



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
January 2012**

Government and Politics

Assessment Unit AS 1

The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland

[AQ111]

FRIDAY 13 JANUARY, AFTERNOON

MARK SCHEME

General Marking Instructions

These mark schemes are intended to ensure that the AS/A2 examinations are marked consistently and fairly. The mark schemes provide examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidate responses likely to be worthy of credit. They also set out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses. The mark scheme should be read in conjunction with these general marking instructions which apply to all papers.

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners will be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of 17- and 18-year-olds, which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their AS/A2 examinations.

Flexibility in marking

The mark schemes which accompany the specimen examination papers are not intended to be totally prescriptive. For many questions, there may be a number of equally legitimate responses and different methods by which the candidates may achieve good marks. No mark scheme can cover all the answers which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner for the paper concerned.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for valid responses rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected for 17- and 18-year-old GCE candidates. Conversely, marks should only be awarded for valid responses and not given for an attempt which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Types of mark schemes

Mark Schemes for questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication. These questions are indicated on the cover of the examination paper.

Other questions which require only short answers are marked on a point for point basis with marks awarded for each valid piece of information provided.

Levels of Response

Questions requiring extended written answers are marked in terms of levels of response. When deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the “best fit” bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement. The following guidance is provided to assist examiners:

Threshold performance: Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.

Intermediate performance: Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.

High performance: Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication which is incorporated within the marks awarded for AO3. Where the quality of candidates' subject knowledge and understanding is not matched by the quality of written communication, marks awarded will not exceed the maximum for Level 4.

1 Background

[1] will be awarded for identification and up to [3] for explanation of the way given in the Source.

(AO1: 4 marks)

[1] will be awarded for identification and up to [3] for explanation of another relevant way.

(AO1: 4 marks)

A MLA can introduce a Private Members Bill into the Assembly. MLAs can also influence legislation by their work in Statutory Committees, by voting in the Assembly, through party meetings, in debates, through comments to the media and by a number of other means; or by voting on a Petition of Concern.

If there is no reference to the Source a maximum of [6] can be awarded.

If there is no reference to any examples or evidence a maximum of [6] can be awarded. [8]

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2 Background

The devolved political structures created in Northern Ireland gave considerable powers to the Assembly to initiate and influence legislation. Many feel that the Assembly has failed to exercise many of these powers and that it is the Executive that dominates legislation. The Source states that a Private Members Bill introduced by an MLA is likely to fail because the leading party in the Executive opposes it. Few PMBs have been passed; most of the legislation approved by the Assembly has been introduced by the Executive; much of the legislation introduced has been "parity" legislation; scrutiny of Executive legislation has been ineffectual; statutory committees have made little use of their power to initiate legislation. It is also the case that MLAs lack the skills and will to challenge an Executive that includes their own party. It is only when the Executive itself is divided over legislation that it risks being defeated.

Weaker answers will tend to present general critical statements and rely heavily upon the Source. Stronger answers will be more detailed and contain supporting evidence. If there is no reference to the Source a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.

If the candidate refers only to the Source a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.

If there is no reference to any supporting evidence or examples a maximum of Level 4 can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1]–[4])

AO1: 2 marks; AO2: 1 mark; AO3: 1 mark

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the legislative record of the Assembly. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence (AO1). There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. An argument, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed and the level of communication and the use of political vocabulary are both rudimentary (AO3).

Level 2 ([5]–[7])**AO1: 3 marks; AO2: 2 marks; AO3: 2 marks**

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the legislative record of the Assembly but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material (AO1). There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument is constructed although the level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary (AO3).

Level 3 ([8]–[10])**AO1: 4 marks; AO2: 3 marks; AO3: 3 marks**

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the legislative record of the Assembly but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material (AO1). There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. An argument is constructed although the level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited (AO3).

Level 4 ([11]–[13])**AO1: 5 marks; AO2: 4 marks; AO3: 4 marks**

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the legislative record of the Assembly and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples (AO1). There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. An argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary and a conclusion is reached (AO3).

Level 5 ([14]–[16])**AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 5 marks; AO3: 5 marks**

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the legislative record of the Assembly and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented (AO1). There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. An argument is constructed which displays effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached (AO3).

[16]

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3 (a) Background

This question assesses candidate knowledge and understanding of shifts in support for the major political parties and their ability to analyse possible future developments.

The relative strengths of parties in the Assembly have changed significantly since 1998. However, there would appear to be a clear pattern of growth and decline within both the unionist and nationalist camps. By 2007, the DUP has grown at the expense of the UUP and Sinn Fein at the expense of the SDLP. Such is the dominance of the DUP and Sinn Fein that some believe we are heading for a dominant two party system in Northern Ireland. In this view, the UUP and SDLP will continue to decline or possibly be absorbed into the larger unionist or nationalist party.

The alternative view is that a plurality of parties will continue to operate in Northern Ireland as the growth in support for the DUP and Sinn Fein will peak and perhaps even decline. Smaller parties will continue to play a significant political role.

Weaker answers will demonstrate limited understanding of changes in party strength.

Stronger answers will display clear understanding of the point of the question, will present a range of evidence and will contain balance. If there is no reference to evidence or examples a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.

If there is no evaluation or balance in the answer a maximum of Level 4 can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

AO1: 2 marks; AO2: 3 marks; AO3: 1 mark

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the changes in the strength of parties and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence (AO1). There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. An argument, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed and the level of communication and the use of political vocabulary are both rudimentary (AO3).

Level 2 ([7]–[11])

AO1: 4 marks; AO2: 5 marks; AO3: 2 marks

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the changes in the strength of parties but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material (AO1). There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument is constructed although the level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary (AO3).

Level 3 ([12]–[16])**AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 7 marks; AO3: 3 marks**

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of the changes in the strength of parties but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material (AO1). There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. An argument is constructed although the level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited (AO3).

Level 4 ([17]–[21])**AO1: 7 marks; AO2: 9 marks; AO3: 5 marks**

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of the changes in the strength of parties and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples (AO1). There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. An argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary and a conclusion is reached (AO3).

Level 5 ([22]–[26])**AO1: 8 marks; AO2: 11 marks; AO3: 7 marks**

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the record of the changes in the strength of parties and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented (AO1). There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. An argument is constructed which displays effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached (AO3).

[26]

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(b) Background

Sinn Fein has come a long way since the first ceasefire in 1994. Arguably it had also come a long way before agreeing to ceasefire at that time. Some would argue that the party has abandoned many of its core principles and policies in the past eighteen years, most notably its commitment to a united Ireland and its refusal to sit in and work a “partitionist” assembly at Stormont. Those who take such a view include those republicans who oppose this change in Sinn Fein’s position and those who approve of the party’s willingness to compromise in the interests of peace.

Sinn Fein itself would reject the claim that it has abandoned its core principles. It would assert that it is committed as ever to the

achievement of a united Ireland and the creation of an all Ireland state that would replace the institutions at Stormont. The Party would also reject any suggestion that it has compromised on its other principles of human rights, equality and the recognition of nationalist culture and traditions.

Weaker candidates will have a limited understanding of Sinn Fein's principles and how they may have changed. Stronger candidates will be able to present a balanced discussion and will be able to produce a greater degree of evidence.

If there is no reference to evidence or examples a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.

If there is no evaluation or balance in the answer a maximum of Level 4 can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

AO1: 2 marks; AO2: 3 marks; AO3: 1 mark

The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of Sinn Fein principles and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or has no evidence (AO1). There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is poor. An argument, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed and the level of communication and the use of political vocabulary are both rudimentary (AO3).

Level 2 ([7]–[11])

AO1: 4 marks; AO2: 5 marks; AO3: 2 marks

The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of Sinn Fein principles but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material (AO1). There is some basic analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is limited. An argument is constructed although the level of communication and the structure and presentation of ideas are both basic. There is restricted use of appropriate political vocabulary (AO3).

Level 3 ([12]–[16])

AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 7 marks; AO3: 3 marks

The candidate demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of Sinn Fein principles but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with more general material (AO1). There is some limited analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. An argument is constructed although the level of communication, the structure and presentation of ideas and the use of appropriate political vocabulary are limited (AO3).

Level 4 ([17]–[21])

AO1: 7 marks; AO2: 9 marks; AO3: 5 marks

The candidate demonstrates full and accurate knowledge and understanding of Sinn Fein principles and deploys this to answer the question. The answer contains relevant evidence and examples (AO1). There is sound analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally good. An argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is appropriate use of political vocabulary and a conclusion is reached (AO3).

Level 5 ([22]–[26])

AO1: 8 marks; AO2: 11 marks; AO3: 7 marks

The candidate demonstrates comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of Sinn Fein principles and deploys this consistently to answer the question. A range of relevant evidence is presented (AO1). There is thorough analysis of political information, arguments and explanations (AO2). Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. An argument is constructed which displays effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is consistent use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached (AO3).

[26]

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Total

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