

on the National Curriculum and its assessment⁸ on the time to be allotted to RE at Key Stages 1-4. His recommendations assume that 36 hours per year will be devoted to RE at Key Stage 1, 45 per year at Key Stages 2 and 3, and around 5 per cent of total curriculum time at Key Stage 4. The SCAA draft model syllabuses also assume around 40 hours per year.

GCSE and agreed syllabuses

- 40 When a conference draws up an agreed syllabus, it should take into account the needs of pupils at Key Stage 4 who want to take a GCSE in Religious Studies. Since all pupils are required to follow the agreed syllabus at this stage, it will be helpful if agreed syllabuses are designed to be compatible, as far as possible, with GCSE courses. Otherwise, schools will have to provide religious education for such pupils in addition to the GCSE course.
- 41 All GCSE (and other external) qualifications, and the syllabuses associated with them, are subject to approval. The arrangements for the approval of qualifications are set out in Circular 2/93⁹. The School Examinations and Assessment Council issued in June 1993 revised criteria for the approval of GCSE courses in Religious Studies¹⁰.
- 42 It is open to conferences to devise and seek approval for their own syllabuses for GCSE, to encourage the development of such syllabuses or to invite GCSE examining groups to develop new syllabuses to meet specific requirements. Where a conference wishes to promote a new syllabus it should consult SCAA or a GCSE Examining Group. Criteria and syllabuses for GCSE and other courses leading to qualifications for pupils of compulsory school age are subject to review and approval by SCAA and may change from time to time.

Education Reform Act 1988
s.5

RE post-16, examinations and agreed syllabuses

- 43 A locally agreed syllabus must cover all registered pupils in school sixth forms (note 4 on page 10). Some of these pupils may wish to take examinations in Religious Studies and it will be helpful if agreed syllabuses are designed to be compatible, as far as possible, with A and AS level qualifications.

Education Reform Act 1988
s.2(1)(a)

Right of withdrawal

- 44 Nothing in the Education Act 1993 affects parents' rights, as established in the 1944 Act and re-enacted in the 1988 Act, to withdraw their children from RE if they wish. To summarise:
 - 1 if the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE at the school, then the school must comply;

Education Reform Act 1988
s.9(3)

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⁸ *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: final report by Sir Ron Dearing, December 1993, available from SCAA, Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 3JB.*

⁹ *Circular 2/93 The Education Reform Act 1988. Statutory Approval of Qualifications under Section 5 (which replaces Circular 6/92), and subsequent annual circulars.*

¹⁰ *Available from SCAA.*

- 49 Experience suggests that, to avoid misunderstanding, a head teacher will find it helpful to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right of withdrawal:
- the religious issues about which the parent would object to his or her child being taught;
 - the practical implications of withdrawal;
 - the circumstances in which the school can reasonably be expected to accommodate parental wishes (paragraph 48); and
 - whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such RE, and, if so, how much.