



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Catholic Certificate In Religious Studies

2026 - 2027



Validated by the
Board of Religious studies on behalf of
The Bishop's Conference of England & Wales

ONE DIOCESAN FAMILY - WELCOMING - WORSHIPING - SHARING - GROWING

*“Teaching is not merely the transmission of knowledge;
it is accompanying each student in their encounter with truth
and with themselves.”*

Pope Leo XIV



Contents

About CCRS



Page 4 ~ About CCRS



Page 5 ~ 2026-2027



Page 6-7 ~ Tutor profiles



Page 8-9 ~ Core Modules



Page 10-11 ~ Specialist Modules

Further Information



Page 12 ~ Requirements



Page 13-15 ~ Assignment Guide



Page 16 ~ Costs & Cancellations



Page 17 ~ Further Information



Page 19 ~ Booking Form Information



About CCRS

What is CCRS?

The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) is managed and awarded by the Board of Religious Studies on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The course seeks to ensure that participants have a basic understanding of the central beliefs of the Catholic faith.

Who is CCRS for?

- Catechists, lay leaders and other adults wishing to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith.
- Serving teachers in Catholic and other schools; teachers aspiring to senior leadership roles in Catholic schools.
- Teachers in training preparing to take up posts in Catholic schools.

Course Aims

- Provide participants with the knowledge and understanding of the teaching and beliefs of the Catholic faith.
- Enable participants to make an informed contribution to their field of work in the Church.

Course Structure

The course is structured into eight modules - six core and two specialist. The core modules explore such areas as the Scriptures, the Person of Jesus, the Church and its Sacramental Life and Moral Understanding. The eight modules are taken over a minimum of two years and within a maximum of five years are:

1. Old Testament
2. New Testament
3. Christology
4. Specialist Module Unit One
5. Church
6. Morality
7. Sacraments
8. Specialist Module Unit Two

The maximum number of modules one may complete within a year is three core and one specialist

CCRS Course Options

CCRS has 3 study options available to suit your needs; completing assignments is optional for options 2 and 3.

- **Option 1: Qualification** - for those wishing to be awarded the CCRS certificate must attend eight modules as listed above in course structure.
- **Option 2: Attendance only** - for those who would like to benefit from the taught modules, either for personal or professional development.
- **Option 3: Single Module** - for those interested in attending singular modules for personal interest or professional development.



2026 -2027



**Distinctive Ethos of Catholic Schools -
Friday 25th Sept. & 2nd Oct. 2026**



**Christology -
Friday 9th & 23th Ocotber 2026**



**Sacraments -
Friday 6th & 13th November 2026**



**New Testament -
Friday 27th Nov. & 4th Dec. 2026**



**Catholic Education -
Friday 22nd & 29th January 2027**



**Old Testament -
Friday 5th & 12th February 2027**



**Church -
Friday 5th & 12th March 2027**



**Liturgy -
Friday 16th & 23th April 2027**



**Morality -
Friday 30th April & 1st May 2027**



**World Faiths -
Friday 14th & 21st May 2027**



Meet The Tutors



Kate Bailey

Kate Bailey gained a first-class honours degree in Theology and Religious Studies from the University of Leeds. A MA in Religion and Public Life from the University of Leeds and a MSc in Educational Research from the University of Exeter. Her specialisms include New Testament studies, New Testament Ethics and Christian Morality. After graduating she trained as a teacher of RE and taught RE for over 15 years in secondary schools in the dioceses of Nottingham and Middlesbrough. She was Head of RE and Deputy Headteacher at St Bede's in Scunthorpe until taking up the role of Deputy Director of Education in June 2020 and Subsequently Director of Education from April 2022. Kate has taught CCRS Christian Morality in the Diocese of Middlesbrough since 2006.



Rev Adrian Dixon

Rev Adrian Dixon is originally from Newcastle upon Tyne and was ordained in 1985. Since then, he has served in various parishes as an assistant priest and then as parish priest first in Jesmond, then in Gateshead, Jarrow and now Billingham. Apart from some time abroad doing further studies much of his time has been connected with the work of the Diocesan Department for Liturgy.



John Hardy

John Hardy is a primary teacher and an active member of the parish of the Sacred Heart in Boldon. He has worked in diocesan schools for the whole of his career and currently is headteacher at St John Vianney School in Hartlepool, which leads the Teaching School Hub in Tees Valley. He facilitates and tutors various national leadership programmes including NPQH and the Religious Education Directory (RED). For the last eleven years he has facilitated the specialist module, Catholic Education (Principles and Practice), for the CCRS.



Tim Madeley

Tim Madeley gained his degree in Philosophy and Theology from Heythrop College, London University, where his particular specialisms were Scripture, Systematic Theology, Philosophy of Religion, and Political and Liberation Theology. He followed this with a PGCE in RE and Drama at Durham University and a PGDE in Educational Management at Teesside University. He taught RE for 25 years, with roles as curriculum leader, Director of Sixth Form and Assistant Principal. He was previously the Director of the Hexham and Newcastle Catholic Schools Partnership, and is now Head of Secondary Schools and Youth for CAFOD in England and Wales.



Meet The Tutors



David O'Connell

David O'Connell gained a Masters degree in Social Science from the University of Waikato in his native New Zealand. After graduating he then taught English as a Second Language for two years in Japan and a further year in South Korea. After arriving in England, David completed his teacher training at the Carmel College Teaching Partnership. Since qualifying as a teacher of Religious Education in 2010 David has worked at an outstanding Catholic secondary school in Newcastle upon Tyne. In that time, he has also taught A Level Philosophy and Ethics. This includes a period as Key Stage 5 Coordinator where he led the implementation of updated teaching and learning strategies for the new A Level curriculum.



Louise Priest

Louise Priest is Head of Religious Education at a successful Catholic secondary school. She gained a BA (Hons) degree in Theology. Her particular areas of specialism include New Testament Texts, Reformation Studies and Religion, Politics and Culture. Since 2007, she has taught Religious Education to key stages three to five, and AS/A2 Philosophy, Ethics and Christianity. She is married with two children.



Tim Rochester

Tim Rochester gained an MTheol in Theology from the University of St Andrews. His particular areas of specialism were Old Testament, New Testament and Biblical Exegesis. Tim also gained an MA in Education from the University of Durham. He has been a teacher of RE since 2004 and has worked in three different Catholic schools in the Diocese. Tim has also taught A Level Philosophy and Ethics in that time. He has been teaching the CCRS New Testament module since 2006.



Andrew Young

Andrew Young gained both his BA (Hons) degree and Masters by Research degree at the University of Leeds in Theology and Religious Studies, specialising in Catholic Eschatology, New Testament studies, the Sociology of Religion, Hindu traditions and Religious Ethics. He then completed his PGCE in RE at Durham University. He has taught in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle for 14 years and been Curriculum Leader for Religious Education, Catholic Life and Mission and Collective Worship for 10 years.



Core Modules

Christology

- Christology is 'the study of the Christ'. It is the branch of Christian theology which looks closely at the identity of Jesus and attempts an analysis of his nature – both human and divine.
- The person and work of Jesus – his titles, teaching and message; his miracles, passion, death, and resurrection.
- Analyse the language used and unpack the difficulties encountered by the Church. We also use art and film attempting to capture a 'portrait' of the nature of Christ.
- We recognise how vital it is to keep the content relevant both to the individual's faith journey and to their use of this material in their work context.
- Links to the new Religious Education Directory, where students are invited to engage in a systematic and in-depth study of the nature of Jesus.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 9th & 23th
October 2026**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
30th November 2026**

Sacraments

- To provide a platform for the candidate to explore their knowledge on how the seven sacraments touch upon each stage of a Catholic's life.
- To make specific links to the expected outcomes for the Celebrate lens of the new RED, beginning with the sacraments of initiation and healing at Key Stage 2.
- Includes practical guidance for teachers and catechists on how to support students partaking in the age appropriate sacraments during Key Stage 2 and 3.
- Practical guidance for teachers on teaching the importance of the Eucharist as "the sacrament of sacraments" within the new RED.
- The opportunity to engage with how the sacraments both inform worship and instruct those within Catholic communities in their daily lives, especially through the notion of vocation.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 6th & 13th
November 2026**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
14th December 2026**

New Testament

- Familiarise yourself with Gospel writers and St. Paul – their audiences and their theology.
- Know how to interpret Scripture that will provide meaning and purpose to your own spirituality.
- Gain valuable insight into the nuances of the New Testament that will transform your teaching of the RED.
- Provide your students/catechists with a biblical insight to help deepen their faith journey.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 27th Nov. &
4th Dec. 2026**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
18th January 2027**



Core Modules

Old Testament

- Discover the richness of the Old Testament by exploring the foundational themes of Creation, Covenant, and Prophecy within the unfolding story of God's relationship with humanity.
- Trace the journey of Salvation History, from the origins of the world to the hopes of the prophets, gaining insight into how God's plan gradually unfolds through the people of Israel.
- Engage with key figures and events, such as Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah, to understand their ongoing relevance for faith, justice, and moral living today.
- Deepen your understanding of Catholic teaching, as the module reflects the RED's emphasis on the unity of Scripture, the Old Testament as preparation for Christ, and respectful engagement with Jewish tradition.
- Ideal for educators, catechists, and lifelong learners, this module offers practical insights and theological depth to support both classroom teaching and personal faith development.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 5th & 12th
February 2027**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
22nd March 2027**

Church

- You will examine what we mean by 'the Church' and 'a church' and how we can be 'the Church' in modern society.
- You will explore how the Church was established and look at the history of the Catholic Church from its foundations to contemporary society.
- You will look at how the Church has tried to reform by examining the importance and impact of the Second Vatican Council and more recent Synods established by Pope Francis.
- You will examine the different models of the Church and explore what the most important function of the Church is in modern society.
- This module will support you in your teaching of the 'Galilee to Jerusalem', 'desert to garden' and 'to the ends of the earth' modules in the new RED.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 5th & 12th
March 2027**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
4th May 2027**

Morality

- This module is excellent for giving you a deeper understanding of Desert to Garden in the new RED.
- It will allow you to understand the ethics of Jesus and how he made moral decisions putting the needs of the marginalised first.
- It will also give you greater insight into legalist approaches held by the authorities at the time of Jesus.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 30th April &
1st May 2027**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
14th June 2027**



Specialist Modules

Please note: due to the similarity in content of the Specialist modules, *Catholic Education* and *The Distinctive Ethos of Catholic Schools* students cannot elect to study both, but need to register for one or the other.

Distinctive Ethos of Catholic Schools

- You will examine the history and importance of Catholic schools in the United Kingdom.
- Explore the Catholic Church's vision for Catholic education and how we are called to live out this fascinating mission.
- Look at what makes a Catholic school distinctly different from state schools and how we can all contribute to this distinctiveness.
- Look at Catholic leadership and the values of true Catholic servant leadership.
- This module will support you in delivering the 'to the ends of the earth' module in the new RED.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 25th Sept.
& 2nd Oct. 2026**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
9th November 2026**

Catholic Education

- Deepening understanding of the philosophy of Catholic Education and exploring its scriptural and theological roots.
- Recognising the pivotal role played by the Religious Education Directory in the delivery of Religious Education in Catholic schools and settings.
- Understanding the process and expectations of a Religious Education Curriculum as revealed in the Religious Education Directory.
- Reflecting upon the part played by practitioners in the Catholic Life, Worship and Religious Education of Catholic schools and settings.
- Appreciating the impact of Religious Education in own life and the lives of others.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 22nd & 29th
January 2027**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
8th March 2027**



Specialist Modules

Liturgy

- The liturgy module will support with a range of modules such as prophecy and promise (looking at the use of scripture) and Desert to Garden (looking at the importance of the Eucharist).

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 16th & 23th
April 2027**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
24th May 2027**

World Faiths

- You will explore the key beliefs, rites of passage and festivals of the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). You will explore their fascinating origins, their sources of moral authority and their religious practices and how these are lived out in contemporary society. This will support your teaching of the new Religious Education Directory for the 'Prophecy and Promise' module and the 'dialogue and encounter' module.
- You will also examine the fascinating beliefs, rites and festivals of the Dharmic faiths (Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism) exploring what they believe, how they worship, what they believe about the nature of God and what happens when you die. This is an excellent foundation for the 'dialogue and encounter' module of the new RED.
- You will have the opportunity to interview four amazing guest speakers in person from the Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist faith traditions and ask them any questions you have about their belief and practice.
- Finally, we will explore how religion is developing in the contemporary society with the formation of new-age religions and the dawn of religiosity exploring how we can see the emergence of the 'sacred in the secular'.

**9:30am to
3:30pm**

**Friday 14th & 21st
May 2027**

**The Durham
Centre, Belmont**

**Essay Deadline:
28th June 2027**



Further Information

Commitment

The dates for the modules are fixed as advertised in this booklet.

Anyone unable to attend a session of a module should contact the Diocesan Department for Education before the course is due to start. Please refer to the cancellation policy section.

Students are required to have a 100% attendance for any module. Failing to meet this requirement may result in that module being deferred to a later date and payment may be required again. Please ensure early arrival for registration. Late arrivals may result in students having to defer their chosen module.

The same level of commitment to attendance is expected from those who are following the course but are not seeking to qualify for the certificate.

What does CCRS require?

Each module requires:

- 10 hours of class time spread over two Friday's from 9:30am to 3:30pm
- Further reading
- Successful completion of an essay of 1500 words

The certificate will be awarded after a **minimum of 2 years** and within a **maximum of 5 years** from the date of initial registration.

All essays should be sent to the Diocesan Department for Education by the close of business on the deadline dates. Our aim is to return the essays within 6 weeks of the stated deadline.

Students are required to have 100% attendance per module for the certificate to be awarded. Failing to meet this requirement may result in the module being deferred to a later date and payment may be required again.

Accreditation for Prior Learning (APL)

Participants who have previously completed a degree in Theology or Religious Studies may be eligible for exemption from some of the core modules. This process relates to prior learning up to a maximum of three core modules (not Specialist Modules). It does not apply to 'concurrent' or 'prospective' learning. Please contact us if you wish to complete the Application for Accreditation of Prior Learning.



Further Information

Essay Assessment Criteria

PASS

The work displays:

Knowledge and Understanding:

- There is some degree of knowledge and understanding of the relevant material.
- Use of an acceptable range of resources is made.

Argument and Analysis:

- An argument is attempted; the work is largely descriptive, rather than analytical.

Structure and Coherence:

- Some attempt is made to organise material logically and to focus on the question.

Presentation:

- The work is presented clearly and legibly, with an acceptable standard of written English within the specified word count.
- Appropriate use of referencing and bibliography is made.

DISTINCTION

The work displays a significant number of the following:

- Evidence of good knowledge and understanding of the question and materials, relevant concepts and methodology.
- Reading beyond the recommended minimum.
- Independent reflection.
- Good level of critical analysis.
- Clear and coherent arguments supported by appropriate examples.
- Good, clear written style.
- Full and accurate referencing and bibliography.

FAIL

Either a significant amount of the work is not the participant's own, or the work displays all or some of the following limitations:

- Inadequate understanding of the subject area; misunderstanding of key concept(s).
- Poor use of resources.
- Insufficient engagement with the question.
- Unfocussed response to the question.
- Inadequate use of referencing and bibliography.
- The work is illegible and/or shows an unacceptable standard of written English. and/or exceeds the specified word count.



Further Information

Essay Assessment Guidance

- Read the essay titles carefully.
- Choose your assignment.
- Decide on your particular focus.
- Read your session notes, handouts and suggested bibliography (consult the tutor if you need further advice).
- Make relevant notes from the books you are reading.
- Write out a plan.

The following suggestions may be useful:

- Make a summary of what you think you want to say (this should form the content of the introduction).
- Divide this into sections and/or paragraphs.
- List the content/title/theme of each paragraph.
- Read your notes once more.
- Develop your thoughts, themes, reflections, arguments logically.
- Note the content of your conclusion.
- Check that your introduction introduces your assignment (it may need to be adjusted in the light of your developing thoughts).

If necessary, talk over your plan with the tutor. Begin writing your assignment based on this plan. Retain the plan until your assignment is marked and returned to you.

Remember:

- Use Microsoft Word (or equivalent) to type your essay.
- Write the title at the beginning of the assignment as well as on the title page.
- Give a source for every quotation including the page number.
- Give website addresses and dates accessed.
- Include your bibliography on a separate page.
- Include the number of words.
- Include a completed cover sheet and an assignment assessment sheet within your essay document.
- Keep a copy of your completed assignment.

Assignments should demonstrate:

- Adequate reading.
- Fulfillment of the learning outcomes as listed in the module description.
- Ability to assimilate, reflect on and criticise the material studied.
- Skills necessary to communicate the substance of the study from an adult christian stance.



Further Information

Using the internet for assignments

There is a great deal of material available on all kinds of subjects on websites but it is not all of the same quality. When you use a search engine such as Google, you may find yourself accessing websites belonging to individuals or groups with some very curious agendas on religious topics.

What we offer below is a list of sites that have been checked by competent people in the subject areas of the modules of the CCRS. Using these sites will give you access to some sound ideas. We will not accept assignments written using AI.

Useful websites for CCRS students

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/accessability/study-skills/study-guides>

University of Leicester—Study guidance including essay writing

www.ntgateway.com

Access to various New Testament websites

www.torreys.org/bible/

Studies on biblical themes

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm

Text of Vatican II documents

www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm

Text of Catechism

www.bioethics.org.uk/

Material on medical ethics

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/>

English & Welsh Bishops' website

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/>

Website of American bishops

www.unitape.org

Online Catalogue



Further Information

Cost

Each module costs **£130** (waged), or **£65** (students and unwaged).

A registration fee of **£20** will apply to those completing Option One.

Applicants intending to engage, or already engaged, in local parish ministry may find their parish willing to assist with course fees. Please contact the parish priest for further information.

Funding may be available via the Lay Training Fund for those who are able to show that their undertaking and completion of the CCRS will be beneficial to the parishes or partnerships within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle or the wider community it serves.

Further information and how to apply for this fund is available at <https://diocesehn.org.uk/living-the-faith/deepening-faith/#training>.

Teachers may be able to apply for assistance with course fees from their school.

Invoicing

Invoices will be issued 2 week before the first session of a module.

A reminder will be sent out 3 weeks prior to the module asking you to confirm you will be attending. Attendance must be confirmed within 3 working days otherwise you will still be invoiced.

If cancellation is required after the deadline, a credit note for the module will be issued so you can take the same module, the next academic year.

Cancellation Policy

In the event that you wish to cancel a place on a selected module, please email the Diocesan Department for Education at education@diocesehn.org.uk 14 working days before the start of the module. This email will be confirmed. Please contact us again if you do not receive confirmation of your cancellation.

In the event of a module cancellation, we will endeavour to inform all students two weeks before the module is due to take place; please be aware, this is not always possible. All module fees paid will be used as a credit for any future CCRS module.



Further Information

Venue Information

The Durham Centre
Belmont Industrial Estate
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TN
www.thedurhamcentre.co.uk
0191 386 1077

Contact Information

Please direct all enquiries to:
Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Department for Education
education@diocesehn.org.uk
0191 243 3313

Resources

The Diocese work in partnership with the North East Religious Learning Resources Centres in Newcastle and Durham. They hold books and resources on our behalf and these can be especially helpful for each module of study. Information on membership fees and packs are available on the NERLRC website, www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk

Useful resources may be purchased from Pauline Books & Media at:

St Mary's Cathedral
Clayton Street West
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 5HH
Tel: 0191 231 6040
Email: newcastle@pauline-uk.org.

Further Information

Please see the Board of Studies CCRS Handbook for more information about the course. This handbook can be found online by following the link on the Diocesan Department for Education website:

<https://diocesehn.org.uk/education/professional-development-and-formation/#ccrs>



Booking Form

The CCRS booking form is now completed via the Microsoft Form linked in the QR code or link below. To access the form, please scan the QR code or use the link.

If you require a paper or alternative copy of the form for ease of completion, email education@diocesehn.org.uk or call 0191 243 3313 to request.

<https://forms.office.com/e/rBwUV3m42t>

(CCRS) Catholic Certificate In
Religious Studies – Booking Form
2026-2027



Guide my studies, as I journey through the
Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies,
enlighten my mind to understand more deeply
the teachings of Your Church,
and open my heart to receive them with faith
and love.

May this time of study draw me closer to You,
and let all that I learn be rooted in Christ,
and bear fruit in my life and in the lives of
those I teach.

Amen



