



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education**

Government and Politics

Assessment Unit AS 1

assessing

The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland

[SGP11]

Assessment

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of the mark scheme is to ensure that papers are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides teachers with an indication of the nature and range of students' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to students' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for GCE Government and Politics.

Students should be able to:

- AO1** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and debates.
- AO2** Analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and theories; identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between the political systems studied.
- AO3** Construct and communicate coherent arguments making use of a range of appropriate political vocabulary.

Not all AOs are assessed in every question. In shorter, factual recall questions only AO1 may be assessed. In longer extended writing responses all three AOs may be assessed.

Quality of students' responses

In marking the papers, teachers should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of students sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which students may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, teachers are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers.

Positive marking

Teachers are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what students know, understand and can do rather than penalising students for errors or omissions. Teachers should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old GCE student.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Examples and evidence

In a subject such as Government and Politics, the use of relevant examples and evidence is crucial. However, the amount of evidence/examples required depends upon the nature of the question.

- shorter, factual recall questions may require no evidence/examples at all.
- other short questions may require an example that is given but not developed.
- some source-based questions may identify an example and the task for students is to identify and explain this example (and usually to provide another).

- extended essay responses require a range of examples/evidence. However, this should not be simply listed but the relevance of the material to the topic under discussion should be explained. There is *no* required number of examples in an essay response for an answer to achieve the top mark band: a response with four developed and applied pieces of evidence is superior to one with ten listed examples.
- Further specific guidance is provided in the detailed Mark Scheme that follows.

Sources of evidence and examples

Evidence and examples can be drawn from political systems referred to in the specification. However, students are free to also draw upon evidence from systems not explicitly mentioned in the specification.

Direct quotation, while acceptable, is not required in responses.

Types of mark schemes

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require students to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication.

Other questions which require only short answers are marked on a point for point basis with marks awarded for each valid piece of information provided.

Levels of response

In deciding which level of response to award, teachers should look for the ‘best fit’ bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, teachers are expected to use their professional judgement.

The following guidance is provided to assist teachers.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing students’ responses to all tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within levels of response as follows:

Level 1: Quality of written communication is inadequate.

Level 2: Quality of written communication is limited.

Level 3: Quality of written communication is satisfactory.

Level 4: Quality of written communication is good.

Level 5: Quality of written communication is of a high standard.

In interpreting these level descriptions, teachers should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Inadequate): The student makes only a very limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack any clarity and coherence. There is very little use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is consistently unclear.

Level 2 (Limited): The student makes only a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is little use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear in places.

Level 3 (Satisfactory): The student makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is some use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

Level 4 (Good): The student makes a good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a good standard of clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently good standard to make meaning clear.

Level 5 (High Standard): The student successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

Government and Politics is one of many subjects in which it is possible to confuse a well-presented response with one that actually contains relevant knowledge and understanding. It is imperative in assessing any response that contains relevant knowledge and understanding, that it should be appropriately rewarded even if the presentation is not of as high a standard as may be the case with other student's work.

It is also important to note that the level descriptors for QWC state that spelling, punctuation and grammar are relevant in so far as they affect the meaning of a student's response. Some failings in spelling, punctuation and grammar should not prevent a response that contains relevant material from being appropriately rewarded.

- 1 MLAs can be said to represent their constituents, their party, the Assembly and outside interests. Some of the ways in which MLAs can represent their constituents include holding surgeries, attending local events, communicating with officials, asking questions in the Assembly. Any other relevant way. Award 2 marks for each correct identification. There are no marks for explanation and therefore explanation is unnecessary.
(AO1: 4 marks) [4]

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2 Background

In explaining the concept of “devolved power” students should display understanding that the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive were authorised by Westminster to exercise legislative and executive power over a range of defined areas. Westminster retained power over several key areas – “Reserved Powers” – but handed over decision-making and legislative power to the institutions at Stormont. Students may refer to the distinction between direct rule, devolution and independence as a way of illustrating the concept. Reference may also be made to the other devolved institutions in the UK or to powers which have been subsequently transferred.

Level 1 ([1]–[2])

The student offers a basic explanation of what is meant by “devolved power.” There is limited or no use of the Source or own knowledge.

Level 2 ([3]–[4])

The student offers a more developed explanation of what is meant by “devolved power”. There is some use of the Source or own knowledge. If no reference to the Source is made a maximum of 4 marks can be awarded.

Level 3 ([5]–[6])

The student provides a full explanation of what is meant by the term “devolved power”. There is good use of the Source and own knowledge.

(AO1: 6 marks)

- Students who do not demonstrate an understanding of the term at all, fall into the Level 1 category.
- To achieve the top band students must use information from the Source and their own knowledge.

Any other valid material will be rewarded appropriately. [6]

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3 Background

The Source identifies voting on the legislative proposals of the Executive Committee as one way in which MLAs are able to influence legislation. Other ways could include Private Members Bills, being part of an Assembly Committee that scrutinised legislation or that introduced legislation, meeting with Ministers and officials, carrying out research, using the media to comment on legislation. Any other relevant area.

Level 1 ([1]–[3])

The student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of how MLAs can perform their legislative role. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. The use of political vocabulary is rudimentary.

Level 2 ([4]–[6])

The student demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of examples of how MLAs can perform their legislative role but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. The level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([7]–[9])

The student demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of examples of how MLAs can perform their legislative role but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material. There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. The level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited.

Level 4 ([10]–[12])

The student demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of examples of how MLAs can perform their legislative role and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples. There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. There is clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary and a conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([13]–[15])

The student demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of how MLAs can perform their legislative role and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented. There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. There is effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

- Students who do not refer to the source either explicitly or implicitly in their response can achieve a maximum top Level 4.
- Responses which contain no examples/evidence can achieve a maximum Level 3.
- Students who fail to follow the instruction in the question and identify less than 'three ways' will have their marks capped as follows:
one way only – max. 5 marks
two ways – max. 10 marks
- If a student identifies a range of ways (more than the three stipulated in the question) the 3 best should be awarded. [15]

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4 (a) Background

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Sinn Féin retains many of the positions that it held in 1998, especially the party's commitment to achieving a United Ireland. It also remains committed to an equality agenda and to broadly left wing positions on socio-economic issues. However, the party's position on some other key issues is very different. It is anticipated that many students will argue that the Party was still in support of the IRA's military campaign and this argument will be accepted even though Sinn Féin's entry into the Good Friday negotiations was based upon their support for democratic politics. Similarly, students will be credited for bringing in the Party's acceptance of the consent principle and its willingness to participate at Stormont. Students may also refer to the Party's position on policing, decommissioning of weapons and Europe and any other relevant areas.

Stronger answers will display clear understanding of the point of the question, will present a range of evidence and will contain balance.

Level 1 ([1]–[5])

Responses at this level are characterised by brevity, often not being more than a couple of paragraphs long, and demonstrate little or no relevant information. The student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Sinn Féin policies have changed and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. An argument, if present, is ill informed and poorly constructed and the level of communication and the use of political vocabulary are both rudimentary.

Level 2 ([6]–[10])

Responses at this level are characterised by a mix of broad sweeping statements only some of which are relevant to the question and all are under explained and imprecise. The student demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Sinn Féin policies have changed but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument is constructed although the level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([11]–[15])

Responses at this level are characterised by a number of accurate and relevant points which are either under explained, have no supporting evidence, are limited in range or entirely one-sided. The student demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Sinn Féin policies have changed but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material. There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and

grammar is satisfactory. An argument is constructed although the level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited.

Level 4 ([16]–[20])

Responses at this level are characterised by a degree of balance in argument, a range of relevant points which are reasonably well explained and good use of appropriate supporting evidence. The student demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Sinn Féin policies have changed and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples. There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. An argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary and a conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([21]–[25])

Responses at this level are characterised by a focus on analysis based on a detailed explanation of a wide range of points which account for all of the main issues on both sides of the argument. There is a consistent engagement with the question throughout and the evidence used clearly illuminates the points being made. The student demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Sinn Féin policies have changed and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented. There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. An argument is constructed which displays effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

- Responses which contain no examples/evidence can achieve a maximum of top Level 3.
- Responses which lack sufficient balance can achieve a low Level 4.

[25]

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(b) Background

It is important that in responding to this question that students should include those factors that were most significant during the period when the DUP was most successful in attracting unionist voters away from the UUP. This would have been in the period between 1998 and 2007. Students may also refer to factors that have enabled the DUP to consolidate its support since 2007 but an answer that only discussed more recent factors will be limited.

Answers may also legitimately discuss the “failings” of the UUP that enabled its unionist rival to capture much of its support base. The best response would be one that refers to both DUP and UUP factors, for example by contrasting the quality and continuity of leadership.

Students may also balance their response by referring to the UUP’s efforts to halt its decline and to mount a challenge to the DUP.

Any other relevant arguments.

Stronger answers will display clear understanding of the point of the question, will present a range of evidence and will contain balance.

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Level 1 ([1]–[5])

Responses at this level are characterised by brevity, often not being more than a couple of paragraphs long, and demonstrate little or no relevant information. The student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the reasons why the DUP has replaced the UUP as the main unionist party and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanation. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. An argument, if present, is ill informed and poorly constructed and the level of communication and the use of political vocabulary are both rudimentary.

Level 2 ([6]–[10])

Responses at this level are characterised by a mix of broad sweeping statements only some of which are relevant to the question and all are under explained and imprecise. The student demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the reasons why the DUP has replaced the UUP as the main unionist party but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument is constructed although the level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([11]–[15])

Responses at this level are characterised by a number of accurate and relevant points which are either under explained, have no supporting evidence, are limited in range or entirely one-sided. The student demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the reasons why the DUP has replaced the UUP as the main unionist party but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material. There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. An argument is constructed although the level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited.

Level 4 ([16]–[20])

Responses at this level are characterised by a degree of balance in argument, a range of relevant points which are reasonably well explained and good use of appropriate supporting evidence. The student demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the reasons why the DUP has replaced the UUP as the main unionist party and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples. There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. An argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of

ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary and a conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([21]–[25])

Responses at this level are characterised by a focus on analysis based on a detailed explanation of a wide range of points which account for all of the main issues on both sides of the argument. There is a consistent engagement with the question throughout and the evidence used clearly illuminates the points being made. The student demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the reasons why the DUP has replaced the UUP as the main unionist party and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented. There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. An argument is constructed which displays effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

- Responses which contain no examples/evidence can achieve a maximum of top Level 3.
- Responses which lack sufficient balance can achieve a low Level 4.

[25]

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Total

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