



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2015**

Government and Politics

Assessment Unit AS 1

The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland

[AQ111]

THURSDAY 4 JUNE, AFTERNOON

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

These mark schemes are intended to ensure that the AS/A2 examinations are marked consistently and fairly. The mark schemes provide examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidate responses likely to be worthy of credit. They also set out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses. The mark scheme should be read in conjunction with these general marking instructions which apply to all papers.

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners will be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of 17- and 18-year-olds, which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their AS/A2 examinations.

Flexibility in marking

The mark schemes which accompany the specimen examination papers are not intended to be totally prescriptive. For many questions, there may be a number of equally legitimate responses and different methods by which the candidates may achieve good marks. No mark scheme can cover all the answers 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 for the paper concerned.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for valid responses 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 for 17- and 18-year-old GCE candidates. Conversely, marks should only be awarded for valid responses and not given for an attempt which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Types of mark schemes

Mark Schemes for 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. These questions are indicated on the cover of the examination paper.

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

Questions requiring extended written answers are marked in terms of 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 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 which is incorporated within the marks awarded for AO3. Where the quality of candidates’ subject knowledge and understanding is not matched by the quality of written communication, marks awarded will not exceed the maximum for Level 4.

1 Background

One mark will be awarded for identification and up to three marks for explanation of the reason given in the Source. **(AO1: 4 marks)** One mark will be awarded for identification and up to three marks for explanation of another relevant reason.

(AO1: 4 marks) The Source refers to agreement over the destruction of Peace Walls. Candidates may refer to any other area where the two parties have overcome differences and this can be before or after 2007.

[1] mark for identification, [3] for each explanation.

No reference to the Source – maximum [6] marks.

No evidence or examples – maximum [6] marks.

[8]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

8

2 Background

The Source refers to continuing differences over the issues of flags and parading. In 2013 there was also significant disagreement over what was termed “the past.” This was short-hand for the thorny issue of how the history of Northern Ireland should be recorded and commemorated. Unionists and nationalists have also had numerous other areas of disagreement including over issues such as education, abortion and same-sex relationships. Candidates may legitimately refer to the continuing disagreement over the future constitutional status of Northern Ireland and any other relevant area.

Weaker answers will tend to present general critical statements and rely heavily upon the Source. Stronger answers will be more detailed contain supporting evidence.

If there is no reference to the Source, a candidate can score a maximum of Level 4.

If there is no reference to evidence beyond the Source, maximum of Level 3.

If an answer only refers to two or less issues, maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[4])

AO1: 2; AO2: 1; AO3: 1 mark

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of continuing areas of disagreement between unionists and nationalists. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence (AO1). There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 2 ([5]–[7])

AO1: 3; AO2: 2; AO3: 2 marks

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of continuing areas of disagreement between unionists and nationalists 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 (AO1). There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 3 ([8]–[10])**AO1: 4 marks; AO2: 3 marks; AO3: 3 marks**

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of continuing areas of disagreement between unionists and nationalists 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 (AO1). There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 4 ([11]–[13])**AO1: 5 marks; AO2: 4 marks; AO3: 4 marks**

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of continuing areas of disagreement between unionists and nationalists and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples (AO1). There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 5 ([14]–[16])**AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 5 marks; AO3: 5 marks**

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of continuing areas of disagreement between unionists and nationalists and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented (AO1). There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

[16]

16

3 (a) Background

One of the primary functions of MLAs is to hold the Executive to account by scrutinising its actions. This is especially so because of the lack of an official opposition in the Assembly and because nearly all parties in the Assembly are represented in government. The constitutional arrangements in place provide ample opportunities for MLAs to be effective scrutinisers through debates and questions. Statutory Committees have extensive powers and are well resourced. MLAs can also use the mechanism of a Petition of Concern.

Critics argue that, in practice, MLAs have 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.

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

If there is no evidence or examples, a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.
If there is no balance, a maximum of Level 4 can be awarded.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

AO1: 2 marks; AO2: 3 marks; AO3: 1 mark

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the debate about the effectiveness of MLAs in holding the Executive to account 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 (AO1). There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 2 ([7]–[11])

AO1: 4 marks; AO2: 5 marks; AO3: 2 marks

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the debate about the effectiveness of MLAs in holding the Executive to account 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 (AO1). There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 3 ([12]–[16])

AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 7 marks; AO3: 3 marks

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the debate about the effectiveness of MLAs in holding the Executive to account 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 (AO1). There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 4 ([17]–[21])

AO1: 7 marks; AO2: 9 marks; AO3: 5 marks

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the debate about the effectiveness of MLAs in holding the Executive to account and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples (AO1). There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 5 ([22]–[26])**AO1: 8 marks; AO2: 11 marks; AO3: 7 marks**

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the debate about the effectiveness of MLAs in holding the Executive to account and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented (AO1). There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3). [26]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

26

3 (b) Background

The durability of the DUP/Sinn Fein led Executive tends to conceal significant divisions within it. These divisions are not only the traditional one between unionist and nationalist. There are also significant divisions within unionism and nationalism. A third division has also arisen between the two dominant parties in the Executive and the UUP and SDLP. All of these have inhibited the Executive from acting collectively and in a coordinated way. Critics have alleged that Northern Ireland still lacks “joined-up government” because of the ongoing disputes within the Executive.

On the other hand, it has been argued that the Executive has been a remarkable success given the history of political and civil conflict in Northern Ireland. From this point of view, the Executive has managed to overcome the difficulties it has encountered and has provided effective government. The durability of the Executive is the surest sign that this is the case. The fact that the DUP and Sinn Fein both strengthened their positions in the 2011 Assembly Elections is further evidence that the electorate are happy with the record of the Executive.

Stronger candidates will be able to present a balanced discussion and will be able to produce a greater degree of evidence.

If there is no evidence or examples, a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded. If there is no balance, a maximum of Level 4 can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])**AO1: 2 marks; AO2: 3 marks; AO3: 1 mark**

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the Executive operates as an 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 has no evidence (AO1). There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 2 ([7]–[11])**AO1: 4 marks; AO2: 5 marks; AO3: 2 marks**

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the Executive operates as an 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 (AO1). There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 3 ([12]–[16])

AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 7 marks; AO3: 3 marks

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the Executive operates as an 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 more general material (AO1). There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 4 ([17]–[21])

AO1: 7 marks; AO2: 9 marks; AO3: 5 marks

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the Executive operates as an effective government and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples (AO1). There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

Level 5 ([22]–[26])

AO1: 8 marks; AO2: 11 marks; AO3: 7 marks

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether the Executive has operated as an effective government and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented (AO1). There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). 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 (AO3).

If there is no evidence or examples, a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.

If there is no balance, a maximum of Level 4 can be awarded. [26]

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

[26]

50