



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination  
June 2013

# Government and Politics

# GOVP2

## Unit 2 Governing Modern Britain

Thursday 23 May 2013 9.00 am to 10.30 am

**For this paper you must have:**

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

### Time allowed

- 1 hour 30 minutes

### Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Examining Body** for this paper is AQA. The **Paper Reference** is GOVP2.
- Choose **two** topics and answer **all** questions on each topic.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

### Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Questions [0 2] and [0 3], [0 5] and [0 6], [0 8] and [0 9], [1 1] and [1 2] should be answered in continuous prose.

For these questions you will be marked on your ability to:

- use good English
- organise information clearly
- use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

### Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each topic.

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Choose **two** topics and answer **all** questions on each topic.

Each topic carries 40 marks.

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### Topic 1 The British Constitution

Read the extract below and answer questions 

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0	2
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 and 

0	3
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 which follow.

#### Judicial independence

The effective independence of the judiciary provides them with enough autonomous power to leave them free to decide cases according to their understanding of the law: the words in statute, well-known rules of construction and *judicial precedent* (case law). They are free to provide impartial judgements that favour no particular group. If they feel they are unable to be impartial, they must decline to hear the case. Failure to do so may lead to an appeal.

In principle, judicial independence and professional norms should ensure that there is great confidence in the judiciary. In the past, however, judges were said to be reactionary, conservative, or anti-trade union. More recently, they have been accused of being unduly liberal and driven by a human rights agenda that ignores the rights of society to protect itself from threats (criminals, terrorists and asylum seekers). In every generation, critics have agreed that since judges are unelected they should defer to Parliament (and in effect the executive).

Source: adapted from I. BUDGE et al., *The New British Politics*, 4th edn, Pearson Education Limited, © Pearson Education Ltd 2007

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 Explain the term *judicial precedent* used in the extract. (5 marks)
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 Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain reasons why judges may have been accused of being 'driven by a human rights agenda'. (10 marks)
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 'The sources of the British constitution give it both stability and flexibility.' Discuss. (25 marks)

**Topic 2 Parliament**

Read the extract below and answer questions **0 4**, **0 5** and **0 6** which follow.

**The role of Parliament**

Those who think they are being somehow radical by pointing out that Parliament plays a marginal role in the making of policy are in fact being astonishingly conventional. Most studies of the role of Westminster have concluded that it is, at best, of marginal or occasional importance in the making of policy. However, there are times where its role is far more significant, for example in so-called *free votes*, covering topics as diverse as embryo research and hunting. Here, the executive remains neutral and the issues are left to parliamentarians to decide. As a result, rather than being peripheral, the legislature, and the legislators within it, becomes central.

Even without free votes, Parliament plays an important symbolic role in legitimisation: in its various procedures it effectively approves public policies that have been made elsewhere, making them acceptable to citizens.

Source: adapted from P. DUNLEAVY et al., *Developments in British Politics*, 8th edn, 2006, Palgrave Macmillan, reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan

- 0 4** Explain the term *free votes* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- 0 5** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, outline the ways in which Parliament legitimises public policies. (10 marks)
- 0 6** 'Select committees provide the most effective means by which Parliament can scrutinise the executive.' Discuss. (25 marks)

**Turn over for the next question**

**Turn over ►**

### Topic 3 The Core Executive

Read the extract below and answer questions **0 7**, **0 8** and **0 9** which follow.

#### Civil servants and ministers

The private office of a minister consists of a private secretary and up to three assistant secretaries. It acts as a link between the ministers and their departments and organises most of their working day – listening in on telephone calls, fixing appointments and briefing them. The office sifts the papers coming into the department and decides which papers and delegations the minister should see. A decision to refer a matter to a minister depends on its sensitivity, demands on resources, need for political judgement, and uncertainty about the minister's reactions. An essential part of the policy-making role of *senior civil servants* is to know a minister's mind.

These civil servants spend perhaps a fifth of their time on work relating to Parliament: for example, preparing for parliamentary questions, drawing up legislation, drafting speeches and handling the correspondence with MPs. It is not surprising, therefore, that the civil servants sometimes appear cautious.

Source: adapted from D. KAVANAGH, *British Politics: Continuities and Change*, 4th edn, Oxford University Press, by permission of Oxford University Press

- 0 7** Explain the term *senior civil servants* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- 0 8** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why it is not surprising that 'the civil servants sometimes appear cautious'. (10 marks)
- 0 9** 'The office of prime minister is what its holder chooses and is able to make of it.' Discuss. (25 marks)

#### Topic 4 Multi-level Governance

Read the extract below and answer questions 

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1	1
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 and 

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 which follow.

##### The powers of local government

To risk a crude but valid generalisation, the private sector is mainly about products, local government mainly about services, and central government mainly about policy. The fact that there are only about half a million central government civil servants, compared to nearly 3 million local government employees, is because central government is not, on the whole, a large-scale provider of services. There are important exceptions but, generally, ministers, and their London-based departments, produce policy not services. They decide, through legislation, what services to provide for citizens, by whom, and how they are to be financed. Others, in the main, do the providing, and throughout the twentieth century by far the biggest providers of services were local councils.

This basic distinction continues today, though local politics and service delivery have been significantly transformed. Councils have lost some of their service powers and responsibilities. The key future role of the *elected local authority* is seen as being the commissioning, rather than the direct provision, of services. Today, councils are working alongside a wide range of other service-providing agencies.

Source: adapted from D. WILSON and C. GAME, *Local Government in the United Kingdom*, 5th edn, 2011, Palgrave Macmillan, reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan

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 Explain the term *elected local authority* used in the extract. (5 marks)
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 Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** ways in which the powers of councils in the provision of services have been 'significantly transformed' over recent decades. (10 marks)
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 'The European Commission remains the dominant institution in the process of EU policy making.' Discuss. (25 marks)

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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