

CAMBRIDGE IGCSE

Religious Studies 0490

Syllabus Overview

Examinations 2028

Understanding the whole syllabus

The subject connects religious teachings and sources with beliefs, practices, history and lived experience. Accurate knowledge supports an explanation of meaning and significance. Where the syllabus requires evaluation, different views need fair treatment and evidence rather than unsupported assertion.

For Religious Studies 0490, the content map below follows the approved subject briefing and the official syllabus. Labels group related areas for orientation; the detailed syllabus remains the authority for individual learning requirements.

Content map

Syllabus area or component	What the area covers
Choice of two religions	You will select two religions from Christianity, Islam and Judaism and study both throughout the course.
Paper 1: Worship, scriptures and sacred places	The first part examines worship, beliefs and scriptures, and sacred places. You will explore places of worship, religious objects, communal and individual practices, the roles of religious leaders and the authority of sacred writings. You will also consider pilgrimage and places of historical or spiritual importance.
Paper 2: Festivals, family and social action	The second part focuses on festivals and fasts, rites of passage, family life and social action. This includes religious celebrations, birth and marriage ceremonies, funerals, family roles, responses to social change, care for others, poverty relief and stewardship of the environment.
Comparison and supported evaluation	Throughout the course, you will compare different perspectives within and between religious communities. You will learn to explain beliefs accurately, connect teachings with practice, and evaluate their significance through reasoned arguments supported by evidence.

These areas should be read as a connected course. Begin with the foundational knowledge identified in the first part of the map, then build towards the applications and explanations that depend on it. Link each teaching or text to its meaning, context and relevant practice. Keep knowledge and explanation distinct in revision, and develop supported evaluation only where the assessment requires it. Where a row describes a choice of topics or components, study the selection required by your agreed route rather than treating all alternatives as compulsory.

Qualification and component choices

All candidates follow the component structure shown in the Assessment Overview. There is no separate Core/Extended route in this syllabus.

Study two religions chosen from Christianity, Islam and Judaism and use the same two in both papers. The supplied 2028 source contains inconsistent component percentages, so no percentage allocation is asserted in this orientation.

The assessed skills

Assessment objectives describe the abilities Cambridge looks for across the qualification. The following explanations paraphrase the syllabus objectives; they are not additional topics or separate orientation tasks.

Assessment objective	Meaning for the learner
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Select accurate subject knowledge, terminology and examples that answer the question, and explain their meaning.
AO2 Evaluation	Weigh evidence, explanations or methods, explain limitations and reach a justified judgement.

These abilities work together in an answer. Accurate knowledge supports application, while a clear explanation shows how the evidence or method leads to a conclusion. The balance varies by component, so the next lesson connects these abilities with the actual assessment formats.

Key pointers: Follow the stated examination-year syllabus, cover the required areas for your route and develop skills alongside knowledge. **Next:** Open **Assessment Overview**.