws

In-depth study 3: Hinduism

The in-depth study of Hinduism should be based on an understanding and application of the following key Hindu concepts. These should inform the study of each of the themes and the key questions, rather than being taught separately. **This section should be studied with emphasis on the themes and key questions found in the "Themes and key questions" in the "Part 2: In-depth studies" section**.

Key concepts

- **Brahman** (ultimate reality)
- **Avatar** (an incarnation of a deity)
- **Brahmin** (the first of the four varnas)
- **The Trimurti, consisting of:**
  - **Brahma** (the deity responsible for creation)
  - **Vishnu** (the deity responsible for the preservation of creation)
  - **Shiva** (the deity responsible for destruction)
- **Murti** (the image of a deity used as a focus of worship)
- **Darshan** (the state of seeing and being seen by the deity)
- **Dharma** (religious or moral duty)
- **Ahimsa** (non-violence)
- **Samsara** (the cycle of life, death and reincarnation)
- **Maya** (the illusory forms of the created world)
- **Gunas** (the qualities of the created world)
- **Moksha** (liberation from the cycle of samsara)
- **Yoga** (the paths to moksha)
- **Bhakti yoga** (the path of devotion)
- **Jnana yoga** (the path of knowledge)
- **Karma yoga** (the path of ethical actions)
- **Karma** (action used to refer to the law of cause and effect)
- **Atman** (the self or soul, sometimes seen as identical with Brahman)
- **Pap** (sin)
- **Punya** (holiness/spiritual excellence)
- **Shakti** (divine feminine creative power)
- **Varna** (the four principle divisions of Hindu society)

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
	Attention should be paid to how and why rituals/rites of passage, worship and festivals vary with branches of a religion according to doctrinal, cultural and gender factors. In Hinduism ritual and worship are influenced by the status and role accorded to different deities, priests, castes and women and the teachings of different branches of Hindu tradition.
Lifetime rituals/rites of passage	• Traditional 16 samskaras, concentrating on birth, naming a child, upanayana (sacred thread ceremony), marriage, retirement,death and cremation • Ashramas (stages of life): brachmacharya (study of the Vedas by boys), grihastha (married householder), vanaprastha (retirement) and sannyasa (renunciation)

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Worship	• Achamana (ritual purification) • Puja (worship) in both the home and mandir (temple) • The use of mythology as the basis of festivals focusing on gods and goddesses. Ishwara or Ishta-Devata (worship of a personal god) • The use of murtis (image of a deity) for darshan (viewing the murti), sharing the prasad (blessed food), bhajans (religious songs) and the arti ceremony • Ashram and seva (community work). Yatra (pilgrimage) to the sacred rivers, shrines and the kumbha-melas (special bathing fairs) **Possible resources** • Murti, arti lamp, conch, bells, drum, incense, flowers, water, kum-kum tilaka (paste), prasad, japa mala (mantra beads)
Festivals	• Holi, Navaratri, Dassehra and Divali • Regional/family/caste variations
Gender and ritual	• Achamana and ritual purification • The women's role in puja (private worship) at home • Samskaras for both sexes but more emphasis on males • Dowry, marriage and becoming a widow. Female deities and female gurus. Reflections on the Laws of Manu. Arranged and "love" marriages
Society and ritual	• The existence of the four varnas (social categories)—Brahmins (priests), kshatriyas (warriors), vaishyas (merchants), shudra (servants or serfs), and the growth of the chandalas (untouchables), who refer to themselves as Dalits (oppressed). Sva-dharma (personal code of an individual) determined by varna and jati (caste) and governed by the varnashramadharma

Theme 2: Sacred texts	Specified content
Key texts	• Divine origin of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Focus on selections from the Rig Veda: X 108 and Atharva Veda • Selections from the Brihadaranyaka, Chandogya and Svetasvatara Upanishads • Selections from the Bhagavad Gita and the Laws of Manu

Theme 2: Sacred texts	Specified content
Composition	• Scriptures divided between shruti (heard) and smriti (remembered)
Collation and development	• Initially passed via oral tradition then later written down • The revealed shruti texts include the Vedas, compiled for ritual purposes, and the Upanishads, written by the sages as a kind of wisdom literature • The smriti texts include the Mahabharata, especially the Bhagavad Gita, and the Ramayana, which is important for the mythological expression of gods and goddesses upholding the sanatana dharma (eternal teachings)
Interpretation	• Both the shruti texts, especially the Upanishads, and smriti texts, especially the Bhagavad Gita, are interpreted differently by the six philosophical systems (darshanas—Nyaya and Vaishesika, Samkya and Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta) • Hindu sampradayas (nine sects founded by gurus) also have individual interpretations
Language	• Shruti texts are in Sanskrit but many smriti texts were written in local languages

Theme 3: Doctrines/ beliefs	Specified content
Where the doctrines came from	• What has come to be known as Hinduism is the result of the layering of beliefs and practices in India over thousands of years. The original teachings were probably contained in the Dravidian societies and then layered over by Aryan migration. However, very few of the original Aryan gods are now significant. Other gods have emerged from the local Indian cultures to achieve national significance • Hinduism is based on orthopraxy and conformity to tradition and duty rather than orthodoxy or correct belief
Statements of belief	• The sanatana dharma (eternal teachings) has no creed but a belief in a supreme being, which can be conceived as personal and having a form—saguna—or as non-personal and without form—nirguna. Saguna conceives the supreme being as Brahman, divided into three as the Trimurti, with Brahma as the Creator, Vishnu the Sustainer and Shiva the Destroyer. All male gods have female consorts who sustain the sanatana dharma. The sanatana dharma is practised and sustained by all the different varnas fulfilling their duties (the varnashramadharma) • Humans are in maya (a state of illusion) and their aim is to release the atman (the soul) from the jiva (ego/body) by attaining moksha (liberation) and achieving union or intimacy with God or release from samsara (reincarnation)

Theme 3: Doctrines/ beliefs	Specified content
Eschatology	• Samsara—the endless cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth of the atman. The world is maya (an illusion), attachment causes desires, and actions cause karma that influences one's reincarnation. Hindus aim to attain moksha (liberation) and union or intimacy with God, or freedom from samsara depending on schools of thought
Cosmogony and cosmology	• Creation mythology and the role of Vishnu and Shiva or goddess
Authority	• The Vedas, the Brahmins, the Upanishads and the gurus
Schools of thought	• Both the shruti texts, especially the Upanishads, and smriti texts, especially the Bhagavad Gita, are interpreted differently by the six philosophical systems (darshanas—Nyaya and Vaishesika, Samkya and Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta). Focus on the influence of Samkya, Yoga and Vedanta in the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita • Look at differing interpretations by philosophers Patanjali, Shankara and his Advaita Vedanta, Ramanuja and Madhva. The Bhagavad Gita teaches that there are Bhakti yoga (path of devotion), Jnana yoga (path of knowledge) and Karma yoga (path of ethical actions), which are all a means to attaining moksha (liberation)

Theme 4: Religious experience	Specified content
Group/individual experience	• Pilgrimage and festivals as a group experience; the role of the guru; ashrams; meditation; yoga
Conversion	• Conversion not possible or necessary. See the development of the modern missionary-type organization ISKCON as well as the Arya Samaj for restoring the Vedic religion • See Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Narayan and Sri Ramakrishna for development in Hinduism and its relations with other religions
Gender and religious experience	• The traditional roles of women in worship and the home • The changing status of women in modern India and the Diaspora • Focus on the role of female deities in religious scripture and festivals as a role model for women. Female gurus

Theme 5: Ethics and moral conduct	Specified content
Approaches to teaching	• This theme can be approached through texts and visiting speakers
Ethical practice and legal issues	• Fulfilling one's role and duties as determined by caste (the varnashramadharma) determines one's moral principles and conduct • Caste (jati) is controversial within Hindu society in India (where it is illegal as a form of discrimination, but none-the-less habitual), and amongst Hindus in Western environments, where it conflicts with more egalitarian and democratic notions of social organization and moral principle. Caste is closely related to ideas of purity • Obtaining the Three Objectives (dharma, artha and kama) and satisfying the Three Debts (to learn/recite the Vedas, to give puja to the gods, to have a son) in life • Themes such as the treatment and worth of sentient creatures (ahimsa), diet, fasting, vegetarianism, protection of the weak, killing, suicide, euthanasia, abortion, sexual misconduct, and transgression of one's varnashramadharma. See the Bhagavad Gita for dharma yuddha—just war in defence of the sanatana dharma

In-depth study 4: Islam

*Please note that we use the word "*Allah*" to mean "God".

The in-depth study of Islam should be based on an understanding and application of the following key Islamic concepts. These should inform the study of each of the themes and the key questions, rather than being taught separately. **This section should be studied with emphasis on the themes and key questions found in the "Themes and key questions" in the "Part 2: In-depth studies" section**.

Key concepts

- **Iman** (faith in *Allah*)
- **Islam** (submission to the will of Allah)
- **Tawhid** (oneness of Allah—an Islamic expression of monotheism)
- **Shirk** (regarding anything as being equal or partner to *Allah*)
- **Risalah** (the message of *Allah* as revealed to humankind)
- **Yawm al-din** (Day of Judgment)
- **Akhirah** (life after death)
- **Ummah** (worldwide community of Muslims)
- **Ibadah** (worship)
- **Akhlaq** (ethics and conduct)
- **Greater Jihad** (personal struggle against evil)
- **Lesser Jihad** (collective defense of Muslim community)
- **Niyyah** (intention)
- **Kufr** (unbelief)

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Lifetime rituals/rites of passage	Attention should be paid to how and why rituals/rites of passage, worship and festivals vary with branches of a religion according to doctrinal, cultural and gender factors. In Islam ritual and worship are influenced by the unique status of the Qur'an, as well as roles accorded to imams, jurists and women, and the teachings of different branches of Islamic tradition. • Birth: naming ceremony, testimony of shahadah (declaration of faith) recited to the baby, hair cutting (regional variations), circumcision • Marriage: engagement, dowry, zawaj (contract and ceremony—regional variations) • Death: cleansing of body, ritual dress, prayers, burial **Possible resources** • Misbahah (prayer beads), prayer mat, compass, male prayer hat (used in the Indian subcontinent and other areas), marriage contract, zakat box in mosques • Khitan (male circumcision), marriage celebration, zawaj (marriage), hajj (pilgrimage), conversion to Islam, death and burial (regional variations) • Replicas of Makkah's central mosque, of Ka'bah, bottles of Zamzam water
Worship	• The Pillars of Islam – Shahadah (testimony of faith): when uttered at births, deaths, conversion, prayer; additional section in Shi'ah shahadah (and Ali is *Allah*'s "friend") – Salah (ritual prayer): timing and adhan (call to prayer), wudu (ablutions), niyyah (intention); places of worship and their features – Zakaht (alms-giving): percentage, beneficiaries, and how it is collected. – Sawm (fasting) during Ramadan: who is exempt and why – Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) **Possible resources** • Several videos on hajj, images of mosques and shrines, Qur'anic calligraphy and inscriptions
Festivals: Sunni and Shi'ah	• Id ul-Fitr (festival of breaking the fast), Id ul-Adha (festival of the sacrifice), Mawlid ul-Nabi (the Prophet Muhammad's birthday)
Festivals: Shi'ah	• Ashura (day of martyrdom of Imam ul-Husayn), Id ul-Ghadir (festival of Prophet Muhammad's final sermon), birthdays of Fatima and of imams

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Gender and ritual	• All Pillars of Islam, especially prayer: location, purity issues, dress, timing • Hajj and gender: validity with purity and related choice of timing (pre- or post-menopause) • Shrine visitation and gender • Death rituals and gender • Separate male and female worship; attendance compulsory for men only, for Friday prayer at the mosque
Society and ritual	• Communal and social implications of rituals such as jum'a (Friday prayer) and hajj • Issue of identity, ummah (worldwide community of Muslims) solidarity • Halal and haram (food and dietary laws) as a means of communal identity • Spiritual and mystical experience through ritual

Theme 2: Sacred texts	Specified content
Key texts	• Passages from the Qur'an, selections from the Hadiths
Composition of the Qur'an	• Divine origin, revelation, the Prophet Muhammad as messenger not author
Collation of the Qur'an	• Traditional account: during the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime or during Khalifh 'Uthman
Development	• Continuity of prophetic revelations, developments in Qur'anic revelation: Makkan and Maedinan periods, different contexts, emphasis of themes (such as the Day of Judgment in Makkan suras, and ummah in Maedinan surahs) • Hadiths (the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions) and, for Shias, the sayings of the imams • Inspiration • Collation—main collections: authenticity and historicity; additional Shi'i Hadiths
Interpretation	• Tafsir (the science of interpretation or exegesis of the Qur'an): commentary on the Qur'an has to observe certain rules or conditions, for example as proposed by the exegete Dehlavi
Language	• Ritual language is Arabic. The Qur'an is written in Arabic and is the revelation of *Allah*, which gives importance to the act of recitation. The Qur'an written in any other language is regarded solely as a translation and not held in the same esteem as the Arabic version

Theme 3: Doctrines/ beliefs	Specified content
Where the doctrines came from	• The Qur'an, the Hadith, commentaries and opinions of legal scholars who formulated Islamic law (the shari'ah)
Statements of belief	• Basis for creeds: shahadah, tawhid, akhirah, Yawm ul-din • Main doctrines • Islam not only as belief but also as practice
Eschatology	• Yawm ul-din (Day of Judgment) and its signs • Life to come (reward and punishment) • Qur'anic description of paradise and hell
Cosmogony and cosmology	• Allah as Creator: creation in time, creation at once • Purpose of creation: of the world, of humankind, of angels, of jinns
Authority	• Issues of authority of the texts (Qur'an and Hadiths) • Authority of the person: the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah of the Prophet), previous prophets, khalifhs, imams (in Shi'ah and Sunni thought), qadis and muftis, Shaykhs and Pirs (Sufism), other leaders • Ulama (religious scholars), imam (in Sunnism) • Schools of thought: mutakallimun, philosophers, different interpretations by Sufis and Shi'ahs
Schools of law	• Four main Sunni schools of law: Malikis, Hanbalis, Hanafis, Shafi's • Shi'i school of law: Ja'faris

Theme 4: Religious experience	Specified content
Group/individual experience	• Jumu'ha (Friday prayer), sawm (fasting), du'a (individual verbal prayers of supplication) • Hajj as a communal and personal experience • Sufi dhikr (recitation/remembrance of the name of Allah) • Sufi dance and meditation • Collective experience of the Shi'ah re-enactment of the martyrdom of Imam ul-Husayn at Kaerbala • Mystics in Islam • Rituals and festivals as an expression of ummah **Possible resources** • Suggested teaching material could include films of Muslim personalities.
Reversion	• Reversion to Islam and the process involved
Meditation/worship/ prayer	• See "Worship" in the "Theme 1: Rituals" table

Theme 4: Religious experience	Specified content
Gender and religious experience	• Prayer and pilgrimage • Female mystics in Islam

Theme 5: Ethics and moral conduct	Specified content
Interpretation/authority	• Authority of the Qur'an, Hadith, Sunnah and interpretation of the Ulama
Ethical practice and legal issues	• Akhlaq (moral conduct) and moral principles • Themes such as love for human beings, protection of the weak, respect for elders, killing, suicide, marriage, polygamy, divorce, abortion, sexual conduct, dress (modesty and the issue of different types of veiling, such as the hijab), jihad as moral struggle; sadagah (charity) • Shari'ah (divine law) and qanun (secular law) • Examples for family law (marriage, divorce, custody, inheritance), but also for qanun (secular law): votes for women, education, commercial law (see also shari'ah and Islamic banking) • Blasphemy and shirk

In-depth study 5: Judaism

The in-depth study of Judaism should be based on an understanding and application of the following key Judaic concepts. These should inform the study of each of the themes and the key questions, rather than being taught separately. **This section should be studied with emphasis on the themes and key questions found in the "Themes and key questions" in the "Part 2: In-depth studies" section**.

Key concepts

- **B'rit** or **Covenant** (the agreement made between God and Abraham/Moses and the Jewish people—the Jewish expression of monotheism)
- **Torah** (Jewish law, teaching; the five books of Moses)
- **Mitzvah (pl: mitzvot)** (obligation or good deed/commandment in the Torah)
- **Halakhah (pl: halakhot)** (Jewish law)
- **Mashiach** (Annointed One or Messiah)
- **Israel** (the children of Israel; the worldwide Jewish community; the land of Israel and the modern state of Israel)
- **Kiddush** (holy) **Kedushah** (holiness)
- **Teshuva** (repentance or returning to God)
- **Shekhinah** (the divine presence)
- **Tikkun olam** (reparation of the universe)
- **Pikuach Nefesh** (setting aside a law to save a life)

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Lifetime rituals/rites of passage	Attention should be paid to how and why rituals/rites of passage, worship and festivals vary with branches of a religion according to doctrinal, cultural and gender factors. In Judaism ritual and worship are influenced by different branches of Jewish tradition and the status and role accorded to rabbis and women. • Birth: b'rit milah (the covenant of circumcision) as a sign of being Jewish. Circumcision is regarded as the seal of the covenant and a sign of obedience to God • Coming of age: bar mitzvah: a boy participates in the synagogue service as religiously adult, usually by reading the Torah portion. He, not the ceremony, is the bar mitzvah (literally, "son of the commandment") and he takes on all the obligations of the Torah. Bat mitzvah for a girl (Reform and Liberal Judaism) or Bat Chayil (Orthodox) • Marriage: ketubah (marriage contract), according to the Law of Moses • Divorce: get (divorce contract) • Death: chevra kaddisha (group preparing the body); shiva (seven-day period after the funeral); longer period of mourning and stone-setting ceremony of a tombstone within the first year (cremation not permitted in Orthodox Judaism) **Possible resources** • Film—Jack Rosenthal's *Bar Mitzvah Boy*, marriage and/or divorce contract

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Worship	• Prayer times: ma'ariv (evening), minhah (afternoon), shaharit (morning) • Beracha (pl. berachot) (blessing): a type of Jewish prayer in which God is blessed, for example, in the Kiddush (blessing recited over wine) at the beginning of a festival • Siddur: the prayer book, containing prayers for both home and synagogue. There are different prayer books for different movements within Judaism, all including the key prayers such as Shema, Amidah, Aleinu. Some prayers require a minyan (quorum)—in Orthodoxy this is 10 males over the age of 13 • Reading of the Torah from the bimah (reading platform) in the synagogue; readings from the Nevi'im (the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible) and the Ketuvim (the writings of the Hebrew Bible) • Music—differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi cultural origins • Worship not seen as separate from daily life • Kashrut (food and lifestyle laws) are ritual and are seen as obligations by the Orthodox to express being set apart as a holy people • Fasting to express repentance **Possible resources** • Kippah/yarmulkah (skull cap), mezuzah case (box on doorpost), tallit (prayer shawl), tefillin (phylacteries) all expressing the importance of prayer and key texts from the Torah (for example, Numbers 1: 28–41), spice box and havdalah marking the separation of Shabbat from the rest of the week, candles for Shabbat
Festivals	• Shabbat and its importance both in the home and synagogue • Pilgrim festivals of Pesach (Passover), Weeks/Shavuot (Pentecost), Sukkot (Tabernacles) • The High Holy Days: Rosh Hashanah (New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement and repentance) • The symbolism of food
Gender and ritual	• In Orthodoxy, women are exempt from positive time-based mitzvot, notably communal prayer at set times, therefore, bat chayil ceremony and not bat mitzvah in Orthodoxy • In Reform Judaism, a girl becomes bat mitzvah and participates in the synagogue ceremony as religiously adult, usually reading the Torah portion. Women can become rabbis and cantors

Theme 2: Sacred texts	Specified content
Key texts	• Torah: the first five books of the Jewish scriptures incorporating the law of God, regarded as given to Moses. Oral Torah, in which God explained the written Torah, is regarded as that which was passed on to Moses but not written down, this includes the Mishnah and the Talmud. The Mishnah is a collection of the oral law compiled by the second century CE. The Talmud goes further than the Mishnah by containing debates between rabbis and theological, philosophical and ethical works • Passages from the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic writings (Talmud including the Mishnah and the Gemara) • Suggested Bava Kama 38b beginning "He who damages", dealing with the biblical principle of compensation: "An eye for an eye" (showing development from roots of belief in the Bible through rabbinic discussion in the Talmud) • Page of the Talmud, showing rabbinic commentary by Rashi and law code by Maimonides
Composition	• Divinely inspired dual Torah—written Torah (the five books of Moses) and oral Torah • The major difference between Orthodox and non-Orthodox movements lies in the latter believing that different authors, including the fallible, wrote the Torah over a long period of time
Collation	• Oral transmission first, then committed to writing; Torah first accepted as authoritative, then Nevi'im, then Ketuvim
Development	• Law codes and responsa, continuing process of rabbinic interpretation, but in Orthodoxy always going back to first principles
Interpretation	• The Talmud (for example, the Genesis Rabba) • Halakhah (Jewish law present in the Talmud consisting of rabbinical debate based on interpretation of the Torah legal material) and Agadah (the part of the Talmud that deals with ethics and moral values including narrative material on exemplary figures)
Language	• Tenakh—Hebrew (regarded as the sacred language) • Talmud—Aramaic • Siddur—different prayer books for different traditions, though all are printed in Hebrew with the vernacular translation opposite • Orthodoxy—all prayers said in Hebrew except vernacular prayer for head of state/monarch • Reform Judaism—approximately half said in Hebrew and half in the vernacular, with variation • Liberal Judaism—tends to be more said in the vernacular • New prayers in recent books, relating to the state of Israel, the Holocaust and modern concerns

Theme 3: Doctrines/ beliefs	Specified content
Where the doctrines came from	• The Torah and the oral Torah • Reform Judaism emerged because of cultural influences in 19th-century Germany. The Jewish enlightenment led some to reject belief in God's giving the entire Torah (written and oral) to Moses on Sinai
Statements of belief	• Few formal statements of belief as the emphasis of Judaism is on obedience to the Torah rather than subscribing to a set of beliefs, yet key beliefs are important • The oneness of God as expressed in the Shema (Deuteronomy 6: 4–9; 11: 13–21; Numbers 15: 37–41) • The holiness of God and his choosing the children of Israel (Jacob) to be a holy people (Exodus 19), keeping the covenant by obeying the Torah obligations • The love of God and the human response; God works in the history of his covenant people (Deuteronomy 5) • The justice of God as King and Creator • Challenges to this faith posed by the Holocaust • The 13 principles of faith as expressed by Maimonides and in the Yigdal in the synagogue service
Eschatology	• Olam Ha-Ba, a fundamentally new age, coming after the Messianic Age, of peace and justice for humankind • Orthodox Jews believe that an individual Messiah, a human being "anointed" by God, will usher in the Messianic Age
Cosmogony and cosmology	• God is the sole creator • He gives human beings free will and requires their cooperation, struggling between good and bad inclinations, to produce a world of peace and justice for all • Tikkun olam (reparation of the universe)
Authority	• Range of viewpoints from Ultra-Orthodox, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Liberal sections of Judaism • All derive authority from the Tenakh and the Talmud, but only Orthodoxy and Ultra-Orthodoxy believe all ritual and ethical mitzvot are binding; the rest believe that the ethical mitzvot are binding and that ritual mitzvot may be modified or even abandoned if they do not serve their original purpose, for example, kashrut, and what is prohibited work on Shabbat • Continuing interpretation through rabbis of how the Torah is worked out in different ages and circumstances • Authority of the person: prophets, priests (temple times), rabbis • Beth Din (rabbinic court)
Schools of thought	• Religious traditions and denominations (as listed above under "Authority") • Laws of status in Israel are according to the Halakah (see below)

Theme 4: Religious experience	Specified content
Group/individual experience	• Emphasis on belonging to a holy people, set apart by the obligations of the covenant • The central experience is that of history, religiously interpreted, so most festivals, weekly and annual, seek to recreate the Jewish experience, for example, Passover: "God brought us out of Egypt" • Much cultural variation between origins and different migrations—Ashkenazi and Sephardi music • Chanting of the Torah in Orthodox worship • Questions of assimilation (tensions in USA are well expressed in Chaim Potok's novel *The Chosen* and the film based on this book) • Diaspora • Kabbalah (mysticism) **Possible resources** • Cantorial music (CDs available from the Jewish Music Institute) and books
Conversion	• Discouraged (though Reform conversion is easier) as Judaism is not a missionary religion. Judaism is not believed to be the only path to God. It is seen as important for Jews to stay Jewish and to be a witness to the Gentile world • A potential convert has a period of study, particularly demanding in Orthodoxy, and has to appear before the Beth Din • In theory, a convert should be considered as much a Jew as someone born of a Jewish mother • Only Orthodox authority is accepted in Israel. Israel is unique in that laws of status (birth, adoption, conversion, marriage, divorce) are according to Orthodox tradition, therefore no non-religious/non-synagogue marriage is allowed for Jews in Israel
Gender and religious experience	• Religious responsibility and what this entails is different in the different movements (controversy over the get) • Many cultural variations (see all previous references to gender for Judaism in this section)

Theme 5: Ethics and moral conduct	Specified content
Interpretation/authority	• Central ethical principles are derived from the Torah: love (of God in Deuteronomy 6: 4 and neighbour in Leviticus 19: 18); the Golden Rule

Theme 5: Ethics and moral conduct	Specified content
Ethical practice and legal issues	• All the mitzvot are either ritual or ethical (a good mixture is seen in the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) • All ethical mitzvot are binding in all traditions • Marriage and divorce according to the Law of Moses • A divorce contract is required before an Orthodox Jew can remarry in a synagogue • Difficulties of a wife remaining agunah (chained) if her husband will not grant a get. Different approaches to evolving laws in Reform and Liberal Judaism finds a way round this difficulty • Importance of Jewish marriage and keeping a Jewish home. Challenges of interfaith marriage and assimilation • Sanctity of life leads to respectful death rituals. Variations on views about abortion and contraception in the different traditions • Transgressions, moral and ritual, are taken seriously. This is seen especially in the prayers of penitence, before and during the High Holy Days. God is forgiving but he cannot forgive a person on behalf of another if that person has not tried to make amends
	• Shechitah (ritual slaughter) is vital for kashrut—Judaism argues that this promotes, rather than violates, animal rights • Zionism—Political movement securing the Jewish return to the land of Israel

In-depth study 6: Sikhism

The in-depth study of Sikhism should be based on an understanding and application of the following key Sikh concepts. These should inform the study of each of the themes and the key questions, rather than being taught separately. **This section should be studied with emphasis on the themes and key questions found in the "Themes and key questions" in the "Part 2: In-depth studies" section**.

Key concepts

- **Nirguna** (God as one and formless)
- **Ik onkar** (the symbol representing God as one)
- **Bani/Shabad** (God's Word. "Bani" (usually spoken) and "shabad" (usually written))
- **Nam simran** (meditation on God's name or entire being and personality)
- **Nam japna** (continual meditation on God's name)
- **Guru** ("that or one that takes away darkness (spiritual ignorance) and brings light (spiritual understanding)")
- **Nadar** (God's grace)
- **Gurprasad** (God's grace)
- **Haumai** (ego-centredness)
- **Manmukh** (follower of the ego, focused on the baser emotions, familiarly known as the "five vices"
- **Vand chakna** (to share one's wealth with others)
- **Gurmukh** (God-centredness)
- **Sewa/Seva** (altruistic service given to anyone)
- **Langar** (meal freely available to anyone)
- **Panth** (the worldwide Sikh community)
- **Sangat** (the Sikh community at a local gurdwara)
- **Khalsa panth** (those who have taken amrit)
- **Amrit sanskar** (initiation into the Khalsa)
- **Jot** (divine light)
- **Mukti** (liberation)
- **Maya** (illusion)
- **Gurdwara** (any place where the Guru Granth Sahib is installed)
- **Kirtan** (from the Punjabi word "kirat" literally meaning "praise"; meditative singing of God's Word)
- **Kirat karna** (earning an honest living)
- **Nam japo** (remembrance of the name)

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Lifetime rituals/rites of passage	Attention should be paid to how and why rituals/rites of passage, worship and festivals vary with branches of a religion according to doctrinal, cultural and gender factors. In Sikhism ritual and worship are influenced by the status and role accorded to the human gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib and the Khalsa. • Naming ceremony, amrit sanskar (initiation ceremony), anand karaj (marriage), death • Naming ceremony • Amrit sanskar (initiation ceremony) opted for by some Sikhs into the Khalsa panth (community of initiated Sikhs) • Anand karaj (marriage) with prescribed stages, for instance, lavan and Ardas (standing prayer) • Death—cleansing the body, dress in the five Ks, prayers, cremation, which may be followed by either a continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (Akhand Path) or shaj panth (reading of the Guru Granth Sahib over several days), sukhmani path (continual reading of the Sukhmani Sahib from the Guru Granth Sahib), prohibition on monuments. On the death anniversary, an Akhand Path is sometimes organized
Worship	• Isnan (washing for reasons of physical cleanliness) • Reciting prescribed prayers in the morning, evening, before retiring for night, during the day: practising nam japna (continually meditating on God's name), kirat karna and vand chakna • A Sikh should also keep holy company by attending the gurdwara **Possible resources** • Copies of the Rahit Nama (small book of Sikh daily prayers) and Rahit Maryada (the Sikh code of conduct), photos of the Golden Temple of Amritsar, symbols, for example, Ik onkar, Nishan Sahib, the five Ks
Festivals	• Festivals (melas), especially Vaisakhi (New Year's Eve, anniversary of the Khalsa being realized on Earth) are celebrated with special services and procession of the Guru Granth Sahib (nagar kirtan) • Divali (celebrates the release from captivity of Guru Hargobind) • Gurpurb (commemorative days celebrating births and deaths of the gurus, especially those of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, and the martyrdoms of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur)
Gender and ritual	• The Guru Granth Sahib, and consequently the Rahit Maryada (code of conduct), states that there is equality of birth and gender, and that all roles in the gurdwara may be practised by anyone, including reading the Guru Granth Sahib (granthi) and performing kirtan (meditative singing of God's Word). Sikhs have gender-free first names • The degree to which this is manifest in practice

Theme 1: Rituals	Specified content
Society and ritual	• Worship in the home • Worship in the gurdwara: diwan consists of reading from the Guru Granth Sahib; katha (talks) explaining the meaning of passages from the Guru Granth Sahib or Sikh history; kirtan (meditative singing of God's Word); prayers, including Ardas (standing prayer) • Installing and closing the Guru Granth Sahib at amrit vela or parkash karna (before dawn) and at night (sukhasan) • Sharing of karah parshad (literally, food given through God's grace) • No weekly holy day; Sikhs will make a special effort to attend gurdwara one day a week depending on the country in which they live, for example, in Britain this would probably be a Sunday • Wearing of the five Ks (Panj Kakke) as a means of communal identity • Langar (the gurdwara dining hall and the food served in it) • Sewa/seva (altruistic service to God and all humanity, regardless of birth or gender)

Theme 2: Sacred texts	Specified content
Composition	• The Guru Granth Sahib was revealed to the gurus. It is believed to have divine origins
Collation	• Originally the Adi Granth (Primary Collection), "the divine words uttered" by the first five gurus and some of the writings of some Hindu bhagats and Muslim Pirs • The Guru Granth Sahib is compiled from the Adi Granth, to which Guru Gobind Singh added the divine words uttered by Guru Tegh Bahadur before installing it as his successor and ending the line of human gurus • The Janam Sakhi, literally, "life evidences". Four books including stories of the life of Guru Nanak • The Dasam Granth, Collection of the Tenth Guru
Development	• The compilation of the Adi Granth and installation as the final Guru, Guru Granth Sahib
Interpretation	• Gurbani (divinely revealed words of God) uttered by the 10 human gurus who were chosen by God for this purpose and then to be found in the Guru Granth Sahib. In this way the authority of the human gurus as revealing the words of God was transferred to the book. Sikhism is not exclusivist; it believes God may be found in other faiths
Language	• Gurmukhi: in the gurdwara, the Guru Granth Sahib is always read from the Gurmukhi text, however, translations of it are available in several languages. Sometimes in the gurdwara, after it has been read in Punjabi form, the Gurmukhi text, a translation of the passage, is also read

Theme 3: Doctrines/ beliefs	Specified content

Where the doctrines came from	• From the divinely given words uttered by the 10 men, known as the human gurus, who were chosen by God to do so. The Mool Mantra, (literally "seed mantra"), the opening words of the Guru Granth Sahib, is understood to be a summary of the Guru Granth Sahib
Statements of belief	• Sikh belief and practice is found in the Guru Granth Sahib, which is understood as the living presence of God among God's people • The Rahit Maryada, written over 20 years by a committee of spiritual and knowledgeable Sikhs and published in the 20th century, includes rules about the organization of gurdwaras and rites of passage. The concept of a Rahit Maryada dates from the time of the Guru Gobind Singh
Eschatology	• Sikhs believe that their jot, or divine spark, will pass to another living being unless they have achieved mukti, that is, their jot has entered into the sach khand (realm of truth) where God is present. While Sikhs believe that everything is according to God's will (hukam), nevertheless they have a responsibility to practise nam japna, kirat karniand vand kakko and be gurmukh (God-centred). Doing so will help them to conquer haumai (ego-centredness) and maya (illusion) • There are five khands, or stages, the last of which is the sach khand (realm of truth). While it is possible to progress to the third khand, it is only through gurprasad (God's grace) that a person may enter the sach khand. This may be either during a person's lifetime or at death
Cosmology	• Akal Purukh (God) the Creator. The universe and everything that happens in it is in accordance with his hukam (will)
Authority	• Shortly before he died, Guru Gobind Singh told Sikhs to consult the Guru Granth Sahib for all spiritual matters. This may be through a hukam nama (random opening of the Guru Granth Sahib to obtain God's guidance) or through reading the Guru Granth Sahib. This moved Sikhism towards becoming a religion of the book since the Guru Granth Sahib would be the eternal guide of the Sikh community with no more human gurus • Guru Gobind Singh told Sikhs to consult the Khalsa for temporal matters. There are different understandings of what this means for Sikhs today, for example, it may be the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, based in Amritsar, which has control of all gurdwaras in Punjab and surrounding states under Indian secular law. However, other Sikhs understand it as the management committee at their local gurdwara • Sants or holy men and women

Theme 4: Religious experience	Specified content
Group/individual experience	• Worship both in the home and the gurdwara, and the practice of nam japna, kirat karna and vand chhakna during the day
Conversion	• Conversion is not encouraged as Sikhism does not deny the validity of other faiths. However, there is a convert movement, known as 3HO, made up mostly of North American and some European Sikhs
Reaffirmation	• If a Khalsa Sikh breaks one of the kurahit in the Rahit Maryada (cuts hair, uses tobacco, commits adultery, eats halal meat) the person must admit their fault before the Panj Piare (beloved ones) at an amrit ceremony. They will be given a penance (tankah) to undertake. It is possible to take amrit a second time if the Panj Piare are assured that the person is truly penitent. It would be most unusual for a Sikh to take amrit more than twice
Meditation/worship/prayer	• Every devout Sikh should practise meditating on the name of God throughout the day (nam simran) • See also "Worship" in the "Theme 1: Rituals" table
Gender and religious experience	• Sikhs believe in equality of humanity, regardless of birth, gender or religion, but caste and gender issues do arise

Theme 5: Ethics and moral conduct	Specified content
Interpretation/authority	• Shortly before Guru Gobind Singh died he said that Sikhs should consult the Guru Granth Sahib for all spiritual matters since it was to be regarded as the eternal word of God • For temporal matters, Guru Gobind Singh stated that Sikhs should consult the Khalsa. Today, some Sikhs understand that to mean their local gurdwara committee. However, other Sikhs would refer to the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which has responsibility for the management of all gurdwaras in Punjab and surrounding states under Indian secular law. Their headquarters is in Amritsar, from where they published the Rahit Maryada

Theme 5: Ethics and moral conduct	Specified content
Ethical practice and legal issues	• There is no systematic manual of ethical practice and laws governing all Sikhs since these are to be discerned by meditating upon the Guru Granth Sahib but the Rahit Maryada acts as a manual for Sikh behaviour. Sikhism has no priesthood or jurists and the line of human gurus has bequeathed authority to the Guru Granth Sahib. • Ethical practice and legal issues should be based on principles found in the Guru Granth Sahib, for example, the equality of humanity, divine creation of the world, and behaving honestly in daily life
	• The five Ks worn by many Sikhs are an outward expression of some ethical beliefs. For example, the kirpan (from two Punjabi words: "kirpa" meaning "grace" and "ana" meaning "honour") is a symbol of a Sikh's duty to protect the weak and vulnerable. Guru Gobind Singh developed dharam yudh (a righteous war) theory in order to limit both when war is permitted and conduct during war • Khalsa Sikhs promise to obey the Rahit Maryada, which includes some ethical and moral rules, in their daily lives

Assessment in the Diploma Programme

General

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. The most important aims of assessment in the Diploma Programme are that it should support curricular goals and encourage appropriate student learning. Both external and internal assessment are used in the Diploma Programme. IB examiners mark work produced for external assessment, while work produced for internal assessment is marked by teachers and externally moderated by the IB.

There are two types of assessment identified by the IB.

- Formative assessment informs both teaching and learning. It is concerned with providing accurate and helpful feedback to students and teachers on the kind of learning taking place and the nature of students' strengths and weaknesses in order to help develop students' understanding and capabilities. Formative assessment can also help to improve teaching quality, as it can provide information to monitor progress towards meeting the course aims and objectives.
- Summative assessment gives an overview of previous learning and is concerned with measuring student achievement.

The Diploma Programme primarily focuses on summative assessment designed to record student achievement at, or towards, the end of the course of study. However, many of the assessment instruments can also be used formatively during the course of teaching and learning, and teachers are encouraged to do this. A comprehensive assessment plan is viewed as being integral to teaching, learning and course organization. For further information, see the IB *Programme standards and practices* document (October 2010).

The approach to assessment used by the IB is criterion-related, not norm-referenced. This approach to assessment judges students' work by their performance in relation to identified levels of attainment, and not in relation to the work of other students. For further information on assessment within the Diploma Programme please refer to the publication *Diploma Programme assessment: Principles and practice* (September 2004).

To support teachers in the planning, delivery and assessment of the Diploma Programme courses a variety of resources can be found on the OCC or purchased from the IB store (http://store.ibo.org). Teacher support materials, internal assessment guidance, grade descriptors, as well as resources from other teachers, can be found on the OCC.

Methods of assessment

The IB uses several methods to assess work produced by students.

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are used when the assessment task is open-ended. Each criterion concentrates on a particular skill that students are expected to demonstrate. An assessment objective describes what students should be able to do, and assessment criteria describe how well they should be able to do it. Using

assessment criteria allows discrimination between different answers and encourages a variety of responses. Each criterion comprises a set of hierarchically ordered level descriptors. Each level descriptor is worth one or more marks. Each criterion is applied independently using a best-fit model. The maximum marks for each criterion may differ according to the criterion's importance. The marks awarded for each criterion are added together to give the total mark for the piece of work.

Markbands

Markbands are a comprehensive statement of expected performance against which responses are judged. They represent a single holistic criterion divided into level descriptors. Each level descriptor corresponds to a range of marks to differentiate student performance. A best-fit approach is used to ascertain which particular mark to use from the possible range for each level descriptor.

Markschemes

This generic term is used to describe analytic markschemes that are prepared for specific examination papers. Analytic markschemes are prepared for those examination questions that expect a particular kind of response and/or a given final answer from the students. They give detailed instructions to examiners on how to break down the total mark for each question for different parts of the response. A markscheme may include the content expected in the responses to questions or may be a series of marking notes giving guidance on how to apply criteria.

Assessment outline

First examinations 2013

Assessment component	Weighting
External assessment (2 hours 45 minutes) **Paper 1 (1 hour 15 minutes)** Syllabus content: Part 1: Introduction to world religions Assessment objective 1 **Nine** stimulus response questions, one on each of the nine world religions. The paper is divided into three sections (A, B and C) based on the columns of religions. Students should answer **five**, at least one from each section. (45 marks)	**75%** **30%**
Paper 2 (1 hour 30 minutes) Syllabus content: Part 2: In-depth studies of six world religions Assessment objectives 1–4 **Fourteen** essay questions based on the guiding themes, seven in each section. The paper is divided into two sections based on the columns of in-depth religions. Each section comprises **two** questions on each of the three religions and one open-ended question. Students answer **two** questions, each chosen from a different section. (30 marks)	**45%**
Internal assessment (research and preparation—20 hours) This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course. Any religion can be the focus of the study. Assessment objectives 1–4 Method: Written analysis with structured format based on an investigative study. 1,500–1,800 words (30 marks)	**25%**

Please note that this subject is currently only available at SL.

External assessment

Two different methods are used to assess students.

- Detailed markschemes specific to each examination paper
- Markbands

The markbands are published in this guide.

The markbands are related to the assessment objectives established for the world religions course and the group 3 grade descriptors. The markschemes are specific to each examination.

Command terms

Classification of command terms

Key command terms are used in the assessment of world religions SL. These are classified below according to the assessment objectives.

- AO1 Knowledge and understanding of specified content
- AO2 Application and analysis of knowledge and understanding
- AO3 Synthesis and evaluation

There is a progression in demand from AO1–AO3. The command terms within each classification are listed in alphabetical order in the following table.

Students must be familiar with these terms to understand the depth of treatment required in examination questions. AO1 and AO2 command terms are used in paper 1. AO3 command terms are used in paper 2 with occasional use of lesser order command terms where appropriate, for example, *identify (AO1)* and *discuss (AO3)*.

Definitions of these command terms are listed in the appendix.

External assessment details

Paper 1

Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes
Weighting: 30%

This paper consists of nine questions, one on each of the nine religions offered in Part 1: Introduction to world religions. The purpose of this paper is to assess students' ability to demonstrate the following objective in relation to five world religions.

- Knowledge and understanding of specified content (assessment objective 1) in part (a) of the question

The question paper is divided into three sections as in the chart of world religions.

- Section A: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism
- Section B: Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Section C: Taoism, Jainism, Baha'i Faith

Students must answer **five** questions, at least one of which must be chosen from each section. The other two questions can be selected from any section.

Each question will consist of a short extract (two to four lines) from a text related to the religion, followed by a two-part question with a total mark of 9. The first part (a) of the question, worth 3 marks, will test knowledge and understanding of a key idea or concept associated with the text. This part of the examination can be answered using bullet points. The second part (b) of the question, worth 6 marks, will test understanding and application of the idea or concept in relation to the text and religion.

The maximum mark for this paper is 45.

Part (a) responses are marked using question-specific markschemes. Part (b) responses are marked using question-specific markschemes and the paper 1 part (b) markbands. Responses are assessed using a best-fit approach.

A best-fit approach to marking means that compensation is made when the response most appropriately matches the different qualities described for each assessment objective in the markband level descriptors (A–D). If the response falls between two levels or matches most of the qualities but not all, the response is checked again and the level and specific mark chosen that most appropriately rewards the work.

Paper 2

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes
Weighting: 45%

This paper consists of fourteen questions on the six world religions offered in Part 2: In-depth studies. The purpose of this paper is to assess students' ability to demonstrate the following objectives in relation to the two religions studied in depth.

- Knowledge and understanding of specified content (assessment objective 1)
- Application and analysis of knowledge and understanding (assessment objective 2)
- Synthesis and evaluation (assessment objective 3)
- Selection, use and application of a variety of appropriate skills and techniques (assessment objective 4)

The paper is divided into two sections as outlined in the chart of in-depth studies.

- Section A: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism
- Section B: Judaism, Christianity, Islam

Each section (A and B) of the paper consists of **seven** questions as follows.

- Two specific questions on each of the three religions appropriate to the section (total of six questions)
- One open-ended question that can be answered in relation to any of the three in-depth religions in that section. Students should answer these open-ended questions using specific examples. Broad generalizations will not be given credit. Most importantly, answers should contextualize examples, making reference to differences in denomination, culture and geography

Students must answer two questions, each chosen from a different section, and draw on relevant primary and/or secondary sources. Each question is worth 15 marks.

The maximum mark for this paper is 30.

Each essay is marked using question-specific markschemes and the paper 2 markbands. Responses are assessed using the best-fit approach.

A best-fit approach to marking means that compensation is made when the response most appropriately matches the different qualities described for each assessment objective in the markband level descriptors (A–F). If the response falls between two levels or matches most of the qualities but not all, the response is checked again and the level and specific mark chosen that most appropriately rewards the work.

External markbands

Paper 1 part (b) markbands

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below
1–2	The response displays little understanding of the demands of the question. The response is descriptive in nature and where examples are referred to they are factually incorrect, irrelevant or vague. Terminology used is incorrect or inaccurate.
3–4	The response displays an understanding of the demands of the questio, but these are only partially addressed. There is some explanation, but this is not fully developed. Examples used are generally appropriate and relevant but do not always support the explanation. The use of relevant terminology is mostly accurate, with some inconsistencies.
5–6	The demands of the question are met. The response contains a well-developed explanation, which is effectively supported by appropriate and relevant examples. The use of relevant terminology is accurate throughout the response.

Paper 2 markbands

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below
1–3	The response demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding in relation to the demands of the question. There is little use of relevant terminology. The response is descriptive in nature. Any conclusions presented are superficial, anecdotal or common-sense.
4–6	The response demonstrates some relevant knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion in relation to the demands of the question. There is some use of relevant terminology. The argument is limited and the analysis is only partially consistent with the knowledge and understanding demonstrated. There is some use of examples, but these are generally vague and do not support the argument. There is a limited conclusion(s), but this is not supported by the evidence presented or examples.
7–9	The response demonstrates mostly relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion in relation to the demands of the question. There is use of relevant terminology, but this is not always consistent. There is an argument, which is generally supported by the analysis; connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings are identified but not developed. The argument at times lacks clarity and coherence but this does not hinder understanding. There is a conclusion(s) but this is only partially supported by the evidence presented and the examples used.
10–12	The response demonstrates relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion, and this is demonstrated throughout the essay. There is consistent use of relevant terminology. The argument is structured and coherent and supported by the analysis; connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings are identified and developed. There is a conclusion(s) supported by the evidence presented, with relevant examples. There is a partially developed evaluation.
13–15	The response demonstrates detailed, relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion, and this is demonstrated throughout the essay. There is consistent use of relevant terminology. A reasoned argument(s) is well-structured and coherent and supported by the analysis with connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/ teachings clearly identified and effectively developed. There is a conclusion(s) supported by the evidence presented, and effective use of examples. There is a developed evaluation; any minor inconsistencies do not detract from the strength of the overall argument.

Internal assessment

Purpose of internal assessment

Internal assessment is an integral part of the course and is compulsory for all SL students. It enables them to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests, without the time limitations and other constraints that are associated with written examinations. The internal assessment should, as far as possible, be woven into normal classroom teaching and not be a separate activity conducted after a course has been taught.

Guidance and authenticity

The internal assessment must be the student's own work. However, it is not the intention that students should decide upon a title or topic and be left to work on the internal assessment component without any further support from the teacher. The teacher should play an important role during both the planning stage and the period when the student is working on the internally assessed work. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students are familiar with:

- the requirements of the type of work to be internally assessed
- the assessment criteria; students must understand that the work submitted for assessment must address these criteria effectively.

Teachers and students must discuss the internally assessed work. Students should be encouraged to initiate discussions with the teacher to obtain advice and information, and students must not be penalized for seeking guidance. However, if a student could not have completed the work without substantial support from the teacher, this should be recorded on the appropriate form from the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all students understand the basic meaning and significance of concepts that relate to academic honesty, especially authenticity and intellectual property. Teachers must ensure that all student work for assessment is prepared according to the requirements and must explain clearly to students that the internally assessed work must be entirely their own.

As part of the learning process, teachers can give advice to students on a first draft of the internally assessed work. This advice should be in terms of the way the work could be improved, but this first draft must not be heavily annotated or edited by the teacher. The next version handed to the teacher after the first draft must be the final one.

All work submitted to the IB for moderation or assessment must be authenticated by a teacher, and must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed malpractice. Each student must sign the coversheet for internal assessment to confirm that the work is his or her authentic work and constitutes the final version of that work. Once a student has officially submitted the final version of the work to a teacher (or the coordinator) for internal assessment, together with the signed coversheet, it cannot be retracted.

Authenticity may be checked by discussion with the student on the content of the work, and scrutiny of one or more of the following:

- the student's initial proposal
- the first draft of the written work
- the references cited
- the style of writing compared with work known to be that of the student.

The requirement for teachers and students to sign the coversheet for internal assessment applies to the work of all students, not just the sample work that will be submitted to an examiner for the purpose of moderation. If the teacher and student sign a coversheet, but there is a comment to the effect that the work may not be authentic, the student will not be eligible for a mark in that component and no grade will be awarded. For further details refer to the IB publications *Academic honesty,* the *Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Programme 2011,* section A8 (Academic honesty) and the relevant articles in the *General regulations: Diploma Programme,* which can be found in the Diploma Programme coordinators section of IBIS in the Miscellaneous section of the Library.

The same piece of work cannot be submitted to meet the requirements of both the internal assessment and the extended essay.

Group work

It is acceptable to use a group visit or visiting speaker as part of an individual internal assessment task but it should only be included as part of a larger, individual choice for investigative study. The investigation and written analysis must be the student's individual work.

Time allocation

Internal assessment is an integral part of the world religions course, contributing 25% to the final assessment in the SL course. This weighting should be reflected in the time that is allocated to teaching the knowledge, skills and understanding required to undertake the work, as well as the total time allocated to carry out the work.

It is recommended that a total of approximately 20 hours should be allocated to the work. This should include:

- time for the teacher to explain to students the requirements of the internal assessment
- class time for students to work on the internal assessment component
- time for consultation between the teacher and each student
- time to review and monitor progress, and to check authenticity.

Using assessment criteria for internal assessment

For internal assessment, a number of assessment criteria have been identified. Each assessment criterion has level descriptors describing specific levels of achievement together with an appropriate range of marks. The level descriptors concentrate on positive achievement, although for the lower levels failure to achieve may be included in the description.

Teachers must judge the internally assessed work against the criteria using the level descriptors.

- The aim is to find, for each criterion, the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student, using the best-fit model. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a criterion at different levels. The mark awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the criterion. It is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be awarded.
- When assessing a student's work, teachers should read the level descriptors for each criterion until they reach a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work being assessed. If a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors should be read again and the one that more appropriately describes the student's work should be chosen.
- Where there are two or more marks available within a level, teachers should award the upper marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a great extent. Teachers should award the lower marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent.
- Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial marks, such as fractions and decimals, are not acceptable.
- Teachers should not think in terms of a pass or fail boundary, but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.
- The highest level descriptors do not imply faultless performance but should be achievable by a student. Teachers should not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.
- A student who attains a high level of achievement in relation to one criterion will not necessarily attain high levels of achievement in relation to the other criteria. Similarly, a student who attains a low level of achievement for one criterion will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for the other criteria. Teachers should not assume that the overall assessment of the students will produce any particular distribution of marks.
- It is recommended that the assessment criteria be made available to students.

Internal assessment details

Duration: 20 hours
Weighting: 25%

Requirements and recommendations

The internal assessment is an investigative study of an aspect of the religious experience, practice or belief of a group and/or individual adherents. The focus for the study can be a visit to a sacred place, building or a museum, a study of artifacts, attendance at an act of worship, an interview or interviews with religious adherents, or a study using a range of sources. However, it is important to emphasize that this is an academic exercise, which requires preliminary research.

Relationship to the syllabus

Any religion can be the focus of the study—it does not have to be taken from the list of the nine world religions in the core syllabus. Students will be expected to write a focused and precise analysis on the investigative study.

Word count

Students must produce a written analysis of 1,500–1,800 words but **no** more than 1,800 words. If the word limit is exceeded, the teacher's assessment of the work must be based on the first 1,800 words. Work that exceeds the stated word count will also be penalized under criterion E. Work that significantly falls beneath the stated range of the word count of the task is likely to receive low marks.

Titles, citations, references and appendices are not included in the word count.

References

Students are expected to include a comprehensive list of references that reflects wide preliminary reading. All sources must be referenced consistently, including interviews, and any referencing system can be used. Appendices can be used, for example, to present questions asked at interviews.

Ethical guidelines

Students should consider whether there are ethical implications involved in visiting a place of religious worship or in interviewing a religious adherent. It is important to show respect for the views and beliefs of others, and the integrity of the information gathered.

It is important that the representation of religions is evidence based, balanced and neutral, as opposed to stereotypical and biased. Generalizations that fail to reflect the internal diversity of belief and practice within major religious traditions should be avoided. A critical awareness of sources is required, especially media and internet sources, with regard to reliability, accuracy and perspective. In the internal assessment task, the authority and appropriateness to the research project of individual interview subjects must be considered. Care should be taken not to misrepresent interviewees when using material gained from fieldwork, for example, by quoting them out of context. At the same time material should not be used uncritically.

Permissions and confidentiality

Teachers must advise students on the suitability of a research topic and approve all topics. Teachers should advise on protocols that apply to visiting specific religious communities, to participating in, or observing, religious practices, and when speaking with religious representatives.

When conducting fieldwork and using interview material, **permission** must be gained from interviewees to reproduce that material. Otherwise, sources have to remain anonymous. All interview participants must be informed of the nature and academic goals of the study in which they are participating and students must guarantee that the interview is **confidential**.

Controversial issues

These should not be avoided but require a balanced and informed approach that acknowledges the likely complexity behind them. Generalizations that represent a whole religious tradition must be avoided, for example, using the term "Muslims" when a particular Muslim group is involved. Value judgments, such as "these are not true Muslims", should also be avoided. There is a clear need to investigate sources and interpretations, and to be critically aware of the complexity of representation.

Further details are given in *Ethical practice in the Diploma Programme* (poster), which is available on the OCC.

The investigation

The following stages are necessary in order to carry out the investigation and set the research question.

- **Preparation**—students are expected to have done preliminary research into their chosen topic in order to establish that it will be an appropriate area of investigation.
- **Expectations/rationale for study**—students must have a clear conception of what they expect to find (out) and how they are going to investigate their chosen area.

The following are given as examples of an investigation.

1. Interview with an adherent reflecting on the significance of personal religious experience on their identity and world view.
2. Observation of a religious festival or rite of passage to investigate its purpose and significance.
3. Investigation of different acts of worship performed by two or more different groups within a religion to analyse different perceptions of the purpose of worship.
4. Visit to an art gallery to view depictions of religious narratives.
5. An investigation of a contemporary religious issue or dilemma (such as inter-religious marriage or conversion from one religion to another) through research on the internet, secondary sources and the media.
6. Investigation of radical, liberal, conservative and fundamentalist interpretations of religious traditions through interviews and/or observations of worship, or research on the internet, secondary sources and the media.

The following are given as examples for research questions.

1. What is the significance of performing Ramadan for a Muslim? (Interview a Muslim family.)
2. What is the importance of a believer's baptism to a Baptist? (Visit a Baptist church, observe the rite and interview a Christian Baptist.)
3. What is the significance of any differences in practice between an Orthodox and Reform Jewish Shabbat service? How do these differences relate to belief? (Visit two synagogues, observe the services and interview members of the congregations.)
4. How does an indigenous religion respond to its environment? Examples might be Aboriginals, traditional African religions and Shamanic religions (secondary and primary sources, visits to cultural centres and museums).
5. Analyse how religious beliefs are transmitted through art or architecture by looking at such examples as the Buddha's enlightenment, the design of a gurdwara, portraits of Jesus's Crucifixion or Resurrection, or the stained-glass windows in synagogues as compared with churches.

The written analysis

Each student must produce a written analysis with the following format (together with a coversheet stating the title of the investigative study and the word count) under the **five** headings given below.

- Rationale and preliminary research
- Plan for study
- Summary of significant findings
- Critical reflection and evaluation
- References and compliance with format

Requirements for the written analysis

Students are advised to use the following guidelines to format their written analysis, which will ensure that the work meets the requirements of the criteria.

Criterion A Rationale and preliminary research

Students must:

- provide a rationale for the choice of topic for the investigative study
- define the focus of the investigative study, which should be formulated as a question
- outline and justify the range of sources consulted
- select and analyse supporting evidence, showing how this evidence informs the investigative study.

Criterion B Plan for study

Students must:

- clearly state and narrowly focus the research question
- outline the scope and plan for the investigative study
- identify the relationship between the research question and the scope and plan.

Criterion C Summary of significant findings

Students must:

- identify and outline significant findings from the investigation through observation, interview and/or participation
- explain the relationship between research findings and the research question
- discuss the rationale and plan of study in relation to the significant findings.

Criterion D Critical reflection and evaluation

Students must:

- critically reflect on the significant findings in relation to the research question
- demonstrate how the investigative study deepens an understanding of religious experiences and/or beliefs
- identify misconceptions and inconsistencies as a result of the research plan and materials used
- understand the degree to which the research was successful in producing significant findings for analysis, and justifying future research.

Criterion E References and compliance with format

Students must ensure that:

- the work is no more than the 1,800 word limit
- the list of references consistently follows a standard format
- the format of the written analysis has been followed as described in the section "The written analysis".

Internal assessment criteria

Investigative study

There are five internal assessment criteria for the written analysis.

Criterion A	Rationale and preliminary research	8 marks
Criterion B	Plan for study	3 marks
Criterion C	Summary of significant findings	6 marks
Criterion D	Critical reflection and evaluation	10 marks
Criterion E	References and compliance with format	3 marks
	Total	**30 marks**

The purpose of the internal assessment is to assess students' ability to demonstrate the following in relation to the written analysis.

- Knowledge and understanding (assessment objective 1)—criteria A and D
- Application and analysis (assessment objective 2)—criteria A, C and D
- Synthesis and evaluation (assessment objective 3)—criteria A, C and D
- Selection, use and application of a variety of appropriate skills and techniques (assessment objective 4)—criteria B and E

Criterion A Rationale and preliminary research

This criterion assesses the rationale and focus for the investigative study, and whether an appropriate range of sources and supporting evidence have been used to inform the investigative study.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The rationale is stated with little evidence of research, or there is limited research but no rationale.
3–4	The study has been researched, and some supporting evidence has been produced, though this may not be relevant. The rationale is stated.
5–6	The study has been well researched using a range of sources, and supporting evidence has been produced. The rationale is clearly stated, with evidence of some development.
7–8	The investigative study has been thoroughly researched using a wide range of sources, and excellent supporting evidence has been produced. The rationale is clearly stated and well developed.

Criterion B Plan for study

This criterion assesses the scope and a plan for the investigative study, the focus of the research question and the relationship between the research question and the scope and plan.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The scope and/or plan for the study are stated but not clearly focused. There is no research question.
2	The scope and plan for the study are generally appropriate and focused. The research question is stated and is related to the scope and plan.
3	The scope and plan for the study are appropriate and focused. The research question is clearly focused and closely related to the scope and plan.

Criterion C Summary of significant findings

This criterion assesses the significant findings from the investigation, the relationship between the research findings and the research question, and whether the rationale and plan of study relate to the significant findings.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	There is little indication of significant findings, and these are not related to the research question, rationale and plan for the study.
3–4	Significant findings are stated and are related to one or more aspects of the research question, rationale and plan for the study.
5–6	Significant findings are clearly stated and well developed, and the relationship between the research question, rationale and plan for the study is fully demonstrated.

Criterion D Critical reflection and evaluation

This criterion assesses the quality and analysis of the significant findings in relation to the research question and how the investigative study has deepened understanding of religious experience and/or beliefs.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	Critical reflection is very limited, with no linkage between the research question and significant findings. There may be some recognition of one or more misconceptions and inconsistencies between the research and the findings, or limited but underdeveloped reference to research methods used.

Marks	Level descriptor
3–4	There is an attempt at some critical reflection, with little or no linkage between the research question and significant findings. There is a basic recognition of some misconceptions and inconsistencies between the research and the findings. There is some limited reference to research methods used.
5–6	There is evidence of sound critical reflection, demonstrating some understanding of religious experience and/or belief. There is an understanding of how far the research question informed most, if not all, of the significant findings. There is some recognition of any misconceptions and/or inconsistencies between the research and the findings. There is some discussion of research methods chosen.
7–8	Critical reflection is sound and well developed, demonstrating an understanding of religious experience and/or belief. There is a good understanding of how far the research question has informed the significant findings. Where appropriate, any misconceptions and/or inconsistencies between the research and the findings are identified. There is an evaluation of the research methods used. Conclusions and future possibilities may be outlined.
9–10	Critical reflection is detailed and very well developed, demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of religious experience and/or belief. There is an excellent understanding of how far the research question has informed the significant findings. Where appropriate, any misconceptions and/or inconsistencies between the research and the findings are developed and evaluated. There is a thorough evaluation of the research methods used and recognition of any underlying assumptions and/or bias. Conclusions and future research possibilities are considered.

Criterion E References and compliance with format

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student meets the three formal requirements of writing, organizing and presenting the written analysis.

- The work is no more than the 1,800 word limit.
- The list of references consistently follows a standard format.
- The format of the written analysis has been followed as described in the section "The written analysis".

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The work is no more than the 1,800 word limit.
2	The work is no more than the 1,800 word limit and meets one of the other formal requirements.
3	The work is no more than the 1,800 word limit and meets the two other formal requirements.

Glossary of command terms

Command terms with definitions

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in examination questions, which are to be understood as described below. Although these terms will be used frequently in examination questions, other terms may be used to direct students to present an argument in a specific way.

The assessment objectives (AOs) listed below are those referred to in the world religions syllabus.

Analyse	AO2	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
Comment	AO1	Give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation.
Compare	AO3	Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Compare and contrast	AO3	Give an account of the similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Contrast	AO3	Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Define	AO1	Give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity.
Describe	AO1	Give a detailed account.
Discuss	AO3	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
Distinguish	AO2	Make clear the differences between two or more concepts or items.
Evaluate	AO3	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
Examine	AO3	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
Explain	AO2	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.
Identify	AO1	Provide an answer from a number of possibilities.
Justify	AO3	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
Outline	AO1	Give a brief account or summary.
To what extent	AO3	Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.