

Circular S/IF/33/20

November 2020

To: The Principals of Post-primary Schools and Directors of Further and Higher Education

For circulation to: All Heads of Departments and Examination Officers

GCSE Religious Studies

Revised Specification Addendum – further guidance for Summer 2021

On 9th October 2020 the Minister of Education set out the arrangements for the assessment of GCSE and GCE qualifications in Summer 2021. In his instruction to CCEA the Minister requested that: *“In the small number of GCSE qualifications where omission of a unit would remove more than forty percent of the content from being assessed, CCEA will be looking at alternative ways to reduce the burden of assessment – these qualifications are GCSE **Religious Studies**, Health and Social Care, Food and Nutrition, Government and Politics, and Statistics”*.

On 5 November 2020 CCEA received approval from the Department of Education to reduce the assessment burden for Full Course GCSE Religious Studies as follows:

- For full course GCSE Religious Studies students have the option of entering for **one** examination unit and completing a **controlled assessment task** in their other unit or students can complete both examination units. They cannot do both examination units and the controlled assessment task.
- The controlled assessment task is equivalent to 10% of the original specification. Candidates will have completed assessment equivalent to 60% of the original specification. It will be worth one-sixth of the uniform marks of the overall revised qualification. The weighting of the revised qualification will be five sixths exam and one sixth controlled assessment weighting.
- The internally assessed task will take a similar format to a question from Section B of the examination paper. The theme for each of the tasks will be taken from early in the Specification (theme 1 or theme 2). The marks will be broken down as a Section B question:
 - Part A - 5 marks, assessing (AO1)
 - Part B - 5 marks, assessing (AO1)
 - Part C - 10 marks, assessing (AO2)
- CCEA will provide a question and answer booklet for each candidate. This will be in the same format as a Section B answer booklet. The time allowed for this controlled assessment is one hour. The level of control of the task taking is medium. Direct supervision of candidates is not required at all times. The use of resources is not tightly prescribed. There must be sufficient supervision to ensure that individual work can be authenticated. An exception for 20/21 is that the teacher may wish to contact the candidate online if they are not completing the work in class.

The following guidance will be helpful in relation to controlled assessment CCEA **GCSE Controlled**



Assessment: Task Taking Arrangements and Possible Exceptions in 2020/21 *Published 2/11/2020*
[Summer 2021 Assessment Arrangements](#)

- The controlled assessment tasks will be set by CCEA, internally marked by teachers, and externally moderated by CCEA. CCEA will provide a mark scheme for each unit.
- There will be Specimen Assessment materials and mark schemes. These will be available on the CCEA website no later than **18 December 2020**. The live tasks and mark schemes will be uploaded to the CCEA website no later than **29 January 2021**. Teachers will be able to access the mark schemes via a secure password.

These arrangements apply to candidates who began their GCSE qualification in September 2019 and wish to achieve a qualification-level grade in Summer 2021. This also includes candidates wishing to resit.

For GCSE short course students, one examination unit must be sat in Summer 2021.

Students who cashed in short course in Summer 2020 and want to enter for full course in Summer 2021, must sit one examination unit and a controlled assessment task from their other unit of study. One of either the examination unit or the controlled assessment task taken in Summer 2021 must be the same as the unit entered in Summer 2020.

Submission Date for Tasks

In line with submission dates for other controlled assessment tasks, the samples for GCSE Religious Studies must be submitted by **4 May 2021**. The samples request will arrive in centres on **20 April 2021**. Please be advised that the revised specification addendum can be accessed on the CCEA website along with the [GCSE Support Webinar](#)

If you have any queries regarding the content of this circular, please contact:

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