

Mark Scheme (Standardisation) Summer 2008

GCE

GCE Government & Politics (Unit 3/6493)
The Changing UK System

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 |
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| 1(a) | <p>Labour's mandate was considered weak for a several reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Labour government received just over one third of the votes cast. • The turnout was low thus damaging the legitimacy of the mandate. • In comparison with previous governments this was the lowest support a government had received since 1929. • The Labour government's vote in gaining victory was lower than the vote it received when it was heavily defeated in 1983. |

| Level | Mark | Descriptor |
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| Level 1 | 0-1 | Poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Fails to appreciate, understand and comprehend the source. May simply copy out the source in full with no interpretation or political development. |
| Level 2 | 2-3 | Limited to sound knowledge and understanding. Attempts to explain the source. May to an extent repeat or quote from the source but does move to contextualise it and understand its content. The clarification of the source will not be complete or in full. |
| Level 3 | 4-5 | Good or better knowledge and understanding. Clearly shows an informed and comprehensive understanding of the source. Able to consider the points in the source and clarify them. Most or all of the points contained in the source will be covered. |

| Question Number | Indicative content |
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| 1(b) | <p>The source asks 'is it fair the electoral reform is introduced for a range of other elections but not for Westminster'.</p> <p>The source then develops the suggested benefits of electoral reform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The end of conflict style "adversarial" policy making. • The introduction of modernity into UK politics. • It would end governments having majoritarian power based on minority support. Government have no clear mandate to act in this way. • It would end short-termism in policy making and the mismanagement of politics. <p>Own knowledge on the area may develop detail on the issue of the elective dictatorship theory and may broaden out to cover the unfairness of the current FPTP system ranging from the damage inflicted on smaller parties most notable the Liberal Democrats, the falling turnout and political apathy reflected in low turnouts. It may also cover the lack of political legitimacy held by recent governments. The wider claim of electoral reform is that it would invigorate the UK political process and system. Other salient points may be raised suggesting the benefits of electoral reform.</p> |

| Level | Mark | Descriptor |
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| Level 1 | 0-3 | Poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Limited political information. Fails to develop and use the source material effectively; restrictive or poorly defined knowledge. May simply copy out the source in full with no interpretation or political development. |
| Level 2 | 4-6 | Limited to sound knowledge and understanding. Adequate political information. Some points raised in the source will be clarified and discussed. Own knowledge will be introduced and explained. There may be reliance on source only or own knowledge only. Where this is done alone and where there is precision and full comprehension it may reach top of Level 2. |
| Level 3 | 7-10 | Good or better knowledge and understanding. Effective political information. A full clarification of the source coupled with informed and perceptive own knowledge. |

| Question Number | Indicative content |
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| 1(c) | <p>The main UK political parties have held changing views of political reform in recent years. Potential answers may include some of the following:</p> <p>The Labour Party in opposition prior to 1997 seriously considered electoral reform. They produced the Plant Report and in government they commissioned the Jenkins Report. However, a promised referendum on the Jenkins Report was never implemented. They introduced different voting systems for their constitutional reforms (devolution, elected Mayors and the EU Parliament) hence initially Labour were positive about electoral reform. Two main events appear to have modified this enthusiasm. Firstly, their continued success using the FPTP for Westminster. Secondly, the losses they have suffered under differing electoral systems; Scotland, the EU elections, Wales and more recently the London Mayor. Reference may be made to the reform process for the House of Lords and introduction of elections.</p> <p>The Conservative Party has never had leading sections of the party that have considered electoral reform. In opposition since 1997 they have gained greater representation under the AMS system in the devolved assemblies than under the Westminster FPTP system and have been successful in the recent London Mayoral election. This may have softened any outright opposition to different systems. They have no plans if elected to government to change the systems of PR in any area where they have been implemented. However the Conservative Party realises that to change FPTP in Westminster will break the two party monopoly and possibly make single party government impossible. As such, given the recent revival of the Conservative Party they have no policies on electoral reform.</p> <p>The Liberal Democrats have constantly been in favour of electoral reform in all elections. They have constantly campaigned for a change to FPTP for Westminster, a system under which they suffer. Their preferred electoral system is STV. The Liberal Democrats have prospered when different electoral systems have been introduced. The Liberal Democrats see PR for Westminster as their great opportunity to shape the electoral system and influence the process.</p> <p>Other political parties who have gained representation in the UK may favour electoral reform and their attitudes may be referenced.</p> |

| Level | Mark | Descriptor |
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| Level 1 | 0-5 | Poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Limited analysis and evaluation of political information. Little developed or focused awareness how the main UK parties view electoral reform. The response fails to understand the motivation behind each parties' |

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| | | position. May only reference one political party. |
| Level 2 | 6-10 | Limited to sound knowledge and understanding. Adequate analysis and evaluation of political information. Aware of the impact which electoral reform would have for political parties and how it would affect them. The detail may be in outline rather than substantive depth. Possibly may consider only two parties in detail. |
| Level 3 | 10-15 | Good or better knowledge and understanding. Effective analysis and evaluation of political information. Focused and comprehensive awareness that electoral reform would have for political parties and how it would affect them. At least three UK parties are considered and their attitudes clearly specified. |

| Question Number | Indicative content |
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| 1(d) | <p>There are numerous arguments against reform. There are a range of factors that suggest electoral reform could usher in political instability. There are various dangers which may arise from coalitions which could be noted. There is the clear possibility that electoral reform may pander to the growth of extremism and give a voice to sectarianism. Policy making as a result in the legislature will be fragmented and could become less open and democratic. In turn it may be argued that possible political instability will give rise to economic and social instability and this is a great danger that must be avoided.</p> <p>There is no evidence that turnout and participation may increase given recent results for the EU, Mayoral and Devolved elections. Indeed it may be argued that electoral reform will cloud rather than enhance the public's understanding of politics. Accountability may also be a danger both at a national level for policy failure and at a local level if constituency MPs are replaced by various forms of PR. Stagnation and inertia could follow an election with no political party having the ability to implement its ideas. There is also the danger of what type of electoral reform will be introduced and by whom, with the possibility that it seeks to benefit the government of the day rather than the needs of the country in the long term. Other salient and relevant points may be advanced as possible disadvantages of electoral reform.</p> |

| Level | Mark | Descriptor |
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| Level 1 | 0-6 | Poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Limited analysis and evaluation of political information. A clear inability to develop and consider the possible disadvantages of electoral reform. There may be only one point developed with accuracy and detail. Very limited political vocabulary. |
| Level 2 | 7-13 | Limited to sound knowledge and understanding. Adequate analysis and evaluation of political information. Displays an awareness of a range of points which indicate the disadvantages of electoral reform. Some of these points may not be fully developed and evaluated. There may be some material inaccuracies but overall a sound comprehension of issues and topics. |
| Level 3 | 14-20 | Good or better knowledge and understanding. Effective analysis and evaluation of political information. Able to appreciate the possible disadvantages of electoral reform in the UK. Uses credible speculative comments based on logical and informed political insight, these may refer to current electoral changes in the UK. Develops a critique from a range of different perspectives. Good use of political concepts. |

| Question Number | Indicative content |
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| 2(a) | <p>According to the source devolution has not operated smoothly for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was slow to become operational in Northern Ireland where the Stormont Assembly was suspended for some time: a situation which has since been resolved. • The governments plans for regional devolution also took a set back with the rejection of a regional assembly in the North East in 2004; this prevented regional government being 'rolled out' for other areas in England. • Finally the source notes that there has been a lack of 'joined up' or holistic thinking with regard to how a unitary or central state deals with devolved power in an essentially asymmetrical pattern of devolution. |

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| Level 1 | 0-1 | Poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Fails to appreciate, understand and comprehend the source. May simply copy out the source in full with no interpretation or political development. |
| Level 2 | 2-3 | Limited to sound knowledge and understanding. Attempts to explain the source. May to an extent repeat or quote from the source but does move to contextualise it and understand its content. The clarification of the source will not be complete or in full. |
| Level 3 | 4-5 | Good or better knowledge and understanding. Clearly shows an informed and comprehensive understanding of the source. Able to consider the points in the source and clarify them. Most or all of the points contained in the source will be covered. |

| Question Number | Indicative content |
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| 2(b) | <p data-bbox="391 232 1278 300">Devolution has proved to be successful in many areas and there are numerous reasons WHY this is alleged to be the case.</p> <p data-bbox="391 333 1278 501">The source indicates success in terms of policy innovations in Scotland that are different and more suited North of the border. These cover education, health care and electoral systems. Success according to the source in Wales arises from flexibility in health and education.</p> <p data-bbox="391 537 1278 840">The source suggests WHY devolution has been a success is because people like self government and have a differing regional agenda showing differing priorities than the Westminster Parliament, in essence this is the principle of subsidiarity where decisions are taken at their lowest level. The source indicates that the reason why the devolution has been a success is because the devolved assemblies in Wales and Scotland were initially guided and supported by a government of the same party complexion though this situation has since changed.</p> <p data-bbox="391 875 1278 1077">Own knowledge of may advance detail given in the source further. Scotland has differing policy on tuition fees, there are no trust NHS hospitals, there is wider availability of care for the elderly in their own homes and finally local government has been elected using STV. It is alleged that the Scottish notice these differences for the better and this has engineered civic pride.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1113 1278 1214">Wales despite having less power than Scotland has also seen civic pride restored and in an attempt to bolster the process of devolution with increased powers for the assembly.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1249 1278 1350">Both nations have been credited with operating within the EU in a more efficient manner. To date there has been no major discredit to each devolved assembly.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1386 1278 1487">The office of the Mayor of London and the GLA has brought about additional policy innovation with transport policy and the responsibility for the 2012 Olympic Games.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1487 1278 1588">In Northern Ireland devolution has ushered in a period of peace and stability. It can be credited with making a major contribution to the peace process.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1624 1278 1825">The reasons WHY noted above include a revival in national pride, subsidiarity (decisions made at the lowest political level) thus engineering acceptance and raising participation levels. Finally devolution may be considered a success as it has allegedly stalled the quest for independence. The Mayor of London has added civic pride and a sense of regional identity to the capital.</p> |

| Level | Mark | Descriptor |
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| Level 1 | 0-3 | Poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Limited political information. Fails to develop and use the source material effectively; restrictive or poorly defined own knowledge. May |

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| | | simply copy out the source in full with no interpretation or political development. |
| Level 2 | 4-6 | Limited to sound knowledge and understanding. Adequate political information. Some points raised in the source will be clarified and discussed. Own knowledge will be introduced and explained. There may be reliance on source only or own knowledge only. Where this is done alone and where there is precision and full comprehension it may reach top of Level 2. |
| Level 3 | 7-10 | Good or better knowledge and understanding. Effective political information. A full clarification of the source coupled with informed and perceptive own knowledge. |

| Question Number | Indicative content |
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| 2(c) | <p>The Labour Party as the political party who introduced devolution are keen supporters both of the decentralisation of power as a political principle but they also appear to take pride in the constitutional fabric they have weaved. As such there is an element of "end game" surrounding their approach. Certainly as regards Scotland there are no further plans to devolve any more power from Westminster. For Wales an increase of powers for the Assembly is being gradually implemented following the Richards Report. Labour plans for English regional devolution took a knock in November 2004 and have not since been put back on track. Reference may be made to the suggested early referendum on Scottish independence favoured by the leader of the Scottish Labour Party.</p> <p>The Conservative Party back in 1997 were set against devolution but since that nadir have come to accept the process in typical conservative fashion. As regards Scotland there is a ready acceptance of the status quo. It is worth noting that it was PR in Scotland that ushered in the party's revival north of the border. As for Wales in the 2005 manifesto the Conservative Party were keen to roll out another referendum to take a longer term strategic view of the process, with options to end or amend the structure of the Assembly. A growing wave of English independence has at times manifested itself in the Party who have taken more seriously the implications of the so called West Lothian Question and the party is not keen on Scottish MP's influencing English only issues. Malcolm Rifkind proposing an Committee of English only MPs with the sole right to consider and vote on issues which impact on England alone.</p> <p>The Liberal Democrats ever keen on federalism as a concept and a reality have always supported devolution. Perhaps what has endeared them to the process is the system of PR by which the elections are held. This has seen both a revival of their fortunes but most importantly a previous share in devolved government in Scotland with Labour.</p> <p>The SNP have always viewed devolution as a staging post on the road to independence as such devolution for them is a period of transition. The party has probably gained some satisfaction from devolution in that it has placed the party in the first two elections as the official opposition. The last elections allowed the SNP to become the minority government with Alex Salmond as First Minister the party continues to voice a vociferous scepticism of Westminster politics placing Scotland on the sidelines, for the SNP devolution will never satisfy their demands. In office they have promised a referendum on full independence.</p> <p>Plaid Cymru like the SNP has emerged as the main opposition to the Labour Party in Cardiff. The party currently share administrative power with Labour as a result of the One Wales Agreement. However the party has not been as vocal in its demands for independence as the SNP and as such has moved</p> |

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| | <p>more consensually to improve the current devolution arrangements rather than to supersede them.</p> <p>All the UK main parties remain committed to the devolution process in Northern Ireland as the only political way out of the continued problems for the province, and despite the earlier suspension of Stormont all view political dialogue via a devolved assembly as the only way forward. Devolution in Northern Ireland is now accepted by the more extreme elements of nationalism/republicanism and unionism. Indeed the opposing parties in Northern Ireland Sinn Fein and The Democratic Unionists now share power.</p> |
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| Level | Mark | Descriptor |
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| Level 1 | 0-5 | Poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Limited analysis and evaluation of political information. Little developed or focused awareness how UK political parties view the process of devolution. The response fails to understand the motivation behind each parties' position. May only reference one political party. |
| Level 2 | 6-10 | Limited to sound knowledge and understanding. Adequate analysis and evaluation of political information. Aware of the views held by differing political parties over devolution. The detail may be in outline rather than substantive depth. The response may possibly consider only two parties in detail. |
| Level 3 | 11-15 | Good or better knowledge and understanding. Effective analysis and evaluation of political information. A focused and comprehensive awareness of how political parties view devolution. At least three UK political parties are considered and their views clearly specified. |

| Question Number | Indicative content |
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| 2(d) | <p data-bbox="391 232 1278 331">It can be said that devolution in Scotland and Wales has created both advantages and disadvantages. Responses may include some of the following points.</p> <p data-bbox="391 367 1278 943">The advantages cover several issues. Firstly it can be seen to be the democratic wish of both nations and is their political right. Secondly it relieves the pressure on the Westminster Parliament now able to concentrate on other topics and in this process all the nations of the UK will benefit. It can be seen to be the saviour of the Union in that the calls for full independence in Scotland and Wales have since subsided and politically it has satisfied that possible development. This is despite the calls by the SNP in office in Edinburgh for independence. It has allowed a growth of civic pride and has provided differing political solutions apart from the 'one size fits all' options that may have emerged from Westminster. It has allowed differing electoral systems to be introduced which have advanced legitimacy in both Scotland and Wales. Both devolved bodies have functioned well within the EU and are able to advance regional interests. Essentially it demonstrates political pluralism in action and safeguards political stability.</p> <p data-bbox="391 978 1278 1554">The disadvantages have also a wide remit. It has been argued that devolution will begin the road to final independence in a 'much wants more' scenario. As is the current demand of the Scottish government. Sceptics have also pointed to the costs, ranging from the hugely over budget Scottish Parliament to the payment of more political representatives and civil servants. The duplication of politicians is another case in point. It has also been argued that there has not been a full resolution of the West Lothian Question. The spectre of raised nationalism in England is also highlighted. Issues have also surrounded the asymmetrical nature of the devolution process in Scotland and Wales as a source of bitterness for the Welsh Assembly. The declining turnout in 2003 and depressed figures for 2007 did not seem to vindicate the devolution experiment in Scotland and Wales. Indeed the recent elections in Scotland which involved STV for local elections caused much confusion and in the process thousands of spoilt ballot papers.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1590 1278 1821">Other relevant advantages and disadvantages for the devolution process may be advanced and will be credited accordingly. For example, the lack of constitutional entrenchment for the devolved bodies by some is considered a disadvantage in that it makes these bodies vulnerable to a strong Westminster parliament. Conversely some see this as an advantage for it allows flexibility for constitutional innovation.</p> |

| Level | Mark | Descriptor |
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| Level 1 | 0-6 | Poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Limited analysis and evaluation of political information. A clear inability to develop and consider the possible advantages and disadvantages of |

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| | | devolution in Scotland and Wales. There may be only one point developed with accuracy and detail. Very limited political vocabulary. |
| Level 2 | 7-13 | Limited to sound knowledge and understanding. Adequate analysis and evaluation of political information. Displays an awareness of a range of points which indicate the advantages and disadvantages of devolution in Scotland and Wales. Some of these points may not be fully developed and evaluated. There may be some material inaccuracies but overall a sound comprehension of both sides of the debate. |
| Level 3 | 14-20 | Good or better knowledge and understanding. Effective analysis and evaluation of political information. Able to appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of devolution in Scotland and Wales. Able to cite accurately the issues that have arisen in both Scotland and Wales and can in the process make considered analytical judgments based on those facts. Good use of political concepts. |