



**General Certificate of Education**

**CITIZENSHIP STUDIES 1101**

**CIST2      Democracy, Active Citizenship  
and Participation**

**Report on the Examination**

*2009 examination - June series*

**This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#)**

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*Dr Michael Cresswell*, Director General.

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## Citizenship Studies

### AS Unit CIST2 Democracy, Active Citizenship and Participation

#### General Comments

This was the first cohort that has undertaken an AS component of a full GCE in Citizenship and it was pleasing to note an increase in entry over the former AS only course. This module was designed to present candidates with the opportunity to write about their own active citizenship involvement and to reflect upon their own actions and those of others. Candidates were able to take their Active Citizenship Profile into the examination to help them to reference their own actions in their responses.

Generally the structure of the paper did not seem to cause issues for candidates. Most were able to write at length within the time available. The issue for many candidates was the time that they allocated between question components. The mark allocations give a clear indication regarding the time that should be spent on a particular element. Many also encountered difficulties regarding the differing demands of questions. Each question has an allocation of marks by Assessment Objective. Often candidates wrote too much to meet one AO but not enough for another. This issue arose in relation to Question 4 which requires candidates to incorporate evidence from their own involvement. Centres need to ensure that candidates record the nature of their active citizenship in their Profile. Often candidates had been clearly involved in interesting work but often this was then only mentioned in passing. For example, several candidates in one centre stated that they had visited a World War Two concentration camp but gave no elaboration or explained how this helped in regard to their work.

Candidates need to be involved in a range of active citizenship tasks if they are to gain the maximum marks in Question 4. Many candidates seemed to lack knowledge and to struggle to apply material from their Profile. Centres need to be aware that this unit accounts for 60% of marks at AS and that 50% of marks at AS are awarded for an understanding of the nature of and direct involvement in active citizenship tasks. Those centres that prepared candidates well by undertaking a range of tasks and ensuring that evidence was logged in the Active Citizenship Profile achieved high marks. Those who undertook little or no active citizenship and did not refer to their Profile, however good their knowledge base was for Section A of the paper, could only achieve lower levels.

#### Question | | | |---|---| | 0 | 1 | |---|---|

Most candidates were able to identify possible consequences, though some did not then offer an explanation. A few candidates speculated further on the Modbury initiative, and some misread the item, claiming that customers would not buy the new bags. To gain full marks candidates needed to identify and explain. A minority of candidates wrote far too much for this 5 mark question. The phrase briefly in the question indicates a shorter style response.

#### Question | | | |---|---| | 0 | 2 | |---|---|

Some candidates limited their mark by not following the instruction to use the item and their own knowledge, producing generalised answers about campaigning often not actually quoting any real examples of campaigning. Some responses were also so general that what was written would have applied to national rather than local campaigns. The question building on from the

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source required candidates to think about factors that relate to local campaigning. Many also wrote about methods rather than factors.

**Question 03**

This was by far the more popular of the optional questions. There were some excellent responses that applied very good knowledge of ownership and control of the media, Marxist and other theories, theories of audience reception and contemporary developments both in the media and politics. Most candidates were able to discuss several types of media. Weaker responses tended to either have a very narrow focus (often just on the press) or be totally generic and never mention any specific media format. Often the specific focus of the question, the forming of political attitudes was not central to the response.

**Question 04**

Although fewer candidates chose this question, many of those who did wrote very good answers, rising to the challenge of addressing all four levels of government. Most did choose the case for reform rather than the case against. A surprising number showed a good understanding of the case for devolved and European levels of government. Many candidates indicated good conceptual understanding in regard to the tiering of government in the UK. Many were able to use the example of devolution within the UK to good effect in their responses. Weaker responses often related to the case for the status quo. Often a case wasn't presented to justify their point of view.

**Section B**

Candidates from several centres submitted their Active Citizenship Profile with their script; centres are reminded that, rather than being submitted, Profiles must be stored by the centre in case they are required by AQA. Candidates also need to be aware that examiners do not have access to the Profile, so requests such as 'please see my Profile for further details' are meaningless.

Many candidates clearly found it difficult to apply material from their Profile. In some cases this was because they chose material that was inappropriate for discussing active citizenship, for example, 'writing an essay on a citizenship topic'. It was, however, clear that many excellent tasks had been carried out, with both centres and candidates developing citizenship skills in innovative ways that clearly benefited communities. Many candidates were enthusiastic about what they had achieved, but some produced descriptive accounts that did not achieve great success in answering set questions. Candidates should be encouraged to read all the questions in Section B before starting their answers, and to work out which activities are most appropriate to refer to in which answers. The instruction at the start of this section is clear, 'You should refer to your Active Citizenship Profile when answering this section'. It is expected that the profile should contribute to all four parts of Question 4.

**Question 05**

There was much confusion over what was meant by 'a knowledge', with some candidates concentrating on skills such as advocacy. Many candidates also did not explain how they had developed knowledge, simply saying that they had researched something. They were perhaps assuming it would be taken as read that this meant an internet search. Candidates should be

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encouraged to note their sources on their profile; which web sites were visited or books were read; which were most informative and why. Many candidates also did not show how their knowledge was applied in the task, with tasks sometimes not mentioned or only briefly described. Many candidates did not achieve full marks due to their failure to identify specific knowledge that related to a specific task or action. Candidates need to be aware that there is a knowledge base relating to citizenship and that this knowledge relates to broad concepts and specific skills that enable citizens to become active citizens.

**Question**

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Responses to this question were of variable quality. Many were able to draw out a range of advantages and disadvantages but fewer were able to relate these to their own activities. Points made by many included control of time and resources and the need to develop ideas through discussion. Candidates need to be aware of the range of skills that are relevant to citizenship and become more confident in the use of citizenship terminology.

**Question**

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Some responses discussed local decision making, for example in relation to parks and other amenities, in ways that showed good knowledge of local issues and a degree of reflection on the involvement of local people. Many appeared to write generically about a local community and didn't often progress much beyond a generalised response. The term 'ordinary citizens' was interpreted by some to include councillors. Stronger response made points regarding the potential for conflicts of interest, the pursuit of sectional interests, the self-selection of individuals and the degree to which they could represent local opinion. The best responses did make reference to the ways in which ordinary citizens are already involved in local decision making.

**Question**

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This question required candidates to write about three distinct elements. Firstly they needed to explain the term 'active citizen'. Secondly they had to relate the active citizen to the democratic process. Thirdly they had to integrate any tasks they had been involved with to the active citizenship and the democratic process involved. Many candidates neglected to refer explicitly to their own active citizenship work, but of these a pleasing number showed the ability to discuss a range of issues relating to citizenship and democracy. Relatively few had a narrow conception of citizenship as voting and obeying the law. Many discussed active citizenship making references to pressure groups, charity work and a wide range of other activities. A small number argued against the claim, basing their discussion on the nature of representative democracy.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html) page of the AQA Website. <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>