

GCE



CCEA GCE Specification in  
**Government  
and Politics**

For first teaching from September 2016  
For first award of AS level in Summer 2017  
For first award of A level in Summer 2018  
Subject Code: 4830





# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Aims	4
1.2	Key features	4
1.3	Prior attainment	4
1.4	Classification codes and subject combinations	4
<b>2</b>	<b>Specification at a Glance</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Subject Content</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1	Unit AS 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland	6
3.2	Unit AS 2: The British Political Process	8
3.3	Unit A2 1: Option A: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the United States of America and the United Kingdom or Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom	11
3.4	Unit A2 2: Option A: Political Power or Option B: Political Ideas	17
<b>4</b>	<b>Scheme of Assessment</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1	Assessment opportunities	22
4.2	Assessment objectives	22
4.3	Assessment objective weightings	22
4.4	Quality of written communication	23
4.5	Synoptic assessment at A2	23
4.6	Higher order thinking skills	23
4.7	Reporting and grading	24
<b>5</b>	<b>Grade Descriptions</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Guidance on Assessment</b>	<b>29</b>
6.1	Unit AS 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland	29
6.2	Unit AS 2: The British Political Process	29
6.3	Unit A2 1: Option A: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the United States of America and the United Kingdom or Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom	29

6.4	Unit A2 2: Option A: Political Power or Option B: Political Ideas	30
<b>7</b>	<b>Links and Support</b>	<b>31</b>
7.1	Support	31
7.2	Curriculum objectives	31
7.3	Examination entries	32
7.4	Equality and inclusion	32
7.5	Contact details	33

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# 1 Introduction

This specification sets out the content and assessment details for our Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced GCE courses in Government and Politics. First teaching is from September 2016.

Students can take:

- the AS course as a final qualification; or
- the AS units plus the A2 units for a full GCE A level qualification.

We assess the AS units at a standard appropriate for students who have completed the first part of the full course. A2 units have an element of synoptic assessment (to assess students' understanding of the subject as a whole), as well as more emphasis on assessment objectives that reflect higher order thinking skills.

The full Advanced GCE award is based on students' marks from the AS (40 percent) and the A2 (60 percent). The guided learning hours for this specification, as for all GCEs, are:

- 180 hours for the Advanced Subsidiary level award; and
- 360 hours for the Advanced level award.

We will make the first AS awards for the specification in 2017 and the first A level awards in 2018. The specification builds on the broad objectives of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

If there are any major changes to this specification, we will notify centres in writing. The online version of the specification will always be the most up to date; to view and download this please go to [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)

## **1.1 Aims**

This specification aims to encourage students to:

- develop a lifelong interest in government and politics;
- draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and understanding;
- develop higher order thinking skills, for example creative thinking and problem-solving;
- carry out research;
- think critically about the political systems in which they live and how they may participate in those systems;
- develop advanced study skills that help them prepare for third level education;
- provide extended responses and evidence of quality of written communication; and
- demonstrate, through external assessments, that they are able to understand and apply key concepts and can think and write critically.

## **1.2 Key features**

The following are important features of this specification.

- It includes four externally assessed units.
- The AS units provide students with a valuable introduction to the study of government and politics.
- The AS units give students the opportunity to study the political systems that directly affect their lives.
- The A2 units give students the opportunity to develop their skills of analysis and evaluation, extended writing and synoptic assessment.
- The A level prepares students for progression to higher education.
- A range of support is available, including specimen assessment materials, exemplar schemes of work and teacher guidance.

## **1.3 Prior attainment**

Students do not need to have reached a particular level of attainment before beginning to study this specification. However, it is recommended that students should have attained at least a C grade in GCSE English.

## **1.4 Classification codes and subject combinations**

Every specification has a national classification code that indicates its subject area. The classification code for this qualification is 4830.

Please note that if a student takes two qualifications with the same classification code, universities and colleges that they apply to may take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCEs. The same may occur with any two GCE qualifications that have a significant overlap in content, even if the classification codes are different. Because of this, students who have any doubts about their subject combinations should check with the universities and colleges that they would like to attend before beginning their studies.

## 2 Specification at a Glance

The table below summarises the structure of the AS and A level courses:

Content	Assessment	Weightings
<b>AS 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland</b>	External written examination with one source and four questions  1 hour 15 mins	40% of AS  16% of A level
<b>AS 2: The British Political Process</b>	External written examination with five questions  1 hour 45 mins	60% of AS  24% of A level
<b>A2 1: Option A: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the United States of America and the United Kingdom or Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom</b>	External written examination with one source and six questions  2 hours 15 mins	35% of A level
<b>A2 2: Option A: Political Power or Option B: Political Ideas</b>	External written examination with one source and five questions  1 hour 30 mins	25% of A level

### 3 Subject Content

We have divided this course into four units: two units at AS level and two units at A2. This section sets out the content and learning outcomes for each unit.

#### 3.1 Unit AS 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland

This unit focuses on the government and politics of Northern Ireland since 1998. Students should be aware of the historical background leading up to 1998, but this will not be the specific focus of examination questions. The unit considers the establishment of the Good Friday Agreement; the operation of the Assembly and the Executive Committee (the Executive); the effectiveness of the Assembly and the Executive; and the relationship between the Assembly and the Executive. The unit also considers the Northern Ireland political parties, their strategies and policies, and the changes in their electoral fortunes since 1998.

Assessment for this unit consists of a written examination that includes both short and extended questions. For more details, see Section 6.

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>The Northern Ireland Assembly</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principles, content and implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and the changes made to it by subsequent agreements;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the three main functions of the Assembly:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– representation;</li> <li>– legislation; and</li> <li>– scrutiny;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• evaluate the effectiveness of the Assembly in performing its main functions; and</li> <li>• assess the extent to which the Assembly is independent of the Executive.</li> </ul>



### 3.2 Unit AS 2: The British Political Process

This unit examines the operation of the British Parliament and the Executive and the relationship between these two institutions. Students also consider the political role of either the British judiciary or pressure groups. The key themes in this unit are:

- the extent to which the Executive dominates the legislature;
- the extent to which the Prime Minister dominates the Executive;
- the extent to which the judiciary acts as an effective check on the Executive; and
- the political impact of pressure groups.

Assessment for this unit consists of a written examination that includes both short and extended questions. The examination paper will have three sections. All students must answer the questions in Section A. Students then choose either Section B: The British judiciary or Section C: Pressure groups in the UK. For more details, see Section 6.

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Section A: Parliament</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the main functions of the House of Commons:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– representation;</li> <li>– legislation; and</li> <li>– scrutiny;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the main functions of the House of Lords:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– representation;</li> <li>– legislation; and</li> <li>– scrutiny;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• assess the extent to which the House of Commons is effective in performing its functions;</li> <li>• assess the extent to which the House of Lords is effective in performing its functions; and</li> <li>• evaluate the extent to which the House of Commons and the House of Lords are independent of the Executive.</li> </ul>

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Executive</b></p> <p><b>Section B: The British judiciary</b></p> <p><b>Section C: Pressure groups in the UK</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the role of the Prime Minister;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the role of the Cabinet;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the powers of the Prime Minister and the limitations on these powers;</li> <li>• evaluate the extent to which the Executive controls the legislature;</li> <li>• evaluate the extent to which the Prime Minister dominates the Executive;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the role of the judiciary in holding the Executive to account through judicial reviews and judicial inquiries;</li> <li>• assess the relationship between the judiciary and the Executive and the extent to which the judiciary is independent of the Executive;</li> <li>• assess the effectiveness of the judiciary in holding the Executive to account;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of pressure groups and their role in the policy-making process;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the different types of pressure groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– cause and sectional pressure groups;</li> <li>– insider and outsider pressure groups; and</li> <li>– social movements; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the tactics employed by these particular pressure groups.</li> </ul>

<b>Content</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Section C: Pressure groups in the UK (cont.)</b>	Students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assess different interpretations of the impact that these groups have on the British political process.</li></ul>

### 3.3 Unit A2 1:

#### Option A: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the United States of America and the United Kingdom

This unit focuses on how the United States of America (USA) is governed and on how this compares to the British political system, with specific reference to the legislative and executive branches. In studying this option, students should draw on the knowledge and understanding that they have acquired in Unit AS 2: The British Political Process.

Assessment for this unit consists of a written examination that includes both short and extended questions. For more information, see Section 6.

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>The government and politics of the USA – the legislative branch</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build on and apply their understanding of democracy, representation, accountability and scrutiny developed in the AS units;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how the constitution defines the role of Congress;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the functions and powers of the Senate and the House of Representatives in their main roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– representation;</li> <li>– legislation; and</li> <li>– scrutiny;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• assess how effective the Senate and the House of Representatives are in performing their roles;</li> <li>• assess the impact of pressure/lobby groups on the legislative branch; and</li> <li>• evaluate the relationship between the executive and Congress.</li> </ul>



Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Comparative government (cont.)</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse similarities and differences in the executive process of both countries, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- appointment structures;</li> <li>- the powers of the executive;</li> <li>- the constraints on these powers; and</li> <li>- the effectiveness of the executives in the two systems; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• compare and evaluate the power, accountability and effectiveness of the two executives.</li> </ul>

## Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom

This unit focuses on how the Republic of Ireland is governed and how this compares to the British political system, with specific reference to the legislative and executive branches. In studying this option, students should draw on the knowledge and understanding that they have acquired in Unit AS 2: The British Political Process.

Assessment for this unit consists of a written examination that includes both short and extended questions. For more information, see Section 6.

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>The government and politics of the Republic of Ireland – the legislative branch</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build on and apply their understanding of democracy, representation, accountability and scrutiny developed in the AS units;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how the constitution defines the role of the Oireachtas;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the functions and powers of the Seanad and the Dáil in their main roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– representation;</li> <li>– legislation; and</li> <li>– scrutiny;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• assess how effective the Seanad and the Dáil are in performing their roles;</li> <li>• assess the impact of the judiciary and judicial decisions on the legislative branch; and</li> <li>• evaluate the relationship between the Oireachtas and the executive.</li> </ul>

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>The government and politics of the Republic of Ireland – the executive branch</b></p> <p><b>Comparative government</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build on and apply their understanding of the concepts of responsibility, accountability and power developed in the AS units;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how the constitution defines the role of the executive;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the executive process in the Republic of Ireland;</li> <li>• evaluate the impact of the judiciary and judicial decisions on the executive branch;</li> <li>• evaluate how the role of the executive has been affected by constitutional change, including formal amendment and informal amendment;</li> <li>• evaluate the impact of coalition government on the operation of the executive;</li> <li>• evaluate the relationship between the executive and the Oireachtas;</li> <li>• analyse similarities and differences in the structures, powers and operation of the Oireachtas and Parliament;</li> <li>• compare and evaluate the effectiveness of the Seanad, the Dáil, the House of Lords and the House of Commons in performing their functions in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– representation;</li> <li>– legislation; and</li> <li>– scrutiny; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• analyse similarities and differences in the executive process of both countries, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– appointment structures;</li> <li>– the powers of the executive;</li> <li>– the constraints on these powers; and</li> <li>– the effectiveness of the executives in the two systems.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Content</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Comparative government (cont.)</b>	Students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• compare and evaluate the power, accountability and effectiveness of the two executives.</li></ul>

### 3.4 Unit A2 2: Option A: Political Power

This option focuses on the factors involved in creating and maintaining power and authority. It also considers why some states are stable while others have a history of instability that, in some cases, leads to state collapse. The major theories that seek to explain the nature and distribution of political power – pluralism, Marxism, elite theory and feminism – are also central to this unit. For their supporting evidence, students should include material from other A2 and AS units, as well as other relevant material.

Assessment for this unit consists of a range of shorter questions and questions requiring a more extended piece of writing. For more information, see Section 6.

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Section A: The factors involved in the exercise of political power</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build on their understanding of power, authority and democracy developed through the study of the AS units;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– power;</li> <li>– coercion;</li> <li>– legitimacy;</li> <li>– dictatorship;</li> <li>– authoritarianism;</li> <li>– oligarchy;</li> <li>– democracy; and</li> <li>– human and civil rights;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the factors affecting legitimacy, including social, economic, religious and international factors;</li> <li>• analyse how legitimacy is created and maintained in a range of political systems;</li> <li>• analyse the nature and effectiveness of authoritarianism;</li> <li>• analyse the nature and effectiveness of coercion; and</li> <li>• evaluate the reasons for state survival and state collapse.</li> </ul>

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Section B: Theories of political power</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of pluralism, Marxism, elite theory and feminism;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how each theory of power addresses the issues of the origin, nature and distribution of power, with reference to the concepts of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– diffusion of power;</li> <li>– ruling class;</li> <li>– elite rule; and</li> <li>– patriarchy;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• assess the relevance of the theories of power in relation to a range of political systems; and</li> <li>• evaluate each theory, employing relevant evidence and arguments.</li> </ul>

## Option B: Political Ideas

Section A focuses on the study of the three key texts associated with a major political ideology – Mill’s *On Liberty*, Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and Marx and Engels’ *The Communist Manifesto*. With each text, students should focus on the key themes and how these can be critiqued. In Section B, students explore the three main political ideologies of liberalism, socialism and conservatism. They analyse and evaluate the key features of each ideology, including the variations within each. Students should include material from other A2 and AS units as supporting evidence, as well as any other relevant material.

Assessment for this unit consists of a range of shorter questions and questions requiring a more extended piece of writing. For more information, see Section 6.

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Section A:</b></p> <p><b>J S Mill, <i>On Liberty</i></b></p> <p><b>Edmund Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i></b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build on their understanding of power, authority and democracy developed through the study of the AS units;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principal themes of <i>On Liberty</i>, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the threats to individual liberty;</li> <li>– the tyranny of the majority;</li> <li>– human rationality;</li> <li>– the Harm Principle;</li> <li>– individual and social progress; and</li> <li>– the role of the state;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• evaluate the evidence for, and criticisms of, the principal themes of <i>On Liberty</i>; and</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principal themes of <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i>, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Burke’s view of human nature;</li> <li>– the value of custom and tradition;</li> <li>– the need for gradual change;</li> <li>– the inevitability of social inequality;</li> <li>– the importance of political authority; and</li> <li>– the role of the state.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Content	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Edmund Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> (cont.)</b></p> <p><b>Marx and Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i></b></p> <p><b>Section B: Liberalism</b></p>	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate the evidence for, and criticisms of, the principal themes of <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i>;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principal themes of <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the nature of capitalism;</li> <li>– social divisions and conflict;</li> <li>– the exploitation of the working class;</li> <li>– the demise of capitalism;</li> <li>– the nature of socialism; and</li> <li>– the role of the state;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• evaluate the evidence for, and criticisms of, the principal themes of <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the major principles of liberalism, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the nature of freedom;</li> <li>– individual liberty and threats to it;</li> <li>– equality;</li> <li>– human reason; and</li> <li>– the role of the state;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• evaluate the evidence for, and criticisms of, these principles;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the variety of thought in liberalism, including classical and modern liberalism; and</li> <li>• evaluate how the principal ideas of liberalism differ from those of conservatism and socialism.</li> </ul>



## 4 Scheme of Assessment

### 4.1 Assessment opportunities

Each unit is available for assessment in summer each year. It is possible to resit individual AS and A2 assessment units once and count the better result for each unit towards an AS or A level qualification. Candidates' results for individual assessment units can count towards a qualification until we withdraw the specification.

### 4.2 Assessment objectives

There are three assessment objectives for this specification. Candidates must:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and debates (AO1);
- analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and theories, and identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between the political systems studied (AO2); and
- construct and communicate coherent arguments, using a range of appropriate political vocabulary (AO3).

### 4.3 Assessment objective weightings

The table below sets out the assessment objective weightings for each assessment unit and the overall A level qualification:

Percentage Assessment Objective Weightings					
	AO1	AO2	AO3	AS	A level
AS 1	7.7	4.8	3.5	16	16
AS 2	13.6	6.4	4.0	24	24
A2 1	16.1	12.3	6.6		35
A2 2	9.7	9.6	5.7		25
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.4 Quality of written communication**

In AS and A level Government and Politics, candidates must demonstrate their quality of written communication. They need to:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear;
- select and use a form and style of writing that suit their purpose and complex subject matter; and
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Quality of written communication is assessed in responses to questions and tasks that require extended writing.

#### **4.5 Synoptic assessment at A2**

The A2 assessment units include some synoptic assessment, which encourages candidates to develop their understanding of the subject as a whole. In our GCE Government and Politics, synoptic assessment involves:

- building on material from the AS units;
- bringing together and making connections between areas of knowledge and skills that they have explored throughout the course;
- following their own lines of enquiry, recording and observing from primary sources;
- making direct, critical comparisons of different political systems; and
- giving them the opportunity to select and present work that demonstrates their strengths from different areas.

#### **4.6 Higher order thinking skills**

The A2 assessment units provide opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking skills by incorporating:

- a wider range of question types to address different skills, for example short and more open-ended questions;
- more complex and more extended stimulus materials;
- more evaluative tasks; and
- synoptic questions that require candidates to connect the content across the specification.

## **4.7 Reporting and grading**

We report the results of individual assessment units on a uniform mark scale that reflects the assessment weighting of each unit.

We award AS qualifications on a five grade scale from A to E, with A being the highest. We award A level qualifications on a six grade scale from A\* to E, with A\* being the highest. To determine candidates' grades, we add the uniform marks obtained in individual assessment units.

To be awarded an A\*, candidates need to achieve a grade A on their full A level qualification and at least 90 percent of the maximum uniform marks available for the A2 units. If candidates fail to attain a grade E, we report their results as unclassified (U).

The grades we award match the grade descriptions in Section 5 of this specification.

## 5 Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded depends in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

The requirement for all AS and A level specifications to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through assessment objective AO3.

### AS Grade Descriptions

Grade	Description
<b>AS</b>  <b>Grade A</b>	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate comprehensive and accurate knowledge of political institutions and processes and a sound understanding of political concepts, theories and debates;</li> <li>• use relevant knowledge;</li> <li>• demonstrate clear contextual awareness; and</li> <li>• use relevant evidence and, where appropriate, contemporary examples.</li> </ul> <p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide analysis that displays a sound awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear recognition of issues;</li> <li>• evaluate political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying appropriate concepts and theories; and</li> <li>• make valid comparisons.</li> </ul> <p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• construct and communicate clear, structured and sustained arguments and explanations; and</li> <li>• use accurate political vocabulary.</li> </ul>

Grade	Description
<p><b>AS</b></p> <p><b>Grade E</b></p>	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate a basic knowledge of political institutions and processes and begin to show some understanding of political concepts, theories and debates;</li> <li>• make a limited attempt at answering the question; and</li> <li>• produce at least one piece of relevant evidence, which may be drawn from source material.</li> </ul> <p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show some basic awareness of differing viewpoints;</li> <li>• attempt simple evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour; and</li> <li>• make simple comparisons.</li> </ul> <p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attempt to communicate and develop an argument or explanation; and</li> <li>• use basic political vocabulary.</li> </ul>

**A2 Grade Descriptions**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>A2</b>  <b>Grade A</b>	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate full, accurate and detailed knowledge of political institutions and processes and a thorough understanding of political concepts, theories and debates, incorporating the relevant specification content;</li> <li>• produce responses that fully address the requirements of the question;</li> <li>• demonstrate excellent contextual awareness; and</li> <li>• use a variety of relevant evidence and, where appropriate, contemporary examples.</li> </ul> <p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide analysis that synthesises political concepts, theories or issues;</li> <li>• evaluate political information clearly and fully, using appropriate supporting evidence that may be drawn from the whole specification; and</li> <li>• make effective comparisons, explaining parallels, connections, similarities and differences.</li> </ul> <p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• construct and communicate cogent and coherent arguments and explanations;</li> <li>• demonstrate a clear sense of direction and, where appropriate, formulate a coherent conclusion that flows from the discussion; and</li> <li>• use a range of relevant evidence and appropriate political vocabulary.</li> </ul>

Grade	Description
<p><b>A2</b></p> <p><b>Grade E</b></p>	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate an outline knowledge and understanding of political institutions and processes, political concepts, theories and debates;</li> <li>• make a limited attempt at answering the question;</li> <li>• demonstrate some basic contextual awareness; and</li> <li>• provide some relevant evidence or examples.</li> </ul> <p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer limited analysis that shows some awareness of differing ideas;</li> <li>• attempt a simple evaluation of political institutions, processes, behaviour, arguments or explanations and make some comparisons;</li> <li>• outline basic concepts and theories; and</li> <li>• demonstrate some recognition of basic parallels and connections or similarities and differences.</li> </ul> <p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• construct and communicate some arguments and explanations with a structure that is narrative or descriptive;</li> <li>• illustrate a sense of direction and, where appropriate, offer a conclusion, though the relationship to the preceding discussion may be tenuous or implicit; and</li> <li>• use some relevant evidence and some appropriate political vocabulary.</li> </ul>

## 6 Guidance on Assessment

This specification will be assessed by external assessment only. There are four external assessment units in this specification, two at AS level and two at A2:

- Unit AS 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland;
- Unit AS 2: The British Political Process;
- Unit A2 1:  
Option A: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the United States of America and the United Kingdom;  
or  
Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom; and
- Unit A2 2:  
Option A: Political Power;  
or  
Option B: Political Ideas.

The external assessment focuses on candidates' knowledge, understanding and analysis of the content of each unit.

### 6.1 Unit AS 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland

There are **four** questions, ranging from a short recall question to a longer extended writing question. Candidates must answer **all four** questions, referring to the source material in **two** of their responses.

### 6.2 Unit AS 2: The British Political Process

Candidates must answer **five** questions: three in Section A and two in **either** Section B **or** Section C. Questions range from a short recall question to an extended writing question.

### 6.3 Unit A2 1:

**Option A: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the United States of America and the United Kingdom**

**or**

**Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom**

There are **six** questions: four in Section A and two in Section B.

In Section A, candidates must answer **all four** questions, referring to the source material in **two** of their responses.

In Section B, candidates must answer **two** questions, one of which is an extended writing question that has two parts. Candidates choose **either** (a) **or** (b).

**6.4 Unit A2 2:**  
**Option A: Political Power**  
**or**

**Option B: Political Ideas**

There are **five** questions, ranging from a short 'definition' question to extended writing questions.

In Section A, candidates must answer **all three** questions, referring to the source material in **two** of their responses.

In Section B, candidates must answer **two** questions, one of which is an extended writing question that has two parts. Candidates choose **either** (a) **or** (b).

## 7 Links and Support

### 7.1 Support

The following resources are available to support this specification:

- our Government and Politics microsite at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)
- specimen assessment materials; and
- guidance notes for teachers and students.

We also intend to provide:

- past papers and mark schemes;
- Chief Examiner's reports;
- schemes of work;
- centre support visits;
- support days for teachers; and
- exemplification of standards.

### 7.2 Curriculum objectives

This specification supports centres to build on the broader Northern Ireland Curriculum objectives to develop the young person:

- as an individual;
- as a contributor to society; and
- as a contributor to the economy and environment.

It can contribute to meeting the requirements of the Northern Ireland Entitlement Framework at post-16 and the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

#### Curriculum Progression from Key Stage 4

Students will have opportunities to continue to develop the **Cross-Curricular Skills** and the **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities** shown below. The extent of this development depends on the teaching and learning methodology the teacher uses.

#### Cross-Curricular Skills

- Communication:
  - Talking and Listening
  - Reading
  - Writing
- Using Mathematics
- Using ICT

### **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities**

- Problem Solving
- Working with Others
- Self-Management

### **7.3 Examination entries**

Entry codes for this subject and details on how to make entries are available on our Qualifications Administration Handbook microsite, which you can access at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)

Alternatively, you can telephone our Examination Entries, Results and Certification team using the contact details provided.

### **7.4 Equality and inclusion**

We have considered the requirements of equality legislation in developing this specification and designed it to be as free as possible from ethnic, gender, religious, political and other forms of bias.

GCE qualifications often require the assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications that prepare students for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

During the development process, an external equality panel reviewed the specification to identify any potential barriers to equality and inclusion. Where appropriate, we have considered measures to support access and mitigate barriers.

We can make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to reduce barriers to accessing assessments. For this reason, very few students will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

It is important to note that where access arrangements are permitted, they must not be used in any way that undermines the integrity of the assessment. You can find information on reasonable adjustments in the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational Qualifications*, available at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

## 7.5 Contact details

If you have any queries about this specification, please contact the relevant CCEA staff member or department:

- Specification Support Officer: Arlene Ashfield  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2291, email: [aashfield@ccea.org.uk](mailto:aashfield@ccea.org.uk))
- Subject Officer: Clare McAuley  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2906, email: [cmcauley@ccea.org.uk](mailto:cmcauley@ccea.org.uk))
- Examination Entries, Results and Certification  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1262, email: [entriesandresults@ccea.org.uk](mailto:entriesandresults@ccea.org.uk))
- Examiner Recruitment  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1243, email: [appointments@ccea.org.uk](mailto:appointments@ccea.org.uk))
- Distribution  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1242, email: [cceadistribution@ccea.org.uk](mailto:cceadistribution@ccea.org.uk))
- Support Events Administration  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1401, email: [events@ccea.org.uk](mailto:events@ccea.org.uk))
- Information Section (including Freedom of Information requests)  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, email: [info@ccea.org.uk](mailto:info@ccea.org.uk))
- Moderation  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2236, email: [moderation@ccea.org.uk](mailto:moderation@ccea.org.uk))
- Business Assurance (Complaints and Appeals Manager: Heather Clarke)  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1244, email: [hclarke@ccea.org.uk](mailto:hclarke@ccea.org.uk)).

