

Dear Mr Gibb,

As religious leaders we are writing to express our support for proposals to allow students to have the option for systematic study of Humanism in GCSE, AS and A level religious studies, and for an annex setting out content on Humanism to be added alongside existing GCSE annexes on the principal world religions. Such a change would not compel anyone to systematically study non-religious worldviews or make it possible to do so for the whole of a qualification, but it would allow young people to study a more representative sample of major worldviews that are common in Britain today. It would reflect how RE is taught in many schools, the position taken by an increasing number of locally agreed syllabuses, and the 2013 curriculum framework. It would also match the positions of the RE Council for England and Wales and the National Association of Teachers of RE. In short, it would be fair, popular, and add rigour to the subject; we see no reasonable or persuasive argument to oppose it.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams, Baron Williams of Oystermouth
Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge and former Archbishop of Canterbury

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Richard Harries
Baron Harries of Pentregarth, former Bishop of Oxford

Rev Keith Ward
Regius Professor Emeritus of Divinity, University of Oxford

Simon Barrow
Co-Director, Ekklesia

Jonathan Bartley
Co-Director, Ekklesia

Rabbi Larry Becker
Sukkat Shalom Reform Synagogue

Revd Richard Bentley
St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Revd Jeremy Chadd
St Chad's, Sunderland

Mark Chater
Director of a Christian educational charity supporting research, development and innovation in RE and former Senior Adviser for RE, Qualifications & Curriculum Development Agency (2006-10)

Rabbi Dan Cohn-Sherbok
Emeritus Professor of Judaism, University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Trevor Cooling
Professor of Christian Education and Director of the National Institute for Christian Education Research, Canterbury Christ Church University

Rev Steve Dick
Executive Director, International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

Rev Marie Dove
Methodist minister in West Yorkshire and former Religious Studies teacher

Rabbi Dr David J Goldberg OBE
Rabbi Emeritus of The Liberal Jewish Synagogue, London

Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi
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Pontprennau Community Church and Church of the Resurrection St. Mellons and Trustee, All Faiths and None

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Chief Officer, General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

Revd Iain McDonald
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Chair, All Faiths and None and former Adviser on Education, Archbishops' Council

Martin Pendergast
Chair, Centre for the Study of Christianity and Sexuality

Revd Michael J Reiss
Professor of Science Education, Institute of Education, University of London

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain
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Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis of Holy Scripture, University of Oxford

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