



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2024**

Government and Politics

Assessment Unit AS 1

assessing

The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland

[SGP11]

MONDAY 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 tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

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

Level 1: Quality of written communication is inadequate.

Level 2: Quality of written communication is limited.

Level 3: Quality of written communication is satisfactory.

Level 4: Quality of written communication is good.

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

In interpreting these level descriptions, 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.

- 1 The Speaker of the Assembly presides over debates and Question Time, decides on who shall speak, maintains order in the Assembly chamber, represents the Assembly at outside events. Any other relevant way.
(AO1: 4 marks) [4]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

4

2 **Background**

As the Source notes, STV is the electoral system used to elect members of the legislative Assembly. It is a proportional system of election that seeks to ensure that a party's representation is proportional to that party's share of the popular vote. In doing this, it is regarded by many as a fair system of election in that it ensures representation for smaller parties that do not always achieve this under the Simple Majority system. This fair representation is reflected in the Source when it notes that the loss of 7% of its vote led to the DUP losing three MLA seats. Candidates that explain the operation of STV and/or the relationship between STV and power sharing, can be awarded the maximum of Level 3 [6 marks].

Level 1 ([1]–[2])

The candidate offers a basic explanation of what is meant by "Single Transferable Vote method". There is limited or no use of the Source or own knowledge.

Level 2 ([3]–[4])

The candidate offers a more developed explanation of what is meant by "Single Transferable Vote method". There is some use of the Source or own knowledge. If no reference to the Source is made a maximum of 4 marks can be awarded.

Level 3 ([5]–[6])

The candidate provides a full explanation of what is meant by the term "Single Transferable Vote method". There is good use of the Source and own knowledge.

(AO1: 6 marks)

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

6

3 **Background**

The Source identifies that one possible reason for the fall in DUP support was the internal divisions within the Party that led to both Foster and Poots being forced out as leader. It is legitimate for candidates to present the turnover in leadership as a second reason, as long as this is linked to the issue of falling support. The inroads into DUP support made by the TUV is another possible reason. There is also evidence that there was a movement by some voters to the Alliance Party that then impacted upon the number of DUP MLAs elected. Any other relevant reason. Credit should be given for a wide range of possible reasons for medium/long term changes in DUP support.

No use of source: Max Level 3 [9].

No evidence: Max Level 4 [12].

Level 1 ([1]–[3])

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the reasons for the decline in DUP support. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. The use of political vocabulary is rudimentary.

Level 2 ([4]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the reasons for the decline in DUP support 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. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. The level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([7]–[9])

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the reasons for the decline in DUP support but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. The level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited.

Level 4 ([10]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the reasons for the decline in DUP support and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. There is clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary.

Level 5 ([13]–[15])

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the reasons for the decline in DUP support and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. There is effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary. [15]

15

4 (a) Background

The Northern Ireland Executive, as established by the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and revised by subsequent agreements, was intended to provide for the collective government of Northern Ireland. It was intended that unionist and nationalist parties would share power and that they would work together to produce policies that would serve the needs of all citizens. The evidence that the Executive failed to do so is compelling. Prior to 2017, the Executive's record was one of conflict and division. Rather than working together, parties often appeared to be working against one another in the interests of their own section of the community. Ministers did not co-operate but looked after their own private 'fiefdom'. The suspension of the institutions for three years due to an inability to work together has confirmed this conclusion. After a brief and turbulent period during which the institutions were restored, they once again collapsed. This has led many to believe that mandatory power-sharing in Northern Ireland will never work. The antipathy between Sinn Féin and the DUP over key policy areas remains.

On the other hand, some would argue that, given the recent history of Northern Ireland, it is remarkable that any sort of government involving unionist and nationalist parties has worked. With the exception of the period of suspension after 2017, the Executive has managed to produce legislation, to create Programmes for Government, to achieve a degree of co-operation and, at times, to present a united front. While power-sharing may not have worked well up to this point, there is hope that, while the institutions survive, it can do so in future.

Weaker answers will display only a limited understanding of the point of the question and be limited in terms of both argument and evidence. Stronger answers will display clear understanding of the point of the question, will present a range of evidence and will contain balance.

No evidence/examples: Max Level 3 [15].

Lack of significant balance: Max Level 4 [20].

Level 1 ([1]–[5])

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the record of power-sharing in the Executive and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. An argument, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed and the level of communication and the use of political vocabulary are both rudimentary.

Level 2 ([6]–[10])

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the record of power-sharing in the Executive but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument is constructed although the level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([11]–[15])

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the record of power-sharing in the Executive but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material. There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. An argument is constructed although the level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited.

Level 4 ([16]–[20])

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the record of power-sharing in the Executive and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples. There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The

quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. An argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary and a conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([21]–[25])

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the record of power-sharing in the Executive and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented. There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. An argument is constructed which displays effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached. [25]

(b) Background

One of the primary functions of MLAs is to hold the Executive to account by scrutinising its actions. The devolved political arrangements provided ample opportunities for MLAs to be effective scrutinisers through debates and questions. Statutory Committees have extensive powers, are well resourced and MLAs have become increasingly competent in performing their scrutiny function as devolution continued. Failures of policy and of incompetence by ministers could be readily identified. It is anticipated that the basis of any response will be an account of the scrutiny powers of the Assembly.

Critics argue that, in practice, MLAs failed to employ the scrutiny powers they have. Careerism, party loyalty, ignorance and incompetence have all been given as reasons for this failure. The dominance of the Assembly by the two leading parties has also been cited as a cause of poor scrutiny. For many, the RHI scandal illustrates how ineffective scrutiny was: it was a combination of whistle-blowers and the media that brought the affair to light, not the Assembly.

Any other relevant issue.

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

No evidence/examples: Max Level 3 [15].

Lack of significant balance: Max Level 4 [20].

Level 1 ([1]–[5])

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny record of the Assembly and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanation. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. An argument, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed and the level of communication and the use of political vocabulary are both rudimentary.

Level 2 ([6]–[10])

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny record of the Assembly and but there are major gaps in this

knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument is constructed although the level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([11]–[15])

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny record of the Assembly but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material. There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. An argument is constructed although the level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited.

Level 4 ([16]–[20])

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny record of the Assembly and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples. There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. An argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary and a conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([21]–[25])

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny record of the Assembly and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented. There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. An argument is constructed which displays effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

[25]

25

Total

50

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**