



Rewarding Learning

ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
January 2014

Government and Politics

Assessment Unit AS 1

assessing

The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland

[AQ111]

THURSDAY 9 JANUARY, MORNING

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 awarding 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

[1] will be awarded for identification and up to [3] for explanation of the reason given in the Source.

(AO1: 4 marks)

[1] will be awarded for identification and up to [3] for explanation of another relevant reason.

(AO1: 4 marks)

In addition to the changes of leadership, the UUP has allied itself with the Conservative party; has sought to outflank the DUP on the constitutional issue; has adopted a more confrontational approach within the Executive; has mooted the possibility of leaving the Executive and becoming an opposition; and any other relevant reason.

An answer that makes no reference to the Source can score a maximum of [6]

[8]

8

2 Background

The growth in DUP support over the past ten years has been remarkable and the problem for the party has now become one of maintaining its dominance. The Party has had to perform a delicate balancing act, holding onto its traditional support base while at the same time reassuring its new supporters amongst moderate unionists.

The Source points to one way in which the party has sought to cement its position, that is by engaging with parties and organisations that it would previously have shunned. This could be interpreted as the DUP seeking to maintain its moderate unionist support by being a pragmatic and responsible governing party. At the same time, the DUP has taken a traditional line on issues such as emblems and flags, on financial support for former RUC/PSNI members and on the response to dissident Republicanism.

It is anticipated that candidates may refer to a very wide range of policies and weaker answers will tend to present general statements and rely heavily upon the Source. Stronger answers will be more detailed and contain supporting evidence.

An answer that makes no reference to the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.

An answer that contains no relevant examples can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[4])

AO1: 2; AO2: 1; AO3: 1

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the recent tactics of the DUP. 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

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the recent tactics of the DUP 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 the recent tactics of the DUP 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 the recent tactics of the DUP 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 the recent tactics of the DUP 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

The absence of a formal opposition in the Northern Ireland Assembly has been identified as a major source of weakness within the devolved political institutions. The mandatory coalition arrangement has resulted in a lack of scrutiny of the Executive. It is argued that both in plenary sessions and in committees Ministers are not properly held to account by MLAs whose own party is part of the Executive. As scrutiny of those in positions of power is central to any democratic system, the Northern Ireland system is seriously flawed.

By contrast, it is argued that MLAs have been effective in scrutinising ministers. The party rivalries within the Executive and Assembly have ensured that MLAs are eager to hold ministers to account. The committee structures also encourage MLAs to challenge their minister. There is also some evidence that MLAs are also willing to hold ministers from their own party to account.

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

An answer that makes no reference to relevant examples can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.

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 lack of opposition in 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 (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 lack of opposition in the Assembly 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 lack of opposition in 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 (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 lack of opposition in the Assembly 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 lack of opposition in the Assembly 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]

(b) Background

There are many who would criticise the legislative record of the Assembly but there are also those who would argue that it has succeeded as a legislative body. Since 2007 the Assembly has been active in scrutinising Executive legislation and many amendments to Bills have been proposed and accepted. Assembly Statutory Committees in particular have displayed a growing maturity as MLAs have become more experienced in assessing the merits of Executive legislative proposals and in putting forward viable alternatives. The Assembly has also successfully debated and passed into law two Programmes for Government. Individual MLAs have begun to propose Private Members Bills and some of these have now made it into the statute book. The Assembly is a much more successful legislative body than its predecessor.

On the other hand, critics would argue that the Assembly's legislative record compares very badly with that of other devolved assemblies. Much legislation is still of the parity variety. Committees have still failed to live up to the task of challenging Executive Bills, not least because of party loyalty and the careerist ambitions of MLAs. Few Private Bills of any significance have succeeded.

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

An answer that makes no reference to relevant examples can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

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

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the legislative 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 (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 legislative record of the Assembly 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 legislative 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 (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 legislative record of the Assembly 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 legislative record of the Assembly 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]

26

Total

50