



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED
General Certificate of Education
2025**

Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1

Comparative Government

[AGP11]

TUESDAY 20 MAY, AFTERNOON

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

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

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for GCE Government and Politics.

Candidates 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.

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners 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 candidates 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 candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners 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 candidate.

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.

Types of mark schemes

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates 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, examiners 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, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement.

The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **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 candidates' responses to all questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These 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, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Inadequate): The candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate 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.

Option A: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK)

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Section A: The Government and Politics of the USA

- 1** The term “pork-barrel politics” refers to the actions of elected representatives when they seek to gain benefits for their constituency. These benefits include agricultural subsidies, defence projects and infrastructural development that are paid for through national taxation but which benefit a local area. Elected representatives achieve these benefits by being willing to back the executive in Congress. The President will seek to gain Congressional support for legislative actions by offering ‘pork’ to elected representatives in return for their vote. Members of the House of Representatives are judged by how effective they are in ‘bringing home the bacon’.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate offers a basic explanation of what is meant by the term “pork-barrel politics”.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate offers a more developed explanation of what is meant by the term “pork-barrel politics”.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate provides a full explanation of what is meant by the term “pork-barrel politics”. A relevant example will be used to support the response.

If no example is given, a maximum of [4] marks can be awarded.

(AO1: [5] marks)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately.

[5]

5

2 Background

The Source identifies that Executive Orders are one way in which Congressional opposition can be overcome. Executive Orders are directives issued to executive departments that do not require the approval of Congress. Candidates may choose Executive Agreements as a second way in which a president may seek to get round Congressional opposition. These Agreements have the same force as a treaty but are not subject to the requirement for a two-thirds ratification by the Senate. Other ways that candidates may refer to include the use of the presidential veto, signing statements, the use of federal funding and other mechanisms.

- If there is no reference to the Source, a maximum of [6] marks can be awarded.
- If there is no relevant example, a maximum of [8] marks can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate identifies a valid way with little or no development.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate identifies a valid way and offers a more developed explanation. An example may be included to support the response.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate identifies a valid way and provides a full explanation of a valid way. A relevant example is included.

(AO1: 5 marks × 2)

Apply criteria for each valid way.

One of the ways identified must come from the Source, the other from own knowledge.

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately. [10]

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

10

3 Background

One of the most high-profile powers of the Senate is its role in approving presidential appointments for positions in the executive and the judiciary. It is widely accepted that, in addition to the public investigations and hearings that the Senate and its committees can hold, the Senate can make it clear to a president that a particular candidate for office does not command sufficient support and is unlikely to be endorsed. On this basis many presidential nominations have been withdrawn. Candidates should also explain the formal processes of Senate approval of presidential nominations.

- If only one way is given, a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.
- An answer that contains no evidence can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Any other relevant way.

Level 1 ([1]–[3])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of how the Senate can influence presidential appointments and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([4]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of how the Senate can influence presidential appointments 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. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([7]–[9])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how the Senate can influence presidential appointments 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 some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. There

is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([10]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of how the Senate can influence presidential appointments and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 5 ([13]–[15])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how the Senate can influence presidential appointments and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary.

[15]

15

4 Background

Critics of the US political system argue that it is frequently dysfunctional and prevents the proper governance of the United States. The Source suggests that the separation of powers between the Executive and Congress frequently results in gridlock, and that tensions between the various branches of government have been increased by polarisation. Since the 1990s, and particularly following Donald Trump’s entry into the political field, US politics have become increasingly polarised around issues such as climate change, gun control, abortion, immigration, Covid-19 and ‘culture wars’. More recently, senior Republicans have continued to claim that President Biden ‘stole’ the 2020 election. Such polarisation has led to less bipartisan co-operation in Congress and an increasing focus on investigations and impeachments.

On the other hand, there are those who argue that limited government is exactly what the US system is intended to produce. The multiple checks and balances within the system prevent tyranny and the centralisation of power. The result is policies that enjoy widespread support. The argument is that the US system results in ‘good government’ as opposed to the ‘elective dictatorship’ found in the UK.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, will tend to rely upon the Source and provide little further evidence. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, will be balanced and will offer a range of argument and evidence.

- An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.
- An answer that fails to refer to the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.
- An answer that contains no examples beyond the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the debate about the impact of increased political partisanship on providing effective government 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 contains no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the debate about the impact of increased political partisanship on providing effective government 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. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the debate about the impact of increased political partisanship on providing effective government 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 some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is sound analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the debate about the impact of increased political partisanship on providing effective government and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the debate about the impact of increased political partisanship on providing effective government and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are

of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

Any other valid material will be rewarded appropriately.

[30]

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

30

**Section B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics
of the USA and UK**

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

5 Background

It is anticipated that many candidates will identify one key difference as the inability of the House of Representatives to directly question members of the executive in the form of Question Time. Another difference may be the superior powers and resources of House of Representatives committees in comparison to their Commons' counterparts. The power of the House of Representatives to subpoena witnesses may well appear as a key difference. Any other valid difference.

- If there is no evidence provided, a maximum of [8] marks can be awarded.
- If only one difference is identified, a maximum of [5] marks can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate identifies a valid difference with little or no development.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate identifies a valid difference and offers a more developed explanation which may include supporting evidence.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate identifies a valid difference and provides a full explanation of the difference with supporting evidence.

Apply criteria for each valid difference.

(AO1: [5] marks × 2)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately.

[10]

10

6 (a) Background

The conventional view of MPs as legislators concentrates on the problem of executive dominance. The high prevalence of party-based voting, strict party discipline and in-built government majorities both on the floor of the Commons and in Public Bill Committees leave few opportunities for individual MPs to radically derail a government bill. Other parliamentary mechanisms such as executive control of the timetable and the ability to use a guillotine motion only make the situation worse. On the other hand, it is possible for MPs to introduce Private Members Bills' and despite a relatively low success rate, some very important legislative changes have been initiated using this mechanism. There is also a noticeable increase in backbench rebellions and, in recent years, a number of government bills have been altered or halted, such as proposals to eliminate house building targets, after it became clear that there was a high level of dissent among MPs and the likelihood of a challenging result for the government. The administration of Theresa May witnessed a series of crushing government defeats, including the rejection of The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 by 432 to 202, the largest defeat on a government motion in the era of universal suffrage.

The system in the USA has a very different approach with the president really only having the power of persuasion when trying to pass legislation.

Individual Members of Congress enjoy much more power to get their legislation enacted. The powerful Congressional Committees see bills emerge from the committee stage unrecognisable and provide opportunities for members of Congress to add pet projects or find ways to include amendments which would help their constituents. If a group of Congressional members can come together on a project they are even more likely to be successful. However, the existence of the presidential veto and powerful 'behind the scenes' bargaining which takes place between the Executive Office and key committee members does give the president some leverage. The legislative process in the USA can be long and complex and the vast majority of bills fail to make it to the statute book. Legislating is even more difficult when the presidency and Congress are controlled by different parties and/or the two Houses of Congress are controlled by different parties. Recent polarisation and partisanship have only added to these difficulties.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, provide limited evidence and make limited comparisons. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, be balanced, offer a range of argument and evidence and will make effective comparisons.

- An answer that is totally unbalanced in terms of argument/in treatment of the two systems can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.
- An answer that contains no examples/evidence can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the legislative powers of both MPs, Lords and Members of Congress and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. There is little recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the legislative powers of both MPs, Lords and Members of Congress 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. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is some recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the legislative powers of both MPs, Lords and Members of Congress 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 some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is sound analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is a reasonable attempt at comparing political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the legislative powers of both MPs, Lords and Members of Congress and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the legislative powers of both MPs, Lords and Members of Congress and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is highly effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached. [30]

30

(b) Background

Candidates may choose to begin by explaining that the British system is based on the principle of collective Cabinet Government. In contrast, to the system in the USA, this principle is absent and the President is the sole elected leader of the executive. The fact that the PM is not directly elected by the UK electorate and is head of the executive, as a result of being leader of the majority party in the Commons, means that Prime Ministers, of necessity, must govern with their cabinet. This is not the case for the President. The President cannot be replaced by a member of their cabinet, unlike the PM. It is also anticipated that most candidates will observe that the Constitution does not refer explicitly to the cabinet, that the President has a relatively free hand in choosing cabinet members, that cabinet meetings are rare and that Presidents often ignore their cabinets altogether. This will allow for effective comparison with the UK.

Candidates should attempt to balance this picture by reference to the argument that the power of the PM over their cabinet increased in the period since the Second World War. There was a significant shift in power to the

PM from the 1960s onwards. More recently, the fate of May, Johnson and Truss perhaps illustrates the dangers of losing the support of the Cabinet.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, provide limited evidence and make limited comparisons. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, be balanced, offer a range of argument and evidence and will make effective comparisons.

- An answer that is totally unbalanced in terms of argument/in treatment of the two systems can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.
- An answer that contains no evidence/examples can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the significance of the cabinet in the USA and UK and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. There is little recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the significance of the cabinet in the USA and UK 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. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is some recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the significance of the cabinet in the USA and UK 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 some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is sound analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is a reasonable attempt at comparing political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the significance of the cabinet in the USA and UK and uses this to fully address

the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the significance of the cabinet in the USA and UK and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is highly effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

[30]

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

30

100

Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK)

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Section A: The Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland

1 Background

The Dáil has the highest percentage of Independent elected representatives of any European legislature. As of March 2023, there were a total of 23 Independents out of 160 TDs. An Independent TD is one that does not belong to any party grouping in the Dáil and does not accept the whip of any party. As only groupings of 5 or more TDs can gain full speaking rights, Independents may join together in a technical group in order to achieve this number. The group may also enter into collective discussion with the parties in power. However, in terms of ideology and priorities, the Independents retain their autonomy.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate offers a basic explanation of what is meant by the term 'Independent TD'.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate offers a more developed explanation of what is meant by the term 'Independent TD'.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate provides a full explanation of what is meant by the term 'Independent TD'. A relevant example will be used to support the response. If no example is given, a maximum of [4] marks can be awarded.

(AO1: [5] marks)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately. [5]

5

2 Background

The Source identifies one area where TDs are able to scrutinise the government as the budget. The Dáil is primarily responsible for scrutinising and authorising budget allocations. TDs can table amendments to tax legislation and to expenditure proposals. In addition to examining executive spending proposals, TDs can scrutinise the government by means of Questions to Ministers, through Oireachtas Committees, during debates in the Dáil, by using the media and social media. Committees have the power to examine the general scheme of Bills prior to First Reading.

Any other relevant way.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate identifies a valid way with little or no development.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate identifies a valid way and offers a more developed explanation.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate identifies a valid way and provides a full explanation of the way.

Apply criteria for each valid way. One of the ways identified must come from the Source, the other from own knowledge.

- If there is no reference to the Source, a maximum of [6] marks can be awarded.
- If there is no relevant example, a maximum of [8] marks can be awarded.

(AO1: [5] marks × 2)

[10]

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

10

3 Background

In spite of the 2013 referendum result, criticisms of the Seanad persist. Among the most significant is the undemocratic methods by which Senators are chosen. In particular, the limited number of universities used to elect the university representatives has been criticised. This includes the Taoiseach's power to appoint a crucial number of Senators, giving the executive control over the House: this is a valid second criticism. Other valid criticisms include being seen as a well-paid retirement home for politicians at the end of their careers. The minimal impact of the Seanad on policy is an area frequently raised by critics. The cost of maintaining the Seanad is an additional criticism.

Any other valid criticism.

- If only one criticism is given, a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.
- An answer that contains no evidence can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[3])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the criticisms made of the Seanad and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([4]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the criticisms made of the Seanad 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. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([7]–[9])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the criticisms made of the Seanad 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 some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([10]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the criticisms made of the Seanad and uses this to fully address the requirements

of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Level 5 ([13]–[15])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the criticisms made of the Seanad and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary. [15]

15

4 Background

As the Source states, there has been a long-standing assumption that coalition government was always weaker than single-party government. The, now-defunct, idea that UK governments were stable in comparison with those in the Republic was widely accepted. The belief that coalition governments in Ireland may have been weak and unstable may have been equally false. The Source suggests exactly this, arguing that Irish governments since the 1980s have been able to dominate the Oireachtas. Candidates should seek to explain the reasons why this may be the case. Many may refer to the effects of localism and brokerage on the capacity of TDs to actively challenge the executive. It is also argued that, even when in opposition, TDs were reluctant to give the government a hard time, knowing that the small pool of TDs meant they may soon be part of an executive. The structures of the Irish system also favour the executive. The capacity of the Dáil to scrutinise and amend the budget, referred to in the Source, is much more restricted than in any other European legislature.

The alternative view is that the Dáil possesses significant powers to scrutinise and challenge the executive. TDs can and do make use of Questions, debates and committees. Governments have been held to account and been brought down. In reality, governments have often been forced to compromise with the Dáil in order to get policies passed but this has happened behind closed doors. This creates the impression, but not the reality, of executive dominance.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, will tend to rely upon the Source and provide little further evidence. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, will be balanced and will offer a range of argument and evidence.

- An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.
- An answer that fails to refer to the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.
- An answer that contains no examples/evidence beyond the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the executive dominates the Oireachtas 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 contains no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the executive dominates the Oireachtas 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. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the executive dominates the Oireachtas 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 some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is sound analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the executive dominates the Oireachtas and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of debate about whether the executive dominates the Oireachtas and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

[30]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

30

Section B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the UK

AVAILABLE MARKS

5 Background

One difference between the Dáil and Commons' Committees is that, in the former, committees are joint in that they are made up of both TDs and Senators. This is not the case with their Commons' counterparts. In the Republic, committees have the power to review and suggest amendments to Bills before the First Reading, something absent in the UK. The joint committees in the Republic scrutinise and amend legislation as well as review the actions of government departments. In the UK these functions are carried out separately by Public Bill and Select Committees. The membership and chairs of committees in the Oireachtas is chosen by the d'Hondt method and so reflect the makeup of the Dáil. Dáil Committees cover a policy area rather than shadow a discrete government department, as is the case with UK Select Committees.

Any other valid difference.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate identifies a valid difference with little or no development.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate identifies a valid difference and offers a more developed explanation.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate identifies a valid difference and provides a full explanation of the difference.

- If only one difference is given, a maximum of [5] marks can be awarded.
- An answer that contains no evidence can be awarded a maximum of [8] marks.

(AO1: [5] marks × 2)

[10]

10

6 (a) Background

As the Irish political system is based upon the Westminster Model, MPs and TDs have very similar legislative powers. MPs and TDs are members of legislatures in which the principle of parliamentary sovereignty applies and thus have the power to decide what does or does not become law. Both are involved in legislative scrutiny of executive Bills and have the power to amend and vote against them. Both can introduce their own legislation and seek support for it from colleagues. Another common feature of both systems is that the executive dominates legislation and this undermines the view that either MPs or TDs are effective legislators.

However, there are significant differences between MPs and TDs. In practice, the higher levels of brokerage and localism that operate in the Irish Republic have meant that TDs have often failed to make use of their powers and are seen as less effective legislators. This is the case with scrutiny of government Bills and with the introduction of Private Members Bills. On the other hand, the high levels of party discipline and loyalty that operate in the UK have prevented MPs making full use of their powers. The extraordinary number of independent TDs in the Republic means that they are not similarly

tied when it comes to legislation.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, provide limited evidence and make limited comparisons. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, be balanced, offer a range of argument and evidence and will make effective comparisons.

- An answer that is totally unbalanced in terms of argument/in treatment of the two systems can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.
- An answer that contains no examples/evidence can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the legislative records of the Commons and the Dáil and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. There is little recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the legislative records of the Commons and the Dáil 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. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is some recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the legislative records of the Commons and the Dáil 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 some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is sound analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is a reasonable attempt at comparing political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the legislative records of the Commons and the Dáil and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples

are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the legislative records of the Commons and the Dáil and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is highly effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

[30]

30

(b) Background

As the Irish system is in large part based upon the Westminster model, it is no surprise that the powers of Taoisigh in relation to the cabinet are very similar to those exercised by Prime Ministers. There was, in the past, a high degree of consensus that the UK Prime Minister had much greater control over their cabinet than their Irish counterpart. The reason for this was the prevalence of coalition governments in the Republic as opposed to the single-party governments in the UK. This consensus was at its height during the premierships of Thatcher and Blair, both of whom seemed to dominate their cabinets. In spite of a brief period of coalition government in the UK, the norm remains one of single party government, which creates the potential for PM dominance.

However, this consensus has broken down in recent years. Recent British PMs have appeared to be prisoners of their cabinets rather than in control of them. Collective Responsibility, in the past a key tool of Prime Ministers in controlling their colleagues, has become something of a joke. Ministers not only openly disagree with the PM but also make their own ambitions abundantly clear. In the Republic of Ireland, Taoisigh continue to struggle with the challenges of coalition and minority governments. However, Irish leaders seem to have found ways to cope with this situation with the result that the contrasts between the two systems are not as clear as they would have been in the past. In fact, recent Taoisigh seem to have had greater freedom to exercise their powers than their UK counterparts.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, provide limited evidence and make limited comparisons. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, be balanced, offer a range of argument and evidence and will make effective comparisons.

- An answer that is totally unbalanced in terms of argument/in treatment of the two systems can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.

- An answer that contains no examples/evidence can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the powers of, and constraints upon, Prime Ministers and Taoisigh and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. There is little recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the powers of, and constraints upon, Prime Ministers and Taoisigh 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. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is some recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the powers of and constraints upon, Prime Ministers and Taoisigh 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 some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is sound analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is a reasonable attempt at comparing political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the powers of, and constraints upon, Prime Ministers and Taoisigh and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the powers of, and constraints upon, Prime Ministers and Taoisigh and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is highly effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

[30]

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

30

100