



CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge O Level Hinduism 2055 for centres in Mauritius

Use this syllabus for exams in 2029, 2030 and 2031.
Exams are available in the November series.



Version I

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Why choose Cambridge?

We work with schools worldwide to build an education that shapes knowledge, understanding and skills. Together, we give learners the confidence they need to thrive and make a positive impact in a changing world.

As part of the University of Cambridge, we offer a globally trusted and flexible framework for education from age 3 to 19, informed by research, experience, and listening to educators.

With recognised qualifications, high-quality resources, comprehensive support and valuable insights, we help schools prepare every student for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

From the world's top-ranked universities to local higher education institutions, Cambridge qualifications open doors to a world of opportunities.

Setting a global standard

With over 160 years of experience in delivering fair, valid and reliable assessments to students worldwide, we offer a global, recognised performance standard for international education.

Your path, your way

Schools can adapt our curriculum, high-quality teaching and learning resources and flexible assessments to their local context. Our aligned offer helps Cambridge schools support every learner to reach their potential and thrive.

Learning with lasting impact

Cambridge learners build subject knowledge and conceptual understanding, and develop a broad range of skills, learning habits and attributes to help make them ready for the world.

Improving learning outcomes through data-led insight and action

Our trusted baseline and diagnostic assessments, together with our insights and evaluation service, help schools turn data into knowledge and actionable insights, to inform teaching decisions and improve learner outcomes.

Bringing together a community of experts

We bring together the collective knowledge of experts and our diverse community of educators worldwide, supporting them to learn from one another and share ideas and information.

Tackling the climate crisis together

We believe that education is key to tackling the climate crisis. Together with Cambridge schools, we can empower young people with the skills and knowledge to take action on climate change, helping them be ready for the world.

School feedback: 'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'

Feedback from: Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

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Important: Changes to this syllabus

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2026. There are no significant changes which affect teaching.



1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

Cambridge O Level is typically for 14 to 16 year olds and is an internationally recognised qualification. It has been designed especially for an international market and is sensitive to the needs of different countries. Cambridge O Level is designed for learners whose first language may not be English, and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

Our programmes promote a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

Cambridge O Level Hinduism develops a set of transferable skills. These include a reflective understanding of values, opinions and attitudes. This syllabus also develops the ability to present and analyse various views and the concepts and values they are based on.

Our approach in Cambridge O Level Hinduism encourages learners to be:

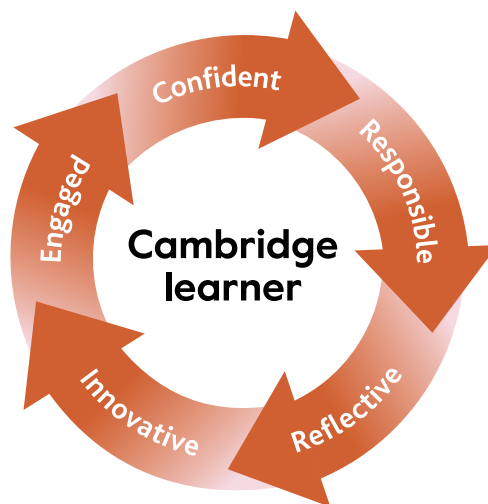
confident, exploring ideas, understanding social, religious and moral concepts and expressing views

responsible, recognising the complexity and sensitivity of issues that give rise to religious debate, including challenges to Hindu belief and practice in today's world

reflective, recognising there are many different views and the ways in which different views are supported and justified

innovative, exploring different Hindu understandings of the world, including views that may be different from learners' own personal views

engaged, with the diversity of understandings of Hindu belief and practice, studied in a Hindu context.



School feedback: 'Cambridge O Level has helped me develop thinking and analytical skills which will go a long way in helping me with advanced studies.'

Feedback from: Kamal Khan Virk, former student at Beaconhouse Garden Town Secondary School, Pakistan, who went on to study Actuarial Science at the London School of Economics

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

Cambridge qualifications prepare and equip learners with the skills they need to thrive at university and beyond. The world's best higher education institutions recognise our qualifications and value the critical thinking skills, independent research abilities and deep subject knowledge that Cambridge learners bring.

We continually work with universities and colleges in every part of the world to ensure that they understand and accept our qualifications. Cambridge O Level provides a springboard to the Cambridge Advanced stage, as well as other post-16 routes. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge O Level Hinduism gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level Hinduism.

Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge O Levels or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition

Supporting teachers

Support materials

We provide a wide range of resources so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge O Level.

Find out more on the School Support Hub at <https://schoolsupporthub.cambridge.org>, our secure online site for teachers (username and password required).

Training

We offer a range of support activities for teachers to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to deliver our qualifications.

2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

Students following a course based on this syllabus will::

- develop an enthusiastic, enquiring and reflective approach to the study of Hinduism
- develop knowledge and understanding of Hindu beliefs, teachings and practices
- explore Hinduism and its contribution in today's global world
- engage with the religious, ethical and cultural questions of Hindu belief and practice raised in the material they study
- develop values, opinions and attitudes informed by the study of Hinduism.

We are an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



Content overview

In this syllabus, learners study different aspects of Hinduism. Learners are encouraged to be aware of the common ground that Hindus share, and to appreciate the variety of practices and views found in Hinduism.

The subject content is organised into two papers: Paper 1 and Paper 2. Candidates must study all the content in both Papers 1 and 2.

The subject content is organised into six sections.

Paper 1 Hindu Gods and Festivals

- 1 Gods
 - Brahman
 - Trimurti
 - Worship
- 2 Avatars
 - Avatar
 - 10 avatars of Vishnu
 - Rama and Krishna
- 3 Festivals
 - Observance
 - Teachings
 - Significance of worship and devotion

Paper 2 Hindu Scriptures, Life and Ethics

- 4 Aspects of knowledge, action and devotion
 - The three main yogas
 - The concept of Brahman
 - The concepts of dharma and karma
 - The concept of bhakti
- 5 Hindu life and ceremonies
 - The four varnas
 - The four ashramas
 - The four purusharthas
 - The samskaras
- 6 Religious and social reforms
 - Religious issues
 - Social issues
 - Gender issues

Assessment overview

All candidates take two components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A* to E.

All candidates take:

Paper 1 1 hour 30 minutes
Hindu Gods and Festivals 50%
60 marks

- Candidates answer three structured questions.
- The question paper has three sections:
Section A: Gods
Section B: Avatars
Section C: Festivals.
- Candidates choose one question from each section.

Externally assessed

and:

Paper 2 1 hour 30 minutes
Hindu Scriptures, Life and Ethics 50%
60 marks

- Candidates answer three structured questions.
- The question paper has three sections:
Section A: Aspects of knowledge, action and devotion
Section B: Hindu life and ceremonies
Section C: Religious and social reforms.
- Candidates choose one question from each section.

Externally assessed

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs, practices, teachings, concepts and traditions of Hinduism.

AO2 Evaluation

Use evidence, evaluation and reasoned discussion to explain teachings, practices and issues in Hinduism from different points of view.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in O Level %
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	50
AO2 Evaluation	50
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	50	50
AO2 Evaluation	50	50
Total	100	100

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate, you are responsible for selecting resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

Paper 1 Hindu Gods and Festivals

1 Gods

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the specified gods within Hindu stories, teachings and traditions. Learners should be able to use evidence and reasoned discussion to explain different beliefs and practices in the worship of these gods.

1.1 Brahman

Different understandings of the ultimate reality as:

- (a) nirguna – without form or qualities
- (b) saguna – with form or qualities.

1.2 Trimurti

- (a) how the divine manifests as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva
- (b) their roles as creator, preserver and destroyer.

1.3 Worship

The following, with specific reference to the gods listed below:

- (a) these gods as the focus of worship and devotion
- (b) stories, teachings and traditions and their significance to different individuals and communities
- (c) significance of different views about images, icons, murtis, main iconographic features and attributes.

The gods for study in 1.3 are: Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Ganesha, Hanuman and Kartikeya/Murugan.

2 Avatars

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of incarnation, including describing the life and actions of 10 avatars of Vishnu. Learners should be able to use evidence and reasoned discussion to explain the differing views of the life, purpose, actions, significance and worship of the two specified avatars: Rama and Krishna.

2.1 Avatar

- (a) meaning, significance and purpose.

continued

2 Avatars continued

2.2 10 avatars of Vishnu

- (a) features, lives and actions of:
- Matsya – the Fish
 - Kurma – the Tortoise
 - Varaha – the Boar
 - Narasimha – the Man-Lion
 - Vamana – the Dwarf
 - Parasurama – Warrior with an Axe
 - Rama – the Perfect Man
 - Krishna – Philosopher and Guide
 - Buddha – the Enlightened One
 - Kalki – the Mighty Warrior.

2.3 Rama and Krishna

- (a) teachings; purpose and significance; association with worship and devotion; for different individuals, communities and traditions.

3 Festivals

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social and religious significance of the specified festivals and devotional practices. Learners should be able to use evidence and reasoned discussion to explain differing views on the observance, teachings and significance related to the festivals specified below.

3.1 Observance

- (a) origins of these festivals
- (b) family and community activities associated with these festivals.

3.2 Teachings

- (a) beliefs and practices associated with these festivals
- (b) gods with which these festivals are identified
- (c) stories and traditions related to practice at these festivals.

3.3 Significance of worship and devotion

- (a) differences in worship and devotion in these festivals for individuals, communities and traditions
- (b) differing views on the significance of stories, teachings and traditions relating to worship and devotion at these festivals.

The four festivals are:

- Cavadi
- Divali/Deepavali
- Ganesh Chaturthi
- Maha Shivaratri.

Paper 2 Hindu Scriptures, Life and Ethics

4 Aspects of knowledge, action and devotion

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the meaning of the specified beliefs, concepts and teachings. Learners should be able to use evidence and reasoned discussion to explain why different beliefs, concepts and teachings are given emphasis or significance by different individuals, communities and traditions.

4.1 The three main yogas

Differences and significance of:

- (a) karma yoga or the way of action: selfless action, letting go of ego and non-attachment
- (b) jnana yoga or the way of knowledge: knowledge of self and knowledge of the ultimate
- (c) bhakti yoga or the way of devotion: the path of self-realisation and love of a god.

4.2 The concept of Brahman

- (a) supreme existence and ultimate reality; to be understood through the illustration of Bees and Honey from Chandogya Upanishad, Chapter 3.

4.3 The concepts of dharma and karma

- (a) to be understood through Arjuna's dialogue with Krishna: Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2 verses 47 and 48, and Chapter 3 verses 1–8.

4.4 The concept of bhakti

- (a) to be understood through Rama's meeting with Hanuman and Rama's meeting with Sabri: Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas.

The selected sacred writings have been chosen for their significance to Hinduism and are not intended to be the subject of an in-depth textual study. A detailed analysis or close reading and quotations of the sacred writings will not be required. The emphasis of the syllabus is that the scriptures selected are to be used to support the study of the beliefs, concepts and teachings specified.

5 Hindu life and ceremonies

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts of varna, ashrama, purushartha and samskara; how these concepts are put into practice today and how these relate to ethical thinking. Learners should be able to use evidence and reasoned discussion to explain the significance, application and practice of the specified concepts and how they may have changed.

5.1 The four varnas

- (a) brahmin
- (b) kshatriya
- (c) vaishya
- (d) shudra.

5.2 The four ashramas

- (a) brahmacharya
- (b) grihastha
- (c) vanaprastha
- (d) sannayasa.

continued

5 Hindu life and ceremonies continued

5.3 The four purusharthas

- (a) dharma
- (b) artha
- (c) kama
- (d) moksha.

5.4 The samskaras

With specific reference to:

- (a) namakarana
- (b) upanayana
- (c) vivaha
- (d) antyeshti.

6 Religious and social reforms

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of significant and ongoing religious and social reforms. They should do this with reference to the work of reformers and organisations specified below and in connection with their particular area of reform as well as the wider context of Hindu life and ethics. Learners should be able to use evidence and reasoned discussion to explain the influence reforms and reformers have had on individuals, society and Hinduism.

6.1 Religious issues

- (a) image worship, interpretation of sacred writings and rituals; with reference to the work of Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj, Swami Dayananda and the Arya Samaj and Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission.

6.2 Social issues

- (a) equal rights, class, the caste system and education for all; with reference to the work of Swami Dayananda and the Arya Samaj, M K Gandhi and B R Ambedkar.

6.3 Gender issues

- (a) equality, education for girls, child marriage and sati; with reference to the work of Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj, Swami Dayananda and the Arya Samaj, Savitribai Phule and M K Gandhi.

The six reformers are:

- Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833)
- Swami Dayananda (1824–1883)
- Savitribai Phule (1831–1897)
- Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902)
- M K Gandhi (1869–1948)
- B R Ambedkar (1891–1956).

4 Details of the assessment

Paper 1 and Paper 2 have the same format.

Candidates will not be penalised for using a different version of the spelling to the one used in the syllabus, as long as it is clear which word they are referring to.

Paper 1 – Hindu Gods and Festivals

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 60 marks

This paper assesses the syllabus content for Paper 1.

Paper 1 has three sections:

Section A Gods

Section B Avatars

Section C Festivals.

There are two questions in each section.

Candidates answer **three** questions, **one** question from each section.

Sections A, B and C

In Sections A, B and C, each question has four parts:

- Part (a) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content (2 marks).
- Part (b) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content (3 marks).
- Part (c) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content (5 marks).
- Part (d) questions require candidates to evaluate and discuss. Candidates are required to provide reasons to support their discussions (10 marks).

Parts (c) and (d) are marked using levels of response marking tables.

Paper 2 – Hindu Scriptures, Life and Ethics

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 60 marks

This paper assesses the syllabus content for Paper 2.

Paper 2 has three sections:

Section A Aspects of knowledge, action and devotion

Section B Hindu life and ceremonies

Section C Religious and social reforms.

There are two questions in each section.

Candidates answer **three** questions, **one** question from each section.

Sections A, B and C

In Sections A, B and C, each question has four parts:

- Part (a) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content (2 marks).
- Part (b) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content (3 marks).
- Part (c) questions assess knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content (5 marks).
- Part (d) questions require candidates to evaluate and discuss. Candidates are required to provide reasons to support their discussions (10 marks).

Parts (c) and (d) are marked using levels of response marking tables.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exams. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Assess	make an informed judgement
Comment	give an informed opinion
Compare	identify/comment on similarities and/or differences
Define	give precise meaning
Describe	state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features
Discuss	write about issue(s) or topic(s) in depth in a structured way
Evaluate	judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount, or value of something
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things clear / say why and/or how and support with relevant evidence
Give	produce an answer from a given source or recall/memory
Identify	name/select/recognise
Outline	set out the main points

Phrases such as 'How far do you agree ...?' and 'To what extent ...?' may also be seen in the assessment for this syllabus.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support.

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have studied a broad curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework.

We do not expect learners starting this course to have previously studied Hinduism.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge O Level syllabuses to require about 130 guided learning hours for each subject. This is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

You can enter candidates in the November exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge O Level, Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) syllabuses are at the same level.

Making entries

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to an administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable.

Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options. Please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries* for the relevant series for the correct entry option code.

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to.

Learn more about retake entries, including definitions and information on entry deadlines, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes

To confirm what entry options are available for this syllabus, refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries* for the relevant series. Regulations for carrying forward component marks can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

At Cambridge we recognise that our candidates have highly diverse linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and may also have a variety of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include special educational needs and disability (SEND), religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity.

We apply accessible design principles to make our syllabuses and assessment materials as accessible and inclusive as possible. This includes reviewing the accessibility of language, layout, contexts and visual content. Using this approach means that we give all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Access arrangements

Our design principles aim to make sure our assessment materials are accessible for all candidates. To further minimise barriers faced by candidates with SEND, illness or injury, we offer a range of access arrangements and modified papers. This is the principal way in which we comply with our duty to make 'reasonable adjustments', as guided by the UK Equality Act 2010.

Important:

Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to taking an assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working. For Cambridge to approve an access arrangement, we need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment and does not affect the security or integrity of the assessment. Our access arrangement regulations can be found in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Applying for access arrangements

- Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- Centres are expected to check the availability of access arrangements and modified question papers at the start of the course. Check the *Cambridge Handbook*, the assessment objectives listed in the syllabus document and, where applicable, any access arrangement restrictions listed in the syllabus document.
- Contact us at the start of the course to find out if we can approve an access arrangement that is not listed in the *Cambridge Handbook*.
- All applications should be made by the deadlines published in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades A*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge O Level.

A* is the highest and E is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances, your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results, Cambridge O Level is shown as GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION ORDINARY LEVEL.

On certificates, Cambridge O Level is shown as General Certificate of Education.

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge O Level has two purposes:

- 1 to measure learning and achievement
The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for or likely to be successful in a particular course or career.
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Changes to this syllabus for 2029, 2030 and 2031

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 1, published September 2026.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme. We review our syllabuses regularly to make sure they continue to meet the needs of our schools. In updating this syllabus, we have made it easier for teachers and students to understand, keeping the familiar features that teachers and schools value.

There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

Syllabuses and specimen materials represent the final authority on the content and structure of all of our assessments.

Quality management



We are committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international education programmes and qualifications for students aged 3 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/about-us/our-standards/

We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.1 Standard. We are always looking to improve the accessibility of our documents. If you find any problems or you think we are not meeting accessibility requirements, contact us at **info@cambridgeinternational.org** with the subject heading: Digital accessibility. If you need this document in a different format, contact us and supply your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

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