

Government and Politics

Advanced GCE A2 H495

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H095

Reports on the Units

January 2010

HX95/MS/R/10J

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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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Advanced Subsidiary GCE Government and Politics (H095)

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Chief Examiner Report

This being the first time the full suite of papers for the new specifications was available, we were naturally interested to see how candidates had performed. Obviously the new AS papers had been seen before so candidates were better prepared for them, but it was also good to see evidence that centres had taken the new A2 papers and their changed requirements very seriously and there was little sign of any serious issues causing problems. Relevance remains a concern as always, both at AS and A2, and all examiners reported a tendency of candidates to write answers to questions they had not been set (but had probably been set in the past). Candidates were better prepared for the compulsory topics at AS, which was good to see, but they could be cavalier in the way in which they utilised the sources which could be very expensive in terms of marks. However, while AS candidates were better briefed on the compulsory topics, they could still be very hazy about the meaning of key concepts such as 'democracy', so a little time invested on those would be very helpful both at AS and at A2.

We would also like to stress that we have placed quite an emphasis on contemporary politics in the specifications and we are more than willing to reward those candidates who use their knowledge of contemporary politics, be it British or American (or EU) relevantly. 'Relevantly' needs stressing however, as all examiners reported a tendency to write at great length about the MPs' expenses – regardless of relevance. There is also a strong case for ensuring that candidates are aware of how marks are allocated (the 10-10-5 split in F853/F854 essay questions for examples) so that they know how to direct their efforts.

On a final note it is worth stressing that in essay questions, particularly those in papers such as F851 to F854, where there is a limited amount of time available, examiners do not expect to see formal 'introductions' (often of limited relevance) or 'conclusions' (which often seem to be at odds with the information given). They would be much happier with a direct answer, with reasons for that answer, supported by recent and relevant information. The candidates might be much happier with the marks awarded as well.

F851 Contemporary Politics of the UK

Last summer's Report noted that, "*the best advice ... teachers can give their students is (to) 'answer the question'. Many candidates failed to gain the marks that their knowledge and understanding might have merited because they ignored the question and 'wrote about' the topic.*" That advice still holds true – and will probably always do so.

For example, on this paper:

- Question 2 asked candidates to discuss the criticisms made of pressure groups, not simply describe their methods;
- Question 3 asked candidates to discuss the case for using proportional representation to elect MPs, not just provide the standard arguments for and against PR;
- Question 4 asked candidates to identify the differences between general elections and by-elections, not just to describe one and then describe the other;
- Question 5 asked candidates to discuss the relative value the rational choice model, not just describe all the models they knew.

These may seem like small differences, but at the top end of the mark range they were the difference between a good, or very good, mark and full marks.

More significantly, perhaps, in answer to Question 1b on the contribution of parties to democracy in the UK, many candidates wrote about the shortcomings of parties without discussing their impact on UK democracy as the question required.

Two other points are worth noting:

- Some candidates continue to write too much in answer to Question 1a (see below);
- Most introductions added little or nothing to the overall answer: they simply delayed candidates getting to the point. Many candidates would be better off not writing an introduction at all and using the time saved to include more substantive points in their answer.

1(a) Using the sources and your own knowledge, explain what is meant by 'democracy'.

For a question on such a central concept as 'democracy', answers to 1a were often disappointing, amounting to little more than a re-hashing of the source material without any attempt at elucidation, development or exemplification.

Importantly, judging by the length of many answers, some candidates seem to have spent far more time on this question than was warranted by the marks available. Indeed, answers to 1a, worth 12 marks, were sometimes longer than answers to 1b, worth 28 marks. As a rule-of-thumb, candidates should spend no more than 10 minutes on question 1a or they risk not having enough time to answer the remaining questions fully.

It is also worth reminding candidates that long answers are not necessarily better answers. All that candidates were required to do in this case was to explain what is meant by 'democracy'. They were not asked to discuss whether the UK was a democracy, or what the shortcomings of democratic systems are, though many did.

1(b) Using the sources and your own knowledge, assess the contribution made by political parties to democracy in the UK today.

This question proved to be the most challenging on the paper and was rarely done well. What candidates were expected to do was to consider the activities of political parties and discuss the contribution these make to democracy in the UK. For example, they might have reflected on the extent to which the work of parties in aggregating and articulating interest, adds to, or undermines, democracy.

Although most candidates identified choice at elections as a benefit, too often this was their only point and many then strayed from the question and ended up discussing internal party democracy, political sleaze or the electoral system. These points are not necessarily irrelevant, but in most cases the way they were used was.

2 Discuss the reasons why pressure groups are sometimes criticised.

A popular question, judging by the length of many answers, and one for which candidates were clearly prepared. Good candidates identified a range of criticisms and were then able to discuss them at length, providing a number of detailed examples. Weaker candidates focussed solely on violent or illegal direct action, and often included lengthy, but unnecessary, typological outlines. Others identified criticisms but did not discuss them.

3 Discuss the view that we should use proportional representation to elect members of the Westminster parliament.

Another popular question, and often done well, however potentially good candidates often trotted out what looked like prepared answers on the benefits and drawbacks of PR without actually attempting to answer the actual question. It makes a difference.

4 Compare and contrast the differences between general elections and by-elections.

The least popular of the optional questions. The best candidates could identify a large number and range of differences between general elections and by-elections, but too many candidates seemed to be grasping at straws and missing. In some cases candidates confused by-elections with local elections, or the selection of party candidates or even the selection of party leaders.

5 To what extent does the 'rational choice' model explain the way people vote?

Many candidates knew their models of voting behaviour, but many were unwilling to use this knowledge to answer the question set. Good candidates could explain precisely what 'rational choice' models suggest, their limitations and the enduring value of other models. Weaker candidates often simply outlined all the models they knew without attempting to answer the question.

Further, while most candidates had a broad understanding of what is meant by 'rational choice', few were able to describe the model in any detail and there was some confusion between rational choice, social structure and party identification models.

F852 Contemporary Government of the UK

Centres are clearly beginning to adapt well to the new specifications and are obviously aware of what to expect. There was still some indication of a lack of depth on the compulsory questions, as well as some reluctance to make full use of the sources. Both these factors led to lower AO1 marks than perhaps were anticipated. There was also some sign that candidates had no real choice of questions in Section B, and were having to do a question which they would have preferred not to. We are aware that it is not always possible to cover all the optional topics by January, but we would recommend that candidates do at least have a choice of two questions. There were still basic errors being made, the confusion between Ministers and MPs was the obvious one. However most candidates were more than willing to 'discuss' when asked to and it was really good to see (and reward) candidates from centres who demonstrably had a really good awareness of contemporary politics.

1(a) Using the sources and your own knowledge, explain the different roles of (i) ministers, and (ii) senior civil servants.

As was the case last year, there was still a tendency to ignore the assistance that could be gleaned from the sources. Obvious points like 'the making of policy' and 'mismanagement of visa application system' were ignored for Ministers, as were pointers like 'administer the policies' for civil servants. While we don't insist on copying from the sources, candidates will find it hard to get top marks unless they make intelligent use of the information provided. The other failing was to confuse Ministers and MPs and wander off into the delegate/representative discussion. The best kept their answers to a couple of good paragraphs, utilising the sources effectively. They made sure the key differences were apparent, such as the permanence of the HCS compared with the transient nature of most ministerial careers, as well as where responsibility lay.

1(b) Using the sources and your own knowledge, assess whether individual ministerial responsibility is still an important constitutional convention.

The best answers always started with a clear definition of IMR and a precise explanation of the two strands of 'personal' and 'role' responsibility. The two major failings were to spend a lot of time dealing with Collective Responsibility and/or confusing Ministers with MPs, yet again. The latter of course allowed long and more or less totally irrelevant discussions on the expenses scandal where clearly 'flipping' and duckhouses had made a deep impact. There was a tendency amongst many who had the right focus to downplay the 'still an important part' aspect of the question, and get a little carried away with 'moments' of madness. However a good number did well on this question, making good use of the sources, as well as having a well focussed answer with awareness of issues like accountability, and some own knowledge to add to the AO1 marks.

2 Discuss the view that the opposition and backbenchers in parliament have little real power.

As was the case last year, there were some candidates who had only a very limited knowledge of the workings of parliament. However the better candidates did two things. The first was to explain, or demonstrate clearly, that they were aware of the difference between the opposition and backbenchers. The second was to show evidence that they had thought about the 'little real power' aspect of the question. Some had a good awareness of what scope was available to both the opposition and backbenchers in such areas as debates, questions and committees, as well as knowledge of factors such as revolts. A couple of centres clearly had made good use of the Parliament Channel recently as their knowledge of the work of recent committees, adjournment debates and the Westminster Hall debates was very impressive. That is the way to high AO1 marks.

3 Discuss the view that the sovereignty of parliament is the most important underlying principle of the British constitution.

More than one examiner pointed out that quite a few candidates' inability to spell either 'sovereignty' or 'parliament' (both in the question) did not bode well for this question. We got a lot of answers on sources (with some amazing spellings) of 'prerogative' which gained few marks. The better candidates first of all started with a definition, kept the focus on 'underlying principles' and also kept a good focus on the issue of 'most important'. By far and away the most popular of the optional questions, the level of response was disappointing because of a lack of awareness of the right focus, or of other principles which might be considered. Inevitably there were those who turned their answer into anti EU rants about how sovereignty (usually incorrectly spelt) was being destroyed by membership.

4 Discuss the view that it is easy for UK citizens to gain redress of grievances.

The least popular of the optional questions, but usually very well done. Candidates were well aware of how grievances could be redressed, and had a good depth of knowledge, looking at means of redress ranging from the courts to tribunals, MPs to pressure groups. There was also often very good discussion of the 'easy' part of the question, with some excellent balance shown as well as some good recent examples. It lent itself well to a 'case for/against/conclusion'.

5 Analyse the view that membership of the European Union has led to a significant loss of UK sovereignty.

It was good to see a range of balanced answers which grasped well the relationship between the UK and the EU (and more able to spell sovereignty correctly!). The best answers thought about the 'significant' aspect of the question and debated that well, while also demonstrating a correct knowledge of where decisions are now taken on what issues. Some also compared membership of the EU with what had happened earlier, with membership of NATO etc, and suggested that it was just part of a wider trend. Inevitably there were the 'eurorants' which displayed limited knowledge and focus.

F853 Contemporary US Government and Politics

It is pleasing to report that the first sitting of the paper in its new format did not seem to present any particular problems to candidates. The compulsory question could potentially pose problems but pleasingly there was no real sign that students were ill prepared for both aspects of question 1. As a general rule, we will always endeavour to ensure that the question set is mainstream although it can be drawn from any area of the specification. Consequently centres should ensure that students are prepared accordingly and no short cuts are taken with whole topics excluded from study.

At the end of this report, I have included a copy of the assessment sheet that we use in my centre to mark A level essays. Centres may like to use it as it stands or in some sort of amended form. It serves the purpose of separating the way in which AO1, AO2 and AO3 marks are awarded. There are several ways in which candidates can excel but perhaps the two most obvious to mention are the need to provide as much detail as possible and that of answering the question set. Every example is recognised when marking and details from the most recent developments in government and politics particularly are welcome. In this regard, discussion of health care reform and the Afghanistan war could have been used to good effect on several questions. In the future it is hoped that questions might specifically focus on the contemporary with specific reference to Obama and the Roberts Court as possibilities. We try and use words like 'today' and 'recent' as means of steering students in this direction and indeed, the title of the paper is "Contemporary US government and politics". Centres would do well then to incorporate study of The Economist, New York Times website etc into their teaching strategies in order to give their candidates an edge in the exam stakes. Naturally citing Brown as a Supreme Court ruling from "1554" did not help the student concerned in this regard.

The AO3 marks are also worthy of consideration in terms of preparing students for the exam. Introductions should be short and focus on the question rather than be broad, descriptive and of little relevance. Similarly, conclusions which merely reiterate what has been already said should be viewed as a missed opportunity to access more marks. In some instances spelling and use of language are also worthy of attention. 'The right to bare arms', 'exceptable' and 'procortion' did have an impact on the AO3 mark that was awarded. Students should avoid using the vernacular by not using terms such as 'dodgy' and 'shady'.

It should be noted that this is primarily an American paper. Whilst references to the UK are welcome as a source of comparative analysis, these should be relevant. At times, it seemed as if comparisons were being made for the sake of it and they did not really serve any purpose. For example the questions on the Electoral College did not really invite discussion of First Past the Post in the UK.

1(a) Outline how the Electoral College works.

No major problems were encountered with this question. Some candidates wandered into question 1b territory by starting to evaluate the worth of the system. Question 1a will always focus on descriptive aspects of a topic and consequently there should be no need for analysis and evaluation. That said, candidates were still rewarded for relevant discussion. Better candidates were able to provide some up to date detail from the 2008 election such as the split Nebraska vote. Timing was an issue on occasion.

1(b) Discuss the view that the Electoral College should be reformed.

Again most candidates were able to discuss a range of arguments relating to reform of the College. Given the compulsory nature of the question and the time available, less emphasis was

placed upon a balanced consideration of the arguments for and against than the word 'discuss' might be normally expected to invite. There was some confusion relating to the role of the Floridian election in 2000 and the debate surrounding the College. Similarly, candidates strayed into discussion of primaries and conventions and the role of delegates there, which was not relevant here.

2 Evaluate the importance of third parties in American politics.

No real problems with this question were encountered. Candidates were able to discuss a range of arguments highlighting the limited electoral success of third parties at national level particularly with examples which were contrasted with counter views outlining their role as 'spoilers' and as a source of alternative policies which were frequently adopted by the two main parties.

Some students did focus on the reasons for failure which although of some relevance, did not provide a thorough answer to the actual question.

3 Assess the relative importance of factors likely to lead to success for pressure groups in Washington.

It is disappointing to note that despite repeated comments in exam reports and at INSET candidates still make the basic error of not providing sufficient discussion of US pressure groups when writing on this topic. Candidates were able to identify some of the most obvious factors which affect success but most were unable to discuss a range of other factors beyond money and membership. At times, one could have been reading a pressure group essay from a UK politics paper. Care should be taken with regard to the definition of a pressure group. Enron, Lockheed Martin, Timothy McVeigh, etc are not pressure groups. The question title did mention 'Washington' specifically and this should have been factored into the essay.

4 Examine whether congressional checks on the president are effective today.

With reference to the awarding of AO1 marks, this was a question where students could do well if they knew the several ways in which Congress can check the presidency. The question was written in the hope that discussion of the Bush administration might be centre stage. Although there was some discussion of recent developments with reference to health care, the impact of Brown's election success and the Bush administration, discussion mainly centred on the traditional. Hence Nixon's impeachment, presidential wars in Korea and Vietnam etc provided the mainstay of most essays. Given the title of the essay, there was no need to refer to judicial checks upon the executive.

5 Analyse the reasons why Congress rejects more legislation than it passes.

A popular question that was reasonably well done. Good candidates were able to provide a range of arguments with supporting evidence. There was some confusion over the difference between legislation and constitutional amendments. Some answers were too heavy on narrative detail of the legislative process at the expense of analysis and argument.

6 Assess the claim that there are too few checks on the president in the determination of foreign policy.

This is a new topic and it was pleasing to report that several candidates were able to provide effective answers to this question. Better candidates were able to effectively focus on the question whilst others provided a more general answer as to who determines foreign policy. Once again the question invited discussion of the Bush administration, whilst good answers also were able to discuss Obama with references to congressional committees and their scrutiny of

Afghan war strategies such as the recent surge. There were scant answers to the issue of 'too few' which again highlights the need for candidates to identify the key words in the question. The rationale behind the need for quick decisions in a nuclear age, consensus and the inability of the legislature to reach quick decisions could have formed part of an answer. Surprisingly the concept of the 'Imperial Presidency' was not to the fore.

7 Discuss the view that the power of the Supreme Court cannot be justified in a democracy.

The question proved to discriminate amongst candidates via their ability to focus on the question and not on providing an answer to one which they would rather have had. Good candidates, and there were several, were able to argue for and against and provide supporting evidence by reference to cases, appointments and concepts such as strict and loose constructionism. As cited in virtually every report on Supreme Court answers, candidates would do well to go beyond Roe and Brown.

8 To what extent have developments since 9/11 proved that rights and liberties are not adequately protected in the US today?

This was quite a popular question but on the whole it was not very well done. One was left with the impression that this question, more than others, was the question of last resort. Detail of legislation such as the Patriot Act and cases such as Boumediene were not to the fore. Discussion of rights generally and recent rulings from the Court would have provided a rich seam of factual evidence and provided the basis for discussion of relevant arguments.

A LEVEL ESSAY MARKSHEET

NAME

DATE

ESSAY QUESTION

STUDENT SELF EVALUATION: (Include time spent preparing, reading and noting completed, problems and difficulties encountered)

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.....

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.....

Assessment objective 1: (marks awarded for knowledge and understanding, factual detail, examples [especially those of a contemporary nature], quotes, references to leading political scientists, reference to relevant political concepts and terminology)

- Level 4 (Excellent)
- Level 3 (Good)
- Level 2 (Limited)
- Level 1 (Poor)

Assessment objective 2: (marks awarded for analysis and evaluation, ability to answer the question set, relevant arguments for and against [balance], especially interpretation of contemporary developments)

- Level 4 (Excellent)
- Level 3 (Good)
- Level 2 (Limited)
- Level 1 (Poor)

Assessment objective 3: (marks awarded for presentation, structure, clarity, use of English, spelling, use of paragraphs, introductions and conclusions)

- Level 4 (Excellent)
- Level 3 (Good)
- Level 2 (Limited)
- Level 1 (Poor)

TEACHER EVALUATION & TARGETS FOR NEXT QUESTION:

F854 Political Ideas and Concepts

General Comments

This is the first time candidates have sat this unit. Bearing in mind the significant changes made to the previous legacy paper, a number of candidates performed at an impressive level. However it must also be said that many failed to come to grips with the demands of this new unit and were underprepared both in terms of knowledge and question style.

There are a number of issues that candidates must be aware of in order to do well in this unit.

- 1 The compulsory question can be taken from any area of the syllabus, thus candidates must revise all areas. It will take the form of a two part question with the first part requiring an explanation of a key term or terms in political theory. It should therefore be more than a simple definition but should outline related issues and include illustration from political theory. The second part of the compulsory question will be focused on analysis and evaluation, thus candidates must be aware of key command words such as compare and contrast, evaluate and discuss. This answer must not be descriptive of the issue but instead perform the task set.
- 2 Optional questions will be set on the areas of the syllabus not covered by the compulsory question. These are similar in style to the former legacy paper questions for unit 2695, although there have been some new areas added to the syllabus. Candidates must display knowledge and understanding of the relevant concept(s) at the focus of the question and the best way to start this is to define this key concept(s). In order to access the higher mark bands candidates must make reference to the views of a range of relevant political thinkers - this need not however be in the form of direct quotes. There is no need to relate answers to modern politics as this is the focus for F856, although some brief example can be useful in explaining a line of argument. Answers should respond directly to the command in the question and avoid long sections of description. If the command is to compare and contrast or assess the extent of similarity/ difference, then both similarities and differences should be covered. The relative importance of factors should be considered where appropriate. This is especially important in accessing the level 4 mark band. Conclusions should also be focused and offer individual judgements based on the issues covered in the essay.
- 3 Candidates are reminded that they must answer four separate questions on the paper. This requires wide coverage of the syllabus (especially when considering the nature of the compulsory question). It also means careful time management. Candidates must avoid the very short final answer by planning their timings carefully during the exam.

In order to allow candidates to be fully prepared for this paper, centres are reminded of the range of relevant textbooks available. As well as the previous textbooks recommended for the old legacy paper (the Heywood series still ranks as some of the best available here), there is now the OCR endorsed textbook, Political Ideas and Concepts, that was designed for use with F854 and F856. As well as syllabus coverage there is useful guidance on essay style, sample questions and revision techniques. The best candidates will probably use a combination of resources in preparing for this unit.

Comments on Individual Questions

Q1a. Explain what is meant by parliamentary and popular sovereignty.

Most candidates were able at least to outline a brief explanation of parliamentary sovereignty and some rightly used the guidance available from the stimulus material. Fewer candidates were

able to accurately explain the meaning of popular sovereignty and some tried exclusively to adapt detail from the stimulus. In order to access Level 4 marks candidates are reminded to include specific reference to political thinkers to illustrate their answers. They are also reminded that only AO1 and AO3 marks are available for this unit thus there is no need to become sidetracked in areas of analysis and evaluation.

Q1b. Compare and contrast legal and political sovereignty.

A pleasing number of candidates were aware of the meaning of the concepts and most did proceed to make some relevant comparisons. Better answers, whilst highlighting significant differences in the nature of the forms of sovereignty, then highlighted their inter-relationship amongst most forms of government. Weaker answers tended to be either descriptive (thus not accessing the AO2 marks - candidates are reminded that there are no AO1 marks available for this question) or confuse the meaning of the terms. Some confused legal and political sovereignty with internal and external sovereignty thus invalidating most of their comparisons.

Q2. To what extent are democracy and dictatorship different?

This was a very popular question and one that most answers, at the very least, displayed knowledge and understanding of the two systems. However a significant number of answers had only a very general understanding of the two systems and did not illustrate their answers with reference to political theorists. This limited their answers to a maximum of Level 2 for AO1. Some candidates only highlighted differences between the two systems, failing to deal with the extent part of the question. Most candidates however, did manage to produce some balance in their answers and the very best were sophisticated in highlighting how in theory the two forms of government appear diametrically opposed, but for many thinkers the elitist aspects of democracy gave it resemblance to features of dictatorship. The best answers also tended to utilise a criteria for assessing the areas for comparison.

Q3. Discuss the extent to which political power is based on decision-making.

Whilst most candidates who attempted this question had a reasonable understanding of the meaning of power, a number of candidates made the mistake of interpreting the question as one comparing power and authority. Answers should have focused upon Lukes' three faces of power - decision-making, agenda-setting and thought control. Better answers displayed good understanding of these models and were able to illustrate their answers with reference to relevant political thinkers. However, a number of answers performed less well on AO2 as they could only describe the 3 models and not discuss their relative importance. Some could only describe their role in terms of the power exercised by the British government - this would have been a better approach if the question had appeared on F856. The best answers tended to relate their discussion to ideological perspectives on power, thus seeing differing priorities for the type of power exercised dependent upon pluralist, neo-pluralist, Marxist and post-modernist viewpoints.

Q4. Compare and contrast legal and moral rights.

As with other comparison questions on this paper a number of answers were overly descriptive on what the legal and moral rights were. Weaker answers tended to have a superficial understanding of the two types of rights and often wrote very short answers. Better answers could explain the two types and considered their inter-relationship especially with regards to recognition by states. The best answers, once again, used a criteria to make comparisons and were sophisticated in how assessing the relative similarities and differences in the two types of rights.

Q5. Discuss the arguments in favour of civil disobedience.

This question was often attempted by candidates as a fourth question and one that they struggled to adequately come to terms with. The biggest problem was the confusion that many made between revolution, rebellion and civil disobedience. Many candidates tried to associate arguments made particularly by Marxists in favour of revolution, to those promoting civil disobedience. The better answers did try and use justifications made by Gandhi, Martin Luther

King and Thoreau, although even here they tended to often describe their campaigns as opposed to how they justified their actions. Some candidates also focused more on the reasons against civil disobedience than those in favour. Whilst criticisms could be used to evaluate the validity of the arguments in favour, they should not have become the focus of the answer.

Q6. Discuss how far New Right theories are essentially conservative.

This was a popular question and most that did attempt it were able to highlight social aspects of New Right thinking with traditional conservative themes and also conjecture whether economic aspects were more classical liberal than conservative. Some less effective answers tended to only describe New Right arguments as opposed to discussing their relationship to conservative principles. The very best clearly outlined the variety of New Right ideas and were able to compare these to conservative principles and themes. The very best questioned whether the ideological nature of much of New Right thought could be related to the pragmatic, non-doctrinaire principles behind traditional conservatism.

Q7. Discuss whether there is more to liberalism than the safeguarding of rights and liberties.

This proved also to be a popular question and mostly those that answered it had a good understanding of liberal attitudes to rights and liberties. Some answers tended to focus almost exclusively upon rights and liberties and fail to consider other themes promoted by the different strands of liberalism. The very best answers did consider alongside rights and liberties other themes such as forms of equality, tolerance, constitutionalism etc. but then argued that in many ways these were developments from the central strand of the desire to promote individual and in some cases rights and liberties for all.

Q8. Compare and contrast deep and shallow ecologism.

Very few attempted this question and those that did had little understanding. This is one of the new areas of the syllabus and centres are reminded that it should be covered, especially with regards to it potentially being at some stage the compulsory question. The question required an understanding of what each brand of ecologism advocates, a comparison of the scientific versus philosophical basis of these ideas and a comparison of their proposed solutions to environmental problems.

F855 US Government and Politics

This was the first time this unit was sat. With only two centres having submitted candidates it was very difficult to get a genuine impression of the spread of quality of answers. Centres appear to feel the level of maturity requires entry for this paper to be left till the June series of exams. However, the paper requires only two questions to be answered and thus does not require the breadth of topic coverage required for F853.

Centres are reminded however, of the synoptic nature of the paper, thus requiring a range of specific contemporary evidence from at least Britain and the USA to be used to support the analysis related to the specific questions. With an hour to answer each question, there should be time spent planning the essay. There is also an expectation that the quality of analysis and evidence will naturally be higher than in the former 45 minute synoptic essay on the equivalent legacy paper.

Only five of the eight questions were attempted and due to the small number of candidates it is very difficult to make specific comments with regards to the spread of attainment.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE Government and Politics (H495)
 Advanced Subsidiary GCE Government and Politics (H095)
 January 2010 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
F851	Raw	100	75	65	55	46	37	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
F852	Raw	100	75	66	57	49	41	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
F853	Raw	100	74	65	56	48	40	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
F854	Raw	100	75	66	57	48	40	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
F855	Raw	100	79	69	59	49	40	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H095	200	160	140	120	100	80	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H095	15.0	40.0	67.5	87.5	100.0	100.00	43

43 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums/index.html>

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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