

## CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**DATE:** 9TH MARCH 2015

**SUBJECT:** REVISED CRITERIA FOR GCSE AND GCE  
**SPECIFICATIONS: UPDATE**

There are a number of meetings that have already been held on proposed changes to specifications and assessment practices for GCSE and GCE - Stakeholders and WG meeting (November 2014) and RS Subject Pane Meeting (December 2014).

### **Main proposed changes under discussion**

#### **Change to assessment objectives**

There will still be two assessment objectives of AO1- knowledge and understanding of religion and AO2 -using skills such as evidence, reasoning and analysis to produce balanced arguments.

English model does appear to put more specific emphasis on impact on individuals, communities and societies. The Subject Panel did stress the importance of stressing *impact* or else it becomes just a study of religion. WJEC may well take the English AOs as their model.

#### **Changes to specifications**

There will a variety of models proposed for both GCSE and GCE and schools will be consulted on these.

#### **GCSE**

- To retain a Full Course and Short Course option – great consensus that a Short Course route be continued.
- English proposed specifications ensure that another religion in addition to Christianity is studied. WJEC is giving consideration that specifications should ensure that another religion in addition to Christianity is studied.
- Issue of whether RC schools will still be able to do 2 RC options as they currently do. This looks unlikely if there is a requirement to study two religions. It may be possible in an updated form to include elements of the two RC Christianity units currently available within Specification A.
- To consider the introduction of 2 new units of study at GCSE (Buddhism and Sikhism) to widen the choice of religions available to study. England already includes these religions in their proposed specifications.

#### **GCE (A and AS)**

- In England AS and A2 will be stand alone qualifications whereas in Wales AS will still feed into A2
- No exam in January in England or Wales.
- England is moving away from having a specific **synoptic unit** but that the synoptic element will be brought into papers generically. If Wales retains the current synoptic unit then *titles* will not be given in advance of the exam as currently is done.

## **Tiering**

RS at GCSE has never offered tiered papers and the proposal is that the **current position is retained with non-tiered papers** at GCSE.

## **Welsh perspective**

Welsh Government and WJEC have agreed that there will a statement appearing in the first section of every new AS/A level specification for Wales. It will read:

*“In following this specification, learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective if the opportunity arises naturally from the subject matter and if its inclusion would enrich learners’ understanding of the world around them as citizens of Wales as well as the UK, Europe and the world”.*

Some examples of where it could fit in will be provided to schools but there will be no prescribed content on Welsh dimension.

## **Process and Timescale**

- Subject Panel will comment on models proposed.
- Questionnaire will be sent to schools early in New Year 2015 for comment.
- There will be 34 weeks to respond.
- Comments will be fed back to the subject Panel.
- A Subject Development Group will be set up to write the specifications and specimen materials.
- Draft specimen materials and specifications will be sent to the Subject Panel for comment.
- WAG approached for accreditation- Summer 2015.
- Implementation from Autumn 2016.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

For SACRE to note the report