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General Certificate of Education  
January 2012

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## Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1

Comparative Government

[AQ211]

TUESDAY 24 JANUARY, MORNING

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AQ211

### TIME

2 hours 15 minutes.

### INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklet provided. Choose **either Option A**: The United Kingdom and the United States of America **or Option B**: The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

From your chosen option, study the source provided and answer questions **1** to **4** and either **5(a)** or **5(b)**.

### INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 100.

Quality of written communication will be assessed in questions **1**, **3**, **4** and **5**.

Figures in brackets printed down the right-hand side of pages indicate the marks awarded to each question or part question.

### ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

You are advised to take account of the marks for each question in allocating the available examination time. For your chosen option, you should spend approximately **40 minutes** in answering question **1** in Section A.

You are advised to study the source before attempting to answer this question and refer to the source in your answer.

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**Option A: The United Kingdom and the United States of America****Section A: The US Constitution**

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

**Source**

In defining the powers of the President, the Founding Fathers were determined to ensure that this position did not become similar to that of a monarch. The exercise of Presidential power required agreement from another branch of Government, usually the legislature. The main exception to this principle was the President's role as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces but, with over 3000 miles of ocean between the USA and its potential enemies, it was not expected that this would be a significant role.

*Adapted from: William Storey, US Government and Politics, Edinburgh University Press, 2007*

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant information you have studied, discuss the extent to which the Constitution has failed in its aim of preventing executive dominance in the United States.

[30]

**Section B: Government in the UK and the USA**

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “ministerial responsibility”. Support your answer with a relevant example.
  
- 3 Explain how Congressional Committees can hold the Executive to account. [10]
  
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of MPs and members of the House of Representatives as legislators. [25]
  
- 5 **Either**
  - (a) “UK governments are strong and durable but US governments are weak and ineffective.” Evaluate this view. [30]
  
  - Or**
  
  - (b) “An increasing reliance on personal advisers is just one explanation for the growth of Prime Ministerial and Presidential power.” Evaluate this view. [30]

## Option B: The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

### Section A: The Irish Constitution

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

#### Source

Each time the Government wishes to amend the Constitution, it must hold a referendum. In order to call a constitutional referendum, a proposal to amend the Constitution must be introduced in the Dáil as a Bill. The Bill sets out the proposed amendment to the Constitution. The Bill must be passed by both the Dáil and the Seanad.

The Bill is then submitted to the people so that they can vote for or against it. If the majority of the votes cast at the referendum are in favour of the change, the Bill is signed by the Irish President and the Constitution is then amended.

*Adapted from © Citizens Information Board*

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, discuss the view that Bunreacht Na hÉireann has been changed more by the decisions of unelected judges than by referendum.

[30]

**Section B: Government in the UK and the Republic of Ireland**

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “patronage powers”. [10]
- 3 Explain how members of the Dáil are able to influence legislation. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of the House of Commons and the Dáil in scrutinising the Executive. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “The recent experience of the UK confirms the lesson from the Republic of Ireland: coalitions are less effective than single party governments.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “The British PM and the Irish Taoiseach both increasingly dominate their political systems.” Evaluate this view. [30]

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**THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER**

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