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# **GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**GCE (NEW)  
GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
AS/Advanced**

**SUMMER 2018**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

### **Online Results Analysis**

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### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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**AS Government and Politics**  
**General Certificate of Education (New)**  
**Summer 2018**  
**Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**  
**GOVERNMENT IN WALES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM: UNIT 1**

**General Comments**

This was the first time candidates had the opportunity to sit unit 1 of the reformed specifications. The exam provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate real skill in applying their political knowledge and understanding to important questions relating to government and politics in Wales and the United Kingdom.

Most candidates were able to complete the correct number of questions in the time allowed. However, a number of candidates clearly did not allow enough time to complete the section C answers in sufficient detail and lost marks as a result. Correct timing is of the essence in these papers, and candidates should be aware of the potential marks for each question, and use the time available accordingly.

The legibility of handwriting was an issue in a number of papers.

**Section A**

**Question 1**

This question on devolution was answered well. Many candidates scored high marks with a thorough explanation and relevant examples (along with excellent subject specific terminology). Those not achieving band 3 generally were not precise in their explanation and evidence, and lacked the specific terminology sufficient to provide a convincing response. Many candidates wrote far too much, often providing an evaluation of devolution. This will have caused timing issues later in the paper.

**Question 2**

As with question 1, this was answered well. Most candidates were aware of the functions of the Supreme Court, and the best answers directly addressed the 'constitutional role' of the institution. As with above, the best answers were precise, offering a range of relevant evidence and examples. Those not getting band 3 were not as precise in their explanations and lacked subject specific terminology. There also a number of misconceptions about the role of the Supreme Court with regard to the scrutiny of legislation, indicating some confusion with the role of the legislature itself. Candidates offered a range of case studies; the best answers were precise and related to the 'constitutional role' of the Supreme Court.

**Section B**

**Question 3**

This question produced a wide range of responses. At best, candidates used the extract as a platform to compare and contrast different types of committees in both institutions, drawing upon precise examples and evidence to illustrate their points. These thorough answers compared and contrasted throughout. Below this level there were many reasonable answers, often with the comparisons not being sustained. At the bottom level of response there was clearly a lack of knowledge about committees, and little effort to use the extract. Skill is required to fashion a top answer in this section and the aim is to encourage candidates to think about connections in politics and government.

#### **Question 4**

This was probably the most popular question in section B and there were a good number of thorough responses. As with Q.3, the best answers used the extract as a platform to compare and contrast the UK's relationship with the EU and the UN, drawing upon a range of examples to illustrate their writing. Those awarded the top marks for AO2 compared and contrasted throughout. Brexit proved to be a popular piece of evidence to suggest contrasting relationships, but at times the example became over-used and led to answers without sufficient range. At the bottom level of response there was clearly a lack of knowledge about the EU and UN (as well as some confusion with NATO), and little effort to use the extract.

#### **Section C**

##### **Question 5**

This was a popular question and the full range of responses was offered. At the top level there were many excellent pieces of writing, which were balanced, with a range of detailed examples to illustrate points made. These top answers went beyond the parliamentary processes for ensuring scrutiny of the legislation, and looked at the ability of parliament to legislate in a post-devolved UK. This often included references to the West-Lothian question and other relevant constitutional issues.

##### **Question 6**

This was another popular question, with the same full range of responses. In fact, the comments for this answer are similar to those made in Question 5. At the top level there were many excellent pieces of writing, which were balanced, with a range of detailed examples to illustrate points made. The top responses considered a range of constitutional issues as part of assessing whether or not it was fit for purpose. Answers below this level were often narrower in focus, often concentrating on the advantages and disadvantages of codified and uncodified constitutions.

##### **Question 7**

This was the least popular of the questions; however, there were many thorough answers. At the top level there were many excellent pieces of writing, which were balanced, with a range of detailed examples to illustrate points made. The broad scope of this question meant that answers in lower bands were very general, often echoing common views on, for example, Thatcher and Blair being powerful, without any real depth or knowledge to substantiate these points. Nevertheless, most candidates were aware of the opportunities and constraints regarding PM/FM power, particularly the importance of a decent parliamentary majority.

## **GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

### **General Certificate of Education (New)**

**Summer 2018**

#### **Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**

### **LIVING AND PARTICIPATING IN A DEMOCRACY: UNIT 2**

#### **General Comments**

This was the first time candidates had the opportunity to sit unit 2 of the reformed specifications. The exam provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate real skill in applying their political knowledge and understanding to important questions relating to the issues surrounding living and participating in a democracy.

Most candidates were able to complete the correct number of questions in the time allowed. However, there was a small number of candidates who chose not to answer the required number of questions, and this inevitably, impacted significantly on their overall performance and mark. It did not appear that candidates who completed the required number of questions had any time issues.

#### **Section A**

##### **Question 1**

This question on describing the main features of the Rule of Law was generally well answered. Many candidates accessed the higher bands of the mark scheme and showed good understanding of the principle. Typically they referenced the importance of the Rule of Law in ensuring that no one in society was above the law, regardless of class, race, and social and economic standing. Those candidates who demonstrated thorough knowledge took this further with clear reference to the principle impacting on government and government ministers, with clear and pertinent examples, as well as its impact on authorities such as the police and the courts. There were also references to aspects such as equality before the law, fair trial and innocent until proven guilty. Candidates who were not precise in their explanation lacked these types of examples, and some candidates described how the courts and judiciary worked. A few candidates saw the question as one about how a law was made and described the process, this clearly sent them down the wrong track and there was limited understanding of the principle. Candidates answered this question in varying lengths and further guidance when teaching maybe required to ensure that candidates focus on the actual question and apply the knowledge and understanding accordingly.

##### **Question 2**

This question on explaining citizenship was generally well answered. Many candidates accessed the higher mark bands with references to citizenship referring to being a member of a state and supporting that with the rights and responsibility it gave the person. Also, at this level, candidates went beyond the idea of state citizenship and referenced European and global citizenship. Weaker answers gave generalised information regarding having a passport and simply being born in a state meant the individual was a citizen.

## **Section B**

### **Question 3**

This question produced a wide range of responses. Clearly many candidates were well versed in the two electoral systems – First Past the Post and Additional Member System – and were able to access and use the extract. However, it was what they did with this knowledge and understanding that varied significantly. The question required candidates to compare and contrast the systems, implying that there was a need to structure their answer in that format. Many candidates choose to ignore that and divided their answers into two sections describing the two systems, and concluding with a judgement that they were either similar, different or were both. These types of answers scored well within AO1, but not so in AO2. Answers that scored marks in the higher bands of AO1 and AO2 typically had structured paragraphs taking a point of comparison or contrast between the two systems, discussing it, and then moving on to another point of comparison or contrast, before ultimately reaching some judgements. It was pleasing to see references to Wales and UK constituency results as supporting evidence.

### **Question 4**

This question also produced a wide range of responses, and many of the comments and observations made in response to question 3 also apply here. The focus in this question was identification of differences between insider and outsider pressure groups. Many candidates were well versed in what the terms meant and had relevant examples of pressure groups who displayed the characteristics of insider or outsider. The key differentiator was how AO2 was applied. Those candidates who identified a difference, discussed it and supported it with examples accessed the higher bands of the mark scheme, compared to those who described types of pressure groups and left the differences implicit. These types of candidates needed to read the question carefully, organise their knowledge and understanding, and construct answers that deal the differences. The extract was well used in most cases, though there were candidates who ignored it and went straight into description of various pressure groups.

## **Section C**

### **Question 5**

This was a popular question and produced a full range of answers. Candidates scoring in the lower bands of the mark scheme tended to see the question as one requiring a list of arguments (for and against) the use of referendums. As a consequence they ignored the focus of the question which was about effectiveness in ‘resolving issues’. Candidates scoring in the mid-range bands focused exclusively on one issue – Brexit. This was invariably well done, but meant the answer lacked range. Candidates scoring in the higher bands had range, typically Brexit, devolution and Scottish Independence and made judgements about whether or not the referendum had actually resolved the issue or not.

### **Question 6**

This was also a popular question and produced a full range of answers. Candidates scoring in the lower bands of the mark scheme generalised about how state funding might help smaller parties and annoy tax payers, with the issue of candidate funding being largely ignored. Candidates scoring in the mid-range bands of the mark scheme focused in depth on the issue in relation to the Conservative Party and Labour Party, and referenced ‘cash for questions’. Candidates scoring in the higher bands of the mark scheme produced well balanced answers, that showed awareness of the issues in relation to a range of political parties (large and small), the impact on candidate funding and how it might address issues around gender and ethnicity representation and had an appreciation that some form of ‘state funding’ already existed.

**Question 7**

This was also a popular question and there were many thorough answers that really got to the heart of the question. Some candidates took the question as an opportunity to only consider the issue of an uncodified versus codified constitution, and while this discussion could be made relevant to the actual question, often it was implicit. Higher scoring responses considered whether or not current statutes protected citizens and the country sufficiently and debated whether or not an actual Bill of Rights would be of benefit or whether it was not required.



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