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# AS

# POLITICS

(7151)

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**Specification**  
For teaching from September 2017 onwards  
For AS exams in 2018 onwards

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Version 1.1 21 February 2018





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## Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Why choose AQA for AS Politics

Lively, relevant, controversial... there are many ways to describe AS Politics. There's no denying that it's one of the most interesting and engaging qualifications you can choose.

Covering news and current affairs from the UK, it helps you understand how the UK country is run and develops research, written communication and debate skills. It also helps grow your confidence.

It's ideal if you're considering studying politics, sociology, ethics, advertising or journalism at university and is highly regarded by employers in industries including politics, international organisations, the media, government and the civil service.

### A specification designed for you and your students

This new qualification retains much of the content that we know you and your students enjoy. Topics are clearly and logically structured and include:

- the government of the UK
- politics of the UK

### Clear, well-structured exams, accessible for all

To enable your students to show their breadth of knowledge and understanding, we've created a simple and straightforward structure and layout for our papers, using a mixture of question styles. There will be no coursework.

You can find out about all our Politics qualifications at [aqa.org.uk/government-and-politics](http://aqa.org.uk/government-and-politics)

## 1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

### 1.2.1 Teaching resources

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7151](http://aqa.org.uk/7151) to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- sample schemes of work and lesson plans to help you plan your course with confidence
- student textbooks that have been checked by AQA
- progress tests with engaging on-screen delivery and instant feedback.
- training courses to help you deliver AQA Politics qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

## 1.2.2 Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7151](http://aqa.org.uk/7151) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- specimen papers and mark schemes for new courses
- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
- example student answers with examiner commentaries.

## 1.2.3 Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at [aqa.org.uk/era](http://aqa.org.uk/era)

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit [aqa.org.uk/results](http://aqa.org.uk/results)

## 1.2.4 Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at [coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk](http://coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk)

## 1.2.5 Help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7151](http://aqa.org.uk/7151)

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at [aqa.org.uk/from-2017](http://aqa.org.uk/from-2017)

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

E: [govandpol-s@aqa.org.uk](mailto:govandpol-s@aqa.org.uk)

T: 0161 958 3861

## 2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

### 2.1 Subject content

1. [Component 1 – government and politics of the UK](#) (page 10)

### 2.2 Assessments

Paper 1
<b>What's assessed</b> Government and politics of the UK
<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 3 hours</li><li>• 98 marks</li><li>• 100% of AS</li></ul>
<b>Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A mixture of short response, extract based and essay style questions.</li></ul>





# 3 Subject content

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There are two broad areas of study in this specification:

- the government of the UK
- the politics of the UK.

Students will study the five sections prescribed for the government of the UK and the five sections prescribed for politics of the UK. They will therefore develop a broad understanding of the historical development of government and politics in the UK in order to know and understand in detail contemporary politics in the UK .

## Skills

In all components of this subject students must demonstrate the following skills:

- to comprehend and interpret political information
- to critically analyse and evaluate the areas of politics studied
- to construct arguments and explanations leading to reasoned conclusions
- to identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the areas of politics studied
- to construct and communicate arguments and explanations with relevance, clarity and coherence
- to use appropriate political vocabulary
- to make connections between the different areas of politics studied.

## Synopticity

An essential element of the assessment of students' work in AS Politics is the extent to which they display a synoptic or holistic understanding of the subject. To demonstrate this students will be expected to inter-relate areas of content within each module and, when appropriate, across modules, to address the requirements of the exam papers. They must use appropriate concepts and knowledge as well as the skills listed above in developing their answers. Politics, as a subject, is inherently synoptic. The political knowledge, concepts, behaviours and institutions studied in any particular module can often be used and applied to new contexts in other parts of the course. The essay questions are particularly synoptic, giving students the opportunity to draw on and synthesise the knowledge, understanding and skills gained throughout the course.

## Guidance on teaching and learning

The specification content is divided into two categories:

- key concepts and terminology
- focus.

Students should understand the meaning of the key concepts and terminology as these are implicit in the areas of focus for each section. Some areas require students to demonstrate awareness. These areas are meant to serve as a background to the points that require analysis and evaluation.

## 3.1 Component 1 – government and politics of the UK

### 3.1.1 The government of the UK

Government and Politics of the UK is divided into ten sections. Each has a particular focus but their interrelationships must be understood to appreciate the complexities of the system. Students will study each of the prescribed sections below.

#### 3.1.1.1 The nature and sources of the British Constitution

##### **Key concepts and terminology:**

- codified
- uncodified
- statute
- common law
- conventions
- authoritative opinions
- The royal prerogative
- rule of law
- parliamentary sovereignty
- individual and collective rights.

##### **Focus**

Students should develop awareness of the significance of the following historical documents to the development of rights in the UK:

- Magna Carta (1215)
- Bill of Rights (1689)
- Act of Settlement (1701)
- Parliaments Acts (1911 and 1949)
- European Communities Act (1972).

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the nature and sources of the British constitution
- contemporary legislation and current issues regarding rights
- issues and debates around recent constitutional changes
- debates about the extent of rights in the UK
- two examples of constitutional changes since 1997, such as the establishment of devolved legislative bodies in constituent countries of the UK, the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act, adoption of the Human Rights Act, changing composition of the House of Lords
- areas where individual and collective rights are in agreement and where they are in conflict.

#### 3.1.1.2 The structure and role of Parliament

##### **Key concepts and terminology:**

- scrutiny of executive
- Commons
- Lords
- MPs and peers

- delegates and trustees
- Burkean theories of representation
- delegate theories
- mandate theories
- trustees
- parliamentary privilege
- opposition
- legislation
- debate
- regressive grievances
- campaign
- referendum.

### **Focus**

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- scrutiny of the executive and how effective scrutiny of the executive is in practice
- parliamentary debate and the legislative process
  - Commons
  - Lords
- theories of representation - Burkean, delegate, mandate theories
- the roles and influence of MPs and peers
- the significance of Commons and Lords:
  - work of committees
  - role of the opposition
  - the extent of Parliament's influence on government decisions:
    - Party discipline enables the government to routinely outvote opposition
    - government control of civil servants' appearances before Select Committees
    - membership of those committees is largely controlled by Whips' offices.
- interactions of parliament and other branches of government.

### **3.1.1.3 The Prime Minister and Cabinet**

#### **Key concepts and terminology:**

- core executive
- prime minister
- primus inter pares
- cabinet
- inner cabinet
- cabinet committee
- individual and collective responsibility
- accountability.

### **Focus**

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- how policy is made
- the relationship between Prime Minister and cabinet

- the difference between individual and collective responsibility. Examples might include:
  - resignation of Sir Thomas Dugdale – Crichel Down (1954)
  - resignation of Iain Duncan Smith over Welfare Reforms (2016)
- two examples that demonstrate the power of the Prime Minister and cabinet to dictate events and determine policy making. One example must be from 1945–1997. The second example must be from 1997 to the present. Examples might include:
  - introduction of poll tax (1990)
  - invasion of Iraq (2003)
- government/parliament relations – accountability/interest.

### 3.1.1.4 The judiciary

#### Key concepts and terminology:

- Supreme Court
- judicial independence and impartiality
- separation of powers
- ultra vires
- judicial review.

#### Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the composition of the judiciary and the appointments process
- the role of the Supreme Court and its impact on government, legislature and policy process
- judicial influence on government
- importance of ultra vires, judicial review and the Supreme Court's interactions with and influence over the legislative and policy making processes.

### 3.1.1.5 Devolution

#### Key concepts and terminology:

- devolution
- The Scottish Parliament and Government
- The Welsh Assembly and Government
- The Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive.

#### Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the roles, powers and responsibilities of the different devolved bodies in the UK
- debate around devolution in England
- existing devolution in England
- impact of devolution on government of the UK.

## 3.1.2 The politics of the UK

### 3.1.2.1 Democracy and participation

#### Key concepts and terminology:

- direct democracy
- representative democracy

- suffrage
- participation
- partisan dealignment.

### **Focus**

Students should develop awareness of development of the suffrage in the UK – debates and issues:

- how suffrage has changed since the Great Reform Act (1832) to the present
- debates regarding gender, class, ethnicity and age
- the significance of the Chartists, Suffragists and Suffragettes
- suffrage as a human right.

Students will be required to analyse and evaluate:

- the nature of democracy
- different types of democracy – direct democracy, representative government
- patterns of participation and different forms of participation.

### **3.1.2.2 Elections and referendums**

#### **Key concepts and terminology:**

- majoritarian and proportional electoral systems
- representative democracy
- suffrage
- participation
- voting behaviour
- manifesto
- campaign
- referendums.

### **Focus**

Students will be required to analyse and evaluate the characteristics of different systems used in parliamentary elections and in elections to one of the devolved bodies in the UK including:

- debates and issues around the performance of those systems
- the advantages and disadvantages of those systems
- three key elections since 1945 should be selected for detailed study. These should include:
  - the 1997 general election
  - one election from before 1997
  - one election since 1997.

The study of these elections, the wider political context in which they occurred and the techniques used by political parties in their campaigns will provide perspectives on the issues and outcomes of each election, particularly in relation to the following:

- patterns of voting behaviour/changes over time – as revealed by relevant national data sources, and explanations of how and why they varied in different elections
- the influence of the media on the outcomes
- the reasons for and the impact of party policies on the outcomes
- the reasons for and the influence of manifestos on the outcomes
- the impact of campaigns and leadership on the outcomes

- the role of elections and their influence on policy and policy making
- likely effects of the electoral system on the party system.

These elections should be selected because they exemplify particular characteristics of the British electoral system, electoral behaviour or electoral outcomes eg:

- an election resulting in a landslide victory for one party
- an election where results reveal a clear discrepancy between the number of votes and the number of seats gained
- an election which shows how large numbers of voters are effectively disenfranchised by the preponderance of voters for one party in large areas of the country
- an election the outcome of which is greatly influenced by a particular leadership style or personality

Students should analyse and evaluate the nature and use of referendums in the UK and their impact.

### 3.1.2.3 Political parties

#### Key concepts and terminology:

- ideology
- party structure
- party systems
- party funding
- party functions
- minor parties
- political agenda.

#### Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the origins, ideas and development of the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat parties and how these have helped shape their current policies
- party structures and functions of Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties
- issues and debates around party funding
- relations with, and influence of, the media
- factors affecting electoral outcomes
- policies of minor parties and their impact on political debates and political agenda
- development towards a multi-party system in the UK and its impact on government and policy.

### 3.1.2.4 Pressure groups

#### Key concepts and terminology:

- pluralism
- political agenda
- insider and outsider pressure groups
- promotional and interest groups.

#### Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- pressure groups and democracy – pluralism
- other influences on government and parliament:
  - think tanks
  - lobbyists
  - corporations
  - media
- typologies of pressure groups, including a detailed study of one insider and one outsider group
- methods used by pressure groups
- factors likely to affect the political influence of different groups, such as membership and resources
- links with political parties, government and the media.

### 3.1.2.5 The European Union

**Key concepts and terminology:**

- EU institutions

**Focus**

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- aims of the EU and the extent to which they have been achieved
- the impact of the EU on UK politics and policy making.





# 4 Scheme of assessment

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Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at [aqa.org.uk/pastpapers](http://aqa.org.uk/pastpapers)

This specification is designed to be taken over one or two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

AS exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2018 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our AS exams in Politics include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- recall information
- draw together information from different areas of the specification
- apply their knowledge and understanding in practical and theoretical contexts.

Our AS exams in Politics include four broad question types.

6 mark questions require students to explain different political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues prescribed in the specification. Students should support their explanation(s) with relevant examples drawn from the course of study and develop their explanation(s) to show their understanding.

12 mark extract based questions require students to analyse a piece of political information, evaluating what concept, idea or theory most expresses and what concept, idea or theory it is less descriptive of. Students should use their knowledge and understanding of the issue and relevant sections of the extract to substantiate analysis and evaluation. The political information used in examinations may take the form of political publications, government publications, newspaper extracts, manifestos, visual material and data.

25 mark essay questions require students to analyse and evaluate a given statement using their knowledge and understanding of the issue under discussion. The question may draw from different sections of the specifications, requiring students to identify and substantiate parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of politics studied. The answer should take the form of a structured and balanced argument, maintaining a sustained line of reasoning, communicating with relevance, clarity and coherence and leading to a reasoned conclusion.

## 4.1 Aims

Courses based on this specification must encourage students to:

- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of contemporary political structures and issues in their historical context, within the United Kingdom (UK)
- develop a critical awareness of the changing nature of politics and the relationships between political ideas, institutions and processes
- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of the influences and interests which have an impact on decisions in government and politics

- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups
- develop the ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate political information to form arguments and make judgements.
- develop and interest in, and engagement with, contemporary politics.

## 4.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all AS Politics specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues.
- AO2: Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences.
- AO3: Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.

### 4.2.1 Assessment objective weightings for AS Politics

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)	Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	
AO1	40-50	40-50
AO2	30-40	30-40
AO3	20-30	20-30
Overall weighting of components	100	100

## 4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Paper 1	98	x1	98
Total scaled mark:			98

# 5 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at [aqa.org.uk/examsadmin](http://aqa.org.uk/examsadmin)

## 5.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Politics	7151	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- Ofqual GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 603/1402/3.

## 5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level Politics specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

## 5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

## 5.4 Re-sits and shelf life

Students can re-sit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

## 5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

## 5.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. Tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published at [jcq.org.uk](http://jcq.org.uk)

### 5.6.1 Students with disabilities and special needs

We're required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested aren't changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader.

To arrange access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the online service at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

### 5.6.2 Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as family bereavement. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

For more information and advice visit [aqa.org.uk/access](http://aqa.org.uk/access) or email [accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk](mailto:accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk)

## 5.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college hasn't previously offered our specifications, you need to register as an AQA centre. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](http://aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

## 5.8 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates.

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

A private candidate may be self-taught, home schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. They must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at [aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates](http://aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates)
- email [privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk](mailto:privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk)

## 5.9 Use of Calculators

Students may use a calculator in the examination. They must however ensure that their calculator meets the requirements as set out in the *JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations*. These instructions make it clear what the requirements are for calculators (what they must be) and what they are not (what they must not be). The instructions are regularly updated and can be found on the Joint Council for Qualifications website at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk).

## Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at

You can talk directly to the Politics subject team:

E: [govandpol-s@aqa.org.uk](mailto:govandpol-s@aqa.org.uk)

T: 0161 958 3861