

Mark Scheme (Pre-Standardisation)

June 2008

GCE

GCE Government and Politics (Unit 6)
Comparative UK and US Politics

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	<p>Candidates should discuss the changing nature of the UK's unitary system and the USA's federal system.</p> <p>It has been claimed that the UK political system is no longer truly unitary as a result of power being relinquished by the UK's central government. Candidates should demonstrate awareness that power has always rested in Westminster and that the government can give and take away power as and when it chooses, the creation and abolition of the GLC being the best modern example. They should also demonstrate awareness that the tendency in recent years has been to give power away in the form of devolution, the pooling of powers with other members of the EU and the incorporation of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) into British law.</p> <p>More sophisticated answers may recognise that, due to referenda, repatriation of devolved powers to Westminster may not be as straightforward as in the past. Similarly, repatriation of powers from the EU is limited by treaties. Conversely, sophisticated answers may point out that devolution does not necessarily inhibit government attempts to influence policy in devolved regions, as demonstrated by the attempts to influence the choice of leader in London and Wales. Similarly, being a signatory to the ECHR did not stop the government from passing legislation which authorised internment in 2001.</p> <p>It has also been claimed that the US system is no longer truly federal as a result of increasing centralisation, culminating in the Great Society programme of the 1960's. Candidates should demonstrate awareness that in the USA the power of the Federal government in Washington DC has expanded well beyond the roles envisaged by the founding fathers and may choose to briefly outline the progression from dual, through co-operative to creative federalism. However, they should also demonstrate awareness that significant powers have remained with the states throughout the nation's history and that since the election of President Nixon the trend has been to limit the power of Washington.</p> <p>More sophisticated answers may explore the twists in the relationship between central and state governments in recent years. States asserted their independence and individuality during the economic boom of the 1990's, initiating policies which often served as a test bed for national policy. Since the economic downturn and terrorist attacks of 2001, states have again demonstrated their dependence on Washington DC and have been directed to follow national policy on homeland security.</p>

Level	Mark	Descriptors
Level 1	1-17	A limited ability to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills learned in the Advanced Subsidiary GCE and in Units 4 and 5

		of this route and some awareness of connections between these different areas of study. A limited level of skill demonstrated in analysis, interpretation and evaluation; arguments and explanations expressed in a less structured manner, making occasional use of political vocabulary and a basic level of written communication. Answers may be unbalanced and make few meaningful comparisons.
Level 2	18-32	A sound ability to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills learned in the Advanced Subsidiary GCE and in Units 4 and 5 of this route and an awareness of connections between these different areas of study. A sound ability in analysis, interpretation and evaluation; arguments and explanations expressed in a structured manner, making some use of political vocabulary and a reasonable level of written communication. Candidates at the top of this range may have demonstrated considerable political knowledge and made appropriate comparisons, but failed to develop a sophisticated argument, preferring to provide an explanation of how one political system works, followed by the other with the conclusions limited to the conclusion.
Level 3	33-50	A high level of ability in drawing together knowledge, understanding and skills learned in the Advanced Subsidiary GCE and in Units 4 and 5 of this route and full understanding of connections between these different areas of study. A high level of skill demonstrated in analysis, interpretation and evaluation; arguments and explanations expressed in a clearly structured manner, making appropriate use of political vocabulary and an excellent standard of written communication. Answers which fail to develop an argument throughout, only drawing comparisons in the conclusion, cannot reach this level, however well expressed.

Question Number	Indicative content,
2	<p>Candidates should demonstrate awareness of the increasingly sharp ideological divisions between the two main parties in the USA on issues such as the right to abortion, minority rights, gun control and environmental regulation.</p> <p>Democrats, even those who personally oppose abortion or gay marriage, support the right of people to make their own life choices; believe that guns should be either regulated or banned; the environment should be regulated and that government should provide support for those who cannot support themselves through no fault of their own e.g. health insurance for those who cannot afford any. On foreign affairs, Democrats place greater emphasis on America building coalitions around its policies than Republicans who object to any restraints on America putting its own interests first.</p> <p>Republicans believe that abortions are immoral; gay marriage undermines families which form the bedrock of society; the 2nd amendment is the ultimate guarantor of freedom; land and water use is best protected by those who use it every day and that the tax system should be used to encourage those who are dependant on support to do more to help themselves e.g. tax rebates to help those who cannot afford healthcare.</p> <p>Meanwhile, in Britain, the two main parties have very similar policies in terms of social polities, economic policy and foreign policy. For example: Privatisation: Although a policy associated with the Conservative Party, New Labour privatised the Air Traffic Control Service; private companies perform operations, such as hip replacements, on behalf of the Health Service and City Academies, run by private organisations, are being rapidly expanded to provide education for the children of Britain’s most deprived communities. Law and order: Although a “tough” law and order policies are associated with the Conservative Party, under New Labour there are record numbers of police, a record number of prisoners and a range of initiatives which by-pass the courts such as ASBO’s and dispersal orders. Taxation: Both the Labour and Conservative parties compete to be seen as the more competent administrators of a free market economy, while maintaining taxes and funding of services at the current level Foreign policy: Although the Conservative Party has been seen as readier to intervene with military force, New Labour has sent the British armed services to fight in Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq Image: even in tone, with David Cameron presenting a kinder gentler image than traditional Conservative leaders, the two main parties appear alike.</p> <p>Candidates may legitimately challenge the statement. It could be argued that the ideological divisions between the parties in the USA are not great, that many factors such as candidate-centred</p>

	<p>campaigns and geographical diversity hinder sharp ideological divisions. This argument can be supported by examples of diversity within parties, such as Michael Bloomberg, the moderate Republican Mayor of New York and socially liberal Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger in California.</p> <p>However, it would be harder to make a case that there is “clear blue water” between the main parties in the UK and, to answer this question well, candidates need to demonstrate awareness of the trend in recent years towards increasing ideological cohesion within each of the main parties in the USA.</p>
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Question Number	Indicative content,
3	<p>Candidates should be aware that there are two phases to the electoral process: selection of candidates and the election.</p> <p>In the selection phase, there is a substantial difference between the US and UK systems. It could be argued that the use of primaries in the USA makes politicians highly responsive to the needs and wishes of voters because:</p> <p>They are more democratic than party leaders deciding on the candidates that voters can choose from at the election, with the possibility that the electorate will not like either of them.</p> <p>As a result of the influence of party leaders being diluted, candidates who would have had little chance of being selected by them may stand for election</p> <p>The competing candidates usually offer a range of policies and election strategies and the result of the primary will provide a strong indication of which approach has the most electoral appeal, especially if independents have been allowed to participate.</p> <p>In the case of open primaries, all voters have the opportunity to participate at this stage of the election process which increases political participation by a wide cross-section of the adult population</p> <p>Conversely, it can be argued that these processes make politicians in the USA less responsive to the needs and wishes of voters than their UK counterparts because:</p> <p>Experienced party leaders may make a more informed decision on suitable candidates for their party than the wider electorate</p> <p>Some candidates may campaign on their personal qualities, trivialising the political issues of the day</p> <p>The primary may be won by the best funded candidate who may not necessarily be the most suitable</p> <p>In the case of open primaries, there is the opportunity for “raiding” by supporters of one party who cross over and vote for a weak candidate of the opposing party</p> <p>In the election phase, three factors may suggest that the US system produces highly responsive candidates:</p> <p>In the USA, the frequency of and character of elections provides more opportunities to “throw the rascals out” and puts the spotlight on each candidate’s record</p> <p>The fixed dates of elections makes it impossible for the majority party to call elections at the most advantageous time, again requiring candidates to defend their records regardless of the political climate</p> <p>US elections, especially Presidential campaigns, are so long, with so many strategies used to deliver the candidates’ messages that there is really no excuse for not knowing who the candidates are and what they stand for. In the UK, party election broadcasts are fairly easily avoided, especially by those who do not watch the news on a regular basis, and election posters and literature are in limited supply in safe seats.</p> <p>Conversely, two factors may suggest that the UK system produces more responsive candidates:</p> <p>In the UK, forms of proportional representation in elections for Devolved Assemblies and in elections to the European Parliament have increased the meaningful choices available to voters as a</p>

	<p>result of the opportunities they provide for smaller parties</p> <p>The structured nature of campaigns means that each candidate has a reasonable chance of their messages being heard, rather than the wealthiest drowning out the rest.</p>
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Level 3	33-50	A high level of ability in drawing together knowledge, understanding and skills learned in the Advanced Subsidiary GCE and in Units 4 and 5 of this route and full understanding of connections between these different areas of study. A high level of skill demonstrated in analysis, interpretation and evaluation; arguments and explanations expressed in a clearly structured manner, making appropriate use of political vocabulary and an excellent standard of written communication. The strongest candidates will demonstrate a recognition of political trends and illustrate their points with relevant, current examples. Answers which fail to develop an argument throughout, only drawing comparisons in the conclusion, cannot reach this level, however well expressed.

Question Number	Indicative content,
4	<p>Candidates should display awareness of ways in which other branches of government check the powers of the Heads of Government, and consider whether these mechanisms have been less effective since 2001.</p> <p>In relation to the UK, issues which could be discussed include:- Limited ability of Parliament to block or amend legislation in the House of Commons, especially if there is effective whipping or the government has a large majority, and the House of Lords being limited to delaying legislation for only one year. In 2003, during the vote on whether to support the invasion of Iraq, the argument that the country's security strengthened the hands of the whips. The same was true of most anti-terrorism legislation but the argument did not prevail in respect of the measure to hold terrorist suspects without charge for 90 days. Ability to hold the government to account both on the floor of the commons and in select committees but a lack of resources and expertise which limits the ability to put ministers under sustained pressure to provide full justifications for their actions/proposals Restrictions on government measures through being a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights have proved ineffective due to the right to derogate. However, the judicial branch has proved willing to challenge government measures passed in the name of the fight against terrorism, such as the indefinite detention in prison of foreign suspected terrorists.</p> <p>In relation to the USA, the range of issues which could be discussed may include:- Separation of powers means that Congress plays a major role in all domestic legislation which is routinely amended or blocked, including the President's budget and flagship legislation. However, in respect of the "War on Terror", Congress has proved extremely reluctant to use these powers. In the low-key, but important, area of scrutiny of the Executive, Congress brings expertise, experience and substantial resources to the role. This was evident in the work of the 9/11 Commission which insisted on being provided with documents and interviewing White House staff despite the President's objections. In the role of ratification of appointments and treaties, the Senate's role can be significant, for example in the rejection of several John Bolton as US ambassador to the UN which has weakened the effectiveness of the US mission. As in the UK, the strongest challenge to the Executive has come from the courts, with the ruling Hamden v. Rumsfeld invalidating the administration's policy of denying constitutional rights to "enemy combatants".</p> <p>Insightful candidates may recognise that the President of the USA combines the positions of Head of Government and Head of State which, at times of crisis, provides an opportunity appear to rise above politics and present a policy agenda as being in the national interest. This can undermine the effectiveness of the system of</p>

	checks and balances, particularly those exercised by Congress. Hence, perhaps, the greater effectiveness of Parliament despite having less powers available to it than Congress.
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Level 3	33-50	A high level of ability in drawing together knowledge, understanding and skills learned in the Advanced Subsidiary GCE and in Units 4 and 5 of this route and full understanding of connections between these different areas of study. A high level of skill demonstrated in analysis, interpretation and evaluation; arguments and explanations expressed in a clearly structured manner, making appropriate use of political vocabulary and an excellent standard of written communication. The strongest candidates will recognise that there is an ideological dimension to this issue, especially when analysing the work of the UK Parliament, and illustrate their points with relevant, current examples. Answers which fail to develop an argument throughout, only drawing comparisons in the conclusion, cannot reach this level, however well expressed.

