

Mark Scheme

Winter 2008

GCE

GCE Government and Politics (Unit 4A)

Key Political Issues

General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative content
1	Understanding of the meaning of power sharing is shown. The principle means that nationalist politicians will be prepared to sit in the same government as unionists and others. Despite their stated aim to reunify Ireland, nationalists have accepted that peaceful political progress towards such an objective is preferable to armed conflict and confrontation. Nationalists accepted that recognition of the equal rights of Catholics was now established in Northern Ireland politics. Some concessions were made by unionists notably over the police service and prisoner release. Nationalists accepted that the unionists were prepared to recognise that they were no longer a terrorist organisation. Other factors include large subsidies offered to Northern Ireland and the intervention of the Irish Republic in putting pressure on nationalists to settle.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 3	13-20	A clear and well explained understanding of power sharing. Good or excellent knowledge of the issues and how they had been resolved. A good or excellent range of issues, and their resolution, are included. A strong analysis of these issues is also offered.
Level 2	7-12	A sound understanding is demonstrated of the principles of power sharing and of the aspirations of nationalists. Reasonable but relatively limited knowledge and understanding of reasons why nationalists dropped their objections to power sharing.
Level 1	0-6	A brief and partial understanding of the principle of power sharing. Vague and incomplete explanations of how a peaceful settlement came about. Probably little detail, but only generalisations.

Question Number	Indicative content,
2	It had been felt in 1997 that the police did not have enough powers to be able to deal with growing crime levels. This reflects a growing belief within the government that, as well as social measures to attack crime, more direct, preventative measures were needed. Many of the measures have related to youth crime. It was also partly a result of the increasing fear of crime among the public. Reference can be made to ASBOs (even though they are administered by local authorities), ABCs, on the spot fines for public order offences, curfews etc. There is a whole range of measures associated with terrorism. These include extending periods for questioning suspects to 28 days without charge, increased powers of surveillance, search powers etc. Not all measures could be included in a short answer, but a good range can be deployed.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 3	13-20	A thorough and very clear understanding of the nature of the growing problems, demonstrating a good understanding of the connections between the measures and the nature of the problems. The range of measures described will be reasonably comprehensive and will deal with both terrorist and non-terrorist issues. There will be a good balance between the "how" and "why" aspects.
Level 2	7-12	Some balance between the two aspects of the question - how and why. There will be a sound understanding shown of the nature of the crime problems, together with a clear knowledge of how the measures were designed to deal with them. The range of measures described will be reasonable, though there may be some omissions.
Level 1	0-6	It is likely that responses will concentrated on 'how'? rather than 'why?' There will be a narrow range of measures described. Important examples will be omitted. It may be that answers concentrate largely on terrorism only, or on non-terrorist crime.

Question Number	Indicative content,
3	The issues have concerned both the state pension and private pension schemes. The controversy over the state pension has revolved largely around the erosion of their real value, with the break and then promised restoration of the earnings link. After early criticisms of Brown for being less than generous with pensions, he was forced to raise pensions substantially. However, there remains conflict over whether state pensions should be targeted on the poorest pensioners. The level of the basic pension remains controversial. With the ageing population, the burden of pensions on taxpayers has increased. Thus there is conflict over how the shortfall can be made up- should the pension be paid at a later age, should there be compulsory private schemes etc. As proposed in the turner report, Brown's so-called raid on private pension schemes, in the form of abolished tax reliefs, was highly criticised. When many private pension schemes failed there was controversy over the extent to which the government had a responsibility to 'bail out' occupational pensioners.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 3	13-20	Strong responses both in terms of range and analysis of the issues. Most of the main issues will be included and there will be good or excellent understanding shown of why and how the issues have been controversial.
Level 2	7-12	A good range of issues with sound understanding shown of the nature of the controversies. There will be successful, if relatively limited, links made between the nature of the issues and the controversies which arose from them.
Level 1	0-6	A limited range of issues, with even more limited explanations of the controversy. Answers will be largely or wholly descriptive and fail to offer any cogent analysis. It is likely that responses will deal only with either state or private pensions.

Question Number	Indicative content,
4.	The main measures have included the introduction of targets , notably of SATs performance, other exam results, literacy and numeracy levels, truancy etc. There has also been the introduction of performance incentives for teachers. Parents are increasingly exposed to performance tables and are encouraged to demonstrate choice. This has produced competition between schools. It is expected that increased transparency on standards and competition will drive up standards. Successful schools have attracted more resources while failing schools have been put into special measures or have been closed. New types of schools have been introduced, notably city academies and specialised colleges, both to introduce more finance and to improve specialised education. Pre-school education for all has been introduced for four year olds and Sure Start has extended education to some three year olds. Sure Start is designed to give children an earlier start and so improve basic standards.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 3	13-20	An extensive range of issues is included. Answers will show special strength in analysing the link between the measures and the improvement of standards. There will be good explanations of the nature of standards included.
Level 2	7-12	A reasonable range of measures will be included. Answers will tend towards the descriptive rather than analytical. However there will be some attempts, ranging from limited to sound, to link the measures to the way in which they have been expected to raise standards.
Level 1	0-6	A purely descriptive, rather than analytical response. There will be a limited range of measures described. Links will not be made between the measures and the way in which they are expected to improve standards. Answers will tend to be highly generalised.

Question Number	Indicative content,
5.	<p>Increases in racially motivated crime are a clear indication of poor race relations. The same is true of recent racial unrest in such areas as Oldham, Bradford, Burnley etc. The Macpherson Report and subsequent inquiries have identified institutional racism as a constant and enduring problem, notably within the police, legal system and even the BBC. Trevor Phillips of the former CRE also pointed out the dangers of growing ghettoisation in various cities. On the other hand, this can be balanced by progress that has been made in some areas, notably education (where progress for some ethnic groups remains stubbornly slow). In recent years there have been fewer examples of inter-communal unrest. Such communities as Hindu and Chinese Asians are demonstrating improved educational standards and good community relations. The terrorist problems have caused racial tensions, especially with Muslim communities. Islamophobia has grown and there have been tensions in several cities. Nevertheless, it could be said that, despite the terrorist atrocities, incidents involving Muslims and non-Muslims have remained relatively limited.</p>

Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 3	39-60	A good or strong, balanced assessment. All or most of the main issues will be well described and analysed. Level 3 responses will be well balanced with a good deal of evidence that race relations have not merely declined, identifying clear examples of better relations as well as analysis of problems.
Level 2	21-38	A good range of issues will be identified. Analysis will be sound, but are unlikely to have great depth. A limited or sound attempt will be made to establish balance, with some evidence of improved race relations as well as problems. Evaluation will be present but will not have great depth.
Level 1	0-20	Responses may correctly identify some racial problems, but the range will be relatively limited and the analysis of them will be weak. Level 1 answers will be largely or wholly descriptive; analytical material will be absent or weak. Answers will be unbalanced, probably tending to deal only with problems.

Question Number	Indicative content,
6.	<p>Welfare state should include health, education and social security measures. Answers may also refer specifically to pensions and housing. In education there is conflicting evidence. Literacy and numeracy rates are improving very slowly and government targets have been missed several times. Large numbers of pupils still achieve no or very weak qualifications. SATs results tend to vary from encouraging to disappointing. On the other hand public exam results continue to improve, there has been extensive school building and the higher education sector has expanded. Sure Start has had patchy success by most analyses. In the health service there have been good reductions in waiting lists and waiting times. Treatment of some conditions, notably heart problems and cancers are proving increasingly successful. However cure rates do not compare well with many other European countries. Numbers of doctors, nurses and other medical staff have risen markedly, but there remain management and financial problems. The welfare to work and tax credit systems have certainly reduced poverty and helped to keep unemployment low. However targets on poverty relief have been missed, especially child poverty have been missed. The position of state pensioners has certainly improved, but with still many poor pensioners living in deprived conditions. There remains pressure on the pensions system. Housing remains a key problem where progress has been slow. There is a great shortage of low cost housing and homelessness remains stubbornly high. In virtually all indications of the performance of the welfare state, the position remains mixed.</p>

Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 3	39-60	A good range of at least, almost certainly more than three sectors included. Extensive knowledge of performance indicators will be included and there will be a clear balance demonstrated between successes and failures. There will be sensitivity shown to different interpretations of welfare state performance.
Level 2	21-38	The range will be greater, though it will not be necessary for all sectors to be included. At lower levels, it may be that only health and education are included. Better answers will include one or more other sectors. Knowledge will range from limited to sound, probably with some important omissions. Some evaluation will be attempted and, again, will range from limited to sound.
Level 1	0-20	Level 1 answers will be weak and very limited both in range and in evaluation. Answers will tend to be one-sided, probably concentrating on failures rather than giving a balanced view. It is very likely that significant sectors of the welfare state will be omitted.

Question Number	Indicative content,
7.	<p>There are clearly extensive areas of consensus over economic policy. Parties vary relatively little over how much of national Income should be taxed. All agree that fiscal and monetary prudence are critical. The priorities of economic policy are also largely consensual, with inflation, unemployment and investment as key targets. The parties may disagree over the performance of labour since 1997, but they disagree less over the measures adopted. The depoliticisation of financial policy is a matter of agreement. The basic principle of a free market economy, with relatively little government intervention is agreed upon. The parties agree very broadly on the balance between the public and private sectors. There are, however, some important areas of conflict. The status of Britain and the euro is a good example, with Conservatives ruling it out, labour very cautious and the Lib Dems enthusiastic. The distribution of the tax burden is becoming an area of conflict, with Lib Dems and the left of Labour wanting to see more progressive tax, while much of Labour and the Conservatives see the balance as about right, though the Conservatives may opt in the near future for significantly reduced taxes for some sections of the community. There is now some disagreement over the extent to which public and private debt are a significant problem. Once again, however, there is little conflict over basic principles of policy. Conservatives also argue that business taxes are too high and wish to see more economic deregulation. The splits over taxation especially within the Conservative party, may be included.</p>

Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 3	39-60	<p>Good to excellent evaluations of the extent of consensus and conflict. there will be successful analysis of economic issues, demonstrating good to excellent knowledge of areas of political controversy. Answers will be sensitive to distinctions between agreements over basics and disagreements over detail. The position of the Liberal Democrats will be included and it is likely, though not essential, that reference will be made to internal splits in one or two parties.</p>
Level 2	21-38	<p>A good range of issues will be raised. Evaluation of the extent of agreement and conflict will vary from limited to sound. Answers are likely to lack sufficient balance and analysis is likely to be basic. However there will a reasonably sound knowledge shown of the main current economic issues. Albeit with some probable omissions. It is likely, though not essential, that the Lib Dems will be included in the analysis.</p>
Level 1	0-20	<p>Responses will be uncritical and largely descriptive. Level 1 answers will probably only describe the economic policies of the parties, with little or no critical awareness of areas of agreement and disagreement. Large areas of economic policy will be omitted. Analysis will range from very poor to weak.</p>