

RE AND RE TEACHER EDUCATION – A READY OVERVIEW¹

	GERMANY ²	ENGLAND	AUSTRIA	SCOTLAND	SWEDEN ³
Title of the subject	Evangelische, katholische, islamische, jüdische Religionslehre; Ethik ⁴ (<i>Protestant, Catholic, Islamic, Jewish religion teaching; ethics</i>)	Religious Education ⁵	Evangelischer, katholischer, orthodoxer, islamischer Religionsunterricht (<i>Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Islamic Religion lesson</i>) ⁶	1. Religious and Moral Education (Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies) 2. Religious Education Roman Catholic	Religionskunskap (<i>Religious knowledge</i>)
Religious landscape	34% No-affiliation 29% Roman Catholic 27% Protestant 4% Muslim 1% Orthodox	59.3% Christian 25.1% No-affiliation 4.8% Muslim 1.5% Hindu ⁷	68% Roman Catholic 18% No-affiliation 6% Muslim 4% Protestant 3% Orthodox	37% No-affiliation 32,5 % Anglican 16% Roman Catholic 1,5 % Muslim	No official statistics ⁸
Number of lessons	2 per week	Non-exam classes in common (non-faith) schools: 1 per week ⁹	1-2 per week (depends on number of pupils)	1 per week	1 every fortnight
Compulsory or optional?	Compulsory with option to opt out ¹⁰	Compulsory with option to opt out	Compulsory with option to opt out	Compulsory with option to opt out	Compulsory
Confessional or non-confessional?¹¹	Confessional ¹²	Both ¹³	Confessional ¹²	Both	Non-Confessional
In which grades can RE be attended?	Every grade	Every grade	Every grade	Every grade	Every grade
School system	Kindergarten, Primary school (1 st -4 th grade), Secondary schools like Gymnasium, Real- and Gemeinschaftsschulen (5 th -10 th , 12 th or 13 th grade)	Primary stage: nursery/early years (ages 3-5), Infant (ages 5-7/8), Junior (ages 7/8-11/12); Secondary stage (ages 11/12-16) ¹⁴	Kindergarten, Primary school (1-4 th grade), Secondary schools like Gymnasium (Grammar School, 5-12 th grade), Hauptschule (Lower Secondary), New Middle School (5-8 th grade), vocational schools (8-12 or 13 th grade), Polytechnic schools (9 th grade)	3-18 curriculum: Nursery (ages 3-5), Primary (ages 5-12), Secondary (ages 12-16/17 or 18)	Pre-school (ages 0-6), Preschool class (from the age of 6), Compulsory school (from the age of 7: 1-9 th grade), Upper secondary school (ages 16-19)
Legal basis	Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Basic Law of Germany) Art. 4; 7,3; 140	1870 Education Act; 1944 Education Act	Basic Law on the General Rights of Nationals Art. 15; Concordat of 1933; Protestantengesetz 1961; Orthodoxengesetz 1967; Israelitengesetz 1890; Islamgesetz 1912/2015 etc.	1872 Education Act ¹⁵	Education Act; SFS 2010:800

Who is allowed to teach RE?	RE teachers and qualified church ministers/staff	All teachers with Qualified Teacher Status in state maintained schools ¹⁶	RE teachers, church ministers/officials	Primary: all teachers Secondary: RE teachers	Educated RE teachers and social science teachers (1-6 th grade). After year 6 more specialized RE teachers.
Required ECTS Points in Religious Studies/Theology to become a RE teacher	Primary: min. 50 ECTS Secondary: 109 ECTS	None required at a national level though different teacher education institutions stipulate their own requirements	Until 2018: 84 ECTS From 2019: 66 (BEd) plus 25/55 (MEd) ETCS	Primary: non specifically, for they are generalists Secondary: 80 ECTS ¹⁷	Primary: Six weeks Secondary: 45 – 90 ECTS
Where does teacher education find place?	University and university college of education followed by attending a teacher training institution	Higher Education Institutions ¹⁸	Universities and University Colleges	University Schools of Education ¹⁹	Primary and secondary level: Educational Departments Secondary and upper secondary level: University Departments of Religious Studies.
Responsible for syllabuses	Officially recognised faith communities and the “Bundesland” (federal state)	Local authorities, religious bodies and/or the schools themselves	State and religious communities	Education Scotland, RE teachers, Scottish Qualifications Authority	The Swedish National Agency for Education ²⁰
Time of practical phase during teacher training	19 weeks during theoretical studies and 18 month practical training after university studies finished	24 weeks in two or more schools	Difference between compulsory (20 ECTS + 8 ECTS during Master) and grammar school (5 ECTS + 7 ECTS during Master) teachers ²¹	Secondary: 18 weeks	30 ECTS
Important actors in the field of RE	Protestant & Catholic Church, Islamic associations and other official faith communities, Federal Ministries for Education	Religious Education Council, National Association for Teachers of RE, Culham St Gabriels, Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education	Representatives of the religious communities, Ministry of Education, State & Church Boards of Education	Education Scotland, General Teaching Council for Scotland, Scottish Joint Committee for RME, Association of Teachers of RE in Scotland (ATRES)	The Swedish Government, the Swedish National Agency for Education, Church Associations and NGO's in the field of Education
Major challenges	Increasing multi-religiosity; increasingly no religious affiliation; theory/praxis relation; need to establish subject groups	Lack of subject specialists; apparent lack of agreement of aims; reduction in number of places on teacher education programmes; pressure from government for RE aims to be shaped around current agendas ²² etc.	Possibility to opt-out mostly without alternative offers; decreasing numbers of Catholic & Protestant pupils; newly organised teacher training	Organisational changes, that marginalise RE; pressure on time and resources	Overloaded curriculum in relation to time for the subject; increased secularism; relentless changes in teacher training

This chart is put together by Janika Olschewski (olschewski@comenius.de).

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- ¹ This overview provides an insight into RE and RE teacher education in the five countries of the participating institutions of READY and shows similarities and differences. Please remember that reality is more complex than what can be captured in some key words.
- ² Religious Education in Germany is organised by each federal state differently. Due to space limitations this document will only depict the situation in Baden-Württemberg, where READY partner Tübingen is located.
- ³ More detailed information on the Swedish school system can be found here: <http://skolverket.se/om-skolverket/andra-sprak-och-lattlast/in-english>.
- ⁴ The subject ethics is called differently in some other federal states of Germany: “Philosophieren mit Kindern” (philosophize with children), “Philosophie” (philosophy), “Praktische Philosophie” (practical philosophy), and “Werte und Normen” (values and norms).
- ⁵ Religious Education is the official title. There is a debate over the appropriateness of the title and (anecdotally) some schools have rebranded RE departments with titles such as ‘Philosophy, Values and Ethics’, or ‘Worldviews’.
- ⁶ Some schools also offer Free Churches, Jewish, Buddhist and Alevi RE.
- ⁷ According to the 2011 census for England and Wales. Smaller religious communities are: 0.8% Sikh; 0.5% Jewish; 0.4% Buddhist; 0.4% other – includes Pagan, Spiritualist, mixed religion, Jain, and Ravidassia. 7.2% of respondents did not answer the religion question.
- ⁸ To ask about religious affiliation is prohibited in Sweden since 1930, but members in religious communities are known. Thus (registered members only) the Church of Sweden (Lutheran/Protestant) - 6,2m members, Muslim Communities – 110.000 members, Roman Catholic Church – 113.000 members, Jewish Community – 9.000, “Free-Churches (Methodists, Pentecostal Churches, Baptists and similar) – 340.000, Orthodox Churches – 131.000 and Buddhists – 5.000.
- ⁹ Often more lessons per week in schools of religious character.
- ¹⁰ Members of a religious community (especially the Protestant and Catholic Church) are automatically registered for the corresponding RE. However, if they opt out they automatically have to attend ethics.
- ¹¹ In the international discourse the differentiation confessional/non-confessional is often used. However, because the association with confessional in some countries is that it refers to religious instruction, more and more rather use the word denominational. For more information, see Schweitzer, F. (2011): Dialogue Needs Difference: The Case for Denominational and Cooperative Religious Education. In: Franken, L. & Loobuyck, P. (Eds.), Religious education in a plural, secularised society. A paradigm shift. Münster et al.: Waxmann, 117–130.
- ¹² More and more RE is taught denominational cooperative.
- ¹³ Non-confessional in common schools and in some schools of a religious character. Confessional in some schools of religious character. In some schools of religious character, the school ethos and assemblies are confessional, but classroom RE is not.
- ¹⁴ Young people expected to stay in education or training until 19.
- ¹⁵ Protestant churches handed over control to the state but sought guarantee for Religious Instruction. Subsequent revisions have led to a non-confessional approach in 85% of schools. In 1918 the Catholic schools handed over financing of their schools to the state but retained their catholicity.
- ¹⁶ It is possible for unqualified teachers to teach it – and there is evidence of this in primary schools.
- ¹⁷ What are relevant credits is contested. Some insist on Religious Studies, Theology or Divinity, others think there is room for Philosophy credits given nature of the subject and modern Scotland.
- ¹⁸ The last few years has seen the increase in school-based teacher education (mostly in partnership with an HEI).
- ¹⁹ Currently Secondary teacher education for RE takes place at Aberdeen, Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities.
- ²⁰ www.skolverket.se.
- ²¹ According to the new curriculum RE is not a single study subject anymore, but part of a specialization within primary school teacher education: the first two years (4 terms) are general education where students also undergo practical training (20 ECTS); the 3rd and 4th year (terms 5-8) comprise RE-specialization with – again – 20 ECTS practical training. Currently it is intended that Bachelor graduates will undergo a one-year “induction phase” and complete a Master degree at the same time. However, this is highly disputed and remains to be decided in due course.
- ²² E.g., current focus on the promotion of “Fundamental British Values” and combatting extremism and radicalisation.