AQA

ASSESSMENT and
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ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

History 2041
Specification

Unit HIS3H

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

Unit HIS3H

Unit 3H: Monarchies and Republics in France, 1815–1875

General Comments

This paper was generally answered very well with a good range of marks seen primarily towards the upper end of the range. This was the result of a combination of good essay skills with extensive subject knowledge. Where marks dipped slightly, this was not due to poor essay style but was due rather to a lack of depth in knowledge. A number of candidates resorted to general type commentary, for example on press censorship, which lacked specific support. There were very few examples of poor time management and almost all candidates were aware of the need to produce balanced arguments. There were very few purely narrative responses. However, there were a handful of candidates that seemed to quote the views of historians in a manner which suggested that this was the evidence they felt was sufficient to prove their case. Knowledge of historiography can occasionally aid a candidate's line of argument but is rarely sufficient on its own to actually prove a case.

The most popular question was Question 1, closely followed Question 2. Question 3 was the least popular.

Question 1

01   Responses to this question were generally very good. The vast majority displayed a good understanding of the role of the ultra conservatives and many argued that this role changed over time. Indeed the very best responses tended to argue that even within the period of 15 years there was quite a substantial shift in the position of the ultras within government and that consequently a blanket judgment was impossible to reach. Conversely there were a small number of candidates that were able to argue very effectively on the role of other factors but were unable to offer any specific evidence proving knowledge even of the meaning of the phrase ultra-conservative. Of these responses, quite a number spent time referring to anecdotal stories of the character flaws of each monarch but rarely advanced out of the general. At A2 level a key determinant of the mark awarded must be the quality of subject knowledge and especially how specific the support of an argument is. Candidates who were able to deploy dates and to name specific ministers tended to provide good support for their points of view. Perhaps of all the questions, it was this one that saw the greatest number of responses that tended towards narrative. Many candidates adopted a chronological approach which in most cases worked fine, but did tempt the weaker candidates to simply tell a story without engaging the argument. The very best response to this question tended to be – but were not exclusively – those that deployed a thematic approach, perhaps considering the role of the Ultras in the first paragraph before moving on to other factors such as the role of the monarchs, or the legacy of the Charter.

Question 2

02   Most candidates were able to draw upon an impressive range of subject knowledge and to at least identify events as evidence of success or of failure. Some of the very best responses set out from the start with a clear statement of aims of foreign policy and even detailed how domestic opinion and strategic achievements were at variance. Most candidates dealt with the chronological range of the question very well, offering the type of

breadth expected in this type of question. Unfortunately there were a few candidates that focused solely on a much narrower time period and thus were limited in the marks received. In addition, there were some candidates that ignored the time scale given in the question entirely and wasted time relaying the foreign policy of Louis XVIII or of Charles X. It is worth noting that this question was the one most often misinterpreted by candidates with some giving general reasons why the governments of the period failed – this type of response cannot be credited as the question is firmly focused on foreign affairs. There was a clear minority of candidates that lacked sufficient knowledge even on this breadth question and resorted to assertions such as 'The Crimean War was a failure' without offering any support at all.

Question 3

03 This was generally done very well indeed by the small number of candidates that attempted it. Subject knowledge was impressive and candidates proved able to balance mistakes of opponents with a good range of other factors. Perhaps the most common problem was an apparent difficulty in defining exactly who or what the opponents of the Third Republic may have been. This was somewhat surprising considering the centrality of the topic – but it was the better type of response that named the groups of potential opponents and some even going as far as naming individuals.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades
Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the
Results statistics page of the AQA Website.