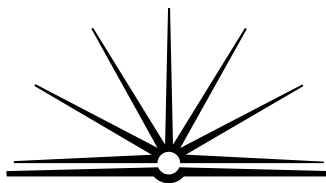


Stages 4 and 5

**STUDIES OF RELIGION
SYLLABUS**

YEARS 7–10



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

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Introduction

The Studies of Religion Syllabus Years 7–10 is an elective course for the School Certificate within the Human Society and its Environment Key Learning Area. It has been developed to be consistent with other courses in this Key Learning Area. Accordingly, it is a course of study about religion and religious thought and the significance of religious traditions in human society.

While this syllabus will allow concentration on a particular religious tradition, it will not be possible to study one tradition exclusively. The syllabus is designed so that it may be studied in all schools, both government and non-government. As a course in general religious education it is distinct from Special Religious Education in government schools and other courses of religion in non-government schools.

Rationale

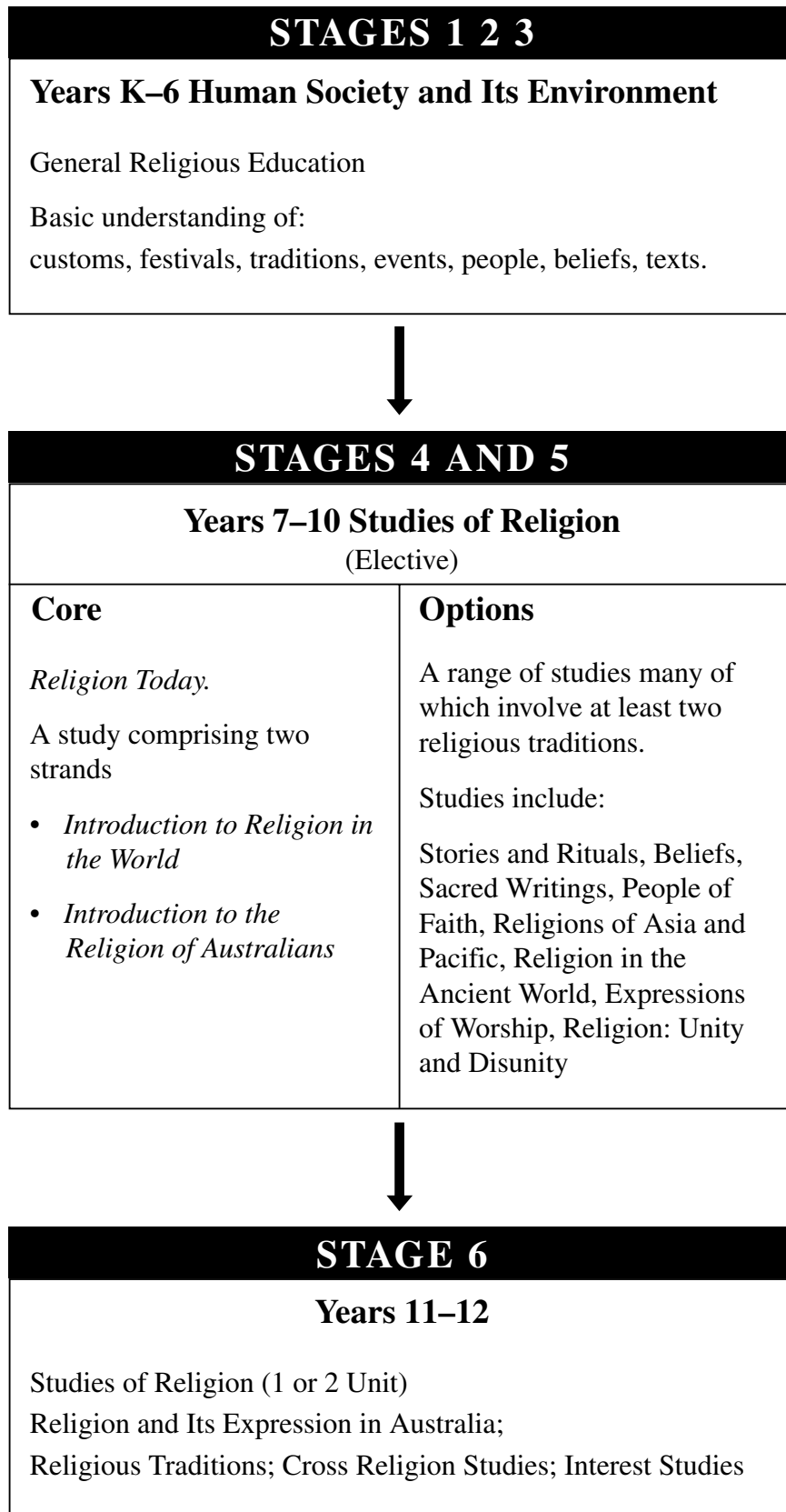
Studies of Religion explores the diversity of religious experience in the world, and will increase the students' awareness of Australia's rapidly changing multifaith society. It recognises the significance of religion in human experience and culture.

This syllabus will assist students to become more informed about their own religious heritage and identify other traditions in Australia's multifaith society. Aboriginal religious beliefs and value systems are included to ensure that all students who study this course have an appreciation of the spiritual nature of Aboriginal culture.

The syllabus consists of a compulsory core and a wide range of options. The core and the options enable teachers and students to have maximum flexibility in the study of a range of religious traditions.

The syllabus adopts an educational approach which is related to the overall aims of the Key Learning Area of Human Society and Its Environment. It is not based on any one model for studying religion.

Overview of K–12 Studies of Religion



Structure of the Syllabus

This syllabus allows for the development of courses of varying lengths which may contribute to either the Human Society and Its Environment mandatory hours or to the available hours for electives.

This course can be studied for up to 200 hours as part of the Human Society and Its Environment Key Learning Area, as an additional study (elective). It can also contribute to the 200 hours of the Human Society and Its Environment Key Learning area, which is required in Years 7–10 in addition to the mandatory 100 hours of Australian History and 100 hours of Australian Geography.

If Studies of Religion is to be studied for 100 hours (indicative), then the study will be the CORE AND THREE OPTIONS.

If Studies of Religion is to be studied for 200 hours (indicative), then the study will be the CORE AND EIGHT OPTIONS.

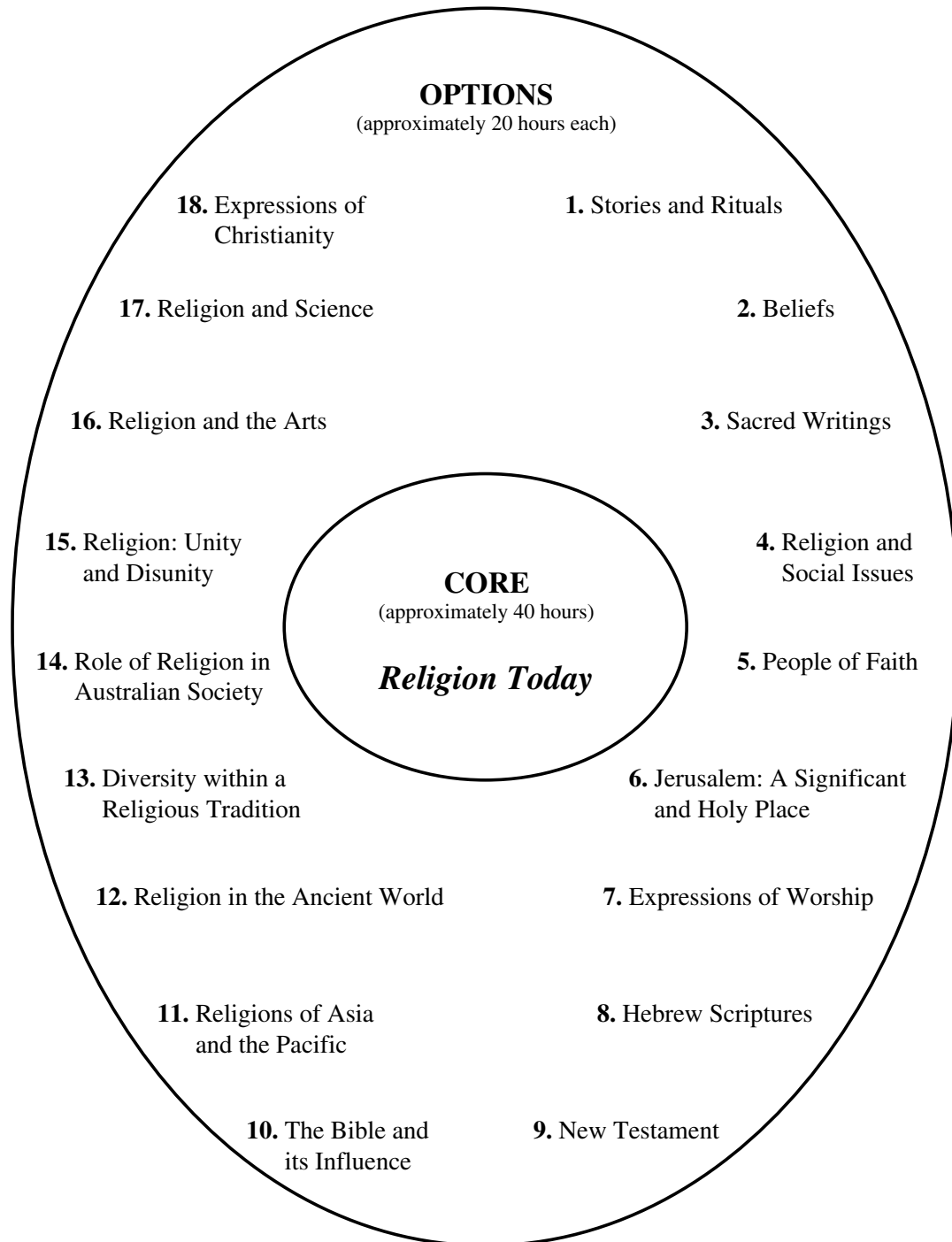
If Studies of Religion is to be studied for 300 hours (indicative), then the study will be the CORE AND THIRTEEN OPTIONS.

If Studies of Religion is to be studied for 400 hours (indicative), then the study will be the CORE AND EIGHTEEN OPTIONS.

STAGE 4		STAGE 5	
YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10
If studied in these years the course is not shown on the School Certificate		If studied in these years the course may be shown on the School Certificate	
Studies of Religion can be part of the HSIE mandatory 400 hours total of which 200 hours will be History and Geography. Studies of Religion can be the remaining 200 hours or part of the remaining 200 hours or as an additional study (elective).			

Studies of Religion Years 7–10

Structure of the Syllabus



Aims

The aim of this syllabus is to promote an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the nature of religion and to develop religious literacy in the student. It builds on the general awareness of religious beliefs and practices contained in the Human Society and Its Environment (K–6) Syllabus. It also provides a basis for a more systematic and analytical study of religion in Years 11 and 12.

This course will assist students to:

- examine the range of religions in the world and particularly in Australia
- understand and appreciate the nature and expressions of a variety of religions
- understand the ways in which religious beliefs and practices may have a shaping influence on the life and values of individuals and societies
- become more aware of individual cultural and spiritual heritages
- reflect on the role of religions in developing an individual's sense of identity.

The course aims to give students of all ability levels an opportunity to pursue areas of study, within the framework of the syllabus, which are grounded in the students' own experiences and interests. It develops research and communication skills through an emphasis on student-centred and collaborative learning methodologies. It facilitates the development of values and attitudes by promoting social interaction in the classroom and encouraging respect for the opinions of others.

Objectives

Knowledge and Understanding — Core

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding about:

- major religious traditions
- the place of Christianity in Australian society
- Aboriginal spirituality.

Knowledge and Understanding — Options 1–7

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding about:

- specific aspects of religion.

Knowledge and Understanding — Options 8–9

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding about:

- the content, structure and place of Scripture in the Hebrew and Christian traditions.

Knowledge and Understanding — Options 10–18

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding about:

- religion as expressed through culture and within a society.

Skills

Students will develop skills in:

- defining the purpose of an investigation
- observing, collecting and recording information
- sequencing and recalling
- investigating and researching
- interpreting and using material from various sources
- analysing and synthesising information gathered from a variety of sources
- communicating and explaining
- analysing the relations between lifestyles and expressions of religious beliefs
- asking questions about religious matters
- assessing the process of investigation.

Studies of Religion and the National Profile for Studies of Society and Environment

The Studies of Society and Environment National Profile is organised around six strands, five of which are based on an important concept in the area. They are:

- Time, Continuity and Change
- Place and Space
- Culture
- Resources
- Natural and Social Systems.

The sixth strand deals with the key processes of:

- Investigation, Communication and Participation.

The Studies of Religion Years 7–10 Syllabus is located within the Studies of Society and Environment — National Profile. Its outcomes relate to the outcomes of the National Profile.

In the National Profile, eight levels have been developed to cover the compulsory years of schooling. Years 7–10, the area of this syllabus, might be expected to cover levels 4–8. For an explanation of the relationship between stages and levels, see the diagram on the next page.

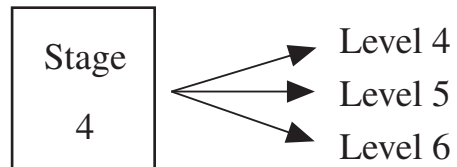
In the list of Outcomes on pages 11 and 12, nationally developed outcomes are indicated by an asterisk. The list contains nationally developed outcomes and outcomes specifically written for this syllabus.

In achieving the syllabus outcomes teachers should carefully consider the Assessment section (p26) when planning learning experiences for their students.

Relationship between Stages and Levels

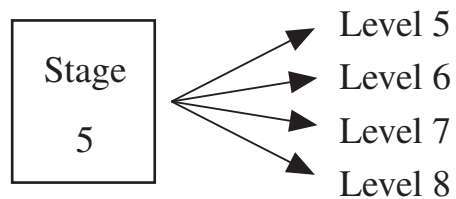
Stage 4

All students in years 7 and 8 are in this stage. Many of these students will achieve level 4. Some may require additional time to achieve level 4/5 outcomes while others could achieve level 6 outcomes. Some students may require additional time to achieve earlier level outcomes and some could achieve later level outcomes.



Stage 5

All students in years 9 and 10 are in this stage. Many of these students will achieve level 5 and 6 outcomes. Some may require additional time to achieve level 5/6 outcomes while some could achieve level 7 and even 8 outcomes. Some students may require additional time to achieve earlier level outcomes and some could achieve later level outcomes.



Outcomes

The following pages contain the outcomes for the syllabus and incorporate those nationally developed outcomes which are appropriate to this syllabus.

The outcomes have been developed in three areas:

- **Knowledge and Understanding**
- **Skills**
- **Values and Attitudes.**

Knowledge and Understanding Outcomes

* Denotes Nationally Developed Outcomes

CORE AND OPTIONS				
LEVELS				
4	5	6	7	8
Name and locate the major religious traditions. Describe what religion is.	Describe how religious beliefs are expressed.	Describe and explain the importance of religious traditions in Australian society. Describe the religious traditions in terms of the components of religion.	Identify and describe similarities and differences in the major religious traditions. Explain the relationships between religious beliefs and their expressions.	* (8.8) Analyse factors which bring about cultural adaptation within groups, communities or societies.
Describe the place of Christianity in Australian society.	Describe the historical background of the major religious traditions.	Discuss important issues arising from the historical development of the religious traditions.	Analyse the ways that religious traditions can be described in terms of the components of religion.	* (8.9) Evaluate moral and ethical issues and justify their own position.
Describe the inter-relatedness of Aboriginal people with their environment.	Identify and describe religious issues which are culturally important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and groups.	Describe and explain the role of art, Dreaming stories and other expressions of Aboriginal spirituality.	* (7.7) Analyse the significance to Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islander people of the ways they are connected to land and/or place.	* (8.7) Analyse contemporary issues of cultural importance from the perspectives and beliefs of Aboriginal groups and Torres Strait Islander groups.
* (4.5) Describe how people's beliefs and practices influence the way s they interact with places.	Describe the significant religious ideas, people or events which have contributed to Australian society.	Account for the ways in which Christian beliefs are reflected in contemporary Australian society.	* (7.1a) Critically analyse the ways in which core values of Australian society have endured or changed over time.	Analyse the interactions between the religious traditions and Australian society.
* (3.8) Identify and describe different groups within their community and how they function.	* (5.6) Explain why various individuals and groups have differing views on issues related to caring for places.	* (6.8) Analyse the ways societies or communities maintain cohesion and allow diversity.	* (7.6) Analyse the views of others on issues related to careful use of a place or space on the earth's surface in order to develop and justify their own stance.	

Skills Outcomes

* Denotes Nationally Developed Outcomes

SKILLS	LEVELS				
	4	5	6	7	8
Investigation	*4.16 Identifies the type of data and sources appropriate to a task and how they will be used to gain information.	*5.16 Recognises significant issues and selects appropriate ways of investigating them.	*6.16 Identifies various ways of viewing an issue and the information associated with it.	*7.16 Uses specific methodologies of the learning area to investigate different perspectives on an issue.	*8.16 Formulate a hypothesis and propose methods of testing it.
Communication	*4.17 Translates information from one form to another.	*5.17 Uses supporting evidence to argue a personal viewpoint.	*6.17 Discusses the logic of and evidence for an argument or viewpoint.	*7.17 Justifies choices of particular form of communication for specific tasks.	*8.17 Uses the specific forms of communication of the learning area to present the findings of an investigation to a particular audience.
Participation	*4.18 Designs appropriate strategies to complete tasks and facilitates decision making for particular purposes.	*5.18 Identifies causes of conflict and ineffective group work and negotiates solutions.	*6.18 Develops an informed personal decision through discussing and considering viewpoints and evidence presented by others.	*7.18 Judges actions of self and others in the light of available choices and avowed value positions.	*8.18 Plans action in the light of conflicting and inconsistent information and values.

* Denotes Nationally Developed Outcomes

Values and Attitudes Outcomes

Values and Attitudes underpin this syllabus in three central ways:

- 1. they are an object of study**
- 2. values influence what is selected for study**
- 3. certain values are a result of study.**

As a result of studying this syllabus students should be able to:

- recognise, clarify and develop positive attitudes and values toward religious expression
- develop an awareness and appreciation of aboriginal spiritual heritage
- develop an awareness and appreciation that they are part of a multicultural society
- appreciate the contribution of religion to the development of communities in Australia and throughout the world
- appreciate the role of belief in the formation of an ethical approach to issues.

Core: Religion Today

To study religion in stages 4 and 5, it is essential that students are introduced to the broad area of religion in a world context.

In order to understand the Australian religious context, students need to study Christianity, Aboriginal Spirituality and the other major traditions present in our society — Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

The Core Study consists of 2 strands:

- A Introduction to Religion in the World
- B Introduction to the Religions of Australians

A. Introduction to Religion in the World

1. Exploring the world of student knowledge
 - What students know about religion in their local area.
 - What students know about religion in the world today.
 - Student review of religion and other belief systems in Australian society (media search, observation, asking questions).
2. Overview of the names and geographical distribution of the world's religions
 - Identifying the major and other religions within these categories.
 - Identifying the population distribution of these religions in the contemporary world.
 - Identifying the major religious traditions in Australia.
3. Key components of religion, for example:
 - gods and spirits
 - worship and festivals
 - beliefs
 - special times and places
 - ways of living
 - writings
 - stories.

B. Introduction to the Religions of Australians

The emphasis is on concrete expressions of the various religions in Australia today. The religions to be studied must include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. This strand of the core must include the study of:

- the central place of Christianity in the development of Australian culture since 1788
- Aboriginal Spirituality in both traditional and contemporary forms.

Aspects to be studied should include:

1. The expressions of each religion within Australia
 - Worship
 - Festivals

- Rites of passage
 - Social values
 - Social action
 - Arts and architecture.
2. The place of each religion in contemporary Australian society
- Beginning
 - Growth and diversity
 - Changing roles in contemporary society.
3. The place of Christianity in the development of Australian society in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries
- European settlement and early expressions of Christianity
 - Role in development of government, law, education and other social structures
 - Changes over time, including the contemporary society.
4. Aboriginal Spirituality
- Dreamings all over Australia based on interrelatedness of people and the environment
 - Concept of land and the importance of kinship
 - Local bases of aboriginal cultures, differing historical experiences and differing expressions of spirituality.

Options

The range of Options in Years 7–10 Studies in Religion allows for different starting points, various approaches and concrete examples. This responds to readiness, needs, abilities, and interests of teachers and students.

The options also allow for a focus on those religious traditions which are relevant in the local context.

1. Stories and Rituals
2. Beliefs
3. Sacred Writings
4. Religion and Social Issues
5. People of Faith
6. Jerusalem: a Significant and Holy Place
7. Expressions of Worship
8. Hebrew Scriptures
9. New Testament
10. The Bible and its Influence
11. Religions of Asia and the Pacific
12. Religion in the Ancient World
13. Diversity within a Religious Tradition
14. Role of Religion in Australian Society
15. Religion: Unity and Disunity
16. Religion and the Arts
17. Religion and Science
18. Expressions of Christianity

Options

1. Stories and Rituals

a. Story

- Story in everyday life (eg personal family, school)
- The importance of story (eg legends, myths, parables, moral/ethical stories)
- With reference to at least two religious traditions, study of a selection of stories noting what they teach about beliefs, and what they say about living
- The role of story in worship.

b. Ritual

- The importance of ritual in everyday life (for example family, school, sport)
- What a ‘ritual’ is
- With reference to at least two religious traditions, examination of rituals as expressions of religious meaning. This study should include different types of rituals such as rites of passage, commemoration rites and sacrificial rites.

2. Beliefs

a. The importance of belief in everyday life

- The range of beliefs in everyday life, for example, values in school, family, friendships
- How these beliefs are transmitted through society, for example, song, poetry, signs and symbols, family customs.

b. With reference to at least two religious traditions a study of beliefs about some of the following:

- ‘God(s)’, ‘Spirit(s)’, ‘Supreme Beings’
- persons
- the universe (beginnings, end)
- salvation
- afterlife
- day to day morality.

3. Sacred Writings

- a. The importance of writings in:
 - personal and social life
 - human history.
- b. With reference to a least two religious traditions, study a selection of writings using particular forms (eg poetry, songs of praise, narrative) or themes (eg forgiveness, death, love, relationships, suffering)
 - The background, content, and importance of the writings to the religious tradition
 - The development and transmission of the text
 - Overview of the contents and structure

4. Religion and Social Issues

- a. With reference to at least two religious traditions, a study of social issues relevant to contemporary Australia. Issues could include:
 - changes in family patterns
 - unemployment
 - poverty
 - preservation of the environment.
 - the problems of disadvantaged groups
 - immigration and Australian society
 - violence
- b. Analysis of the issues selected in terms of:
 - their development and relevance in contemporary society
 - the teachings and practices of the selected religious traditions

5. People of Faith

With reference to at least two religious traditions, a study of biographies of significant people (excluding founders) to explore their influence and place in their religious traditions

- Key features of their lives, noting in particular the influence of their beliefs
- Contributions made by each of these people
- Relevance of their lives to contemporary religion.

6. Jerusalem: A Significant and Holy Place

- a. Jerusalem today
 - A place of pilgrimage for three religious traditions
 - Geography, including location and archaeology
 - Religious and political tensions.
- b. Significance for:
 - Judaism
 - centre of worship
 - cycles of exile and return
 - sacred places.
 - Christianity
 - importance in the life of Jesus and the early Christian community
 - the Crusades
 - sacred places.
 - Islam
 - importance in the life of Mu hammed
 - the Crusades
 - sacred places.

7. Expressions of Worship

Drawing from at least two religious traditions, a study of the following:

- a. What is worship
- b. Why people worship, this could include:
 - times of need
 - asking, praising, thanksgiving
 - times of the year
 - events in life
 - way of life.
- c. How people worship, this could include:
 - rituals, customs and images
 - different ways for example,
 - prayer mat
 - communal

- songs/chants
- physical positions and patterns of movement
- liturgies/services.

d. Where people worship, this could include:

- various settings
- buildings
- position.

e. Types of worship, this could include:

- liturgy
- meditation
- public/private
- reading from a sacred book
- communal/individual
- preaching – sermon/address
- special rituals
- special services.

8. Hebrew Scriptures

a. A brief overview of the structure of the Hebrew Scriptures

- The Five Books of Moses
- Historical Books (Early Prophets)
- Prophecies
- Writings.

b. A study of key themes which could include:

- covenant
- law
- the land of Israel
- relationship with God and each other
- morality.

c. Examine the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures on society

- Their place in Judaism
- Their influence on other religious traditions
- Their influence on our society
 - law
 - literature
 - morality
 - justice.

9. New Testament

a. Structure, background and compilation of the New Testament including its relationship to the Hebrew Scriptures and other Jewish literature.

b. Choose either A or B.

A. The Gospels

Using either a study of one gospel or all four gospels

- the life, works and major teachings of Jesus
- the accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection
- the impact of Jesus' teaching on society, both in the 1st Century and in contemporary society.

B. Other New Testament Writings

- The beginning and expansion of Christianity as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles
- Some themes in the letters of Paul, for example:
 - law and grace
 - relationships
 - meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection
 - community

10. The Bible and its Influence

a. The way in which the Bible has been viewed throughout history

- its original compilation and use
- the first few centuries
- the Middle Ages
- the Reformation

- eighteenth and nineteenth centuries
 - today.
- b. The way the Bible has influenced society and culture. Choose two aspects of society, eg
- law
 - education
 - morality
 - politics
 - literature
 - art
 - music.

11. Religions of Asia and the Pacific

- a. A study of two religions of Asia and the Pacific not already studied in the Core. The religions studied could include:
- Animism/Primal religion/Tribal religion
 - Confucianism
 - Melanesian/Polynesian/Micronesian/Maori Beliefs
 - Shintoism
 - Sikhism
 - Taoism.
- b. The study should include:
- a brief historical background
 - significant individuals
 - beliefs
 - religious expressions within the cultures
 - stories.

12. Religion in the Ancient World

- a. Evidence from archaeology including architecture, art, artefacts, documents, inscriptions and tombs.
- b. A study of evidence relating to religion in one or more civilisations
 - Babylonian
 - Chinese
 - Cretan
 - Egyptian
 - Greek
 - Roman
 - Sumerian
 - Civilisations of Central and South America: for example Inca, Mayan, Aztec.
- c. How this evidence helps us to understand religious expression and beliefs found in the Ancient World.

13. Diversity within a Religious Tradition

Choosing one religious tradition other than Christianity study

- a. The factors involved in creating diversity, eg personalities, historical circumstances, and new insights.
- b. The range of expressions and structures in worship and beliefs.
- c. Various responses to diversity, eg
 - dialogue
 - conflict
 - adaptation
 - integration.

14. Role of Religion in Australian Society

An exploration of the way religious people, beliefs and practices have been part of the development of two or more aspects of Australian life. Where aspects allow, at least two religious traditions should be included. Some aspects which could be included are:

- education
- social welfare
- attitudes to land and the environment

- political parties
- attitudes to work
- clubs, societies and community organisations
- many cultures in one land
- constitutional issues
- justice system
- role of women.

15. Religion: Unity and Disunity

At least one case study of cooperation and one of conflict chosen from one or more religious traditions.

- a. Case studies of religious cooperation, eg
 - World Council of Churches
 - Christian – Jewish
 - World Vision
 - Freedom from Hunger
 - Taize
 - a local project.
- b. Case studies of conflict within religious traditions, eg
 - Buddhist: Orthodox – Zen
 - Islamic: Shiite – Sunni
 - Jewish: Orthodox – Modern
 - Christian: Catholic – Orthodox – Protestant
 - Roman Catholic: Conservative – Liberation theology
 - Conservative – liberal in any religious tradition.
- c. Case studies of conflict between religious traditions, eg
 - Christian – Jewish
 - Hindu – Sikh
 - Hindu – Islamic
 - Islamic – Jewish
 - European – Indigenous peoples

- Christian – Indigenous peoples.

These case studies might focus on:

- willingness to listen
- ignorance of others
- conflicting interpretation of historical events
- denial of validity of others' beliefs
- historical injustice
- shared values, sharing resources.

16. Religion and the Arts

With reference to at least two religious traditions, a study of the ways art forms are used in religious expression.

Some aspects that could be studied are:

- the development of a religious tradition as reflected in the art form
- the relationship between the religious tradition and a specific culture
- the use of art forms in worship
- the interrelationship of various art forms.

Art forms could include:

- music
- painting
- sculpture
- architecture
- dance
- literature.

17. Religion and Science

A comparison of scientific and religious approaches to a variety of scientific issues. These could include:

- the beginning of the universe
- the beginning of humanity
- bioethics
 - euthanasia
 - IVF
 - abortion

- organ transplants
- animal experimentation
- genetic engineering.

The study would need to consider:

- beliefs of religious traditions that relate to the scientific issues
- sacred writings/stories of the traditions that relate to the issues
- a range of scientific viewpoints on the issues and their underlying assumptions.

18. Expressions of Christianity

A study of the historical development of the different traditions within Christianity. The study could be explored through the lives of significant personalities and events.

Aspects to be covered could include:

- Orthodox traditions
- Catholic traditions
- Protestant traditions
- Christian Missionary movements
- Ecumenical movements.

Student Assessment

Assessment is the ongoing process of gathering information about student achievement in relation to predetermined outcomes.

In order to assist teachers to determine the extent to which students have achieved the syllabus outcomes the list of Syllabus outcomes has been reproduced and each outcome has been broken down into suggested components or pointers. This should enable teachers to choose appropriate assessment tasks and reporting procedures in terms of what students can know and do.

Teachers are reminded that these are only sample statements. Teachers may wish to add to, modify and adapt these in relation to student needs.

LEVEL 4	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <p>name and locate the major religious traditions</p> <p>describe the place of Christianity in Australian society</p> <p>describe the inter-relatedness of Aboriginal people with their environment</p> <p>describe how people’s beliefs and practices influence the ways they interact with places</p> <p>identify and describe different groups within their community and how they function.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locate on a map of the world major concentrations of the various religious traditions • identify the names of religious traditions from a general list of names • identify Australian holidays that have Christian significance • locate buildings and institutions in the local area that have Christian origins • retell Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples stories that demonstrate the link between the environment and Aboriginal spirituality • describe an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ritual that reflects the importance of place in their beliefs • identify the significant places which have importance to various cultural groups (such as churches, synagogues and mosques) • compare places to describe how the varying beliefs and practices of religious groups are expressed in the ways these places are used • locate and identify the range of religious groups within the local area • describe the range of functions performed by local religious groups.

LEVEL 5	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Student should be able to:</i></p> <p>describe how religious beliefs are expressed</p> <p>describe the historical background of the major religious traditions</p> <p>identify and describe religious issues which are culturally important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and groups</p> <p>describe the significant religious ideas, people or events contributing to Australian society</p> <p>explain why various individuals and groups have differing views on issues related to caring for places.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe some examples of worship from various religious traditions • Analyse the presentation in the mass media of the practices of various religious groups • retell the origin stories of the major religious traditions • identify key events in the development of the major religious traditions • analyse the significance of the symbols and colours of the Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag for cultural identity • examine the basis of conflicts which have arisen between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples beliefs, customs and laws and those of non-Aboriginal society in Australia • describe the influence of a religious person or group or particular period in Australia’s history • make a collage of images of religion that represent the Australian identity today • develop a display using maps, photographic, diagrammatic and written sources which explain different perspectives on an issue related to caring for places • use role play and debate to demonstrate awareness of different viewpoints about an issue related to caring for places.

LEVEL 6	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <p>describe and explain the importance of religious traditions in Australian society</p> <p>discuss important issues arising from the historical development of the religious traditions</p> <p>describe and explain the role of art, Dreaming stories and other expressions of Aboriginal spirituality</p> <p>account for the ways in which Christian beliefs are reflected in contemporary Australian society</p> <p>analyse the ways societies or communities maintain cohesion and allow diversity.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • account for growth/decline of the various religious traditions in Australia • account for the changing role of the various religious traditions in determining policy on key issues in Australia • examine the contribution of religious debate on an important issue in Australian society • explain events in history that have led to the present form of religious traditions in Australian society • describe how the Dreaming is represented (oral stories, art, dance, song) • research and compare a range of contemporary Aboriginal artists' and writers' viewpoints about the land and the Dreaming • analyse the ways in which the law, art, education or social welfare practices reflect Christian beliefs • examine the ethical stances of Christian groups on an issue current in the media • examine the roles of religious groups in maintaining cohesion or allowing diversity within their group • analyse the responses of any other society to conflicts within religious groups.

LEVEL 7	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <p>identify and describe similarities and differences of the major religious traditions</p> <p>analyse the ways that religious traditions can be described in terms of the components of religion</p> <p>analyse the significance to Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islander people of the ways they are connected to land and/or place</p> <p>critically analyse the ways in which core values of Australian society have endured or changed over time</p> <p>analyse the views of others on issues related to careful use of a place or space on the earth’s surface in order to develop and justify their own stance.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the major features that are common to various religious traditions • account for differences in a particular ritual in terms of the express beliefs of different religious traditions • analyse a specific religious tradition in terms of the key components of religion • demonstrate how one of these components is expressed in several religious traditions • give examples of the spiritual relationship of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people with their land, sea and water systems • explain the significance of land, sea and water systems to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people who have left their homeland and are now living in urban areas or rural towns • identify religious influences that have contributed to the development of core values in Australia • explore how religious understandings of what is masculine or feminine have changed over time within religious traditions • frame questions and conduct interviews with a sample of people on issues related to the careful use of place or space • justify their own stance on an issue based on information gathered in research and by addressing points raised in alternative views.

LEVEL 8	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <p>analyse contemporary issues of cultural importance from the perspectives and beliefs of Aboriginal groups and Torres Strait Islander groups</p> <p>analyse factors which bring about cultural adaptation within groups, communities or societies</p> <p>evaluate moral and ethical issues and justify their own position.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research and compare a range of Aboriginal perspectives on contemporary issues • examine the impact that factors such as developments in communications technology, the global media or international migration may have on a religious tradition • examine potential sources of ethical conflict arising from the experience of multiculturalism in Australia • present and evaluate an argument on a particular moral issue from the perspective of a selected religious group.

LEVEL 4 SKILLS	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i> identify the types of data and sources appropriate to a task and decide how they will be used to gain information</p> <p>translate information from one form to another</p> <p>design appropriate strategies to complete tasks and facilitate decision making for particular purposes.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify people and places that could provide information related to an investigation and suggest how they can be approached or used • state the purpose of an investigation • locate information from a variety of sources (catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, concordances, dictionaries and atlases) • read material for understanding of main religious issues • compare the differences and similarities in a variety of sources • distinguish between fact and opinion • define concepts in simple form • combine information from a variety of sources • explain the information orally, in writing, or in a graph • make simple summaries from information gathered • select from sources to write a simple narrative • communicate a narrative account of events and people in oral and written forms • make notes from a variety of sources as preparation for answering questions • practise problem solving techniques (collect evidence, consider alternatives and decide action) • use conflict resolution strategies to solve a problem • make notes, list and describe what is observed • make simple deductions from a variety of sources, eg photos, illustrations, graphs, written, oral, data in the local community • develop a plan related to the purpose of an investigation • follow a logical inquiry sequence • report what has been achieved through the investigation.

LEVEL 5 SKILLS	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <p>recognise significant issues in an area of investigation and select appropriate ways of investigating them</p> <p>use supporting evidence to argue for a personal viewpoint</p> <p>identify causes of conflict and ineffective group work and negotiate solutions.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyse media reports on an issue to determine points of view that need to be further investigated or contested • discuss with peers their own interpretation of the key questions in an issue • show links between what they have observed, collected and recorded • locate, select, organise and present information • design and conduct a survey as a basis for a report on a social or environmental issue • ask questions about a source to reveal author, purpose and point of view • make summaries from a variety of sources in order to pose questions about an issue • communicate a logical argument/opinion in oral/written form • assess the effectiveness of their own participation in groups • identify roles, procedures and rules for members of groups • relate the outcomes of the investigation to the original plan and assess the need for further investigation.

LEVEL 6 SKILLS	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i> explain various ways of viewing an issue and the information associated with it</p> <p>discuss the logic of and evidence for an argument or viewpoint</p> <p>develop an informed personal decision through discussing and considering viewpoints and evidence presented by others.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and use the different methods available to research and document an issue (eg use statistics, Hansard, literature and extracts from the media to explain changes in the rights and freedoms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the 20th century) • design questions which bring out the strengths and weaknesses of different positions on an issue • determine relations of cause and effect supported by evidence • recognise bias, propaganda and prejudice • define concepts in complex form • seek information from a number of sources to test claimed causal relationships • present several different viewpoints about an issue (the causes of youth unemployment) with the best case and evidence in support of each viewpoint • devise a logical inquiry sequence • develop the cases on a contested issue • frame questions which bring out the pros and cons, and costs and benefits of different positions • use a variety of sources to draw conclusions • make deductions from sources to support an argument.

LEVEL 7 SKILLS	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <p>use specific methodologies of the learning area to investigate different perspectives on an issue</p> <p>justify choices of particular forms of communication for specific tasks</p> <p>judge actions of self and others in the light of available choices and avowed value positions.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use maps and statistical information to test claims about the impact of human activity on the environment • analyse sources from different periods to identify changing perceptions about individuals, groups and environments • explain the desired outcomes and consequences of adopting a particular approach to an investigation • modify or defend a form of communication as a consequence of testing its effectiveness in providing the necessary data • describe the value positions and motives underpinning the public position of a group or an individual • debate whether sexist attitudes are consistent with championing individual rights.

LEVEL 8 SKILLS	
OUTCOMES	POINTERS
<p><i>Students should be able to:</i> make a research proposal and design a research plan using methodologies of social and environmental enquiry</p> <p>use the specific forms of communication of the learning area to present the findings of an investigation to a particular audience</p> <p>plan action in the light of conflicting and inconsistent information and values.</p>	<p><i>This will be evident when students can:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the economic consequences, the environmental implications, the historical context and the motivations of different interest groups; list key questions on each and propose ways of collecting information relevant to each question • plan ways of gathering data from people with publicly stated positions on an issue • present a report that uses a variety of visual forms of information such as old and recent newspaper articles, photographic and artistic representations and tables • combine a variety of written forms appropriate for communicating to a specific audience (using quotations, case study examples and graphs in a history journal article, environmental impact report) • articulate the tensions in a possible course of action and accommodate them in deciding actual behaviour (consider tensions between values of personal freedom and social responsibility when planning a public action) • make a choice, for personal action, after listening to others, recognising consequences, understanding conflicting views and identifying ‘trade offs’.

Designing an Assessment Program

It is left to the professional judgement of teachers to ensure that when setting assessment items in any course, a valid and reliable judgement of the student’s achievement and performance should be measured. A range of instruments should be selected which will best measure students achievement of the knowledge and skills outcomes of the syllabus. The actual instruments chosen may vary among the topics being studied but they should reflect what has been taught in relation to each objective.

In planning an assessment program, teachers should take into consideration the following guidelines in order to assess students:

- a. all outcomes need not be assessed every time an instrument is used
- b. a variety of outcomes may be assessed by using the one assessment task.

Schools should use the outcomes and pointers above to:

- determine the extent to which their students have achieved the outcomes of the course
- award School Certificate grades based on the Course Performance Descriptions
- provide feedback to students so that they may improve their performance
- provide information to parents about the progress of their children
- make decisions about student's accelerated progression.

Student assessment in Studies of Religion should be:

- a continuous process
- reflective of the school assessment policy
- consistent with the objectives and outcomes of the school program
- based on reliable information
- based on a variety of valid and reliable assessment strategies
- presented in a way that furthers student development and learning
- conducted within a supportive environment.

A variety of assessment strategies should be used to assess student achievement in Studies of Religion. These may include:

- projects, assignments, investigations and reports
- workbooks and worksheets
- independent exercise in inquiry and decision-making
- diaries, scrapbooks, journals, log books and file collections
- debates and role plays
- interviews, questionnaires and surveys
- knowledge tests including objective and subjective items
- small group and large group discussions
- recorded observations and anecdotal records
- book reviews
- skills tests
- analysis of sources
- quizzes

- peer assessment
- contracts
- checklists or records of completed work
- rating scales and ranking sheets
- responding to film
- story telling
- peer assessment
- self-assessment, including student/teacher discussions, self-reports and video or audio tape production
- artistic expression, audio visual and pictorial presentations
- reports on excursions, visits, interviews.

Teachers need to select from this list carefully to ensure that the strategies chosen are the most appropriate for gathering the information they require.

The specific requirements for the award of grades for the School Certificate are set out in the Course Performance Descriptors issued by the Board of Studies.

Evaluation of School Programs

Effective evaluation involves asking questions about the outcomes of a teaching program and the factors which influenced these outcomes. Not all teaching outcomes will have been anticipated. The criteria for evaluation will be specific to a particular school, program and group of students. The most useful evaluation occurs when there is a clear focus and there are established mechanisms to ensure that changes, if necessary are made.

Effective evaluation in Studies of Religion should involve teachers, students and parents. It should address questions such as those listed below.

Programming

- Does the teaching program comply with the requirements of the syllabus?
- Are the objectives of the teaching program clear and precise?
- Are the objectives achievable in terms of the syllabus outcomes?
- Is the organisation of the teaching program logical?
- Are the resources adequate and suitable?
- Does the choice of options contribute to a unified course structure?

Students

- What are the social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs of students?
- How well does the Studies of Religion program accommodate these needs in Stages 4 and 5?
- What student needs does the Studies of Religion Program attempt to meet?
- Do content and activities take into account all aspects of student development?
- To what extent have students achieved the aims?

Objectives and outcomes

- Are the objectives of the school program valid and achievable?
- Do school program outcomes adequately reflect objectives of the syllabus?
- Are outcomes appropriate for specific stages of learning in Studies of Religion?
- What are the unintended outcomes of Studies of Religion? Are these desirable?
- To what extent have the learning outcomes have been met?

Learning environment

- How effective are the teaching/learning strategies in promoting student interest and awareness?
- Are the resources being used suitable and adequate?
- Are materials used up-to-date, accurate and unbiased?
- Are the resources free of cultural and/or gender bias?
- Are facilities and equipment safe and appropriate for student use?
- Is the learning environment conducive to student cooperation?
- What elements in the learning environment are barriers to student learning?
- What changes need to be made to the learning environment to assist student learning?

Learning activities

- Does the teaching program adequately cater for students with different learning styles?
- Does the teaching program adequately cater for students of different cultural backgrounds and those who learn at different rates?
- Do the learning activities contribute to the achievement of the syllabus outcomes?

Assessment and evaluation

- Are the selected assessment procedures appropriate to and consistent with the syllabus generally?
- Is the perceived success of the program reflected in student achievement?
- What are the unintended outcomes? Are these desirable?
- Have program evaluation strategies been planned and implemented to ensure effectiveness of programming?

Techniques suitable for gathering answers to these questions include:

- interviews with students, parents, teachers and other groups
- checklists and rating scales of skills, behaviours, performances, procedures, interactions and resources
- portfolios showing a range of work from students of different ability or a collection of documents of analysis
- individual files and journals of students' work, opinions, attitudes and experiences
- questionnaires relating to attitudes, opinions, and preferences.