

# Examiners' Report January 2007

GCE

GCE Government & Politics (8067, 9067-9070)

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## Unit 1: 6491 - People and Politics

### General Comments

Examiners commented that in line with many previous series the better and higher rewarded candidates were those who used developed, informed and relevant examples in support of their responses. This was a key discriminator especially with regard to the (c) part of all four questions. Timing issues did not present any major obstacle but it was noted that a significant minority appear to have divided time and/or content level equally between (b) and (c) parts to the response, which means that full utilisation of the available mark range was not obtained.

### Question 1

By far the most common question attempted by candidates. Pressure groups are a popular topic and one which candidates relate to; clearly far more it appears, than the topic of political parties. It was pleasing to see many centres had widened to an extent the range and scope on pressure group activity, this practice is to be encouraged and with ever widening media coverage, material in this area should not be difficult to obtain.

#### *a) What is a pressure group?*

Most candidates were able to provide a succinct definition of pressure groups and backed up this with an example to demonstrate that definition. Underperformance arose mainly because a minority wished to define categorisation as opposed to the definition requested.

#### *b) Explain three ways in which pressure groups exert influence?*

A very common comment from examiners was that it often proved to be the case that many candidates failed to move out of the Level 2 mark range. Factors behind this arose from candidates simply stating characteristics of pressure groups rather than their ways of influence. By way of example many referred to the media assuming this to be a method, the same was done with size, again a characteristic not a method of influence. Where correct methods were identified, an inability to hit Level 3 lay in the detail. It was common for candidates to identify lobbying as a method of influence but extremely rare for lobbying with a clear example to be fully illustrated. Examples of Fathers4Justice and direct action were common and were acknowledged and rewarded. Examples of terrorist groups still perpetuate with Al Qaeda often being quoted alongside the IRA. These are not pressure groups and given the vast spectrum of pressure groups in political life it must be advised for centres to instruct candidates to use more pertinent examples.

#### *c) To what extent do pressure groups exert influence in the UK?*

A balanced response with supporting examples was the hallmarks of top level answers. It was noticeable that although a majority of candidates were able to go some way towards this goal few could extensively substantiate the theory with pertinent examples. The case in favour of pressure groups promoting democracy was in the main better evidenced than the case against. The nature of the question calls instinctively for a judgement call on the issue. It was the norm for many responses to remain in level 2 for they comprised in the main of a list-like categorisation with only tangential connection to exemplified political reality in the UK.

## Question 2

This question appeared to share popularity with Q3. This was done well by candidates who had clearly prepared and revised the various electoral systems in the UK and could cite in their responses the practical workings and results which have emerged from recent elections.

### *a) Outline two functions of a general election.*

What led to underperformance here was the confusion of features with functions by a number of candidates. This confusion proved in the main to be costly in terms of reward. Functions demand an operational knowledge backed up by an illustrative example to clarify these.

### *b) How does the electoral system for the House of Commons differ from the other electoral systems used in the UK?*

The refuge of many candidates here was often to list types of electoral system in the hope that somehow the differences would by default appear. This was seldom the case. Issues such as fixed term versus flexible term were rarely used. By contrast, the term Majoritarian abounded for the House of Commons elections with no detail as to how majoritarianism existed. Its use is relevant in forming governments but at a constituency level a simple plurality operates. Marks were lost by some candidates who wished to make an evaluative judgement here surrounding the fairness of other electoral system and lost focus on the key remit of the question.

### *c) Discuss the impact of the use of proportional electoral systems on UK Politics.*

This was seen as a question (c) which acted as a discriminator. Those candidates who progressed to the top levels were informed and aware of the outcomes of proportional systems in the UK and cited empirical detail to illustrate knowledge then used this as a base to evaluate and draw upon AO2 marks. Coalitions, different types of representative, turnout and political party fortunes were the key items discussed. Weaker responses tended to warn of the dangers of extremism and the fear of Nazi type parties being the beneficiaries of a reformed and proportional system.

## Question 3

As indicated above, a popular question. Candidates who provided informed detail and knowledge were able to access the higher mark levels.

### *a) Define direct democracy.*

This concept caused few problems of definition but not all definitions were full and encompassing. It was common to note that many simply stated that this is what referendums were all about and what the ancient Greeks used, without clarity in a prior developed concept in the first instance.

### *b) How has direct democracy been more widely used in the UK in recent years?*

Invariably this became a description of the recent use of referendums which was creditworthy and a route when done with precision to reach the top level for reward.

For some, 'recent' was the referendum in the North East but for others this went back to the 1973 referendum in Northern Ireland. The initial command word of "how" served in the main to differentiate between responses: hence a list of referendums without any reference to the overall context became a limitation.

*c) Do the advantages of referendums outweigh the disadvantages?*

This was well rehearsed and often well executed. However, a common failing was to merely state that referendums do outweigh the disadvantages without the recourse to a balanced evaluation which is at the heart of the response. As always, the better candidates backed up theoretical views on the benefits and disadvantages of referendums with succinct examples. These in the main were from the UK but international references were made, and where made relevant, merited reward.

**Question 4**

In recent series the questions on political parties has demonstrated a fall in popularity. This series proved no exception to this emerging pattern.

*a) Define, using an example, consensus politics.*

Candidates encounter less difficulty in defining consensus as opposed to its opposite adversarial politics. The restriction in the main was not the example which was often clear but the narrow view of consensus in a minority of instances where it was defined as agreement over a single policy issue and not the broader policy framework as is required.

*b) Explain three ways in which 'new' Labour differs from 'old' Labour.*

This question has appeared often before on this unit and candidates in the main responded well. There were common errors such as the declaration that Clause IV had been abandoned when it has in fact been amended. However, in the main there was a wealth of material to develop and examiners were able to reward for a huge variety of issues.

*c) To what extent has the Conservative Party moved towards the centre ground of UK politics in recent years?*

This proved to be a major discriminator. At the top level there was a detailed focus on the post-Thatcher Conservative Party and its handling of policy since its defeat and exclusion from office since 1997. Many developed the emerging policy statements under David Cameron which covered the environment and the NHS. It is accepted that detail on the latter is more restricted but awareness of the policy of the major opposition is central to the study of political parties in the UK. What restricted many responses from reaching level three was a lack of balance and to consider not only the supposed move to the middle ground but also the counter argument that the Conservative Party remained loyal to the policy of its Thatcherite heritage and had not abandoned these core values.



## Unit 2: 6492 - Governing the UK

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### General comments

This examination paper was of a comparable standard with earlier series. All of the questions cover well-established parts of the Specification and have been asked in some form in previous examinations. The question on constitutions (Q2) was very popular and there were some very good responses. It is pleasing that candidates now refer to codified and uncodified constitutions rather than written/unwritten. The question on the executive (Q3) was also popular but candidates appeared to be less well prepared on the constitutional role of the Cabinet than they were on the Prime Minister. Some candidates also limit their marks by referring only to the current Prime Minister in their answer. The question on the judiciary (Q4) was not popular, which given the topicality of the issues covered, was disappointing.

### Question 1

#### *a) Outline the powers of the House of Lords.*

Answers to what is a very straightforward question were disappointing. There was clearly some confusion between 'powers' and 'functions' but even allowing for some overlap, few candidates were able to identify the important legislative and judicial powers of the House.

Many answers dealt only with legislative powers and although the power of delay was known, the length of the delay - and the impact of the Parliament Acts, for example to do with money bills, were ignored by many candidates. Few candidates were able to indicate that the House had the power of veto over extending the life of a Parliament.

Sadly, the judicial function was surprisingly neglected by many candidates due to the preoccupation with legislation. On the whole the question should have been answered better.

#### *b) Explain the main differences between parliamentary government and presidential government.*

Candidates, with rare exceptions, compared the USA presidential system and the UK's parliamentary system. It was apparent that the subject matter had been taught thoroughly and there were many contrasting features offered. Candidates were reasonably confident discussing the fusion and separation of powers although many answers lacked full development. Elections were well handled with reference to presidential systems (USA) but fewer candidates understood their significance to parliamentary systems.

Weaker candidates, however, wrote one paragraph on one system and a second on the other and therefore limited their marks, as they were unable to explain the differences between the two systems.

It was pleasing to note that there were very few answers that detailed cabinet government versus presidential style government instead of answering the question set.

*c) How effective is Parliament in scrutinising the work of the executive?*

The biggest weakness of answers was the way candidates focused their attention on the methods available to Parliament rather than trying to evaluate the effectiveness of those methods. Moreover, the main focus of responses was on the House of Commons with surprisingly few answers including the House of Lords. This was a serious error because not only is Parliament bicameral, the reform of the House of Lords, although quite modest, has encouraged the lordships to become more activist in opposing government legislation especially those proposals affecting human rights and anti-terrorism legislation.

Candidates dealt competently with Question Time (and PMQT), which was in marked contrast to committees where confusion between standing and departmental select committees suggested a lack of understanding.

Candidates who did move on to evaluate the success or otherwise of Parliament in being able to scrutinise the executive were able to identify the size of the government majority and the strength of party loyalty as critical features in assessing how competently Parliament discharged its scrutiny function. Examples were quoted from both Thatcher's premiership and that of Blair, which reflected the easy passage government has with comfortable majorities although abler candidates did comment on the increasing rebellious nature of Tony Blair's backbenchers.

Of the weaker responses, many candidates fail to appreciate that in the British political system the term 'Executive' does not solely refer to the Prime Minister.

**Question 2**

*a) What is a constitution?*

This was well-handled question. There were many Level 3 responses with candidates accurately explaining the mechanics of a constitution in terms of outlining the relationship between government institutions and between the state and the citizen. The examples of the UK and the USA were the most common.

*b) Distinguish between a codified constitution and an uncodified constitution.*

This question was very straightforward and it is noted that all but the weakest candidates avoided the use of written and unwritten in favour of codified and uncodified when describing a constitution. Students were able to correctly identify that a codified constitution was one set out in a single document, with the US as the example given but some chose to use France or Germany, which were equally as valid. Students were also mainly able to explain what was meant by an uncodified constitution. Again, the UK was the best example with candidates offering some explanation of the range of sources of the UK constitution. Candidates were generally able to draw a distinction between the rigidity of the codified US constitution and the flexibility of the UK's uncodified constitution. The best candidates offered examples here to illustrate the point either using responses after September 11th and/or gun control

It was disappointing that few candidates went on to discuss the status of constitutional law and the role of the judiciary within each type of constitution.

*c) Should the UK constitution remain uncodified?.*

Again, this was a straightforward question. Most responses were balanced with points made from both sides thus earning candidates Level 2 marks. Where weaker students fell down was their willingness to make bold statements (on both sides) and then to fail to provide good examples to substantiate their claims. It was surprising that so many candidates failed to mention the lack of entrenchment of the Human Rights Act in their analysis. In higher level responses it was satisfying to see students not automatically go down the road of criticising the UK constitution but instead to provide some real balance with good, well developed points made in defence of the UK constitution. A popular example to illustrate the strengths of the UK constitution was contrasting the issue of gun control in the aftermath of Dunblane/Columbine and comparing the UK ban on handguns favourably with the failure of gun control due to the second amendment in the US constitution. Stronger students also made the point that the UK constitution ensured that power ultimately lay in the hands of elected MPs rather than unelected judges as in the US.

Weaker responses failed to develop the points they made and very often-focussed on relatively superficial points. The judgement of 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' summed up many weak responses. A minority of candidates seem unaware of the existence of the Human Rights act and there are still those who believe the ECHR is part of the EU.

**Question 3**

*a) Define collective ministerial responsibility.*

This was generally well answered with many candidates getting Level 3 marks. They were able to accurately define one aspect of the convention, namely that all ministers must support each other in public and Parliament -'singing from the same hymn sheet' and if they cannot do this then they are expected to resign. The examples of Robin Cook and /or Clare Short were the usual ones offered.

Very few candidates, however, were able to outline the second aspect of CMR, namely that a government must stand or fall together and must resign if they lose a vote of no confidence in the House of Commons as evidenced by Callaghan in 1979.

There were however, candidates who confused IMR with CMR and therefore were awarded no marks.

*b) What are the functions of the Cabinet?*

This proved to be the stumbling block for many candidates, some of whom were unable to outline even one function of the Cabinet. Far too many candidates believe that the Cabinet's role is only to help and/or check the PM and run government departments. Many candidates wrote at great length about the responsibility of running government departments.

However, there were a significant number of candidates who were able to cover at least two functions of the Cabinet although many over emphasise the debating function. Candidate's inability to progress into higher-grade boundaries was because they were unable to offer the exemplification required.

Overall, in this part of the question there was evidence that candidates lack an appreciation and understanding of the constitutional role of the Cabinet within the British political system.

*c) To what extent do Prime Minister's dominate the Cabinet?*

Candidates have been well prepared to answer questions on the Prime Minister, the powers at their disposal and to evaluate whether or not the British Prime Minister is becoming presidential. However, few candidates were able to successfully transfer their knowledge to an appreciation of the relationship between the Prime Minister and their Cabinet. Consequently, references to bi-laterals, size of majorities in the House of Commons and special advisers were not set in context. The demise of Mrs Thatcher is still not understood by many candidates who state that she lost a General Election or lost a vote of no confidence in the House of Commons.

There were good Level 3 answers to this question though with candidates able to offer examples from the premierships of Mrs Thatcher, Major and Blair. Some candidates were also able to draw a distinction between Blair's position with his Cabinet in 1997 compared to the situation now.

Weaker responses referred only to Tony Blair and concentrated on the presidential style of his leadership.

**Question 4**

*a) What is the judiciary?*

Few candidates were able to accurately identify fully that the judiciary is the branch of government that it is empowered to decide legal disputes but can also be called upon to chair government enquires or Royal Commissions. However, there was awareness that there is a hierarchy within the judiciary and this point well developed with an example allowed the candidate to achieve Level 2 marks.

Weaker candidates wrote that the judiciary comprises the police, solicitors and barristers.

*b) What is judicial neutrality, and how is it upheld in the UK?*

Very few candidates were able to outline correctly what is meant by the concept of neutrality, therefore their answers tended to lack focus. It was then difficult for them to expand the answer to explain how the concept was upheld in the UK. There was a temptation to cite the Griffith's argument to argue that judges in the UK are not neutral, rather than answering the question set.

Too many candidates confuse the concepts of neutrality and independence citing high salaries, and security of tenure amongst other things as guaranteeing judicial neutrality.

*c) To what extent so judges constrain parliament and the executive?*

Given the topicality surrounding the judiciary's relationship with the current government it was very disappointing to see so few answers mentioning the on-going disputes regarding the rights of suspected terrorists, asylum seekers and so on. Examples drawn from the early 1980s, for example Ponting, need to be supplemented with recent cases. The impact of the Human Rights Act, the source of much angst between the judiciary and recent Home Secretary's, is appreciated by very few candidates.

Candidates also failed to draw the distinction between Parliament and the Executive in their answers and thus the potential of the judiciary to constrain each branch of

government. The constitutional position of the judiciary was not fully understood. Many candidates argue that the EU has allowed the judiciary to become a Supreme Court

The handful of responses which reached Level 3 were pertinent contained a range of examples and provided the evaluation required.



## Unit 6493 - The Changing UK System

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### General Comments

Constitutional reform with regard to the House of Lords as the basis for question one with devolution and its impact on the UK as the basis for question two. Each question contained two sources. The greater number of candidates opted for question two which had marginally more source material. In overview examiners felt that performance in the January series displayed an improvement on previous series. However, this report is directed to illustrate areas which candidates were well prepared and also areas that can be developed and where candidate performance can be improved.

### Question 1

With a clear focus on second chamber reform, the question primarily investigated the functions of the Lords then moved on to examine the difficulties in progressing reform once initiated, next considering the arguments in favour of reform and the implication which an elected second chamber would realise.

*a) Using Source 1, outline the functions of the House of Lords within Parliament.*

Few candidates encountered major problems here and many easily converted the source into their own words and identified the functions given in the first passage. The difficulty, as always, which followed the source question were the minority of candidates who did little more than lift the source word by word as the sum of their response. Where this was the approach, a lower level mark was obtained.

*(b) Using Source 2, and your own knowledge, explain the difficulties encountered in implementing a two-stage reform of the House of Lords.*

Examiners noted some well informed responses here. Many candidates used the source effectively and discussed the generic problems identified by Sir George Young and related to them. Impressively, many identified the failure of the Wakenham report with its various options of election and appointment for consideration by the House of Commons. However, detail of the latter was not a pre-requisite for achieving top level marks and it was encouraging to see a range of problems which has beset the Government on its reform process for the second chamber. Having identified a range of good practice the common failure on this question for a number of candidates was a distinct lack of own knowledge: the source could be developed but often there was provided minimal awareness of why difficulties had emerged.

*(c) Explain the arguments in favour of reforming the House of Lords?*

Candidates in the main were at ease in providing a range of factors for reform, the better responses illustrating the theory with practical examples. For instance, many candidates discussed a lack of democratic legitimacy by having unelected or hereditary elements and then moved on to explain that a reformed chamber may ignite political participation and also restrict a dominant executive. More able candidates developed their responses and were not exclusively about electing the Lords but essentially considering reform in its broadest sense. Many pointed out the perils of appointment and the number of peers created by the current Prime Minister, the so called "Tony's Cronies." What was encouraging to see was that a

considerable number of responses related reform to current events in the “cash for peerages” scandal very much in the news of late: many being able to infer that democratic reform would prevent this alleged abuse of the political system. By contrast, weaker approaches took this as only the removal of the hereditary element with possibly the benefits this brought to the Labour Party and the damage it would/has inflicted on the Conservative Party in the Lords. Whilst both have relevance they do not present the full picture of the benefits which reform may bring.

*(d) Evaluate the implications of a fully elected second chamber.*

As is common for Unit 3 questions, this response required political conjecture based upon informed political reasoning. It proved to be an effective discriminator certainly at the higher levels. The better responses considered the positive and negative implication of elections for the second chamber, whereas, it was common for weaker approaches to provide essentially negative views or more often the case to take a negative standpoint and not provide any sustained evaluation to the factors which were raised. Political gridlock or stalemate between two chambers was a common issue identified, next a growing political apathy which may result from more elections. Many candidates considered the loss of life peers as an implication which may result in a poorer quality of debate and specialism in the chamber. A good number continue to assert that elections would automatically usher in a more representative chamber somehow by default. This may occur but it is not necessarily an automatic consequence of elections. It was good to see that many did identify problems with elections which may make the second chamber more constrained by established political parties and elections may serve to merely enhance the power of the executive as it may dominate two chambers instead of one.

## Question 2

This question on devolution was by far the more popular of the two questions. Despite the source being marginally longer in content the question drew the heavier response. Central to fully developing this response was a clear appreciation of the West Lothian Question, which was outlined in the second source but oddly often not developed well until part (d) of the question.

*(a) Using Source 1, how does the Labour Party propose to continue the process of devolution?*

As with Q1a there was little difficulty in understanding the source material. Again the discriminator was the inability to convert the source in to competent own prose in response. Mere verbatim repetition could not access the higher levels. As stated candidates do not have to provide additional detail beyond the source but at the same time mere repetition of it is not a response of a high order.

*(b) Using both sources and your own knowledge, how do the Labour and Conservative parties differ over the future development of devolution?*

This question was often not done very well. The main fault often being the under use of the source to a greater or lesser extent. A clear inability to draw out differences permeated weaker responses. As stated, it was surprising to see the number who failed to pick upon the Conservative plan to hold a referendum in Wales on the continuance or abandonment of the devolution process. Many chose to ignore the point drew out in the Conservative Party extract on the West Lothian issue.

A significant number asserted that the Conservative Party remain totally opposed to devolution and will reverse the process, despite the reference made in the source. It was accepted that the Conservatives are clearly not as enthusiastic supporters of the process but many candidates still portrayed views on devolution given by both Thatcher in the 1980's and Major in the 1997 election, a position now long out of touch with reality.

*(c) What are the advantages of devolution for the UK?*

Again here it was felt that this question was a good discriminator. Better answers provided both the theoretical and practical benefits to the devolution process in the UK. For instance, devolution, it is suggested, improves the democratic process and brings politics to more local level, examples of this theory in operation is political flexibility in different regions and the ability to pursue solutions within a regional context. Many candidates were well informed of the different approaches to legislation in Scotland and/or the earlier introduction of legislation ahead of the Westminster Parliament. It was commonly noted that it has been suggested that the devolution process has stilled the demands for independence and saved the Union of the UK. Many did take each devolved region into account. Credit was advanced where devolution in Northern Ireland was cited as an advantage. For although devolution has been suspended for longer than the process has been operative, the rejection of violence and a return to political dialogue through the devolution mechanism was clearly seen as an advantage. A small minority continue to speak of devolution in the abstract and fail to contextualise that the process is now eight years almost down the line with the third election in the spring of 2007: enough political material is available on this. Although it is coming out from centres it would be good to see it developed further.

*(d) Analyse the problems that have emerged with devolution.*

It was felt that the better informed responses were given for part (d) than for part (c). Clear detail was cited on the West Lothian Question with reference to both the passing of tuition fees and trust hospital for England and their exclusion in Scotland. Cost was another key problem with the huge over-spend on the Scottish Parliament to the multiplicity of politicians who all need to be paid from public money. Credit was advanced for the frustration which has emerged. This covered the feeling of disappointment in Wales at their lack of equality with Scotland or the gains made in Northern Ireland by parties more at the extreme of the spectrum where devolution is not seen as a welcome move. Lack of parity for the English regions was noted emanating both from resentment at the cost, but also at the lack of regional bodies having similar powers to provide local solutions to local problems. Where candidates underperformed it was often the result of a narrow empirical base of detail on the political front coupled with a low level of analysis as demanded by the question. However, as noted in question (c) above, there is ample material now available for this to be discussed and brought to candidates attention.



## Route A, Unit 6494 - UK Political Issues

### General Comments

Candidates attempted the various questions in roughly equal proportions. No questions were outstandingly popular or unpopular. There were also no significant differences in the standard of responses of particular questions - standards were even throughout the examination.

A common fault, running through many scripts, was a failure to address the specific demands of the question. Thus, for example, where candidates were required to say why multiculturalism has been criticised (Q1), too many answers simply raised issues about multiculturalism without identifying specific criticisms. Similarly, in Q3, many ignored the word 'why?' and simply described a number of educational reforms under Labour. With Q7, candidates routinely ignored the word 'future' in the question and so lost a good deal of potential marks. Candidates, therefore, need to be reminded again of the need to read the question carefully and respond especially to the key command words or phrases, such as 'why', 'to what extent' and 'how'.

There were, however, many good responses, especially with the longer essay style questions. The structure of essays was generally of a good standard and an encouraging amount of factual knowledge was commonly deployed. Knowledge of economic policy, the Northern Ireland peace process and the Welfare State in the modern world was generally rather impressive.

### Question 1

#### *Why has multiculturalism in the UK been criticised?*

Most candidates, including those at Level 1, attempted different definitions of multiculturalism. These were usually accurate though varying a great deal in depth or subtlety. Weaker answers tended to concentrate on problems related to a multicultural and multiracial society, including issues of racial tension or conflict, institutional racism and Islamophobia. These invariably tended to ignore the specific question about criticisms of multiculturalism. Level 2 answers tended to concentrate on the critique coming from conservatives, preferring integration and assimilation or from racial minorities, seeing it as a sham. Only strong, Level 3 answers dealt with the problems associated with a multicultural society, such as Trevor Phillips' comments or more recent concerns expressed by Conservatives including Cameron. The issue of multi or single faith schooling was used well only by stronger candidates. The very best discussed issues of equal opportunities, social exclusion etc.

### Question 2

#### *Why have attempts by governments since 2001 to deal with the terrorist threat in the UK been controversial?*

Most candidates were able correctly to discuss the conflict which has existed between the judiciary and the government and security services over issues such as detention without charge, stop and search and control orders following the Belmarsh case. However, it was stronger candidates who could discuss the problems in some communities following police action against suspects, such as at Forest Gate and against de Menezes. There were some good responses from strong candidates too, about the tactics of the police, for example at airports and train stations, targeting

members of racial minorities. Sadly, too few candidates entered into discussions about the conflict between human rights and national security on a sophisticated level. A common error was to suggest that it was the judges who stopped 90 detentions, when it was a famous defeat for the government in the House of Commons. A common strength was that candidates did understand that the right to a fair hearing and not to be held without trial are traditional rights in the UK.

### Question 3

*How and why have governments since 1997 'targeted' welfare benefits of those in most need?*

In general, responses tended to be stronger on the 'how' rather than the 'why'. Thus many candidates identified correctly a range of measures, notably tax credits, welfare to work, child trust funds and various pensioner allowances which have been used for targeting. Few candidates did not understand what targeting is. Where the lower tax band was mentioned, examiners gave credit, even though it is not a 'benefit' as such, provided it was linked to the poverty trap issue. Level 2 answers generally understood how targeted measures are designed to work and provided a reasonable range of at least three measures. To achieve Level 3 marks, however, candidates needed to identify why the measures were used. Such issues as cost saving, third way philosophy and social exclusion policy tended to be mentioned only by the strongest responses, but these formed the essence of a good answer. A few candidates got lost in a discussion of fraud and dependency culture - both valid issues in this context, but perhaps should not have been used to the exclusion of central issues as described above. Though many candidates referred to poor pensioners, too many are still ignoring this key aspect of welfare policy.

### Question 4

*Why has education been a major government priority since 1997?*

Weak responses tended to fall into two categories. One was a response which tended to overly concentrate on crime issues, including truancy and the general social effects of educational measures. The other comprised responses which ignored the question 'why' and simply described a number of reforms. Typical Level 2 responses deployed a decent range (typically four) of education measures and were able to identify some reasons for them, but not enough. Rather too many candidates tended to state that Blair's commitment in 1997 to education was a reason in itself. It may be valid to say the reason for prioritising education was that it was Blair's personal mission, but this is not enough. The main differentiation between Level 2 and Level 3 marks, was the quality of the evaluation, i.e. understanding of why education was prioritised. Thus, examiners gave most credit to those who were able to identify such issues as social exclusion, improved labour force, crime prevention, equality of opportunity, social mobility etc. It was encouraging to find so many candidates were able to identify and describe well a good range of issues. Evaluation was more variable.

### Question 5

*How successful have attempts to bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland been since 1992?*

As usual with questions on Northern Ireland too many candidates became bogged down with over-lengthy historical narratives. It was valid to look at past, failed, attempts at peace, in order to throw into focus the current peace process. However, too many simply recounted the history without relating it to the answer. Level 1 answers tended to concentrate on the remaining problems without making an assessment of the current process. At Level 2, some sort of evaluation of the peace process was attempted but it tended to be very much secondary to a narrative about current problems. In general, candidates were too often guilty of concentrating on 'negatives' and were unable to look at evidence of the successes of the process. Level 3 answers provided a balanced assessment of how the peace process is progressing, with a good range of positives and negatives.

Developments were taking place right up to the date of the examination and best candidates successfully pointed out that a tentative agreement on policing in Northern Ireland had been made the day before. Generally, there was encouraging knowledge of 'social' issues as well as the old standards of decommissioning and policing. Thus, stronger candidates referred to progress in such areas as employment and education and looked for evidence of better responses to the marching season and to general demilitarisation. There was an encouraging number of level 3 responses and a small number which were in Level 1. This was, perhaps, the most impressive set of responses seen on a Northern Ireland question. There was widespread knowledge of the nature of the Good Friday Agreement and many candidates were able to extend beyond the agreement itself to the more protracted peace process. As usual, the balance of opinion tended to be pessimistic.

### Question 6

*To what extent have the economic objectives laid out by Gordon Brown in 1997 been achieved?*

This question produced the highest degree of success in assessment objective 2, concerning analysis and evaluation. Candidates who could not evaluate the performance of government since 1997 clearly avoided the question altogether. There were, therefore, relatively few responses in Level 1. Those that were at the lowest level tended to recount the policies and referred to objectives, but failed to evaluate in anything but a superficial way. Examiners did not expect or demand detailed statistical analysis of performance, but some specific evidence was certainly required. Large numbers of Level 2 responses discussed such central issues as employment, growth, stability and inflation and were able to deploy some sort of assessment of how well the objectives had been achieved. Level 3 answers were distinguished both in terms of the breadth of issues raised and the depth of evaluation. Thus, stronger candidates discussed such issues as competitiveness and poverty reduction and the state of the public finances. They were also able to produce a well supported, balanced assessment.

No doubt Gordon Brown would be encouraged to hear that the balance of opinion among responses was positive and perhaps too many candidates tended to be uncritical, not searching below the surface of low inflation, interest rates and steady growth etc. For example, only stronger candidates referred to the controversy over poverty statistics or discussed the balance of payments (the huge trade deficit) or

personal debt. Tax policy tended to cause the most confusion with many candidates not sure whether to believe taxes had been held down or were out of control. The best candidates were able to analyse the way in which alternative interpretations of such policies can lead to different conclusions. Those who were most 'up to date' with their assessment of the economy tended to produce the most balanced evaluations.

### Question 7

*In what way, and to what extent, has the future of the welfare state in the UK become a controversial issue?*

This question created slightly more problems than the other two essay questions. There was plenty of knowledge of problems which have been thrown up in the Welfare State, such as the pensions shortfall, NHS funding, education standards etc, but a description of the problems and shortfalls of the Welfare State does not constitute an analysis of controversies. Too few candidates (very few, in fact) identified party positions on the future of the Welfare State and very few were able to discuss the position of factions within parties or pressure groups. Examiners tended to take a sympathetic view, however, of candidates who were able to identify accurately the nature of the controversies without identifying the actual sources of the different views. Similarly, few responses discussed the future of the Welfare State. Again examiners took a sympathetic view and accepted that the future could be implied in an answer even if it was not explicit.

Fortunately, candidates did tend to respond to the 'what extent' part of the question, and most level 3 and many level 2 answers were able to refer to the degree of consensus (over principles) as well as conflict and controversy.

Overwhelmingly, the most common controversy mentioned was private sector involvement of various kinds (with charging for health and education services a distant second). Good knowledge was typically shown, but there is still too much confusion over the word privatisation. Many candidates use it when they mean private sector involvement. It is, of course, valid to say that critics (mainly on the left) call such measures a PFIs and Foundation hospitals privatisation, but this is a political device rather than necessarily a statement of literal fact.

Level 1 responses tended to be narratives, describing a range of welfare State problems. Level 2 answers were typically wide ranging, but stronger on description than on analysis of the controversies. Level 3 responses contained more political context and were able to describe the controversies in a political or ideological setting.

## Route B, Unit 6497 - Introducing Political Ideologies

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### General Comments

The standard of responses to this paper were broadly in line with previous years, with most candidates being able to demonstrate at least a basic understanding of the ideas, doctrines and theories addressed in the questions. Student performance was, nevertheless, adversely affected on a number of occasions by one of two trends. The first of these was a tendency for candidates to possess relevant knowledge and understanding but have less capacity to deploy it effectively in response to the specific question asked. This may be a consequence of the fact that candidates entered for the January examination are not prepared as thoroughly as they would be for the June examination, by, for example, a programme of timed essays. This nevertheless highlights the need, throughout the course, to develop candidates' ability to *use* their knowledge and understanding to think analytically rather than merely to *acquire* more and more knowledge. The second - and perplexing - tendency was for candidates to disregard the question set, and to answer instead the question on that topic which had been asked the previous June. While it is perfectly reasonable, and indeed sensible, to use the most recent exam paper as a mock examination, it is also wise to make candidates aware that the questions on that paper are in fact the least likely to turn up on the next paper.

### Question 1

*Why have conservatives often feared cultural diversity and pluralism?*

Answers to this question were generally satisfactory. Most responses recognised that the conservative fear of diversity and pluralism derives from their view of society and the need for political unity to be underpinned by a common culture. However, fewer candidates were able to link this to organicism and the idea of society as an interlocking but fragile set of relationships between and amongst its parts. Some strong candidates recognised the importance of the neoconservative critique of diversity, seeing neoconservatism, in part, as a reaction against multiculturalism. Some weaker responses did little more than note that conservatives had often been in the forefront of movements to protest about immigration and call for the assimilation of minority cultural groups into the national community, without explaining why they held such opinions. Only a minority of candidates bothered to define either cultural diversity or pluralism.

### Question 2

*On what grounds have liberals raised concerns about democracy?*

This was a popular question, which elicited very few weak or poor responses. The most popular liberal concern about democracy identified was the notion of the 'tyranny of the majority'. However, some candidates merely identified this concern as opposed to explaining it in relation to the threat that it poses to minority rights and individual freedoms. Only a minority of candidates also recognised that the 'tyranny' that many liberals have associated with majoritarianism is reflected as much in a tendency towards dull conformism and an unwillingness to challenge widely-held beliefs as it is reflected in the persecution of minorities and of individuals. Similarly, there was insignificant recognition in many cases of the fact that liberal concerns about majority rule derive from the nature of the majority,

notably from the fact that the majority is usually poorly educated and lack political wisdom, thus being susceptible to the entreaties of demagogues and would-be tyrants.

### Question 3

*How and why have conservatives and liberals disagreed over authority?*

Limited responses to this question tended to go little beyond pointing out that while conservatives have positively endorsed authority, liberals have generally feared it and wanted to restrict its expression. Stronger responses, however, were able to discuss how differences over 'extent' reflected different views about the nature and origins of authority. Some candidates did nevertheless recognise that the liberal view of authority is reflected in social contract theory and implies that authority arises 'from below', although only the strongest candidates were able to explain that this reflects the belief that authority is constructed by rational individuals to serve their own ends and thus has a limited, closely defined purpose. Generally, accounts of the conservative view of authority were stronger than accounts of the liberal view, with a widespread recognition of the idea that as authority comes 'from above', it helps to hold society together and give people a clearer sense of who they are, where they belong.

### Question 4

*Why did Marx predict the 'withering away of the state?'*

Too many candidates used this question as an opportunity to write generally about Marxism, and often at great length about Marx's theory of historical stages, while saying relatively little about the Marxist theory of the state, or indeed about the state at all. In some cases, a generalised and lengthy account of Marxism simply ended up with the conclusion that, therefore, Marx believed the state would 'wither away'. Sounder responses to this question were able to link the withering away of the state to the 'socialist' phase of development, characterised by the dictatorship of the proletariat. In these cases, there was at least a recognition of the fact that the state withers away because it loses its reason for existence. Only the strongest candidates, however, provided an insight into the theory of the state that underpins Marx's prediction, explaining that the state is part of the ideological and political superstructure, conditioned by the economic base, its purpose being to serve the interests of the ruling class by oppressing and subjugating exploited classes. Only this understanding helps to explain why, as society moves towards classlessness, the state loses its purpose for existence and thus withers away. It would be helpful to emphasise for students that not all questions on Marx or Marxism can be adequately answered by an extended description of Marx's theory of historical stages.

### Question 5

*'Modern liberals support state intervention, but only within limits.' Discuss.*

This was a popular question; however, a number of candidates underperformed by virtue of misconstruing part of it. Very few of the responses failed to demonstrate an adequate and often good understanding of the reasons why modern liberals endorse state intervention. Social intervention tended to be better understood than economic intervention, with ideas such as equality of opportunity and positive freedom generally being well understood. In relation to this part of the question, the main differentiator was between candidates who described modern liberal arguments and

those who explained them. Although Keynesianism often featured in answers, fewer candidates were able either to flesh out the Keynesian basis for economic intervention or note how and why it needs to be limited. However, the main concern in relation to 'limits' arose when candidates explained the limits of state intervention by reference to fears about the corrupt and corrupting nature of power. The reason why modern liberals fear 'excessive' intervention is because they have not entirely abandoned classical liberal ideas about the benefits of self-reliance and the virtues of market competition. Differences between modern and classical liberals over intervention do not stem from different levels of concern about the corrupting nature of power. Liberals, both modern and classical liberals, deal with the latter fear through limited government, not by limiting intervention. That said, some candidates advanced well focused and insightful arguments, usually along the lines that modern liberals favour 'helping individuals to help themselves' - once they can help themselves, state intervention is unnecessary.

### Question 6

*Why, and to what extent, have socialists supported the common ownership of wealth?*

Very few candidates who attempted this question lacked basic knowledge of why socialists in general have tended to favour common ownership over private property. The principal discriminators in this respect were over the range of socialist arguments identified and the extent to which these arguments were explained and analysed rather than simply described. Strong responses recognised that the relevant socialist arguments range over issues such as the promotion of (absolute) social equality, the fostering of fraternal and co-operative behaviour, and the promotion of economic justice (in that those who produce wealth should enjoy a share in its ownership). This was often done more effectively when the complementary socialist arguments against private property were also acknowledged and explained. A large proportion of responses, sensibly, gave attention to differences between communists and social democrats over the issue of ownership, noting that the former endorses comprehensive collectivisation while the latter supports selected nationalisation. Explanations of these different viewpoints were, however, rarer, with only a minority of candidates being able to explain why social democrats have backed away from ideas of wholesale collectivisation. A better understanding of Crosland would have been helpful in this respect. A number of strong responses, moreover, tackled neorevisionist positions which have, in effect, come close to a wholesale abandonment of common ownership. Some weak answers, however, demonstrated little understanding of differences within socialism; for example, focusing on only the communist or the social democratic position.

### Question 7

*To what extent are there tensions within conservatism over its support for the individual and its commitment to the community?*

This was a popular question, sensibly answered by a very large proportion of candidates. The most common approach was, sensibly, to examine the contrasting tendencies within traditional conservatism and the New Right, with very few candidates not recognising the communitarian inclinations of the former and the individualist tendencies of the latter. In some weaker cases, this amounted to a description of the two contrasting traditions without either the issues of community and the individual receiving sufficient attention or adequate time being spent on noting tensions between the two views. On the other hand, some very insightful

answers explored in detail the contrasting theoretical beliefs and policy orientations of paternalistic or One Nationist conservatism as opposed to the liberal New Right. Similarly, many responses recognised the complexity of these contrasts, pointing out that the tensions within the New Right, between neoliberalism and neoconservatism, as well as the overlaps between traditional conservatism and neoconservatism, both of which endorse community rather than the individual. The analysis of how and why these two communitarian models conflict was, nevertheless, less well done, with too few candidates recognising that while neoconservatives believe that community needs to be strengthened by the restoration of authority and social discipline, they are rarely keen on extending such ideas to the economic realm.

## Route C, Unit 4: 6500 - Representation in the USA

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### General Comments

The Examiner's Report of Summer 2006 indicated that future exams would contain a mixture of questions, some traditional and some breaking new ground, designed to be accessible to all candidates while challenging the most able. This exam, consisting of four questions which have appeared previously in various guises and three which were less familiar, adhered to this pattern.

The number of candidates attempting to answer the question on Race & US Politics has continued to rise, which is not surprising as the same issues continue to be addressed in this topic. However, the quality of the answers has not noticeably improved over the past two exam cycles and this report will address the shortcomings in this area. By contrast, this year, the quality of answers on political parties saw a dramatic improvement, with some outstanding essays. Questions on elections continue to be done well and questions on Pressure Groups produced the poorest answers, as in previous years. However, this year, the number of candidates attempting the Pressure Group questions were much lower than in the past so the impact of poor performance in this area was minimised.

### Question 1

#### *Explain the role and significance of 'invisible primaries'*

This was a popular question. It required candidates to explain how 'invisible primaries' operate and analyse the impact they have on presidential elections. Key issues to be considered included:

- Patterns of political behaviour before the primaries begin and an awareness that the 'invisible primaries' begin (at the latest) immediately after the mid-term elections
- Evaluation of the importance of building a large financial "war chest", particularly in view of the "front-loading" of primaries
- Evaluation of methods and importance of developing a public profile before the primaries begin
- Evaluation of previous "invisible primaries" and their impact on presidential elections (AO2)

In addition to the issues outlined above, the strongest candidates evaluated the importance of building a strong campaign staff and the development/refining of a policy platform. They explained that raising large sums of money can have a dual purpose: providing the means to build on any early successes once the primaries begin and intimidating potential opponents considering entering the contest. The experience of John Edwards in 2004 was used as an illustration of the difficulties faced by a candidate who did well in Iowa and New Hampshire but did not have the resources to campaign actively in all the other states which held primaries soon after. Elizabeth Dole was cited as an example of a candidate withdrawing at an early stage after finding it impossible to raise sufficient funds. Stronger candidates were also able to refer to previous campaigns to demonstrate that success in the 'invisible primary' is a strong indicator of success but does not guarantee nomination, as

demonstrated by Howard Dean in 2004. Examples from the 2008 campaign were also used.

Other candidates were able to explain the ways in which 'invisible primaries' are used to raise funds and public profile but failed to effectively analyse their impact on the formal primaries.

The weakest candidates explained either the methods used to raise public profile or the intensity of fundraising before the formal primaries begin but offered no analysis of the significance of 'invisible primaries'. Only a few candidates confused 'invisible' primaries with real primaries.

Only a few candidates provided weak answers to the question, with a substantial number providing very good, or excellent, responses. Overall, this question was done well.

## Question 2

### *Why do minor parties find it difficult to achieve electoral success in the USA?*

This was the most popular of the short answer questions. It required candidates to outline and explain the reasons that minor parties often fail to make a significant impact on elections. Key issues to be considered included:

- Many States have restrictive regulations which make it difficult for candidates to be included on the ballot unless they have already demonstrated (by raising signatures) that they have significant levels of support. This often causes expensive distractions from campaigning by the candidates who may have the fewest resources.
- "Straight-ticket voting", which allows voters to back all the candidates of one party in all the positions being contested, penalises minor parties which may have not have candidates for all posts. Minor candidates receive, on average, twice as many votes in districts that do not allow straight ticket voting.
- Campaigns are getting steadily more sophisticated and expensive and minor parties often have limited funds and expertise at their disposal.
- Campaign finance laws, at both federal and State levels, base financial assistance for candidates on their performance at the previous election. Parties which did not stand, or did not do well, at the previous election will not receive funding support while candidates for the main parties usually will.
- In recent elections voters on the left of the political spectrum have voted for the Democratic Party while voters on the right have voted for the Republicans, leaving little ideological territory vacant for minor parties
- The first-past-the-post electoral system penalises small parties and, when there is intense partisanship, encourages voters to cast a vote in favour of one of the two main parties to keep out the party they most dislike.

The strongest candidates were able to outline all of the factors outlined above, providing brief analysis in each case. Some were able to develop these points, explaining that the expectation of electoral failure means that minor parties draw little attention from the media and this, in turn, makes it very difficult to attract talented and charismatic people to represent them. Also, the lack of ideological space tends to force minor parties to the margins of politics or to become associated with a single issue, both of which limit their support. It was pointed out that even when minor parties do enjoy some success, the major parties tend to adopt their most popular policies. Candidates at this level were able to illustrate their answers,

with George Wallace, John Anderson, Ross Perot and Ralph Nader all being cited. It was not necessary to explain all these factors to achieve top marks but a few concise, well-written answers managed to cover all this ground in the fifteen minutes available.

Other candidates were able to outline an impressive list of factors but provided limited explanation and illustration of their impact.

The weakest candidates provided only a couple of factors inhibiting minor party success and offered little or no analysis. At this level, illustrations were often confused, for example, suggesting that Ross Perot cost Al Gore the 2000 presidential election.

Only a few candidates provided weak answers to the question, although there were not as many very good, or excellent, responses as Q1. Overall, this question was done well. One strange feature of this question was the number of candidates who suggested that the all-encompassing nature of the main parties was an obstacle to minor party success but then went on to answer Q4 and explain, in detail, the conservative focus of the Republican Party.

### Question 3

*How and why do pressure groups seek to influence the executive branch of the government?*

This was, by a significant margin, the least popular of the short answer questions. It required candidates to outline and explain that insider groups may seek to set the political agenda by directly influencing the President and immediate advisors while outsider groups will usually seek to influence policy through senior civil servants in the federal bureaucracy. Key issues to be considered included:

- Direct access is only available to groups ideologically sympathetic to the President. Their access, however, will be enhanced if they have demonstrated themselves to be of use to the President's team. This may mean:
  - financial contributions, usually in the successful election campaign
  - delivery of a large number of campaign activists and the votes of a large number of their supporters in the election
  - provision of expertise in policy areas on the President's agenda
- Indirect access may be available to groups with the ability to influence the Federal Bureaucracy. This is often the preferred avenue of groups unable to access the West Wing. Civil servants, whose long-term projects may not have the support of the President, can be willing to work with groups who support their priorities. If these two groups are joined by key members of Congressional Committees, who fund the work of the Executive branch, an Iron Triangle is formed which can thwart the will of the President.

The strongest candidates explained that the President sets the political agenda for the year in the State of the Union address, and that the executive branch, by deciding how to implement laws, has considerable latitude over how public policy is put into effect. Thus, influencing this branch of government can be particularly beneficial to pressure groups. To achieve higher marks, effective analysis of both strategies to influence the executive branch was required.

Other candidates provided only a brief explanation of why it can be so advantageous to influence the executive branch and were often able to outline only one method for doing so.

Weakest candidates tended to provide pre-prepared short answers on US Pressure Groups, often unrelated to the question. A surprising number of candidates thought that Congress was the executive branch of government.

Overall, this question was not done well. Even the best responses did not match the best responses of the other three short-answer questions and the weakest were very poor indeed.

#### Question 4

##### *Why groups of supporters support the Republican Party, and why?*

This question was less popular than the first two, but not by a wide margin. It required candidates to outline the main policies of the Republican Party and explain why certain sections of American society support them. Key issues to be considered included:

- An explanation of the main planks of the party's platform, including the priorities of social conservatives, promoting "family values" and of fiscal conservatives, who believe in reducing taxation and the level of government intervention in society.
- Evaluation of why these policies have attracted the consistent support of the "heartland" in the South and mid-West
- Alternatively, evaluation of social groups which provide the party's core support, including people who attend a religious service at least once a week ("values" voters) married couples and households with annual incomes above \$50,000
- Traditional democrats who have drifted towards the Republicans, most notably Catholics of European descent (Irish, Italians etc.) and Hispanics (in 2004 but not 2006)

The strongest candidates were able to effectively explain both the social and fiscal policies of the party and the different groups of voters they attract. Often both the sections of society and their regional distribution was explained, although this was not essential to achieve top marks. Additionally, the growing tendency of Catholic voters to defect to the Republicans was analysed and, in some cases, the small swings towards the party of African Americans and Jews was covered. (Note, several answers of this standard were written by candidates who, in response to Q2, had referred to the main parties as 'umbrella parties'.)

Other candidates provided an effective explanation of which groups constitute the core support of the Republican Party, and why, but nothing on recent defectors from the Democratic party.

The weakest candidates provided a general survey of voting trends, covering supporters of the Democratic Party as well as the Republicans.

Of all the short answer questions, this one had the highest proportion of very good, or excellent, responses. Candidates unable to provide an analytical answer tended to avoid it.

## Question 5

*'Campaign finance legislation significantly shapes the strategies used by pressure groups.'* Discuss

This was a popular question. It required candidates to analyse the extent to which pressure groups rely on funding candidates in order to gain access and influence policy and to analyse whether legislation to limit this type of influence has proved effective. Key issues to be considered included:

- The methods used by Pressure Groups to influence elected representatives through support for their election campaigns, and the concerns which this has generated.
- Evaluation of all campaign finance legislation, objectives and mechanisms, designed to limit the impact of Pressure Groups on the electoral process, most notably the Federal Elections Campaign Acts (FECA) of the 1970's and the Bi-partisan Campaigns Reform Act (BCRA) of 2002.
- Evaluation of responses by Pressure Groups to these restrictions, especially the loopholes they have found in the legislation and how they have been used.
- Evaluation of other tactics used by Pressure Groups to advance their agenda.

The strongest candidates provided effective explanations of the restrictions introduced over the past forty years to limit the ability of wealthy Pressure Groups to establish undue influence through the funding of election campaigns, and the strategies adopted by Pressure Groups to neutralise the impact of these regulations. They were also able to analyse other strategies used by Pressure Groups, not affected by campaign finance legislation, to promote their interests, reaching a balanced conclusion.

Other candidates were able to explain campaign finance regulations, and strategies to evade them, but with many inaccuracies. Alternatively, campaign finance was analysed effectively but without any discussion of other strategies.

Weakest candidates often avoided any discussion of campaign finance and provided a general essay on Pressure Groups largely unrelated to the question.

## Question 6

*Why, and with what success, has affirmative action been used to promote racial equality in the USA?*

This was the most popular of the essay questions. It required candidates to demonstrate an understanding that affirmative action programmes were introduced in the 1960's to redress imbalances created by a long history of racial discrimination, with the active support of different tiers of government, but that there is a vigorous political debate over whether the policy is either desirable or effective. Key issues to be considered included:

- Understanding of why affirmative action policies were introduced and their objectives.
- Understanding that there are a range of perspectives on the effectiveness of affirmative action policies.
- Evaluation of the arguments that affirmative action policies have helped promote racial equality in the USA.

- Evaluation of the arguments that affirmative action policies have not helped promote racial equality in the USA, and may have hindered it.

Even the strongest candidates rarely got fully to grips with the debate between supporters and opponents of affirmative action. There was a tendency to offer a range of indications of improved opportunities for some ethnic minorities, balanced by counter indications of continued disadvantage, leading to a conclusion. Unfortunately, it is difficult to be sure how much these developments owe to affirmative action that these essays, although much more well-informed than in the past, tend to be speculative (rather than analytical) with the conclusion usually reflecting the candidate's personal viewpoint.

The answer to the question is, simply, that the success of affirmative action is in the eye of the beholder. Different groups of people, and different ideological positions, in the USA make powerful cases for and against the policy. Furthermore, there are disagreements between those who support affirmative action, as well as different strands of opinion among the policy's opponents. In order to demonstrate why affirmative action has been a success in the opinion of some, but a failure in the opinion of others, the different points of view need to be discussed. There will still be scope to outline positive and negative developments in race relations, to illustrate the competing viewpoints, but this approach offers greater opportunities for rigorous analysis, in keeping with the demands of the other topics.

Mark Schemes on this topic, which usually outline the same key points, can be used for guidance.

### Question 7

*'The influence of moderates has declined dramatically in the both the Democrat and Republican and parties.' Discuss.*

This was, by a small margin, the least popular essay question. It required candidates to analyse developments in both of the main parties over the past 10-15 years and reach an informed conclusion on whether the political pendulum has swung towards the centre or the extremes. Key issues to be considered included:

- Understanding that the nature of party politics in the USA has changed dramatically since the early 1990's with fiercely partisan elections, a reduction in split-ticket voting and little bi-partisanship in Congress
- Evaluation of the policies of the Republican Party, which make it, identifiably, a conservative party
- Evaluation of the policies of the Democratic Party, which make it, identifiably, a liberal party
- Evaluation of the political fortunes of moderates in both parties

As with Q4, the strongest candidates provided sophisticated detailed analysis of both parties, using both specific policies and personalities to illustrate their points. With the exception of some outstanding candidates, the Republican Party tended to be explored in more depth, having dominated the political stage ever since the Contract with America in 1994 (and having produced so many colourful, controversial characters). At this level, many answers explored the success of the Blue Dogs in the 2006 mid-term elections, arguing that the pendulum has swung decisively towards the centre in the Democratic Party, and considered the absence of a social conservative standard-bearer among the Republican presidential front-runners to

suggest that the pendulum may be about to swing back towards the centre in the Republican Party as well.

Other candidates made similar arguments but in less depth.

Even the weakest candidates had a broad general understanding of trends within the parties over the past two decades, although they often struggled to illustrate their points.

The best of these essays strongly challenge assertions that the 'gold standard' of A Levels has been debased.



## Route D, Unit 4: 6503 - Introducing International Politics

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### General Comments

This was a successful exam paper in that all questions provided ample scope for differentiation. Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate their greater awareness and understanding but weaker answers struggled to answer the questions specifically or to provide adequate analysis.

### Question 1

*Distinguish between economic globalisation and cultural globalisation.*

This was quite a popular question and was, in general, a good discriminator. The vast majority of candidates had little difficulty in defining the two versions of globalisation though the quality of the supporting evidence was often disappointing. Very few candidates mentioned the internet, for example, and many students were overly critical of economic globalisation, claiming that it merely served to benefit the Global North. Only a minority linked economic and cultural globalisation and no candidates pointed out that both were present during the colonial era. The good answers not only described economic and cultural globalisation with detailed examples, but analysed a connection between the two.

### Question 2

*To what extent is the idea of a North-South divide still relevant?*

This was a popular question but far too many candidates simply described the North-South divide. In addition, surprisingly few were able to give examples of poverty in the South and only a minority identified states which had climbed out of poverty; most simply used the label "Asian Tigers". Good answers not only described the North-South divide, with examples, but also analysed the extent to which the divide is still valid, with examples.

### Question 3

*Why is international co-operation over environmental issues difficult to achieve?*

This was not a popular question which was surprising given that analysis was straightforward. Virtually all those answering it identified climate change as the crucial issue and then noted that sovereignty was the barrier to agreement at, for example, Kyoto. Stronger candidates discussed the desire of some states to use state sovereignty and the perceived national interest, to prevent coherent action to reduce environmental damage. Good answers also discussed the link between economic growth and environmental damage, noting that many nation states are reluctant to threaten economic growth in order to meet international targets to reduce carbon emissions. Strong candidates also remarked that the scientific debate concerning global warming, for example, is on-going and Bush, for example has so far not been persuaded that global warming is a significant threat which will not be dealt successfully by future generations. Most noted that if the superpower is unwilling to make sacrifices then other states, particularly LDCs, will also ignore the problem.

#### Question 4

*Define multipolarity, and explain its significance for international politics.*

Surprisingly few candidates managed to define "multipolarity" and this led many into a quagmire. The successful minority tended to explain multipolarity in historical terms with particular reference to pre WWI and between the wars; the best answers discussed the flexibility of alliances and the confusion that this can create. Thus, they argued multipolarity could result in global instability. It was also argued that multipolarity made the international system more secure because no state would risk military conflict against another power for fear that other powers would ally against the aggressor. Some strong answers successfully related this to the current situation, suggesting, for example, that Gulf War 1 was an example of multipolarity. Unfortunately, no one was able to discuss the extent to which Gulf War 1 is an example of multipolarity bringing stability or instability.

Weaker answers simply tried to discuss whether the international system is currently multipolar. Others defined bipolarity, then unipolarity and then speculated about the imminent rise of multipolarity based upon the EU, China, India and Brazil as separate counterweights to the USA. These candidates did not necessarily answer the question.

It is concerning that many candidates misunderstand polarity questions. This question on multipolarity, for example, requires candidates to discuss theoretical concepts. For example, candidates should describe multipolarity as a theory and discuss how multipolarity theoretically impacts upon global security, and then support this with examples. Instead, some candidates merely attempt to discuss the extent to which the world is currently multipolar.

#### Question 5

*Did the end of the Cold War leave NATO without a viable role?*

Almost all candidates agreed that NATO's traditional role was to keep the Soviets out, the Americans in and the Germans down. There was also general agreement that article V bound all allies to come to the military aid of any member who was attacked. This is not strictly true as the article states that an attack on one is an attack on all who must respond; but the nature of the response is left to the individual state. All agreed that the end of the Cold War marked, in effect, the end of NATO's role. Thereafter, although there was agreement that NATO had found a new role there was no agreement on what it was. Many candidates ignored the Partnership for Peace and concentrated on the recruitment of retired Warsaw Pact members as a means of pushing Russia to the wire. However, most did identify NATO's new role as a substitute for the UN in a peacekeeping (strictly peace-making) role. Too many had NATO (rather than the odd member) fighting in Iraq, all mentioned Afghanistan with surprising optimism and the record of intervention in the former Yugoslavia. Very few mentioned the disagreements that seem to characterise the "new" NATO.

Level 3 answers discussed the extent to which the Soviet threat provided the glue which held NATO together. Once that threat had diminished then it could be argued that NATO would begin to fall apart. During the 1990s there was considerable political will to keep NATO together and the failure of UN peacekeepers in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia provided an opportunity for NATO to develop a new role as peace enforcer. However, in recent years NATO has come under pressure. The US has

been unable to gain full NATO support for its War on Terror and some EU states are frustrated by the influence NATO gives the US in European affairs.

### Question 6

*Has the growth of international institutions made a reality of the idea of world government?*

This was not a popular question and was not usually well answered. Most responses were characterised by grossly optimistic assessments of the UN's prospects for world government but few mentioned the general failure of peacekeeping operations and the reasons for it. Even fewer mentioned the ICC and the ICJ and the limitations put on their supranational ambitions by states refusing to accept their jurisdiction. On the other hand the successes of the World Bank, WTO and IMF were mentioned but the most common "success" story was the EU which was often taken as a harbinger of general supranationalism despite the evidence that there is a choice between enlargement and integration: you can have one or the other but not both.

Strong answers contained sophisticated analysis of the extent to which the UN, World Bank, IMF, WTO, ICC and ICJ, etc provide the institutions which together constitute a world government. International law provided candidates the opportunity to discuss the limitations put on the supranational ambitions of the ICC and ICJ by states refusing to accept their jurisdiction.

### Question 7

*'The EU has now developed into a world power.'* Discuss.

This was a popular question with generally good knowledge of the EU although almost all neglected to define "world power". Some candidates defined it as a "super power" but then did not define that. Most gave competent assessments of EU economic power in terms of GDP, international trade and leverage on the relevant economic IGOs. Again most concluded that individual members of the EU jealously guarded their sovereignty as far as foreign and defence policy were concerned. NATO was seen as a crucial rival that completely overshadowed the ERF and accurately reflected state priorities.

Good answers discussed the term 'world power'. Some decided that this was merely a synonym for superpower, which was acceptable, others decided that a world power would simply be a state or body that is able to influence other states or non state actors to do something which they otherwise would not do. Strong answers discussed the extent to which the EU held power in areas such as economic, political and cultural power.



## Statistics

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### Unit 1 (6491) People and Politics

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	58	51	45	39	33
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

### Unit 2 (6492) Governing the UK

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	61	54	48	42	36
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

### Unit 3 (6493) The Changing UK System

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	28	25	22	19	17
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

#### Route A Unit 4 (6494) UK Political Issues

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	62	55	48	41	35
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

#### Route B Unit 4 (6497) Introducing Political Ideologies

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	61	54	47	41	35
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

#### Route C Unit 4 (6500) Representation in the USA

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	63	56	50	44	38
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

#### Route D Unit 4 (6503) Introducing International Politics

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	63	57	51	45	40
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

#### Notes

**Maximum Mark (Raw):** the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the Mark Scheme.

**Boundary mark:** the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.



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