

Government and Politics

Advanced GCE A2 H495

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H095

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Overview

It was good, as always, to note the continuance of a quality performance from the great majority of the candidates. The willingness to challenge, discuss and remain up to date with contemporary politics was refreshing. Greater relevance and a sharper focus on the mandatory topics at AS, are stressed as the key factors in improving performance overall. A plea is also made not to forget how many marks are allocated for Assessment Objective 3.

With the ending of the face to face INSET, OCR has developed new methods of providing support for centres teaching this qualification, such as the new e-community, which teachers can join to share ideas and good practice. Details of this, as well as several other new types of support are available on the OCR site. We are well aware that some teachers of GCE Government and Politics come to the subject not necessarily having been trained in it, and so we are attempting to make available valuable resources where we can through the Professional Development and the GCE Government and Politics sections of the OCR website.

F851 Contemporary Politics of the UK

General Comments

Candidates found Question 1 challenging and often struggled to achieve the quality of response displayed in the rest of their answers. On this evidence it seems that many had not prepared thoroughly enough for a question on party organisation. Candidates may need to be reminded that questions can, and will, be set on any part of the specification.

More generally, it is also worth reminding candidates that, when marking scripts, examiners are looking for certain qualities:

- Focus: a direct answer to the question
- Range: a number and variety of points
- Balance: both sides of an argument
- Detail/examples/evidence
- Good English.

If any of these are missing, candidates cannot necessarily expect to access the higher levels of the assessment matrix.

Crucially the tighter the focus, the better the answer is likely to be: 'Answer the question' remains the basic mantra for all exam candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1a** Most candidates were able to identify at least some aspects of the way in which the Labour and Conservative parties select their leaders. For example, they knew that they are elected and must be MPs. They were rewarded for what they knew. However, few candidates were able to explain these processes in sufficient detail to gain full marks and descriptions of the Conservative Party method were noticeably poorer than those for the Labour Party.
- 1b** Candidates who considered a range of areas in which ordinary Labour and Conservative members might arguably have influence, and who did do so in a balanced and analytical manner, did well. The most common areas for consideration were the election of leaders, policy-making, choosing local candidates and campaigning. Candidates who restricted themselves to just one aspect of party functioning, for example, policy-making, did not display the range of knowledge and understanding required to access the higher mark levels.
- 2** Most candidates were well aware of arguments advanced both for and against the view that pressure groups benefit democracy and were able to support their case by frequent and detailed reference to contemporary examples. Some candidates wrote about pressure methods and success, and where an answer might be inferred, they were rewarded, but, as always, the tighter the focus, the higher the mark.
- 3** Candidates who correctly identified the systems used to elect MEPs - closed party list in Great Britain and STV in Northern Ireland - and who focussed on their advantages and disadvantages did well. However, candidates needed to think carefully about the points they chose to use: arguing that a disadvantage of these systems is that they are more likely to lead to coalition or minority government may be true when discussing them in theory, but is not really relevant in the context of elections to the European Parliament.

- 4** The best answers were able to provide a balanced assessment of the importance of party leaders in influencing the outcome of recent elections by discussing the evidence for this and considering alternative factors which might have had an impact on the outcome of a particular election. Weaker answers either provided an assessment of the importance of leadership but without reference to 'recent elections', or just described the characteristics of a range of party leaders without attempting to assess their electoral impact.
- 5** Most candidates knew their psephological models, but the best answers were those that maintained a tight focus on the question and tried to assess the extent to which the rational choice model provides the best explanation for voting behaviour. This question discriminated well between those who were able to describe a range of models and those who were able to use this knowledge to answer the question. All-purpose voting behaviour answers which did not attempt to do what the question asked for were not highly rewarded.

F852 Contemporary Government of the UK

General Comments

It was really good to see the increasing use of contemporary knowledge to back up points made. The Mitchell/Huhne affairs and their implications were well utilised in Question 1 and the role of Lord Leveson in Question 4 were good examples of this. The willingness to debate, discuss and challenge was invariably strong, although there was not always the supporting detail there to make the case that convincing. There were plenty of strong candidates who not only had a good textbook knowledge with a strong awareness of contemporary politics but could also write clearly and convincingly. General recommendations for improvement are to ensure a stronger grasp of the essential detail for the two mandatory topics and more awareness of what is needed to get the Assessment Objective 3 marks.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1a** The key to success in this question lay in not confusing the two conventions and not getting too involved in any debate on either. The highest marks were allocated to those who explained the full implications of collective ministerial responsibility (CMR), what it was and who it applied to. Very few candidates grasped the confidentiality requirements, although the source did give hints there. Many candidates assumed that it applied to all MPs, regardless of whether they were in the government or not. What made it challenging to mark at times was the way in which candidates used the terms ‘minister’ and ‘MP’ at different times in their responses which led to reservations about their understanding of the convention. In the second part of the question, there again could be confusion between ministers and MPs, with the expenses scandal featuring prominently and often with little relevance. There were some excellent comments on the Huhne affair and also some very good comments on the strains that coalition put on CMR.
- 1b** Provided candidates had a sound understanding of the two conventions they gave some very strong answers here. The implications of CMR for effective government with an image of unity and common purpose were stressed and the implications of individual ministerial responsibility (IMR) for quality ministers who were properly accountable were also stressed. Some candidates had a tendency to repeat the definitions which were required for Question 1 (a), which wasted time. There were some very good debates on the relevance of the two conventions with some interesting comments on whether CMR would change irrevocably as a result of coalition. Mr Gove’s comments on the EU and Leveson/Murdoch and their implications for CMR were well known and used as examples for the decline of CMR.
- 2** This question produced a wide range of very good answers. It was pleasing to note how many candidates covered both the Commons and the Lords. The best answers usually started with an overview, considering what an efficient, or an inefficient check might be, and considering whether if Parliament had too large a checking power then government might not actually be able to get anything done. There were also some perceptive comments about the implications of a large or a small government majority on effectiveness. Many answers gave very good detail on the checking processes, such as Adjournment Debates, Select Committees and above all Questions. Some candidates just wrote about PMQ and rather ignored the perhaps more effective Written and Oral Questions to all ministers. Committees could get confused as always, but then there were some excellent examples of the role of MPs like Keith Vaz and Tom Watson in select committees, and above all Margaret Hodge and the PAC (Public Accounts Committee). Details on the Lords could be vague however and this is an area which could do with some updating.

- 3** A popular topic. The key to success in this question appeared to be not confusing principles with sources. Some of the best answers argued that the rule of law was the most important ‘underlying’ one, while parliamentary sovereignty was the most important ‘practical’ one. Some of the best answers kept the focus just on those two principles, while others broadened the debate right out to look at other principles like parliamentary government, the unitary state and the constitutional monarchy. There were a surprisingly large range of very interesting answers. Apart from the confusion between source and principle, the most common error was to bring in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), assuming that it was an integral part of the European Union (EU), and state that this was a new principle.
- 4** There were some very good answers which reflected carefully on the ‘increasing’ aspect of the question in a very sophisticated way. The general consensus was that it was increasing and there were a good range of reasons put forward why this was the case. Judicial review was of course a major factor put forward, but other reasons such as the implications of the CRA and the impact of judges running enquires such as Leveson and Saville .One or two candidates argued that the changes coming in legal aid might change this. As always in such essays there was substantial confusion about the roles of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the ECHR with lots of detail about the Factortame case where the relevance was never made clear.
- 5** Some excellent answers were given for this question. The best really thought carefully about ‘extent’ and made sure that both government and citizens were covered. Some candidates who worked their way systematically through the ways in which both could make an impact were clearly surprised at what could be done. There were some very good comments on the impact that pressure groups could make in Brussels and some excellent examples given of the work of MEPs, with Nigel Farage featured largely here. Those who had a sound knowledge of how the EU works found it very easy to get high marks. There were some excellent explanations of how Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) actually works. While there was some good comment on the role of the ECJ and how it could impact on the decision making, inevitably there was too much on the ECHR.

F853 Contemporary US Government and Politics

General Comments

In general terms the paper did not seem to present any particular difficulties. Most questions were attempted in equal measure. To reiterate comments from previous reports, the keys to success on this paper are to focus on the actual question set and to provide a range of arguments supported by a range of examples, preferably of a contemporary nature. Throughout the paper, the best candidates had a feel for the dynamics of US government and politics in the present day through references to the Obama administration and issues such as the fiscal cliff, detention of detainees on Guantánamo Bay and gun control.

Comments on Individual Comments

- 1a** One of the consequences of short answer questions is that it allows aspects of topics that would not normally be part of an essay question to be assessed, such as types of pressure groups. The typology of US pressure groups did prove to be a good discriminator in that some candidates struggled to go beyond the insider / outsider debate.
- 1b** Rather like the previous question, understanding of the meaning of elitism was central to providing an effective answer to this question on pressure groups and elitism. The command word of “evaluate” did invite a consideration of the pluralist debate. Given the time constraint of this question however, those who offered a one sided answer were still able to score highly. Answers which related the theory to the actual practice of US government and politics reached the highest mark levels. Many candidates provided good explanations of “Iron Triangles” and “The Revolving Door Syndrome”. Candidates often focused on the National Rifle Association (NRA) as an “elite” interest group though and could have benefited from knowledge of a greater range of examples.
- 2** The question offered a new variant on the traditional topic of the Electoral College. The best candidates focused on this by considering the most recent developments from the 2012 presidential election. Candidates should be wary of providing seemingly pre-packaged answers to the question of ‘should the system be reformed’, as these did not score as effectively. Candidates need to ensure they answer the specific question set.
- 3** This was a question on party functions and it was surprising to discover that the basic arguments surrounding party decline and revival (particularly the latter) were not always to the fore. On occasion there was some confusion with the functions of Congress. Developments such as increased partisanship and polarisation of party ideologies offered considerable scope for good answers. Some candidates drifted into generic “third party” answers in places. It would have been good to see more candidates writing about candidate selection within the primary system and the declining significance of party fundraising (as opposed to PACs etc) in election campaigns.
- 4** There were several approaches that could have been adopted to answer this question on the Roberts Court defence of rights and liberties. Knowledge of rights from the Bill of Rights and relevant cases from the Roberts Court was needed in order to access the higher mark levels for the assessment objectives. Comparisons with other courts and reference to other cases were accepted provided they were placed in context.
- 5** Rather like Question 2 on the Supreme Court, candidates seemed reluctant to address this question on the flexibility of the US Constitution head-on, due to their preference to answer why there have been so few amendments to the US Constitution. The best answers had

considered changes in federal state relations, the powers of the presidency and interpretative rulings from the Supreme Court via the mechanism of judicial review.

- 6** This question on functions of congress provided a relatively clear structure for an essay, as each function could be considered in turn. Executive oversight offered lots of opportunities to provide Assessment Objective 1 (AO1) detail and the best answers were able to focus on the Bush and Obama administrations and the relationship between the respective executives and legislatures. The representative function too offered those who knew the detail of the ethnic, gender and age composition of the Congress to accumulate AO1 marks.
- 7** As mentioned in the general comments of this report, there is need for students to be aware of contemporary developments in the USA. Consequently on this question, on presidential power, the candidates who were able to discuss the success and failures of the Obama administrations and to provide a relevant explanation did well. The best were able to contrast developments such as the War on Terror with Obama's pivot to Asia/Libya and Syria. The nature of the Congress as always holds the key to explaining the real nature of presidential power.
- 8** Detail of the Bush and Obama appointments was needed in order to assess the impact of the appointments to the Supreme Court. This needed reference to whom they replaced, voting blocs on the court, terms such as strict and loose constructionism and an evaluation of case rulings from the Court. The best answers were able to provide a balanced consideration of the Roberts Court and reached conclusions which suggested that its conservatism may be exaggerated in certain quarters.

F854 Political Ideas and Concepts

General Comments

Candidates are mostly familiar with the requirements of this paper and are demonstrating a better and more focused use of political theory, including illustrating their theory based arguments with the views of specific theorists. Candidates should make sure, however, that when they highlight the views of specific theorists these should be explained and thus they should avoid generic references to thinkers (e.g. conservatives such as Burke believe in individual law and order). Knowledge and understanding is not meant to be the name-dropping of political thinkers but the genuine understanding of their ideas.

Candidates are also taking more care over how to answer specific types of questions. This was especially true with regards to 'discuss' questions where there were relatively few one-sided answers. Candidates, however, are reminded that this is political ideas and concepts paper and thus does not require evidence drawn from modern politics. This should be saved for the application of political ideas and concepts in unit F856.

In the January report to centres, a new approach to how scripts are to be marked was outlined. This hopefully provided greater transparency for candidates and centres in how scripts were marked. Also it provides a more coherent link between the marking of AS units and those at A2 level. These guidelines have been repeated below.

Assessment Objective 1 (AO1)

- Answers which only display a general understanding of the topic area without any reference to specific theory will be awarded at Level 1.
- Answers which describe specific aspects of the relevant concept(s) but lack any use of the ideas of specific thinkers will be awarded at the bottom of Level 2.
- Answers which display understanding of the specific concept(s) and are able to relate the ideas of a few specific theorists will be awarded towards the top of Level 2 (this might be 1 or 2 relevant examples of the views of thinkers, or generic reference to a wider range of thinkers without any exemplification of their specific ideas).
- Answers which display a good understanding of the relevant concept(s) and illustrate their arguments with examples from a range of specific thinkers (this might be approximately 3-7 examples dependent upon quality of exemplification) will be awarded at Level 3.
- Answers which display a thorough understanding of the relevant concept(s) and illustrate their arguments with a wide range of examples drawn from specific thinkers (this might be approximately 8 or more examples, but might be less if very good exemplification of specific views) will be awarded at Level 4.

Assessment Objective 2 (AO2)

- Answers which only describe general issues relating to the question focus will be awarded at the maximum bottom Level 2 (Level 1 for very generalised descriptions).
- Answers which analyse one or two relevant factors (e.g. for and against, similarities and differences, or issues of importance and related other factors) or list an underdeveloped range of factors will be awarded towards the top of Level 2.
- Answers which adopt a one-sided approach to their answer (either for OR against, similarities OR differences, or related issue of importance without considering other factors) will be awarded at the maximum bottom Level 3.
- Answers which analyse a range of relevant and developed factors (approximately 3 or 4) or a wider range but in a very imbalanced manner (e.g. 4 for 1 against) will be awarded at Level 3.

- Answers which analyse a wide range of relevant and developed factors (e.g. 5 or more) with balance will be awarded at Level 4.
- Answers must show sophistication in their analysis and evaluation to be awarded the top of Level 4.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1a** Good answers were able to outline a full meaning of liberal democracy. The large majority of answers had an appreciation of the concept, with the very best able to highlight liberal and democratic features of the concept, as well as illustrate their ideas with reference to the ideas of relevant thinkers.

This question should take approximately 10-12 minutes to answer, so need not be overly lengthy, especially in comparison to Question 1 (b).

- 1b** Most answers displayed a good working knowledge of the liberal and democratic aspects of liberal democracy. Those that were able to only highlight one area tended to be awarded at Level 2. Very good answers particularly focused upon the question and attempted to differentiate between the importance of liberal and democratic features of the concept. Most of these tended to argue that both were integral to the understanding of the liberal democracy. As there are no AO1 marks available for this question there is no need to focus upon illustrative examples from the ideas of political thinkers.
- 2** Good answers had a clear understanding of the meaning of sovereignty especially the internal aspects of the concept. Better answers went beyond a description of the location of sovereignty, and to a debate over whether the UK parliament has lost sovereignty to the EU (note the question was concerned with the generic concept of parliamentary sovereignty and was not exclusively about the UK Parliament). The very best answers weighed up the arguments for and against the concept of sovereignty residing in parliament, and also debated the merits of the potential alternative locations of sovereignty.
- 3** Good answers had a clear understanding of the meaning of authority and its necessity for the operation of the state. Better answers went beyond a description of Weber's ideal types of authority, instead focusing upon the arguments relating to the necessity of the concept. Some answers did attempt to answer the question regarding the benefits and drawbacks of authority. Whilst this did have some merit, these answers were not as well rewarded as those that particularly focused upon the idea of necessity. The very best candidates did produce a wide-ranging and balanced argument focusing on the necessity of authority, illustrating their answers with a good range of thinkers, ranging from Weber, Arendt, Gramsci and Hobbes. It was pleasing to see that relatively few answers confused the concepts of power and authority.
- 4** Good answers had a clear understanding of the meaning of rights and in particular animal rights. Better answers moved beyond a one-sided approach, or a generalised discussion of moral issues surrounding mankind's relationship with the animal kingdom. Very good answers were able to evaluate a wide range of balanced arguments, illustrating these with effective use of the views of relevant political thinkers such as Regan and Singer.
- 5** Good answers displayed a clear understanding of the meaning of justice and particularly its substantive and procedural forms. Better answers went beyond a description of the two concepts and actually compared the two directly. The comparison tended to focus on issues such as their different interpretations of justice; their views on morality and their attitudes regarding the role of judiciaries. The very best answers had balance in their comparison, evaluating similarities and differences.

- 6** Good answers understood the meaning of the New Right and differentiated between its neo-liberal and neo-conservative strands. Better answers went beyond a description of New Right ideas, instead analysing those that could be considered conservative and those that were more liberal. The very best answers were balanced in their analysis and were effectively illustrated with a range of New Right thinkers including Strauss, Kristol, Hayek and Friedman.
- 7** Good answers had an effective understanding of socialist and conservative views on human nature. These also undertook direct comparisons, albeit, understandably focusing more on the points of difference than similarity. The very best answers did appreciate some of the more subtle similarities between one-nation and social democratic strands of the two ideologies, as well highlighting that both ideologies recognise the existence of selfishness and corruption within society, albeit due to different causations. Centres are reminded that for the ideologies sections of the specification, questions can be asked that do compare central themes across the major ideologies.
- 8** Good answers had an effective understanding of postmodernism and were able to evaluate its ideological basis. In order to do this well, answers had to show also an effective understanding of the meaning of ideology. The very best answers tended to break down the meaning of ideology into its central components and relate these to postmodernism, thus producing a highly focused and balanced response. Candidates who attempted this question did tend to have a good working knowledge of postmodernism and were able to bring in the views of a range of relevant political thinkers.

F855 US Government and Politics

General comments

The general quality of the answers to this paper was quite impressive. Successful candidates managed to provide a range of arguments supported by an array of examples which provided an effective answer to the question. References to other countries and the EU, though not essential, enhanced some answers on occasion and it was pleasing to see references to contemporary developments to help support analysis and evaluation.

Comments on Individual Questions

1. Candidates who attempted this question on elections needed to draw on their AS study and knowledge of electoral systems to provide effective comparisons of both the UK and the USA use of FPTP (First Past The Post). Use of the basic principles of plurality, majoritarianism, proportionality and hybrid systems provided a good structure for essays. References to the use of different systems within the UK and beyond provided the Assessment Objective 1 (AO1) material to support arguments.
2. Candidates were able to provide detailed examples of the similarities and differences between party policies. The best answers, however, focused on ideology as stated in the question. They were able to make reference to key ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, nationalism and social democracy. These were complemented by reference to developments such as triangulation, compassionate and one nation Conservatism, the third way, new/blue/one nation Labour and political scientists such as Fukuyama, Bell and even Huntington.
3. Candidates were able to reach the highest mark levels on this question on pressure groups by considering the worth of insider status, especially in the UK with its executive dominance and a range of other factors. Comment on iron triangles and policy networks in the USA served a similar purpose. The use of examples was key to scoring AO1 marks with the best candidates recognising the impact of austerity politics and developments such as the BMA strike over NHS reforms in the context of relations with the executive.
4. The impact of the ECHR and the recent cases relating to prisoners' votes and the attempted deportation of Abu Qatada were set against the need for national security as a basis for most of the best answers to this question on rights and liberties. Detention at Guantánamo bay and the anti-terrorist legislation helped provide a counter view. Key concepts such as positive/negative/natural and paper rights also allowed candidates to access Assessment Objective 2 (AO2) marks for analysis and evaluation. Similarly detail of the rights outlined in both the ECHR and the Bill of Rights and relevant cases was a source of both AO1 marks and a basis for a consideration of the key issues relating to the question.
5. The constitutional principle of parliamentary sovereignty and legislation such as the constitutional reforms enacted since 1997 and anti-terrorist measures since 2001 allowed candidates to argue that Parliament lacks effective checks. The best candidates developed further to consider executive as opposed to legislative dominance in line with

theory of the “elective dictatorship”. Discussion of judicial review and executive checks upon the Congress allowed counter arguments to be presented. In the same vein, the impact of the Human Rights Act and developments such as divided government in the USA helped provide balanced and effective answers to the question on constitutions.

6. The representative function of legislatures could have been accessed by reference to the various models such as trustee and delegate as well as providing detail of the ethnic, gender and age composition of legislative chambers. The differences between the UK and the USA provided considerable scope for comparative analysis with an analysis of the impact of the whipping system and the fusion of the executive and legislature, and arrangements in the USA with a clear separation of powers and weaker party system. Reference to recent increased partisanship in the USA did provide a counter view which invited comment on issues such as gun control, Obamacare and the fiscal cliff. AO1 marks were on offer for reference to the legislative and scrutiny processes and discussion of committees and the influences upon voting within legislative chambers.
7. The issue of effectiveness and power of executives was a well attempted question. The best candidates were able to consider presidential congressional relations within the concept of the “power of persuasion” and the problems of the Obama administration. In a similar vein the impact of coalition government was considered as a key determinant of the effectiveness of the UK Prime Minister. Those candidates who were able to assess the nature of a parliamentary system of government against one based upon a real separation of powers were rewarded.
8. References to the impact of the ECHR, the rise of pressure group activity, concerns about human rights and the development of a rights culture, provided the basis for a detailed and informed discussion of the increased importance of judiciaries. It was pleasing to see recognition of the different roles played by the ECHR and the ECJ. References to recent cases and issues such as gun control, *NFIB v Sebelius* and arguments surrounding a British Bill of Rights provided an excellent platform for informed discussion of the arguments relating to this question.

F856 Political Ideas and Concepts in Practice

General Comments

The most important feature of this paper is highlighted in the title of this unit – Political Ideas and Concepts in Practice. Answers that do not undertake this will not be as well rewarded as those that do. It is important that answers do have a basis in the arguments relating to political ideas and concepts, including the views of specific political thinkers. These then need evaluating by relating them to the practice of modern politics. This should include specific examples drawn from modern politics and thus should allow for the use of knowledge drawn from the study of AS Government and Politics.

Answers that only deal with ideas and concepts in a generalised form, thus focusing very heavily on modern politics, will tend to be rewarded at maximum Level 2. Answers that do at least show a clear understanding of relevant political ideas and concepts but only make reference in general terms to modern politics will be rewarded at maximum bottom of Level 3. Answers, in order to access mid-Level 3 and beyond, must have clear synoptic links in their arguments. Good ways of showing the synoptic links is for each point of the argument to debate the relevant theory and then apply it in practice. If the expectation is that 5 or 6 relevant theory based arguments are made for unit F854, then this should be repeated for F856 with an additional 5 or 6 clear attempts made to apply the theory to modern politics. Thus an F856 essay might consist of an introduction where points are defined and a thesis statement is made, 5 or 6 theory based paragraphs with each followed by a paragraph highlighting the practical applications and a concluding paragraph drawing the key themes of the argument together with a personalised response directly answering the question set.

The January Report to Centres outlined how this synoptic approach would be marked. This guidance has been repeated below.

Assessment Objective 1 (AO1)

In order to access the higher mark bands answers must include specific examples drawn from political theory **and** modern politics.

- Answers will be awarded at Level 1 where there is only basic understanding (this might include very short answers).
- Answers will be awarded at Level 2 where there is understanding of relevant ideas and concepts, but few specific references to relevant illustrative evidence both in theory and practice (this might be 1 or 2 for each). Also answers at this level may make more references to modern politics but no relevant references to the ideas of political thinkers.
- Answers will be awarded at Level 3 for a range of relevant illustrative specific examples from modern politics and specific use of a range of relevant examples from theorists (this might range from approximately 3 for each at the bottom of the level to approximately 7 for each at the top of the level, or an imbalanced combination of both – note where detailed case study evidence is used it is still possible to access the top of the level with a smaller range of examples). Also answers will be awarded at this level where there is a wide range of relevant examples from theorists (eg 8 or more) but mostly implicit use of examples drawn from modern politics.
- Answers will be awarded at Level 4 where there is a thorough and sophisticated variety of relevant factual and theory evidence used (this might be 8 or more for each, but could be less if more detailed case study style evidence is used).

Assessment Objective 2 (AO2)

To access the higher mark bands answers must go beyond description of relevant political ideas and concepts.

- Answers will be awarded at Level 1 for basic description only.
- Answers will be awarded the bottom of Level 2 where there is more specific description of relevant ideas and concepts.
- Answers will be awarded at mid to top Level 2 where there are a range of arguments discussed but lack any real synoptic links.
- Answers will be awarded towards the bottom of Level 3 for a one-sided approach with relevant synoptic links (either for OR against, similarities OR differences, or relative importance without considering other factors), and/or a range of arguments made but with only a few relevant synoptic links.
- Answers will be awarded towards the top of Level 3 where there is an attempt at a balanced analysis of a range of factors (approx 3 or 4) with appropriate synoptic links made.
- Answers will be awarded at Level 4 where there is clear and balanced evaluation of a wide range of factors and appropriate synoptic links made (this might be 5 or 6 relevant arguments). There should be balance in the evaluation of factors in order to access Level 4.
- Answers will be awarded at the top of Level 4 where there is clear sophistication in the evaluation.
- Answers in order to access Level 3 or 4 **must** make appropriate synoptic links between theory based arguments and evaluation of these through application to modern politics.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 Good answers outlined a full meaning of representative democracy and explored the arguments surrounding the concept of enslavement. There were a range of good arguments relating to the views of Rousseau and other radical democrats, as well as elitist and Marxist based arguments critical of representative democracy. These were often countered by the views of protective democrats and pluralist theories. Good answers tended to be well illustrated by the use of relevant theorists and also practical examples often drawn from the electoral processes seen in representative democracy and the makeup and activities of modern legislatures, most often the House of Commons. Many good answers accessed the higher mark bands by critically evaluating the degree of enslavement through analysing the models of representation (mandate, trustee, delegate and resemblance).
- 2 Good answers had a clear understanding of the meaning of globalisation and differentiated between its political, economic and cultural forms. These answers tended to go beyond a heavy focus on Britain's relationship with the EU and other international bodies. They also had relevant synoptic links by evaluating in practice the views of political thinkers such as Scholte, Klein, Chomsky and Hertz. It was pleasing to see that a number of candidates were able to use a good array of contemporary examples to illustrate their arguments, with often the tax affairs of multinational organisations coming to the fore.
- 3 Good answers had a clear understanding of the meaning of legitimacy and how it is bestowed upon Western democracies. There were a pleasing number of answers that used criteria for assessing whether legitimacy has been lost, with many, for instance, using Beetham's analysis of the basis of legitimacy. There were also many good answers that developed a neo-Marxist approach to assessing a lack of legitimacy, especially regarding Habermass and his views on a legitimisation crisis. There were many good examples used, drawn from modern politics, relating to topics ranging from declining levels of consent due to electoral apathy and declining participation in mainstream politics. Good case study evidence was also used over alternative participation through pressure groups and social protest movements.

- 4 Good answers had a clear understanding over the meaning of political equality and these tended to use effective criteria for assessing the basis of political equality (often differentiating between legal and formal forms of equality from equal opportunity and outcome). This approach tended to prevent essays becoming a list of examples for and against political equality and also allowed consideration of differing ideological standpoints on the meaning and desirability of equality. There was also much effective application to modern politics by using evidence relating to the socio-economic background of parliamentarians, the use of affirmative/ positive action schemes by governments and political parties, as well as case study evidence of the inequalities within various aspects of the political system such as voting systems and access to the corridors of power.
- 5 Good answers displayed a clear understanding of the meaning of the rule of law and how it operates in Western democracies. A good approach to take was to identify the different components of the rule of law, with AV Dicey's criteria being very useful for this. These then could be analysed and debated in theory prior to being applied in practice. Good approaches tended to undertake the latter by analysing the role of judiciaries in providing executive and legislative oversight, as well as analysing the operation of constitutional checks and balances, thus restraining despotic style government actions. It was pleasing to see that answers to this question tended to avoid listing the process of law making and the role and functions of the judiciary.
- 6 Good answers understood the meaning of right-wing nationalism and differentiated it from other right-wing theories (conservatism albeit with overlapping features) and other forms of nationalism (especially liberal and socialist nationalism). Very good answers were differentiated between the ideas of right-wing nationalism (especially xenophobia, patriotism and imperialism) and the influence of right-wing nationalist parties. This differentiation allowed consideration of the influence of the ideas on mainstream political parties rather than focusing the analysis on right-wing parties and pressure groups such as the BNP, UKIP and EDL, as well as allowing synoptic links to be made with the views of theorists such as Fichte, Tonnies and de Gaulle.

Good answers introduced liberal nationalist views in a relevant manner by highlighting the greater importance of these ideas, especially with regards to Scottish and Welsh nationalism through the SNP and Plaid Cymru. This approach allowed better focus than the listing of the views of all nationalist parties in the UK. It was also pleasing to see those answers that qualified the relative success of right-wing nationalist parties, keeping in perspective the actual degree of influence of the BNP and EDL especially.

- 7 Good answers had an effective understanding of liberalism in UK politics. Better answers tended to utilise the core components of liberal ideology (freedom, rights, constitutionalism and limited government, rationalism and toleration) in assessing its relevant triumph. This was certainly a better approach than confusing the question with a 'triumph of liberal democracy' style essay that had been set in a previous session. The very best answers adopted a balanced approach through considering its relative triumph by also considering the importance of other mainstream ideologies, especially conservatism and socialism. It was pleasing to see a large number of answers adopting clear synoptic links in answering this question, with much good use made of the actions of recent governments as well as in the development of the main UK political parties
- 8 Good answers had an effective understanding of environmentalism, often differentiating between shallow and deep forms of ecologism. Better answers went beyond a list of environmental style policies or describing the manifesto commitments of the mainstream political parties. Instead these answers adopted criteria for assessing the impact of environmentalism; this taking the form of the core themes within the environmentalism. This approach allowed for the application of the relative importance of the environmental

agenda in modern politics through the impact of environmental parties and pressure groups as well as the relative degree of commitment shown by the mainstream political parties to the environmental agenda.

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