



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 6761

Specification A

GSA6 Society, Politics and the Economy

Mark Scheme

2006 examination – June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Unit 6 (GSA6 Society, Politics and the Economy)

INTRODUCTION

The nationally agreed assessment objectives in the QCA Subject Criteria for General Studies are:

- AO1** Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines.
- AO2** Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
- AO3** Marshal evidence and draw conclusions; select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.
- AO4** Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge and of the relationship between them, appreciating their limitations.

All mark schemes will allocate a number or distribution of marks for some or all of these objectives for each question according to the nature of the question and what it is intended to test.

Note on AO2

In all instances where quality of written communication is being assessed this must take into account the following criteria:

- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter;
- organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate; and
- ensure text is legible and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

Note on AO4

In previous General Studies syllabuses, there has been a focus on the knowledge and understanding of facts (AO1), and the marshalling and evaluation of evidence (AO3) – on what might be called ‘first-order’ knowledge. AO4 is about understanding what counts as knowledge; about how far knowledge is based upon facts and values; and about standards of proof – what might be called ‘second-order’ knowledge.

By ‘different types of knowledge’ we mean *different ways of getting knowledge*. We might obtain knowledge by fine measurement, and calculation. This gives us a degree of certainty. We might obtain it by observation, and by experiment. This gives us a degree of probability. Or we might acquire it by examination of documents and material remains, or by introspection – that is, by canvassing our own experiences and feelings. This gives us a degree of possibility. In this sense, knowledge is a matter of degree.

Questions, or aspects of them, which are designed to test AO4 will therefore focus on such matters as:

- analysis and evaluation of the nature of the knowledge, evidence or arguments, for example, used in a text, set of data or other form of stimulus material;
- understanding of the crucial differences between such things as knowledge, belief or opinion, and objectivity and subjectivity in arguments;
- appreciation of what constitutes proof, cause and effect, truth, validity, justification, and the limits to these;
- recognition of the existence of personal values, value judgements, partiality and bias in given circumstances;
- awareness of the effects upon ourselves and others of different phenomena, such as the nature of physical, emotional and spiritual experiences, and the ability to draw upon and analyse first-hand knowledge and understanding of these.

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR SECTION A

Level of response	Mark range	Criteria and descriptors: knowledge, understanding, argument, evaluation, communication
LEVEL 3	7-8 (-9)	A good to comprehensive response demonstrating overall grasp of the range and nature of issues; knowledge and understanding of key principles and evidence; interprets and illustrates arguments coherently and convincingly with fluency and accuracy.
LEVEL 2	4-5-6	A modest to quite good attempt showing some competence and grasp of the issues; some understanding and realisation of key principles; moderate arguments and exemplification; reasonable clarity and accuracy of expression.
LEVEL 1	1-2-3	A bare to limited response showing uncertain grasp, knowledge and understanding; lack of clarity of argument and little appropriate exemplification; weak expression.
LEVEL 0	0	No valid response or relevance to the question.

Distribution of marks across the questions and assessment objectives for Section A

Question Numbers	1	2	3	4	AO marks for Section A
Assessment Objectives AO1	1	1	1	1	4
AO2	1	1	1	1	4
AO3	3	4	3	1	11
AO4	4	2	4	6	16
Total marks per Question	9	8	9	9	35

Note: It is the questions themselves which are designed to elicit the range of response appropriate to the assessment objectives for each question. Examiners are required to assign each of the candidates' responses to the most appropriate level according to **its overall quality**, then allocate a single mark within the level.

GSA UNIT 6 CASE STUDY SUMMARY OF EXTRACTS JUNE 2006

THE 2005 GENERAL ELECTION

EXTRACT A *Data on the 2005 General Election*

Figure 1 **How Britain has voted since the war**

The graphic shows that Labour have won the last three general elections and 9 out of the 17 held since the war. Usually the party with the most overall votes forms the government, but not always (e.g. 1951). Significant gains in the popular vote made by the Liberal Democrats at the expense of the other two main parties since 1974 have not always been translated into winning seats (viz. 1983).

Figure 2 **National turnout 1945-2005**

Shows a significant fall in the turnout of voters during the last two general elections.

Figure 3 **Votes and seats in the 2005 UK General Election by region**

The regional figures show Labour dominance in the North of England in particular, as well as Scotland and Wales, a more even distribution between Labour and Conservative in the Midlands and Conservative dominance in South, South East and South West. Labour tends to win seats in the big cities and the Conservatives in rural areas. Lib Dem strength is mostly in the South West and in this election the Lib Dems gained mostly from Labour in university seats and some cities.

Because of the UK's 'first-past-the-post' system the correlation between number of votes cast and seats gained is not strong. This is shown most strongly in the difference between the number of votes cast for the Conservatives (greater than Labour in England) and the number of seats gained. Also perhaps in the votes (23%) for Lib Dems compared with their number of seats (9.6%). The total Labour vote of 9.56m represents only 21.6% of the total electorate, but it is extremely difficult for minority parties to gain any representation at all.

Turnout tends to be higher in rural areas and in the South than in the cities and in the North.

Figure 4 **How Britain voted in 2005 by sex, socio-economic class and age**

Significant differences are shown in the percentage of women voting Labour as opposed to Conservative, the overall percentage vote of the ABC1 group as opposed to C2DE and the much higher Labour vote in this latter group, and the older you are, the more likely you are to vote and also to vote Conservative.

EXTRACT B *Should it be Tweedledum . . . or Tweedledee?*

Discusses the differences between the two main political parties and suggests that there is almost total consensus on the major economic issues that used to dominate political debate – inflation, unemployment, taxation, interest rates, public ownership. However, much emphasis is still placed in the manifestos upon what are now minor differences on taxation, public spending, personal saving, and public sector management to highlight contrasting positions on virtually all issues, including health and education, as well as the economy.

Suggests that in comparison with earlier generations both the 2005 manifestos have a historically distinct Conservative flavour to them. They are both pro-business and the old Labour shibboleths of social intervention and partnership with the Trade Unions have disappeared and have been replaced with Tory-sounding talk of globalisation, free trade, deregulation and competition.

Are both more rhetoric than reality? The Conservatives talk tough about the EU and abolishing regulation, but there is an absence of specific promises to repeal legislation. Both intend to increase tax and public spending and Tory cuts would only reduce public spending by £12b (2%) as their figures also include intended Labour savings of £21b. Differences in tax policies are even smaller and these are expected to rise under either party. Aggregate differences in their plans are smaller than the margins of error in forecasts.

Poses the question whether the differences will mean anything at all and suggests they would in terms of the powers of the state, in the abolition of quangos etc or a freeze on Civil Service recruitment, but on the other hand the state's role is likely to increase under either party with increased spending on 'the big three' programmes of health, education and pensions.

Suggests that the old socialist heights of the economy – car manufacturing, steelworks and coalmines – have been replaced by a new socialism in the form of state control over the current heights of hospitals, schools, universities and savings institutions.

EXTRACT C *Election? I can't say anyone round here has really noticed*

Discusses reasons why Liverpool Riverside continues to have the lowest turnout in UK general elections. Suggested reasons include:

all politicians talk rubbish, Liverpool FC success in European Cup more important, dull election campaign, no campaigning, Labour bound to get in, no party to support (Iraq war), nothing to vote for, waste of time voting, large number of students who vote at home, poorer people not engaged by system.

EXTRACT D *It's best to leave politics to the oldies*

Entirely logical why young people are less inclined to vote than older people: typical issues are not ones to engage young people, e.g. there is no conscription, 'no' censorship, but general freedom to do as you please – sex, drink etc. People vote on issues which touch them, e.g. health, schools, immigration, crime and pensions.

Young people rarely visit hospital, don't have children, are only occasionally affected by crime, pay little tax, don't own houses, are too young to worry about pensions, are more likely to have friends from ethnic minorities. One issue to attract students is HE tuition fees which explains why Lib Dems have done well in university seats.

That young people don't vote now doesn't mean they will never vote when they have issues like schooling, mortgages, tax bills and health problems to worry about.

EXTRACT E *The reason the polls swing all over the place*

There are more polling companies than there used to be and they use different systems and politicians pay a lot of attention to them, regardless of what they say. Why do swings occur when little emerges to change people's opinions?

One reason is that commentators like to find new things to emphasise and swings tend merely to reflect findings of different companies' polls. Another is that samples struggle to be genuinely random/representative; they are likely to show some bias, e.g. people at home rather than at work. Some people won't reveal who they will vote for or don't tell the truth. In the recent past the Conservative vote has been underestimated, so various adjustments are made to allow for previous patterns to be repeated, e.g. people voting the way they did last time.

Polls struggle to reflect the peculiarities of different constituencies, which is a key feature of the UK system and they cannot take account of their own impact.

YouGov is commissioned by *The Daily Telegraph* and its methodology is promoted by them. They claim greater accuracy via use of the internet(!?) during the last election, and correctly predicted the outcome of *Pop Idol* and the Tory leadership contest. The figure shows immediate support for the Conservatives at the time of the election announcement drifting away as the election day approaches.

EXTRACT F *Media coverage of the 2005 election and what the papers said*

Shows the distribution of election coverage (TV, radio and newspapers) in terms of issues, approaches and personalities. The major emphasis appears very much on the process and approaches of the parties rather than the issues/policies themselves.

A range of Sunday and daily newspapers declare their support for the parties of their choice with a few brief reasons. The *Daily Express* adopts an interesting position after the results.

SECTION A**1 Outline briefly what the data in Extract A (Figures 1 to 4) tell us about voting patterns and the system of Parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom.****(9 marks)****Relevant points which might be made on each of the figures are:**

The graphic shows that Labour have won the last three general elections and 9 out of the 17 held since the war. Usually the party with the most overall votes forms the government, but not always (e.g. 1951). Similarly, in 2005 Labour gained marginally more votes over the Conservatives in the UK, but approaching twice as many seats. In England, Labour gained fewer votes than the Conservatives overall, but nearly fifty per cent more seats. The Liberal Democrats have gained votes, and eventually seats, at the expense of the other two main parties over the last two decades, but again winning votes is not always translated into seats.

Figure 2 shows a significant fall in the percentage of voters during the last two general elections. The turnout increased slightly in 2005 (and this was put down to the introduction of postal voting, but there were numerous problems with this system and accusations of fraud).

The regional data in **Figure 3** show Labour dominance in the North of England in particular, as well as in Scotland and Wales, a more even distribution between Labour and Conservative in the Midlands, and Conservative dominance in South, South East and South West. Labour tends to win seats in the big cities and the Conservatives in rural areas. Lib Dem strength is mostly in the South West (and in this election the Lib Dems gained mostly from Labour in university seats and some cities).

Because of the UK's 'first-past-the-post' system the correlation between number of votes cast and seats gained is not strong. This is shown most strongly in the difference between the number of votes cast for the Conservatives (greater than Labour in England) and the number of seats gained. Also perhaps in the votes (23%) for Lib Dems compared with their number of seats (9.6%). The total Labour vote of 9.56m represents only 21.6% of the total electorate, but it is extremely difficult for minority parties to gain any representation at all.

Turnout tends to be higher in rural areas and in the South than in the cities and in the North.

In **Figure 4** significant differences are shown in the percentage of women voting Labour as opposed to Conservative, the overall percentage vote of the ABC1 group as opposed to C2DE and the much higher Labour vote in this latter group, and the older you are, the more likely you are to vote and also to vote Conservative.

The abilities being tested are to select and summarise efficiently and effectively the key elements of the data relevant to the question. A candidate who makes some coherent comments on the relationship between votes and seats and each of the figures should be eligible for Level 3 marks. A reasonable range of points, but not necessarily comprehensive discussion, should qualify for Level 2 marks.

It may be feasible to think in terms of awarding 1 mark for each valid and coherent point, including others not covered above, as well as for development of ideas, use of argument or illustration, depth of comment, consideration of the nature of the evidence or concepts (AO4). The number of ticks need not however equal the final mark awarded, which should reflect the overall grasp and quality of the candidate's response to the question, as reflected in the General Mark Scheme criteria.

2 Using Extract B, discuss the key differences and similarities between the Conservative and Labour parties in the 2005 general election.

(8 marks)

Extract B discusses the differences between the two main political parties and suggests that there is almost total consensus on the major economic issues that used to dominate political debate – inflation, unemployment, taxation, interest rates, public ownership. However, much emphasis is still placed in the manifestos upon what are now relatively minor differences on taxation, public spending, personal saving, and public sector management, to highlight contrasting positions on virtually all issues, including health and education, as well as the economy.

A suggestion is that, in comparison with earlier generations, both the 2005 manifestos have a distinct ‘Conservative’ flavour to them. They are both pro-business and the old Labour shibboleths of social intervention and partnership with the Trade Unions have disappeared to be replaced with ‘Tory-sounding talk’ of globalisation, free trade, deregulation and competition.

Are both more rhetoric than reality? The Conservatives talk tough about the EU and abolishing regulation, but there is an absence of specific promises to repeal legislation. Both parties intend to increase tax and public spending and Tory cuts would only reduce public spending by £12b (2%) as their figures also include intended Labour savings of £21b. The Conservatives are claiming they would spend £1.3b a year more on pensions, police and defence. Differences in tax policies are even smaller and these are expected to rise under either party. Aggregate differences in their plans are smaller than the margins of error in forecasts.

The author poses the question whether the differences will mean anything at all but suggests they would in terms of the loss of state control in the abolition of quangos etc or a freeze on Civil Service recruitment. On the other hand the state’s role is likely to increase under either party with increased spending on ‘the big three’ programmes of health, education and pensions.

Extract B concludes by suggesting that the old socialist heights of the economy – car manufacturing, steelworks and coalmines – have been replaced by a new form of socialism represented by central control over the current heights of hospitals, schools, universities and savings institutions.

The key abilities being tested are understanding of the complex arguments of the passage and the extent to which the differences between the parties’ policies are real. Candidates may go on to remark that there are inevitably differences between what parties say they will do in a manifesto and their ability to keep to these promises when in power.

It may be feasible to think in terms of awarding 1 mark for each valid and coherent point, including others not covered above, as well as for development of ideas, use of argument or illustration, depth of comment, consideration of the nature of the evidence or concepts (AO4). The number of ticks need not however equal the final mark awarded, which should reflect the overall grasp and quality of the candidate’s response to the question, as reflected in the General Mark Scheme criteria.

3 Using Extracts C and D and relevant data from Extract A (Figure 4), suggest reasons why almost 40 per cent of the electorate as a whole chose not to vote in 2005 and why the proportion of younger non-voters was even higher.

(9 marks)

There are two dimensions to this question: why people choose not to vote and why this is more prevalent amongst younger voters. There are plenty of suggestions for the first in Extract C, the second in Extract D and supporting indicators for both in the data.

Relevant points from **Extract C** might include:

- first-past-the post-system does not encourage involvement in constituencies where result is almost a foregone conclusion ('Labour bound to get in' in Riverside, 'waste of time voting')
- general disaffection with politics and politicians ('all politicians talk rubbish', 'dull election campaign', wish to support neither main party – 'Iraq war', 'nothing to vote for', 'poorer people don't feel connected to the system')
- little interest from politicians ('no campaigning', concentrate efforts on marginal seats, less transient populations like students, where votes will count more)

Relevant points from **Extract D** might include:

- entirely logical why young people less inclined to vote than older people: typical issues are not ones to engage young people
- people vote on issues which touch them, e.g. health, schools, immigration, crime and pensions; young people rarely visit hospital, don't have children, are only occasionally affected by crime, pay little tax, don't own houses, are too young to worry about pensions, are more likely to have friends from ethnic minorities. (One issue to attract students is HE tuition fees which explains why Lib Dems have done well in university seats.)

Supporting indicators from the data might include:

- in UK system extremely difficult for minority parties to gain representation
- turnout tends to be higher in more affluent/rural areas and in the South than in poorer areas in the cities and in the North
- ABC1 socio-economic groups more likely to vote than C2DE
- the older you are, the more likely you are to vote (directly supports Extract D)
- the older you are, the more likely you are to vote Conservative (is Conservative vote in terminal decline?)

Credit may also be given for any other valid arguments.

A reasonable range of points from Extracts C and D addressing both dimensions of the non-voting issue should be sufficient for a candidate to gain reasonable Level 2 marks with Level 3 perhaps reserved for detailed answers which offer a degree of synthesis and successfully integrate points from both extracts and the data.

4 With reference to Extracts E and F and any other of the extracts, discuss to what extent opinion polls and the media influence the way in which people vote.

(9 marks)

This is a different kind of question which requires candidates to speculate on the data and information rather than draw directly from them. Because of the latent uncertainty of the knowledge to answer the question the main assessment objective is AO4.

Points which relate to the extracts are:

- individual newspapers support political parties, but most do so historically and it is reasonable to assume that readers choose them in part for their political leanings
- exceptions to this might be *The Sun* (the largest selling daily, although its sales are less than 4m) which switched its allegiance from Conservative to Labour in 1997 and *The Independent* which might claim independence, although it suggested vote either Lib Dem or anti-Conservative
- one or two papers in addition suggested tactical voting to strengthen opposition and this might appeal to individual voters
- radio and television, particularly BBC and ITN, would justifiably claim independence but generally go to great lengths to criticise policies, plans, campaigns, presentation and to highlight controversies, blunders etc
- the main parties make much use of the media with elaborate and expensive campaign and presentation strategies, daily briefings, advertisements, broadcasts etc and how leaders come across in the media (their image) is crucial in increasing or decreasing popularity (Extract F suggests that 40% of media coverage focuses on analysing these elements more than actual policy issues.)
- opinion polls have often been wrong or at least not very accurate, although during this election their methods appear to have improved and they remained fairly accurate and reliable
- trends in opinion polls might be used to mobilise uncertain or reluctant voters and might exert influence at the margins (fear factor?), but the UK electoral system is particularly susceptible to marginal shifts.

Overall wisdom about the influence of the media is that they are mainly channels through which impressions pass and the audience accepts or rejects what they see and hear according to their predispositions. It is up to the politicians therefore to persuade through their arguments and presentation. However where there is a general climate or mood for change the media can be seen to accelerate the process. In this light the *Daily Express*' choice of post-election comment might be more than just 'sour grapes'?

It may be feasible to think in terms of awarding a mark for each valid and coherent point but the number of ticks need not equal the final mark awarded, which should reflect the overall grasp and quality of the candidate's response to the question, as reflected in the General Mark Scheme criteria. This is most likely not an easy question for candidates to handle and answers which show sophistication and maturity of judgement should be rewarded highly.

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR A2 ESSAYS

The essay questions in *General Studies A* are designed to test the four assessment objectives (see INTRODUCTION above) as follows:

AO1 – 6 marks AO2 – 5 marks AO3 – 7 marks AO4 – 7 marks **Total – 25 marks**

Each answer should be awarded two separate marks, comprising a mark out of 20 for content. (Assessment Objectives 1, 3 and 4) and a mark out of 5 for communication (Assessment Objective 2).

The mark for content should be awarded on the basis of the overall level of the candidate's response in relation to the following general criteria and descriptors for each level.

Level of response	Mark range	Criteria and descriptors for Assessment Objectives 1, 3 and 4: knowledge, understanding, argument and illustration, evaluation.
LEVEL 4	16 – 20 (5)	Good response to the demands of the question: sound knowledge of material (AO1); clear understanding and appreciation of topic, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO4); valid arguments and appropriate illustrations, coherent conclusion (AO3).
LEVEL 3	11 – 15 (5)	Competent attempt at answering the question: relevant knowledge (AO1); reasonable understanding and appreciation of topic, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO4); some fair arguments and illustrations, attempt at a conclusion (AO3).
LEVEL 2	6 – 10 (5)	Limited response to the demands of the question: only basic knowledge (AO1); modest understanding and appreciation of topic, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO4); limited argument and illustration, weak conclusion (AO3).
LEVEL 1	1 – 5 (5)	Inadequate attempt to deal with the question: very limited knowledge (AO1); little understanding and appreciation of topic, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO4); little or no justification or illustration, inadequate overall grasp (AO3).
LEVEL 0	0	No response or relevance to the question.

The mark for communication (AO2) should be awarded using the following scale and criteria.

5 marks	Clear and effective organisation and structure, fluent and accurate expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4 marks	Clear attempt at organisation and structure, generally fluent and accurate expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3 marks	Some organisation and structure evident, variable fluency, occasional errors in expression, punctuation and grammar.
2 marks	Limited organisation and structure, little fluency, a number of errors in expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1 mark	Lacking organisation, structure and fluency, frequent errors in expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
0 marks	No response.

Note: A totally irrelevant response (Level 0) should also receive 0 marks for communication. A brief and inadequate response (Level 1) should be awarded not more than 2 marks and a limited response (Level 2) normally not more than 3 marks for communication. Responses at Level 3 and 4 for content may be awarded up to 5 marks for communication.

SECTION B

- 5 Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of changing the current system of electing United Kingdom Members of Parliament to one based on proportional representation. (25 marks)**

In a good answer candidates might be expected to explain what proportional representation (PR) is (or can be) and to demonstrate how it contrasts with the present First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) method of electing MPs. Then to go on to discuss the perceived advantages and disadvantages of either method in overall terms. They are not asked for their opinion, but should not be penalised for giving it provided that they justify their view in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Knowledge of the variety and complexity of different systems and their application should be rewarded, but in a General Studies context candidates should not go into too much technical detail and should concentrate on the general question and issues in hand.

Points that might be made include:

PR is the principle behind a number of electoral systems, all of which attempt to ensure that the outcome of the election reflects the proportion of support gained by each competing group.

PR contrasts to the FPTP principle, in which whichever party or candidate wins the most votes within any given constituency wins that contest outright. This is the system that is used for the election of MPs to the House of Commons, but other systems are used for different purposes within parties including alternative vote, bloc vote and various single member constituency systems.

Similarly, there are a number of different UK electoral systems based on PR. The party-list PR system is used for the European Parliament, Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly's regional elections. The single transferable vote system is used for Northern Ireland Assembly elections.

Arguments cited in favour of a change from FPTP to PR include:

- fairer treatment of minority parties and independent candidates
- fewer votes 'wasted', as fewer people's preferences aren't taken into account
- greater effective choice for voters. By reducing the dominance of the large parties, PR may encourage turn-out and reduce voter apathy
- by rarely producing an absolute majority for one party, PR ensures greater continuity of government and requires greater consensus in policy-making.

Arguments cited against PR include:

- provides a route for extremists into the political mainstream, who would otherwise be excluded by the structure of FPTP
- produces 'weak' coalition governments rather than 'strong' majority governments, which can lead to indecision, compromise and even legislative paralysis. It can also reduce accountability to voters, as an ousted party of government can reinstall itself by finding new coalition partners after an election
- adoption of list systems breaks the link between the elected representative and his or her constituency
- greater complexity and choice that PR allows can put voters off voting, by requiring them to have a greater knowledge of individual and party positions
- considerable variety and complexity of systems.

There is also an institutional paradox built in to the British political system, working against the adoption of PR. Any party that comes to power under FPTP is likely to appreciate the advantages that it gives to the Government: a strong mandate, (usually) a lack of coalition partners, and considerable freedom of action. Therefore, arrival in government under FPTP is likely to dampen any party's enthusiasm for PR – as some suggested was the case with Labour in 1997, who had promised a referendum on PR on coming into power.

General notes adapted from article on Proportional Representation

www.politics.co.uk

6 The fact that the number of men elected to Parliament in 2005 outnumbered women by 4 to 1 might suggest that little progress has been made in equal opportunities for women in the United Kingdom.

To what extent do you think this is the case and what more could or should be done to increase women's role and status in public life?

(25 marks)

Although the question focuses on the small number of women in Parliament, it has been broadened out to allow candidates to show their awareness of issues to do with the role of women in public life and the extent to which progress has or has not been made in equal opportunities for women across the employment spectrum. At the highest level it calls for some knowledge of the participation and role of women in recent years, the gains which have been made (including in Parliament) and what has contributed to these, and what more could or should be done to bring about further changes, if the candidate feels they are desirable.

We should not expect too much detail here, but it would be reasonable for candidates to point to women's growing achievements and increasing occupation of senior positions in education, work and other areas of public life, supported by equal opportunities legislation and increasing provision for maternity leave and childcare. In comparison there has been a lack of progress in some distinctive area such as, for example, the judiciary, the stock exchange and national politics, despite increasing numbers of highly educated women with better qualifications.

The best candidates will be aware that some progress has been made. In the run-up to the 1997 election the Labour Party introduced a series of all-women shortlists. The number of female Labour MPs almost doubled from 62 to 121. This has helped, in part, to push so-called 'women's issues' higher up the political agenda – with childcare, flexible working, maternity and paternity issues and even domestic violence more prominent. The Liberal Democrats have also made some progress in introducing new women MPs, but the Conservatives very little.

The use of all-women short lists is controversial and the loss of a 19 000 majority in Blaenau Gwent was one of the biggest upsets for the Labour Party in the 2005 general election. Critics argue that the selection of candidates must be based on merit and not gender. For them, achieving representation for men and women does not have to mean equal numbers of male and female MPs.

The counter-argument is that this ignores the reality that women are less able to succeed because of discrimination in the selection process. According to the Equal Opportunities Commission, in 1997 half of the aspiring candidates short-listed in every safe Labour seat were women and yet only one in ten selected a woman (EOC 2001). This low number would appear to indicate male bias within the selection process. Positive action should therefore be seen as a necessary precursor to rectify this. Better training and support for potential women candidates might also help women to secure more positions.

Another further argument is that the presence of greater numbers of women in senior positions will change the practice and nature of politics and other male-dominated institutions, rather than simply emulate what men have currently done. Parliament and the Police with their long-established male-dominated traditions have proved to be hostile and unsupportive environments for many women, both physically and psychologically. Increasing the number of women MPs above 20 per cent, for example, could help to combat this atmosphere by looking again at how Parliament operates (and male MPs behave), and further reform to the working hours and practices of this and other similar male-dominated institutions could help to make them more 'family-friendly'.

Statistics also show that more equal representation can make a difference: the increased presence of women MPs could help to increase political activism among women. In seats where a woman MP was elected in 2001, turnout among women was 4 per cent higher than men, with no apparent negative impact on male turnout.

Notes partly adapted from an article published by the Institute of Public Policy Research
www.ippr.org.uk

- 7 By 2011 the number of people in the United Kingdom aged over 65 is expected to be greater than the number under 16. Discuss the implications of this change for the UK economy and society.**

(25 marks)

This question echoes the major theme of the Case Study set in January 2005, so candidates who have studied this should have some ideas on which to base a response.

The relevant issues include:

- The average age of the population is likely to continue increasing and the so-called dependent population is increasing over those in work, mainly those over 21, who pay taxes to sustain them.
- Life expectancy has increased by 6 years for males during the past 30 years and 5 years for females, although on average females live 5 years longer than males. Higher earning and qualified groups live longer than lower paid, less skilled groups by a difference of 5-7 years at the extremes. These groups are healthier, fitter and better able to provide for their own health and expenditure needs.
- At the same time social protection benefits have risen over the past 10 years with expenditure on old-age related benefits almost twice what it was in the 1990s and on sickness and health care almost 50% higher. Over 75% of benefit expenditure is currently in these two categories and both can be expected to rise further in the future. The issue is how this projected increase is to be paid for.
- The demand for trained healthcare staff can also be expected to continue to rise, so there are educational and training implications as well.
- At the other end of the spectrum there are fewer under 16s to provide for which will require fewer teachers, paediatric nurses etc and enable some funds to be re-allocated.
- However the old people of the future will have gone through different life experiences (e.g. less job security, more single people, more caring for longer-living parents, delayed inheritance) which may change future trends, as well as there being more general uncertainties connected with estimating future needs and costs.
- The structure of social protection benefits and health care provision are changing already and are likely/will have to change further in the future, which will also affect future costs.

Ways to tackle the problems:

- Delay retirement age and reduce state pension entitlements.
- Increase private saving and pension schemes.
- Increase NI contributions and taxes to raise revenue.
- Increase investment in health services, education and training of future staff.
- More effective health promotion – dietary habits, recreation and physical fitness, banning smoking in public places.
- More effective promotion of the family and family values to encourage home care.
- Improved efficiency and effectiveness in education and health services.
- Better targeting of treatments and services for key groups, e.g. young people and those more at risk
- More use of preventive medicine, e.g. health screening, and speedier treatment of identified problems.

8 In the 2005 general election, topics like transport and the environment received minimal coverage.

Discuss the reasons why transport and environmental issues are difficult to address and what measures can be taken to improve the United Kingdom's record in these areas.

(25 marks)

The main question is in two parts: why are transport and environmental issues difficult (for politicians) to address and the range of measures that can be taken to improve matters. Stronger candidates will be able to make the link in the preamble to the failure in implementing original good intentions by referring to some specific examples, like road building, airport development, housing, CO₂ reduction, fuel tax. In such a difficult area candidates are not being asked to solve the problems, merely to suggest ways in which they may be addressed.

Difficult to address:

- in the broadest sense there are few attractive solutions available to both politicians and the public
- nearly all measures involve restrictions to individual and public behaviour, limits to consumption and economic restraints, like increased costs, taxes and barriers to growth
- some of the problems are global rather than national and involve international cooperation, trust, concerted action (e.g. climate change measures)
- most voters claim to be concerned about environmental issues, especially young people, but don't necessarily want to give up their individual privileges (e.g. car usage)
- time scale – significant differences/benefits unlikely to be apparent for years/decades and politicians tend to be more interested in short term gains.

What could be done (and specific barriers):

- convert to cleaner/renewable energy, e.g. hydro, wave, wind, geothermal, nuclear (more expensive, not all feasible, nuclear problematic)
- greater commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions, carbon capture and burial (cost, fossil fuels will run out)
- conservation of resources, e.g. forests, oceans (needs international agreements)
- conservation of energy, reduce waste (less packaging, recycling and composting – incentives/tax polluters?)
- greener transport (alternative fuels being developed but slowly and high cost)
- discourage use of cars and encourage use of public transport (unpopular, capital costs, structural problems)
- reduce production/consumption levels, particularly in developed world (requires economic model not based on growth – how to get people to change?)
- longer-lasting product design rather than built-in obsolescence
- more environmental education and awareness raising
- lobby MPs, join Green Party, support effective pressure groups.

There are other relevant points which could be singled out and credit should be given for additional factual information, e.g. reference to Kyoto and Johannesburg Summits, USA policy, industrial development in LEDCs.

Distribution of marks across questions and assessment objectives for Unit 6

Question Numbers		Section A				Section B	AO marks per Unit
		1	2	3	4	5-8	
Assessment Objectives	AO1	1	1	1	1	6	10
	AO2	1	1	1	1	5	9
	AO3	3	4	3	1	7	18
	AO4	4	2	4	6	7	23
Total marks per Question		9	8	9	9	25	60