

# Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCE

GCE Government & Politics (8067, 9067-9070)

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## Unit 1: 6491 - People and Politics

### General Comments

Examiners felt in general that the paper and its demands were very much in line with that of past summer series. Candidate performance did vary however in response to the challenges which were presented. At one extreme examiners noted the confident handling of the paper with some exceptional responses on each question yet at the other extremes some considerable frustration in that basic principles underlying the UK political system were found wanting. Reference should be noted to where questions require a balanced response and that this is vital access the higher levels of marks. Few examiners felt that time constraints were in evidence. Candidates are moving to appreciate that it is in part (c) where the bulk of the marks reside and devote their time accordingly.

### Question 1

As is the norm the question on pressure groups was an automatic choice for most candidates. However, as is often the pattern this automatic choice may have switched on an "automatic pilot" in that some of the responses became the opportunity especially in part (c) for candidates to express their complete knowledge and understanding of the area but not specifically tailor this to the demands of the question. What was noted in the higher levels of responses was a clear, informed and contemporary understanding of pressure groups and good responses were furnished with excellent examples which show wide reading and research, and this is to be welcomed and encouraged.

#### (a) What is pluralism?

This question proved to be a key discriminator. A huge number of candidates did not understand the term. A significant minority confused the concept with plurality voting system. Frequently the vague assertion was made that pluralism was "what pressure groups are about" then ventured no further. Given that this is a key concept on the specification the gap in knowledge was manifest and this was a major failure commented on by all assistant examiners.

#### (b) Explain the different types of pressure groups

There were few issues or problems with this section of the question. Here examiners noted that candidates accessed with ease level 3 marks and were able to provide the different types and supplement this detail with pertinent examples. The main factors which prevented the obtaining of the top level was initially brevity and on numerous occasions the provision of only one method of classification: either just the insider/outsider division or the sectional and promotional/cause division. Another limitation was the lack of supportive illustrations of each category.

#### (c) To what extent are the largest pressure groups the most powerful?

This part of the question was again a key discriminator for two main reasons. Firstly, many candidates did not fully respond to the question asked and instead wished to discuss rather the success of pressure groups on their own terms, not those of the question. Secondly a significant number of candidates did not provide the balance which was requested. It was common to see that many simply stated that large pressure groups are the most powerful then provided no illustrative examples of

large pressure groups achieving the goals which they strove for. The latter point of the lack of examples of either successful or unsuccessful large pressure groups was a common comment of examiners. Some reverted to a re-run of classifying pressure groups to reach the conclusion that insiders are the most powerful.

## Question 2

A popular choice and invariably handled well by candidates without major problems. This area in comparison to other parts of the specification is narrow and defined. As a result candidates were often well prepared. Some of the comments in part (c) of question one is again relevant in that candidates tried to mould their response rather than that asked for in the question.

### (a) What is a referendum?

Most candidates were able to give a reasonable definition and could identify that referendums were an example of direct democracy. Weaker candidates tended to simply state that they were votes given on a yes/no format or described some functional aspect of their operation. Good responses pin-pointed the use of referendums as a supplement to a system of representative democracy, as this is how they have operated in the UK.

### (b) Explain the circumstances of three referendums in the UK

Most candidates were able to come up with three examples of referendums held in the UK. What was absent however was the ability to contextualise these referendums and provided details of the circumstances in which they were held. This consigned a huge number of responses into level 2. Hence it was common to see candidates provide accurate details of turnouts and voting preferences but could not identify the referendums part of the new constitutional arrangements of the Labour Government since 1997. So for instance there was precision in turnout and results for the Welsh referendum but no appreciation of its relevance in the devolution agenda. A surprising number it must be noted ignored the 1997 watershed and included the referendums of the 1970's most commonly the EEC referendum held in 1975 and for this no marks could be allocated.

What was more surprising but widely commented upon was the creative candidates who conjured up referendums which have never arisen.

Examiners noted that these covered a huge range, House of Lords reform, the Euro, the EU constitution fox hunting and the Iraq war to name but a few.

### (c) Do referendums strengthen or weaken the power of government?

On part (c) as noted previously, many candidates had prepared a standard "pros and cons" debate for referendums and just wanted to pour this out regardless of the question being asked. Thus the advantages and disadvantages of referendums became the most common response. It was a minority who could readily address the question and focus on the government and their power base with regard to referendums. This could aptly be demonstrated with the endorsement of devolution in the late 90's but the rejection of regionalism following the vote in the North East in 2004. The power and restrictions upon Parliament was noted but often not that of the government. Many candidates stated incorrectly that the Government has the power to phrase and set the question.

That is no longer the case and questions are now placed before independent scrutiny not governmental checks. It does remain the case that Governments can select the areas upon which it wishes to hold referendums and select their timings. Surprisingly few candidates noted that referendums can add a layer of legitimacy to constitutional changes and make reversal of them less likely following that government's possible demise.

### Question 3

In the main this was handled well by candidates with the main weakness in part (b) of the question which will be outlined below. This question combines an understanding of the concept of democracy an appreciation of it in operation in the UK. Conceptually there were no issues, where problems did arise this was in not being able to correctly state the key aspects of representative democracy in the UK: simple and straightforward but not dispatched with ease or fluency by many.

#### (a) Define democracy

Some excellent answers given here, which covered both the direct and representative models of democracy? The notion of popular participation and political equality were well documented. A common pattern was a number of candidates who simply gave an abridged version of the Lincoln statement "Government of the people, by the people for the people" while this can be useful it is not an all encompassing definition and does require explanation and detail. Alone as a response it is not sufficient.

#### (b) What are the main features of representative democracy in the UK?

Elections and their operation at all levels of government and Parliament as a central institution were taken as key barometers of success in this response. However for a huge number of candidates these essential elements was often overlooked and instead a heavy focus was placed by contrast on MP's surgeries and the role of political parties.

There was a singular lack of precision and detail in this section of the question and responses often failed to leave level 2. This is surprising given that the question is fairly straightforward and without caveat.

#### (c) To what extent has the UK political system become more democratic in recent years?

Again this question has appeared in past series and thus did not present a significant hurdle or obstacle to candidates. If there was a restriction to progression the reason often was the lack of balance, in that the candidate took one viewpoint and ignored its counter-argument. Additionally there was a lack of contemporary evidence to analyse and evaluate the debate. Hence for instance devolution and referendums commonly cited as improvers of democracy but often their worth was never fully analysed in terms of democratic credentials; no account was made of turnouts at referendums and in the subsequent elections to the devolved assemblies to assess if democracy had been reinvigorated. A common failing was to assert that the House of Lords is now much more democratic. It is true that it has entered one stage of reform in the removal of a large section of hereditary Peers, but its democratic credentials in that it has electoral legitimacy is still some way off. The issue of "recency" was commented upon.

No definitive time span was given for examiners but when responses reach back 100 years the flexibility of recent is somewhat stretched. In the main events over the last 20 years is substance enough to cover the question.

## Question 4

The topic of political parties has a declining customer base; this was the least popular question on the examination paper. In some ways this is surprising given the central role which political parties play in our political system. The question gave a base for hope and at times one for concern. There were some truly exceptional responses with developed mature and examples: evidence that some centres teach and deliver the area with great diligence. Concern arose in some of the responses which lacked any meaningful insight into our political system.

### (a) Outline two differences between a political party and a pressure group.

From wide base candidates could easily provide two differences between political parties and pressure groups. Where under performance was noted this was a result of insubstantial outlines given for each difference or only one difference being made clear in the response.

### (b) Explain the main functions of a political party

There was generally held concern that this part of the question was not done well. Some examiners noted that confusion existed between the features and functions of a political party. A significant number failed to move beyond the electoral function and this was the only real aspect which was well developed.

Where this part of the question was handled well candidates linked the theoretical functions to practical reality: hence for instance if the educative function was noted than examples of this taking place were cited such as in party political broadcasts and media interviews.

### (c) To what extent are parties effective in promoting political participation?

The lack of detail and substance in many responses limited the ability to advance to the higher levels for reward. In essence broad statements were made that political parties were failing but often there were no specific measurements to base this premise upon, such as party membership and accurate turnout figures. Again progress was hampered with a lack of balance and presenting both sides of the debate.

Weaknesses also arose as candidates ignored the word "participation" in the question and simply considered the good and bad points surrounding parties: some candidates also tended to focus exclusively on the current governing party (Labour) and excluded all others.

## Unit 2: 6492 - Governing the UK

### Question 1

- (a) Many candidates did not know the term and therefore made an educated guess, producing generalisations about law. Only those who could refer to equality before the law and the prevention of arbitrary government could achieve a top mark. Additional, optional features, were the principle of fair trial and the certainty that all offences will be subject to due process. Dicey was too rarely mentioned.
- (b) Most candidates could identify three methods of maintaining independence. Responses were usually differentiated by the thoroughness of the explanations. Thus candidates who referred to security of tenure were accurate, but higher marks were available for those who explained why this could avoid political or media pressure. This was also true of those who referred to pay issues. A typical error was the confuse independence with neutrality, though this was less common than in the past.
- (c) Most candidates, encouragingly, demonstrated a knowledge of civil liberties, either directly or by implication. There was also widespread understanding of the various ways judges protect liberties, notably judicial review and the application of the Human Rights Act. The best answers were those that successfully attempted an assessment of how effective these methods can be and could deploy examples. Such responses looked at the limitations of the HRA and discussed the importance of the sovereignty of parliament. Candidates who simply offered descriptions of how judges operate could not reach beyond the middle of level 2. The very strongest answers added that judges had also been acting as a kind of rights pressure group, operating through parliament and the media.

### Question 2

- (a) There were two typical answers here. One was accurate, referring to centralised versus decentralised power. The other was completely inaccurate because the candidate was referring to codified versus uncodified constitutions. For the substantially accurate answers there was a common tendency to refer to power rather than sovereignty. To obtain full marks it was necessary to refer to sovereignty explicitly or implicitly.
- (b) This question was done well by many candidates who were thoroughly prepared. For top marks it was expected that at least four sources could be identified. Differentiation between substantially correct answers usually revolved around the effective use of examples and the quality of the explanations.
- (c) Virtually all candidates centred their responses around the flexibility of the constitution. Plenty of responses discussed adaptability and the organic nature of the constitution. Many referred to the idea that the constitution could allow for changes to law needed in the face of terrorism and the like. A good number used the experience of the USA as a contrast. This was a successful approach.

However, many candidates could not go beyond these issues. Those who did were rewarded with good marks. They tended to refer to the strength of the executive (strong candidates seeing this as both a strength and a weakness) and the fusion of powers. Some also discussed the importance of the sovereignty of parliament.

### Question 3

- (a) There were a distressingly large number of candidates who confuse ministers with MPs. Perhaps this is because they are aware that most ministers are also MPs, but this does not define them. To obtain full marks it was necessary for candidates to refer to both main roles of a minister, i.e. manager of a government department and a member of the collective executive branch.
- (b) Fortunately many candidates who confused ministers with MPs did not transfer the error over to part (b). Most could identify both collective and individual ministerial responsibility as common reasons and could deploy appropriate examples. However, many went no further. The third most popular reason mentioned was personal misconduct. Only the very strongest candidates could go beyond these three reasons, referring, for example, to media pressure and loss of prime ministerial support.
- (c) It was this question which brought most light relief for examiners. There were many examples of 'moments of madness' and they were ascribed to a wide range of former ministers. Furthermore there was a range of locations for this, including Hampstead Heath, public toilets and ministerial offices, as well as Clapham Common. One candidate combined three separate examples by claiming that Robin Cook had had an affair with his nanny, but had not been dismissed because she had not had his illegitimate child. It was David Blunkett who proved to be the most popular example of misconduct.
- (d) Many candidates could identify the main limitations, citing cabinet, parliament, party and the media as the main agents of control. What differentiated the stronger candidates, however, was the ability to evaluate such limitations. A further differentiator was the ability to discuss the changing circumstances of the prime minister, such as the size of the parliamentary majority, the state of public opinion and the absence of presence of party splits. Where examples were used they tended to be effective and well chosen. Weaker candidates tended to refer to Thatcher, Major and Blair in very generalised terms.

## Question 4

- (a) This question was done well, though some candidates were a little too brief, failing to explain the functions, albeit briefly. This was especially true of the legislating function, where merely saying that 'parliament makes laws' was not sufficient.
- (b) Most candidates could identify three methods successfully. What differentiated better candidates was the depth and quality of their explanations of those methods.

As with part (a) there were too many brief answers. For example something needed to be said about how select or standing committees go about their work. This was also true of the role of the Opposition.

It should be noted here that the presence of the word 'explain' in the question should be a cue for candidates to go into some detail, within the limitations of time, of course.

- (c) Candidates experience difficulty with this analysis. There may have been some misunderstanding over the nature of the question being asked, but the main problem was a lack of sensitivity to the way parliament has behaved in recent years. Perhaps the wording of the question was difficult. In reality this was a question about parliament's effectiveness. There were a number of reasonable answers, describing strengths and weaknesses, but the best marks were usually reserved for those who understood that the position of parliament changes with circumstance. For example, the size of the government majority is key. There was far too little evaluation of the House of Lords, too, especially in view of its activism in recent years. Approaches which discussed whether parliament was representative enough were valid, but this was a peripheral issue compared to its relations with the Executive.

## Unit 3: 6493 - The Changing UK System

### General Comments

The paper presented a choice on electoral reform for question 1 and the topic of the UK membership of the EU for question 2. Electoral reform had appeared in the last summer series and was the more popular of the two options this was again the case in this series. It was noted by examiners that for both questions the source was not fully utilised and developed. The specific circumstances and issues of this are detailed below.

### Question 1

As indicated by far the more popular of the two questions but it is worth noting that candidates encountered significant problems with the concept of marginal seats. What this is indicative of is an unclear appreciation of some of the mechanics of First Past the Post this is mentioned below. However if ground was lost on the source element recovery was made by many candidates in the more traditional and perhaps anticipated area of electoral reform for Westminster MP's.

- (a) **Using source 1, comment on the levels of representation achieved by the three main parties in the 2005 General Election.**

This did not present any major difficulties for candidates. The three political parties levels were defined and comment was advanced. This brought for the vast bulk of candidates entry into level 3. Exclusion from this top level arose if all the three parties were not included or no comment advanced.

- (b) **Using source 2 and your own knowledge, why are marginal seats important under the first-past-the-post electoral system?**

The response here drew the most severe criticism from all examiners. It was only a vast minority of candidates who could accurately understand the importance and significance of a marginal seat in the Westminster elections. Hence answers repeated the source without any understanding.

Many made the comment that the Conservative Party was strong in the South and Labour in the North and thus marginal seats were to be found in the Midlands. A considerable number asserted marginals were only fought between the Conservatives and Labour, no other parties were involved. Hence the issue of safe seats and heartlands were completely by-passed by many.

- (c) **Explain the advantages of electoral reform for Westminster elections.**

It was noted here by many examiners that candidates reached higher levels on part c than on part d. A sound response was well within the remit of most candidates. The drawbacks of the current system were well rehearsed and developed. Quite often candidates drew on their knowledge of alternative systems in the devolved assemblies plus overseas models. The answer was largely speculative in nature but presented no difficulties.

- (d) **Make a case against electoral reform for Westminster elections.**

Candidates found this question accessible but yet at times failed to advance often to the higher levels. However there was good use of contemporary detail with reference to the difficulties in the devolved assemblies with spoilt ballots as had occurred in Scotland and the issue of two types of representatives under the AMS system. What did limit responses was where some candidates stated the problems associated with reform and switching to an alternative electoral system but often failed to fully clarify what was good about the current system. Or if both aspects were covered there was a lack of analysis and evaluation which was restrictive of progress.

## Question 2

The EU has proved to be increasingly popular for politics students over the recent years with the emergence of the constitution and the topic of the single European currency the Euro plus the enlargement of the Union eastwards. As a result it has been a major flash point between UK political parties in an otherwise stagnant domestic political climate. However the attraction of electoral reform clearly put respondents to this question in the minority. Generally there was a considered feeling that the question was not handled well by candidates.

- (a) **Using the source, explain the dilemma which the Prime Minister perceived over his relationship with Europe.**

This did prove difficult for a considerable number of candidates who failed to convert the source and understand the perceived dilemma of the Prime Minister. As a consequence few reached the top levels and the standard response was a re-wording of the source without any realistic advancement or understanding displayed.

- (b) **Using the source and your own knowledge, what have been the achievements of the Labour government with regard to the European Union since 1997?**

The conversion of the source material did not prove problematic: addition of extensive and relevant own knowledge was. The inclusion of the social Chapter and enlargement were in evidence.

Examiners continue to note and these reports continue to mention the passing of the Human Rights Act which invariably appeared here. The ECHR is not an EU body but is treated as synonymous and integral.

This does not mean marks were deducted but proves that this fundamental difference is not being made clear by a lot of centres. In retrospect the Labour government have been in power for ten years and the impact of EU matters for the UK during this period should be well known.

In contrast the debacle over the EU by the previous Conservative administration of John Major was better evidence in later parts of the response than the events of the preceding decade.

- (c) **Explain the major differences between the UK political parties over the European Union**

Here answers covered the full mark range. There were well developed responses which were contemporary and well documented which covered an array of political

parties and their current differences. Labour was seen as the pragmatic party and the Conservatives still sceptical and reserved with the Liberals the most enthusiastic of the main three. Detail on UKIP and the nationalist parties was good to see. A minority detailed that splits existed within the parties as opposed to between them.

However, there were many candidates who were singularly ill prepared and spoke of the Conservative Party and its desire to leave the EU.

**(d) Why, and to what extent, has the UK had a difficult relationship with the European Union?**

The two pronged request of the question, the “why” and the “to what extent” were often not fully covered by candidates. Hence the balance of how serious was the difficult relationship did not receive full consideration. It was accepted that some candidates would revert to problems on entry or failed attempts in the 1960’s and this was included in the mark scheme. The UK and US “special relationship” was covered well and the difficulties over the Iraq war with EU members was noted. The most common weakness was the candidate who wished to consider exclusively the matter of sovereignty and failed to develop the debate to cover the course of the UK’s relationship with the EU on matters such as CAP, free trade and other relevant topics.

## Route A, Unit 4: 6494 - UK Political Issues

### Question 1

There was good knowledge of the nature of unionism and most candidates could accurately relate the background to power-sharing. Few, however, explored clearly what power sharing would actually involve so the discussion became a little too generalised. Most candidates could understand that the problem was related to the DUP mainly and their reluctance to sit down with perceived terrorists. However, rather too many were content merely to discuss general; mistrust and the effects of the history of the troubles. It was the better candidates who looked in some detail at issues surrounding decommissioning, disbandment of the IRA, policing, punishment beatings etc. The very strongest candidates traced the recent history of various attempts to restore devolved government and why they had failed.

### Question 2

Although this was a fairly specialised question, it was attempted by a large number of candidates and generally they achieved a fair degree of success. Most knew examples of both successes and failures in terms of management of the NHS. The weaker candidates tended to concentrate on contemporary issues such as MRSA, problems with doctors' pay and conditions, and the losses made by some health trusts. Such candidates often tended to generalise from the particular, no doubt picking up cues from the popular press and other media ! Such approaches often yielded satisfactory marks, but higher level responses looked more deeply at the issues. The best referred to the difficulty of evaluating the performance of the NHS, looking, for example, at conflict over statistics and whether they had been manipulated. For high level marks it was also necessary for candidates to include evaluation, comparing, for example successes over new treatments, A and E stats and waiting times and lists, with continuing problems.

### Question 3

Some weaker candidates rather ignored the actual question and decided to write about race relations in general. They gained some marks, but remained at the lower levels. The most successful responses made specific links between terrorism and race relations, as the question required. These pointed to specific incidents such as 7/7, the de Menezes killing and the Forest gate incident. These responses also often referred to the effects of increased security on public transport, placing racial issues at the forefront of people's mind. For top level marks it was also important to engage in some evaluation. This usually involved candidates pointing out that there were other religious, cultural and economic causes of poor race relations, so terrorism was not the only cause. However, such strong evaluations were relatively rare. Most candidates simply argued that, yes, terrorist issues were causing deteriorating race relations. This approach was acceptable, but not at quite the same level as true evaluations.

## Question 4

Most candidates understood the term well and were able to describe examples, especially New Deal, tax credits and the treatment of single parents or the disabled. Some used the minimum wage and the 10% tax band, but these are outside the terms of the question. However, they were credited if they were shown as part of a broader policy of attacking the poverty trap. On their own, however, they were ignored by examiners. The better answers engaged with the question of why welfare to work was introduced. These stronger responses referred to economic reasons on the whole, but many referred to juvenile crime, social problems and the hope that bringing people off welfare will reduce the tax burden and reduce unemployment in general. A typical weaker response was purely descriptive and lacking a full response to the whole question.

## Question 5

A common problem arose over this question. This was that many candidates decided to engage in a long, detailed history of economic policy and conflicts over it, but failed to address the question directly and included too little contemporary evidence. The question had a contemporary feel to it, but rather too many candidates had little feel for this. The best responses were fully aware of the extent to which there are any common principles in the policies of Brown/Blair and Cameron/Osborne. Here such issues as taxation, fiscal and monetary policy, single currency and priorities were successfully discussed. The best answers engaged in evaluation by comparing areas of consensus with continuing areas of conflict over such issues as the distribution of taxation and public and private debt. It was also encouraging to see so many candidates exploring ideological aspects of the question, noting that most mainstream politicians are essentially neo liberal. It was not essential to discuss the Liberal Democrats, but many did successfully, pointing out that they were the only party with genuine differences over economic policy, notably over taxation. This question, above all others, demonstrates how essential it is that candidates attempt to respond directly to the question rather than merely pursuing their own agenda.

## Question 6

Many candidates avoided this question, possibly because they were unable to understand its requirements. In that respect it was not a successful question. However, those who did attempt it tended to do well as they did understand the premise of the question. Various responses were possible and a combination of them all yielded best results. The most common response was to discuss the reasons why there is so much fear of crime. These tended to include the rise in crimes of violence sexual offences and the like, media coverage of crime (notably gun and knife crime) and a general sense that there is a great deal of offending among the young. Some also successfully introduced a racial element into the discussion. A second approach was to differentiate between crimes that are rising and those that are falling, pointing out that burglaries and car crime are down, but that street robbery is up. A third approach concerned a perceived lack of visible policing. One particularly astute candidate suggested the government could not win. If the streets were flooded with police, there would be an assumption that crime was out of control. With a lack of police people would be more fearful of personal attack.

A few candidates also cleverly pointed out that a perceived soft approach to offenders by the courts also raised fear that offenders were let loose too easily. The quality of such reviews varied, of course. The best answers did attempt an evaluation, some suggesting

fear of crime was indeed justified, others saying there was a genuine paradox. Some very well informed candidates also discussed disputes over the way the incidence of crime is recorded, noting discrepancies between Home Office and British Crime Survey figures.

## Question 7

Many candidates attempted this as it is a question which has appeared before in a similar form. It was not necessary for candidates to range across the whole of the welfare state, but it was expected that responses should go beyond merely health and education. There remains a misconception among many candidates that the welfare state is being privatised, bit by bit. This is not a valid analysis. The private sector is certainly becoming more involved but this is *quasi* privatisation at most. Thus, the best candidates tended to suggest that, although some aspects of the welfare state have been in danger, including the principle of services being free, or the postcode lottery making too much inequality, or some areas being scaled down such as social housing, there was still adherence to the original conception and that none of the main parties were threatening them. The very best candidates pointed out that, under the neo liberals, the welfare state had been in danger, but this was not the case under New Labour and the current Conservative Party. For high level marks a strong evaluation was necessary with a balance between examples of perceived threats (for example to the state pension system or higher education) and advances and improvements (including growing spending on health and education. The very best talked of the benefits system having been reformed, but that it was more precisely targeted than absolutely reduced. Weak responses usually took the form of a review of welfare state policy, normally since 1979, with little evaluation.

## Route A, Unit 5: 6495 - The EU and European Issues

### Question 1

Many candidates were able to describe the problems that have bedevilled the CAP. However, the question specified the controversies surrounding the reform of the CAP, not merely its difficulties. The higher marks, therefore, were reserved for those who focused on the reform process. Good responses therefore concentrated on the different attitudes of different countries to reform, usually identifying the UK, France, Germany and the recent accession states. These stronger responses described recent reforms and demonstrated why it was difficult to negotiate them. Those candidates who did a good job of describing problems such as inequity, corruption, over-production, contested protectionism, wastage etc. could not get beyond the top of level 2 marks.

### Question 2

It was encouraging to see so many candidates attempting this question, demonstrating that there is good knowledge of the role of the Commission presidency. Those who tackled the question tended to discuss both the position of the Commission generally and then discussed the presidency. Good knowledge was shown of the record of past presidents such as Delors and Santer as well as the current incumbent.

Most candidates described the role of the president, referring to patronage, chairmanship of meetings, representing the EU externally and his position as a figurehead. The highest marks were gained by those who included one of two qualities or both. One was a sensitivity to the changing role of the presidency. The other was an evaluation of the president's position, balancing strengths against weaknesses and limitations.

### Question 3

This question was well done on the whole, probably because only those who had made a special effort to look at the issue of Turkey would have attempted it all. A few weaker candidates attempted to discuss the problems of enlargement in general, notably of poorer countries and then merely adapted their answers to the Turkey case. But these were relatively rare. The best answers ranged across several issues, normally including economic matters, human rights, religion and culture and the issue of geography. Those who explored the various problems could reach the top of level 2 and possibly get into level 3. The best responses, however, were those that also discussed the attitude of existing member countries to Turkey's candidacy. Thus the differing views of such countries as the UK, Germany, Austria and France were prominent.

### Question 4

Responses tended to fall into one of two categories. There were those which chose to treat the question as a general one on the powers of the European Parliament. These did not focus on its relationship with the Commission.

However good these responses were they could not go beyond level 2 marks and many fell into level 1. The best of this category showed good knowledge and were aware of the changing role and importance of the parliament. The other category, where the level marks could be found, were those that concentrated on the parliament-commission relationship. Of those the best showed good knowledge of legislative procedures.

Too many ignored this aspect of the nature of parliamentary control. Most could refer to dismissal of the Commission, budgetary control etc., often quoting well known examples, but few understood that a key element of control lies with decision making and the parliament's post Maastricht powers.

## Question 5

This was an extremely topical issue so candidates tended to display excellent contemporary knowledge. Those who failed perhaps to achieve their potential marks were largely candidates who did not address both halves of the question reasonably evenly. Some simply described the terms of the constitution and some of its issues, while others concentrated largely on implementation problems. Such candidates rarely got further than the middle of level 2. This left the better candidates who responded to both halves. Some tended to write about the *terms* of the constitution (accurately on the whole) rather than the reasons why it had been developed. Thus higher level answers referred to motivations such as entrenchment, consolidation, further integration, arrangements dealing with enlargement etc. This approach led more naturally into the other half of the question. Some excellent responses understood both the political problems (such as unanimous approval and the internal problems in France and Holland) as well as the fact that different member states wanted different things out of the constitution. The very best candidates linked the problems of implementation with the more general issue of the future course of the EU. It was most encouraging to see so many good responses to such a key issue. Sadly, for some, it proved too demanding and they were only able to rehearse superficial media comment.

## Question 6

This was not a popular question, almost certainly because few, if any, candidates expected it and so had not prepared. Nonetheless there were some high quality, informed and sensitive responses. These ranged over single currency issues and the ECB, of course, but also considered such issues as fiscal rules, trade rules, as well as the micro economic issues surrounding the CAP, regional funding, transport etc. A few strong candidates pointed that, although the UK is not in the Euro, the economic policies of the Commission and the ECB do have an effect on policy making here. Much use was also made of the importance of convergence criteria. That said, there were many weaker answers where candidates simply explored the extent to which the EU affects domestic policy making *in general* and then tried to adapt the analysis to economic policy specifically. Such approaches yielded limited success.

## Question 7

There were two main approaches on offer here. One was institutional - looking at the various institutions and processes of the EU and examining the extent to which they were supranational.

There was encouraging knowledge shown on the growth and significance of QMV. There was widespread awareness of the status of the main institutions and few errors were made. Examiners tended to differentiate such responses on the basis of both range of issues and the depth of analysis of the operation and status of the institutions in question. Discrimination was also used on the basis of how up to date the candidate was with developments.

The other main approach was issue-based and this is where the better answers tended to come, though not always. These candidates looked at such issues as trade, finance, economy, external relations, defence, taxation, social policy etc. and examined the extent to which they had become the subject of a supranational approach. Evaluation was more readily available with this approach, with good candidates demonstrating how some issues, notably trade, agriculture, fisheries, were indeed very supranational, but others, such as taxation, defence and foreign policy, remained very much intergovernmental.

A few outstanding candidates combined both approaches very successfully. Weaker responses tended to avoid any evaluation, being purely narratives. They also tended to deploy a limited range of issues.

## Route A, Unit 6: 6496 - Policy Making in the UK

### Question 1

There were many excellent accounts of the changing positions of the parties, recounting the shifts in the positions of Labour and the Conservatives since the 1960s and right up to the present day. These accounts also demonstrated the degree to which there has been past conflict. All or most candidates also demonstrated clear knowledge of the largely consistent position of the Liberal Democrats. Many candidates, however, achieved little more than such accounts. Three features tended to distinguish the stronger responses. One was knowledge of the divisions within parties and the effects these had on inter-party relations. The second was knowledge and understanding of the contemporary situation, notably the nuances of David Cameron's position, some divisions within the Liberal Democrats, and the influence Brown's succession will have, notably his scepticism and reluctance to join EMU. Third, better candidates did address the question full on with an assessment of the degree to which there is now more consensus than in the past. In this third regard, the most effective approaches looked at specific issues within the EU context, such as EMU, enlargement, the social model, the Constitution etc., in each case examining the extent to which there was consensus or conflict. Such approaches were the domain of the very strongest candidates. The most serious faults were failure to look at the current political scene or failure to make an evaluation in direct response to the question. Very few candidates, however, demonstrated weak knowledge.

### Question 2

This was the least popular question on the paper but was still attempted by a substantial minority. The most encouraging common feature was an understanding that there has generally been a consensus over the principles of the welfare state, but that adversarial politics has broken out over methods of delivery and over priorities. The strongest candidates pointed out that the 1980s was a period of more fundamental conflict, however, when the very basis of welfare was challenged by neo liberals and defended by the Labour Party. Since then, most candidates knew, there has been a growing consensus. Two distinct approaches, equally valid, tended to yield good results. One was to look at a number of services individually - typically health, education, social security, pensions and housing - and examine the extent of conflict over these between the parties. The other - often taken by stronger candidates - was to look at the issue thematically. These examined such issues as marketisation, competition, quasi privatisation (too many candidates are still describing private sector involvement inaccurately as privatisation), dependency culture, targeting, target setting etc. Such responses tended to be more elegant and fluent. They also tended to be more evaluative. As usual the most common weakness was failure to address the question. Typically these featured long historical narratives, often accurate, but paying little attention to the question.

The welfare state is, of course, a vast subject and it was not expected that candidates should examine every aspect. This would have been impractical given the time constraints. It was accepted, therefore, that probably three areas, usually including health and education, was a sufficient range.

That said, some candidates did manage to range quite widely and yet still produced a good analysis of the issues.

### Question 3

The vast majority of candidates could demonstrate some sensitivity to the changed position of pressure groups in the EU. Three typical approaches were used and each was equally valid. One was institutional. Here the main EU institutions, their role, powers and relationships, were examined in relation to pressure group activity. Thus, for example, many responses examined the enhanced role of the parliament or looked at the way in which the Commission initiates policy. The ECJ was commonly mentioned as a source of pressure group leverage, though too few candidates could offer examples. The second approach concentrated on the behaviour of groups themselves, giving examples and showing how they have enhanced their role by joining EU-wide groups, by lobbying and by finding new points of access. The third approach was issue based, typically looking at such policy areas as agriculture, fishing, environment, transport, economic development, employment rights etc. and showing how pressure groups have enhanced influence in such areas. A few very strong and industrious candidates were able to combine two or more of these approaches with great success.

The most challenging aspect of the question was to evaluate the extent to which the EU has enhanced pressure group influence. Most candidates, understandably perhaps, stuck to the simple option of accepting that influence had increased and, provided they had enough evidence, they could achieve good marks. The stronger candidates attempted some evaluation by pointing out areas where the EU was limiting pressure group influence, such as countervailing forces in Europe, expense and the difficulty in accessing the less accountable Council of Ministers. Another approach was to identify policy areas where national, rather than European activity was needed by pressure groups. It was very encouraging to read how many candidates now understand the distinction between QMV and unanimity in decision making with regard to pressure group influence. Weaker candidates tended to offer narratives with little evaluation. The most common failing, however, was a lack of examples. A few candidates are still confusing the ECHR with the EU, but, thankfully, they are a diminishing minority.

### Question 4

Many candidates were able to offer long and usually quite detailed narratives, demonstrating a general drift towards a more draconian attitude to law and order issues in the UK. There was good knowledge of legislation since 1979 concerning police powers, treatment of suspects, anti-terrorism measures etc. It was not necessary for candidates to demonstrate knowledge of all developments in this field, but many were impressive in the extent of their knowledge. The same cannot, however, be said for knowledge of ways in which the rights lobby, parliament and the judiciary have been able to counteract these tendencies. Too many candidates offered uncritical accounts, remaining content to agree with the statement that the forces of law and order have prevailed. Only the stronger candidates were able to describe examples of judicial and parliamentary activism, such as Belmarsh or the government defeat on 90 day detentions of terrorist suspects. Few were able to extend beyond these examples.

Very few sought to argue that perhaps the rights lobbyists have had more victories than defeats in recent years. A substantial minority also chose to answer a different question by examining whether the losses of civil liberties were justified by the threats. Another common fault was to suggest that some law and order measures, such as more and longer prison sentences, were issues of civil liberties when they are clearly not, however contentious they may have been.

Strong candidates demonstrated good knowledge, some balance and came to conclusions which could be backed by evidence. Those who decided that the forces of law and order were indeed winning, but conceded that it was not all one way traffic and could offer examples of successes by the rights lobby, were generally the most successful

## Route B, Unit 4: 6497 - Introducing Political Ideologies

The overall standard of performance in the route B units this summer was broadly in line with previous years. At the top end, there were some very impressive scripts, which showed a strong understanding of the relevant ideological traditions and were able to recognise ideologies as a point of intersection between political theory and political practice. That said, there were also many sound responses which provided accurate and well drilled accounts of key ideas and doctrines, though these tended to lack theoretical sophistication. Nevertheless, there were two main reasons for under-performance. First, there was a tendency for key terms in questions to be misunderstood. A very good piece of advice for candidates would be: if you are unsure about the meaning of a major term used in the question, don't attempt that question - however much you may love the topic! Second, there were, as ever, some very good responses to questions that were not set (not uncommonly, these were questions that had come up on last year's paper). An important skill to develop in candidates is therefore to get them to 'think on their feet'; that is, to be able to recast or restructure their knowledge and understanding to ensure that it 'fits' the specific question set.

### Question 1

This question was generally very competently done. Most candidates were well aware of the key aspects of the New Right, although the liberal version was more securely addressed than the conservative one. However, it was pleasing to observe that a number of candidates were able to write effectively on the features of the conservative New Right in the USA (without getting confused about the foreign policy ideas of the so-called 'neocons'). Weaker responses to this question tended to write about empirical developments in the UK in the 1980s without showing an awareness of the theoretical character of neoliberalism and neoconservatism.

### Question 2

This was a very popular question, and most responses were at least sound. However, the definitions of individualism were frequently skeletal and incomplete, which resulted in limited success in evaluating its importance to liberalism. A minority of candidates were able to distinguish between egotistical and developmental individualism, but this provided them with a very sound basis for exploring the implications in terms of the contrasting ideas of classical and modern liberalism.

Too many candidates, however, simply defined individualism as the belief that individuals should make their own decisions; in other words, they mistook individualism for freedom. A belief in individual freedom is an *implication* of individualism, not what it means. Individualism is a belief in the primacy of the human individual over any collective body or social group; it is therefore an approach to social theorising.

### Question 3

Here a large number of candidates suffered because they did not fully understand Lenin's theory of the party, even though they had a general understanding of how Marx, by contrast, believed that revolution would come about.

Nevertheless, some wrote very generally about Marx's theories of history, rather than focusing on his relevant ideas. Where the basic features of vanguardism were grasped, these were seldom explained clearly or fully. In particular, there was a tendency to explain the need for a vanguard party in terms of Russian backwardness, rather than in terms of the impact of bourgeois ideology. The key question here is: why did Lenin believe that the proletariat would not achieve revolutionary class consciousness if left to its own devices? Among those who did address the issue of the party, only a small number were able effectively to explain how the doctrine of democratic centralism fits in.

### Question 4

This was another popular question, and was generally well done. Most candidates were well aware of the key features of both ideologies regarding human nature. The main source of differentiation was the range of distinctions that were discussed. In the case of weaker responses, the distinction sometimes was developed little beyond the difference between optimistic and pessimistic views. Others, however, were able to examine issues such as 'plasticity' (the nurture-nature divide), cooperation v. moral corruption, rationality v. limits of rationalist, and personal self-development v. human imperfection.

### Question 5

This was the most popular essay question by far, and it was generally competently answered. Candidates were usually well aware of at least some of the key distinctions between classical liberalism and modern liberalism, and many were able to write clearly about why they are important. At the top end of performance range, candidates were able to reflect not only on both similarities and differences, but were also able to reach a conclusion supported by evidence. In addition, there were able to consider a broad range of issues, ranging from philosophical ones to policy matters. In the case of weaker answers, these tended to focus more narrowly on issues such as social welfare and economic management, with the differences between the two traditions being treated descriptively rather than analytically. Moreover, in some cases, the emphasis was entirely on differences, with the similarities and overlaps between effectively ignored.

### Question 6

Too few of the candidates who attempted this questions had a secure understanding of the concept of pragmatism. Many had a partial grasp - pragmatism was taken to mean something like resistance to change, a belief in slow change, or an acceptance of 'change in order to conserve'. Some simply thought that it equated to tradition (a forgivable mistake, for candidates who recognised that the conservative argument that tradition should be respected because it has been 'tried and tested' is an *example* of pragmatism). Without this understanding of the concept, most answers were unable effectively to address the key issues raised by the question. Much more seriously, pragmatism was

sometimes mistaken for paternalism or even patriarchy, leading to answers that were at times wholly irrelevant. Most responses did, nevertheless, recognise that the emergence of the New Right, and especially neoliberalism, did have implications for pragmatism. On this one, there was some confusion, though. While it is possible to argue that the shift towards free-market economic priorities essentially happened for pragmatic reasons (Keynesianism had ceased to work, etc), it cannot be denied that such thinking had in itself a highly ideological character and was based on principle.

## Question 7

Most of the candidates who attempted this question had a general understanding of the different phases of socialist development, moving from revolution to reformism, from fundamentalism to revisionism, and from revisionism to the 'third way' or neo-revisionism. However, some candidates interpreted socialism as being invented by Marx, and interpreted the question as being the same as one from a recent paper on the shifts within Marxism. They then produced discussions at considerable length about Lenin and Stalin, which were of very limited help. Even when they then went on to discuss social democracy, they had wasted a significant proportion of their answer. On the other hand, there were some very thorough and insightful responses that focused consistently on the issues of values and goals, and explored how and why socialist theory and practice had changed over time. It was pleasing to observe a considerable number of answers that discussed Bernstein, the Fabians and Crosland. Forgivably, very few candidates challenged the notion of 'retreat'.

## Route B, Unit 5: 6498 - Other Ideological Traditions

### Question 1

This question was popular, as anarchist questions usually are. Very few candidates had no idea about the anarchist distaste for the state, although this was not always underpinned by sound theoretical understanding. In some cases, answers developed little beyond the idea that as anarchists have a strong belief in freedom they must view the state as evil and oppressive. The key to this question was the recognition that anarchists have a particular *view* of the state that highlights its oppressive character, and that that view is rooted in the notion that authority of any kind, and especially political authority, is profoundly corrupting. This can be seen as an extreme form of 'Actonism', if you like (power corrupts etc). It is important to note, however, that the anarchist view differs from the liberal one, as liberals believe that state power can be 'tamed'

### Question 2

Most responses to this question were at least sound. At the top end of the performance range, candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of social Darwinism (although Herbert Spencer was sometime portrayed as a fascist theorist, which would have greatly upset him) and then explored its implications for international relations. In this sense, struggle was explained separately from war. There was, nevertheless, a significant gulf between candidates who merely mentioned social Darwinism and ones who fully explained it.

In the case of weaker responses, these often placed too much emphasis on empirical developments, notably the (largely unexplained) militaristic and expansionist tendencies of fascist regimes.

### Question 3

The first part of this question caused many candidates few problems. That said, the sophistication of their definitions varied considerably. In weaker cases, the nation was sometimes, unhelpfully, seen to be defined by geographical features or racial ones. Few candidates were unable to highlight the political nature of the state, but only a minority were able to explain the nature and significance of sovereignty. The second half of the question, on confusion between the two terms, was often poorly done.

Not uncommonly, candidates explained the confusion by reference to multinational states, failing to recognise that such examples are more effective in highlighting differences than similarities (and therefore confusion). Many drew attention to the misnaming of the United Nations, seemingly believing that this was the *source* of the confusion between the terms rather than an *example* of it.

### Question 4

There were some very good answers to this questions from candidates who understood the nature of difference feminism and the significance for feminist analysis of an essentialist model of human nature.

From this perspective, gender equality compounds female oppression by encouraging women to be 'male identified'.

However, other candidates paid less attention to the 'rejection' of gender equality. As a result, they sometimes discussed different notions of gender equality; for example, suggesting that socialist feminists had questioned gender equality because they had emphasised the importance of social equality. Such a position, however, falls well short of a rejection of gender equality, as its purpose is simply to remove the social barriers that prevent women and men living equally.

## Question 5

This was a generally successful question for most candidates who attempted it. The most common approach was to consider, in turn, the links between fascism and nationalism and fascism and socialism. The key discriminator was between responses that were analytical and evaluative and ones that were largely descriptive. As often happens with fascism questions, candidates seldom under-perform as a result of their lack of historical knowledge of the Hitler and Mussolini regimes, but that knowledge on its own rarely provides the basis for a satisfactory response. In other words, answers are often too historically-orientated. Most of the more analytical responses argued, perfectly reasonably, that fascism was closer to nationalism than to socialism.

Some candidates also, and helpfully, considered the notion of 'blending', considering whether what was distinctive about both fascist nationalism and fascist socialism was that they formed part of a larger 'world view' that portrayed society as an indivisible social whole.

## Question 6

This was a popular question, with a large proportion of good and very good responses. Very few candidates had an inadequate understanding of at least the key differences between liberal feminism and radical feminism. What distinguished good and better responses from merely satisfactory ones were the sophistication of their understanding and the fact that they dealt with both similarities and differences. Many workmanlike answers simply highlighted a variety of differences between the two feminist traditions without saying much (or anything) about the similarities. Some of the best answers showed an understanding of the circumstances in which radical feminism arose, through a growing dissatisfaction with liberal and reformist thinking that, in their view, had failed to deliver full emancipation. In a small number of cases, radical feminists were portrayed, unhelpfully, as man haters, or as separatists.

## Question 7

The quality of responses to this question turned very much on whether key terms were understood. In particular, the term 'progressive' caused many candidates trouble. Some dealt with this by simply ignoring it and, as they had planned to do anyway, provided an account of the various nationalist traditions. Others interestingly, seemed to take progressive to mean 'good' or 'politically acceptable', whereas 'reactionary' was seen to be associated with aggression and expansion. In some perplexing cases, reactionary was perfectly well understood but progressive entirely confused. Clearly, the adequacy of

these definitions had a implications for the rest of the response. Nevertheless, stronger candidates fully understood the terms as well as the distinction.

In many of the best responses there was a recognition that many nationalist traditions consist of a blend of progressive and reactionary features, and cannot just be pigeon-holed into one or the other category.

## Route B, Unit 6: 6499 - Ideological Development in the UK

### Question 1

This question was popular. However, the quality of responses varied significantly according to whether some standard of socialism was established at the outset, enabling judgements to be made about whether Labour is now post-socialist or not. As with all unit 6 questions, this one sought an understanding of the linkages between political theory and political practice. This does not necessarily mean that half the essay should be devoted to each, but rather that each should receive appropriate attention. Good responses often started by examining the nature of Keynesian social democracy, highlighting its core values, goals and policies, before evaluating modern trends in the Labour Party in the light of them.

Weaker responses either ignored the nature of socialism altogether or forgot it once they started to look at recent political developments, failing adequately to make evaluative judgements. In some cases, candidates pointed out that the Labour Party has never properly been a socialist party, but was rather a party that has contained socialists. On the same lines, a distinction was sometimes drawn between socialism and social democracy.

While such reflections may be insightful, they sometimes made it difficult for candidates to establish a standard of socialism to set up the rest of the answer.

### Question 2

Good responses to this question showed a reliable understanding of the nature of devolution and of recent developments in Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish politics. The elections and developments that have so far taken place in 2007 were particularly useful in this respect, and candidates that had not only followed these but could also draw conclusion from them were duly rewarded. On the other hand, there were some weak responses. These sometimes reflected not on how devolution had *affected* the various nationalist traditions, but on what the introduction of devolution told us about the nature and strength of nationalism. In such cases, too much time was spent looking at the referendum results in 1997 and 1998, and very little attention was given to subsequent events. It would nevertheless have been helpful, probably at the outset, to have pointed out that in 1997 there were different analyses of the likely relationship devolution - ranging from Labour's belief that devolution would be the antidote to nationalism to the nationalist parties' belief that devolution would prove to be a Trojan Horse for nationalism. The rest of the response could then have considered who was right. When the *impact* of devolution was properly addressed, its impact in Wales was usually the least well understood (despite the forward march of political demands), while good points were often made about Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### Question 3

The least successful responses to this question turned it into a constitutional reform essay, saying very little about the nature of liberal democracy. In these cases, the various post-1997 constitutional reforms were explained together with their strengths and weaknesses, unconnected with whether they were 'liberal' or 'democratic'.

Stronger responses demonstrated a fuller grasp of the nature of liberal democracy at the outset, in the best cases recognising the hybrid character of the term. These, then, went on to evaluate the core features of the UK's political system in the light of these features.

Most answers showed an awareness of the liberal-democratic deficiencies of the UK political system (majoritarian electoral system, weak Parliament, lack of separation of powers, non-elected second chamber etc), but nevertheless concluded that to view the UK as a 'poor' example of a liberal democracy was stretching the point. In the best cases, answers were fully up-to-date, taking account not only of the advance of liberal democracy in the 1997-2001 period but also of subsequent developments, including the alleged rolling back of civil liberties through, for example, terrorism legislation.

#### Question 4

This was a very popular questions. Once again, a key discriminator was the balance between theory and practice, and in this case whether the 'Thatcherite heritage' was sufficiently well explained in the first place. Some answers, unimpressively, through themselves into the post-Thatcher period and told the story, sometimes in remarkable detail, of each of the Conservative Party's subsequent leaders. The alternative mistake was to spend too much of the essay providing an account of the Thatcherite 1980s, leaving little time to analyse what happened next. Two other discriminators were important. First, how much attention did David Cameron receive, as not only the current leader of the party but the one who seems to understand the 'Thatcherism problem' most keenly? In some cases, much too long was spent recounting the twists and turns of the Major and Hague periods in particular followed by only a brief account of Cameron.

Second, were larger lessons drawn about the state of the Conservative Party and its attempted to return to power, or was each leader treated as, effectively, a separate story? Good responses often explained how and why the party is finding it so difficult to crack the 'Thatcherism problem', drawing attention, for example, to the Thatcherite nature of the party's core support, its membership and its activist base.

## Route C: Politics in the USA

This year's papers contained a mixture of questions, some traditional and some breaking new ground, designed to be accessible to all candidates while challenging the most able.

This Examiner's Report maintains the format for Units 4 & 5 adopted in the summer of 2006. It considers the requirements of each question, makes an overall assessment of how well each question was done and outlines common features of weak, stronger and strongest answers. In some cases, guidance on areas for improvement are added. Unit 6 does not cover the requirements of each question they are designed to encourage the inclusion of themes from across the syllabus. Feedback from centres indicates that this approach is helpful.

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

#### Introduction.

This year's exam contained a mixture of questions, six traditional and one breaking new ground. Of the traditional questions, the essay on race and ethnic politics was broader than many that have been asked previously.

#### Question 1

Explain the key factors that influenced the outcome of the 2006 mid-term elections.

This was a popular question and generally done to a high standard. It required candidates to analyse the impact of the key issues which dominated the election campaign. These included:

- The poor handling of the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe in 2005
- Scandals involving senior Republicans including lobbyist Jack Abramoff, "Duke" Cunningham, Tom DeLay and, above all, Congressman, Mark Foley whose sexual advances towards young men working in Congress had been ignored by the Republican Party leadership for several years.
- The war in Iraq.
- The recruitment of Democratic candidates with conservative views to compete in Republican strongholds such as Montana and Virginia.
- An unusually high level of unity among Democrats

Many centres had anticipated that there would be a question on the mid-terms, especially as there had not been one in January, and candidates were well-prepared.

Weaker candidates tended to demonstrate knowledge of the outcome of the 2006 midterm elections but offered no analysis of the factors which led to the Democrats gaining control of Congress

Stronger candidates analysed the outcome of the elections but failed to go beyond the factors which made the Republican Party unpopular.

The strongest candidates were able to analyse both the factors pushing voters away from the Republican Party and the factors attracting them to the Democratic Party.

There is a common failing on questions about the outcome of elections: the causes of the popularity of one party and the causes of the unpopularity of the other main party need to be explained in order to provide a full account of an electoral result. Often only one of these is analysed.

Overall, this question distinguished which candidates analyse effectively and follow current affairs closely and illustrated that students should always be asking themselves what the “push” and “pull” factors are in relation to electoral support

## Question 2

### Why and how do pressure groups attempt to influence the Senate?

This was a popular question, although candidates generally explained methods used by pressure groups more effectively than the reasons that pressure groups seek to influence the Senate. Factors that make the Senate particularly attractive to some pressure groups include:

- Filibusters can be used to obstruct the agenda of the dominant party in Congress
- Groups which take a particular interest in foreign policy issues will be attracted by the Senate’s exclusive power to ratify treaties.
- Groups which take a particular interest in the Federal courts will be attracted by the Senate’s exclusive power to confirm Presidential appointments.

Methods used to influence the Senate are similar to those used to influence other politicians, including:

- Contributing electoral donations
- Using professional lobbyists to develop a relationship with Senators
- Mobilising supporters in support/opposition to Senators
- Mounting publicity campaigns around high-profile issues (applies especially to the confirmation of judicial nominees).

Weaker candidates tended to provide generic answer on Pressure Groups in the USA, not focussed on the question.

Stronger candidates were able to analyse why Pressure Groups seek to influence the Senate or how (usually the latter) but not both.

Strongest candidates were able to effectively analysis why Pressure Groups seek to influence the Senate and the strategies they use, often illustrating their points with examples.

This format of short answer questions, how and why Pressure Groups seek to influence specific branches of the federal government, will continue to appear in future exams.

### Question 3

#### Why have African-American voters remained loyal to the Democratic Party?

This was a popular question, although marginally less so than the first two. It required candidates to analyse the “pull” factors which drawn African-Americans to the Democratic Party and the “push” factors which have made the Republican Party unattractive, including:

- Democratic Party initiatives to alleviate poverty, from the New Deal through the Great Society to continuing support for government intervention to aid the disadvantaged (such as increasing the minimum wage)
- Democratic Party support for the Civil Rights movement in the 1960’s and continuing support for Affirmative Action.
- Republican hostility to such policies, as the party has become increasingly committed to low taxation and withdrawing government support for welfare programmes.

Weakest candidates were often able to identify factors which first attracted African American voters to the Democratic Party but offered little on the reasons for their continuing loyalty.

Stronger candidates were able to analyse the factors which first attracted African American voters to the Democratic Party *and* the policies which help retain their loyalty.

Strongest candidates were able to confidently discuss both “pull” factors attracting African Americans to the Democratic Party and “push” factors alienating them from the Republican Party.

At all levels, one common misconception kept appearing: many candidates attributed Supreme Court judgements, such as *Brown v. Board*, to the Democratic Party and accounted for the continuing loyalty of African Americans. While Democrats tend to favour judicial activism, many liberal justices such as Earl Warren, John Paul Stevens and David Souter were nominated by Republican presidents.

The 2006 midterm elections provided two interesting examples of the loyalty of African American voters to the Democratic Party. In both Maryland (which has a black majority) and Pennsylvania the Republican candidates for Senator and Governor were black while the Democratic candidates were white. In both cases, African-American support for the Democratic Party remained solid and both black candidates were well beaten.

## Question 4

Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the “front loading” of presidential primaries.

This was a timely question, with much debate in the media over the previous six months about the unprecedented front loading of primaries in 2008. Unsurprisingly it was a popular question, although marginally less so than the first two.

Surprisingly, a significant proportion of candidates offered poor responses and overall this was the least well done of all the short answer questions. It required candidates to explain the criticisms of front-loading, including:

- Inflating the importance of the “invisible primaries” by forcing candidates to have raised substantial funds, established name recognition and gained endorsement from prominent party members to make an impact in the first, crucial, weeks of the primaries
- The importance of the first primary, in New Hampshire, and the first caucus, in Iowa, is also magnified as carrying early momentum into “Super Tuesday” is essential.
- Candidates who perform unexpectedly well in the first primaries, such as John Edwards in 2004, have little time to build on their success through fund-raising, building their campaign teams and buying additional campaign advertising.
- Voters in States which do not hold their primaries early in the season are effectively disenfranchised in the selection process.
- The process, overall, creates a sense that election campaigns start very early and last too long.

It also required candidates to explain advantages of front-loading, including:

- With the race virtually over by the end of March, any battles which erupt between members of the same party will be short, reducing the damage to the party ahead of the general election campaign and preserving resources for that phase.
- Backing from the most prominent leaders of the party is highly beneficial to candidates in a compressed primary calendar, giving the leaders an opportunity to influence the choice of candidate to represent them in the election.

Weakest candidates often misunderstood the term “invisible primary” and offered an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of primaries in general.

Stronger candidates often provided an effective analysis of the disadvantages of front-loading but nothing on the advantages. .

Strongest candidates were able to effectively analyse both the advantages and disadvantages of front-loading, typically citing the impact of this trend on the 2008 election cycle.

## Question 5

To what extent has there been a resurgence of political parties in US politics?

This was a popular question which effectively differentiated stronger and weaker candidates. It required candidates to analyse whether US political parties remain “umbrella” parties, encompassing a wide range of ideological views, or whether they have become more ideologically cohesive. Effectively argued, either viewpoint was worthy of reward, although claims that they remain “umbrella” parties are more difficult to sustain with relevant recent illustrations.

Weakest candidates were often able to provide an outline description of party decline, followed by recent revival, without any detail of illustrations. Alternatively they attempted to convert the question into a discussion of minor parties by arguing that continued third party insignificance was proof of party resurgence.

Stronger candidates provided more detailed analysis of the party decline and renewal theories but were unable to apply them to the policies of the main parties.

Strongest candidates were able to confidently analyse the main strands of opinion in the two main parties set in their historical contexts.

Overall, there were fewer weak responses than in previous years when questions have been set on political parties but too few candidates were able to reach the highest levels.

## Question 6

Do pressure groups strengthen or weaken democracy in the USA?

This was the most popular of the essay questions. It required candidates to analyse indications (preferably supported by political theory) that Pressure Groups make a positive or negative contribution to the democratic process.

Those who argue that Pressure Groups weaken democracy tend to anchor their argument in power elite theory which holds that they help maintain the social and economic dominance of a small circle who head Pressure Groups which have large memberships, effective lobbyists, effective lawyers and considerable wealth. The less wealthy and minorities, by contrast, tend to lack the organisation, political connections and lack the voting power to make themselves heard in the corridors of power.

Those who argue that Pressure Groups strengthen democracy tend to anchor their argument in pluralist theory which holds that even if it appears that one section of society is dominant, US society is so open with multiple opportunities for everyone to be heard that all groups may make a contribution to shaping their society.

Thus *Brown v. Board of Education* transformed the South, *Roe v. Wade* meant that vulnerable women no longer had to resort to back-street abortions; *Lawrence v. Texas* meant that laws which discriminated against gays were declared unconstitutional and, in 2004, gay marriage was permitted in Massachusetts.

Weakest candidates tended to provide generic answers on Pressure Groups, not focussed on the question and lacking illustrations to support their points.

Stronger candidates tended to effectively analysis of the role of Pressure Groups in US politics but in very general terms or, alternatively, discuss one side of the argument much more effectively than the other.

Strongest candidates were able to provide detailed analysis of both views of the role of Pressure Groups in US politics, illustrated with recent examples.

This question tended to attract answers that were lacking in depth of analysis and evaluation. A significant proportion of responses were of AS standard, with candidates substituting US examples for those that they had previously used in Unit 1 answers. Even the more sophisticated responses tended to emphasise the ways in which pressure groups tend to weaken democracy in the USA, overlooking positive contributions that these groups can make. As in previous years, a smaller proportion of the candidates produced excellent responses to this question than on the other essay topics.

## Question 7

**Have political strategies to create genuine equality of opportunity for all racial and ethnic groups in the USA been effective?**

This was a popular question. It required candidates to analyse the strategies offered across the political spectrum to promote racial equality. This includes government intervention, mainly in the form of affirmative action, as well as arguments that robust individualism is the most effective strategy for overcoming social and economic disadvantage.

Weakest candidates tended to provide descriptive account of race relations in the USA, often going back to slavery, with minimal or poor analysis.

Stronger candidates offered an effective analysis of strategies to promote racial equality but discussed in very general terms. Alternatively, a sophisticated discussion was provided but limited to affirmative action, with other strategies overlooked.

Strongest candidates provided a detailed analysis of more than one strategy to promote racial equality, illustrated with recent examples.

## Route C, Unit 5: 6501 Governing the USA

### Introduction

This year's exam contained a mixture of questions, four traditional and three approaching topics from an unfamiliar direction. Once again, the question on Federalism attracted the highest proportion of weak responses, suggesting that centres should consider reviewing the teaching and learning of this topic.

Please take particular note of the report on Question 2, which contains some guidance on the new syllabus being introduced in 2008 and the way in which it will place different demands on candidates even if traditional questions reappear.

### Question 1

**What is 'judicial activism', and why has it been politically controversial?**

This was a popular question but a surprisingly high proportion of candidates had only a weak grasp of the definition of "judicial activism" and therefore did not produce responses of a high standard. It required candidates to explain that this judicial philosophy justifies policy-making by judges and it requires them to analyse, briefly, the arguments for and against this viewpoint. The principal arguments in favour of judicial activism are that it provides a means for the values of the constitution to be applied to the modern world and enables judges to address the "third rails" of US politics, controversial social issues which the elected branches are reluctant to deal with. The main argument against is that it enables unelected people to determine policy, in the guise of interpreting the constitution, which is fundamentally undemocratic.

Weakest candidates tended to suggest that any indications of judicial bias amounted to judicial activism and that this was controversial because it runs counter to the doctrines of judicial independence and neutrality.

Stronger candidates had a more secure grasp of the concept of judicial activism and were able present the conservative/Republican arguments against it but many were unable to outline the reasons for judicial activism.

Strongest candidates provided a precise definition and effectively analysed the justifications and criticisms of judicial activism, with recent illustrations.

## Question 2

### How flexible is the US constitution?

This was a very popular question. It has appeared before and candidates were generally well prepared. It was gratifying to see that basic errors on the mechanisms for amending the constitution, that have been quite common in the past, have been virtually eradicated. The question required candidates to explain the difficulties in formally amending the constitutions, while recognising that judicial review provides a means for 'organic' development.

The mark scheme provided an opportunity for the strongest students to stand out by analysing the differing political viewpoints on whether the constitution is too flexible (the right-wing view) allowing the government in Washington DC to use periods of crisis to steadily undermine those mechanisms in the constitution which protect liberty, especially Federalism; too inflexible (the left-wing view) restricting the federal government from more actively defending civil liberties, particularly of minorities or the view that the founding fathers struck the best possible balance, enabling governments to respond effectively to crises without infringing the liberties of the citizens. When the new syllabus is introduced, which assesses synopticity by the ability of candidates to recognise and explain differing political viewpoints on a topic, this type of response will be required in order to achieve top grades.

Weakest candidates provided inaccurate explanations of how the US constitution may be amended with no recognition of the role of judicial review.

Stronger candidates discussed the difficulties of formally amending the US constitution and the role of the Supreme Court in keeping it up to date through judicial review.

Strongest candidates were able to effectively discuss the difficulties of formally amending the US constitution and the role of the Supreme Court in keeping it up to date through judicial review with relevant, recent illustrations. The very strongest were able to analyse at least two ideological viewpoints on whether the US constitution strikes the right balance between entrenched rights and effective government.

## Question 3

### How important is the role of the Vice President?

As with question 2, this was a very popular question that had appeared previously, for which the candidates were generally well prepared. It required candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the very limited formal powers of the Vice President and the increased stature of the position since World War II, analysing the political factors which have brought this about. These could have included:

- The role of Vice Presidents in winning elections by "balancing the ticket"
- As the role of the federal government has grown, the Vice President has been given increasingly high-profile roles to support the President in running the Executive Branch.
- The tendency of Vice Presidents to be "presidents in waiting, with four of the most recent Vice Presidents having gone on to be President and three more having been chosen as their party's presidential candidates.

Answers were often illustrated with the colourful quotes from earlier Vice Presidents, bemoaning the lack of formal powers at their disposal.

Weakest candidates tended to provide an historical survey of the contributions of Vice Presidents.

Stronger candidates compared and contrasted the contributions of recent Vice Presidents.

Strongest candidates analysed the constitutional and discretionary powers of Vice Presidents and discussion of the contributions of recent Vice Presidents in this context.

## Question 4

To what extent are the two chambers of Congress equal in power?

This was a popular question. It required candidates to briefly outline the concurrent and exclusive powers of the two chambers and provide a reasoned argument on their relative importance. Any conclusion, if adequately supported, could achieve top grades.

The question effectively differentiated candidates. Some had a more complete grasp of the range of Congressional powers; others had a greater ability to justify their conclusions.

Weakest candidates tended to describe the powers held by each chamber without actually attempting to establish an answer to the question, thus presenting two lists with concurrent powers often omitted.

Stronger candidates tended to produce imbalanced responses, with the powers of one chamber of Congress analysed more effectively than the other (the Senate typically analysed more effectively than the House of Representatives)

Strongest candidates were able to effectively analyse and compare the powers of both chambers of Congress.

## Question 5

Are second-term presidents invariably "lame ducks"?

This was a surprisingly popular question, considering its unfamiliar nature. It prompted a full range of responses, from journalistic accounts of the second term of George W Bush to rigorous academic analysis. It required candidates to define what is meant by a "lame duck", (increased difficulty persuading Congress to give financial and legislative support; a fall in the opinion polls; failures in domestic and foreign policy; a tendency for attention to be focused on the next election and its possible candidates) and a discussion of whether these are inevitable features of a second term presidency.

Weakest candidates tended to describe the second term of George W Bush with minimal or poor analysis.

Stronger candidates tended to provide effective analysis of the difficulties faced by second term Presidents but little on how some Presidents have been able to be effective in their second terms.

Strongest candidates analysed effectively the difficulties faced by second term Presidents, with an explanation of how some Presidents have been able to overcome those difficulties, with illustrations.

## Question 6

**How effectively does Congress fulfil its constitutional roles?**

This was a popular question. It required candidates to analyse how well Congress meets its constitutional responsibilities to legislate, scrutinise (particularly the Executive branch) and to represent the interests of constituents.

The commonest fault was to forget that representation is a key constitutional role. The main differentiator, however, was how well candidates evaluated how well Congress performs. Too often the analysis was simplistic, underpinned by the assumption that Congress is only being effective when it is making muscular use of its powers. Some candidates wrote as if they wanted every President to have been successfully impeached.

Weakest candidates provided a description of the work of Congress, focussing in particular on its legislative role, with minimal or poor analysis.

Stronger candidates provided effective, but narrow, analysis of how well Congress fulfils its roles, concentrating on its legislative and scrutiny roles and, typically, overlooking its representative role.

Strongest candidates effectively analysed how Congress fulfils all of its roles, with illustrations.

## Question 7

**'Federal government increasingly dominates state governments in the USA.' Discuss.**

This was the least popular essay question and generally not well done. It required candidates to analyse developments in the relationship between the states and Washington DC, with (bearing in mind the use of the present tense in the question) an emphasis on recent trends.

Too many candidates concentrated on dual and co-operative federalism, many not getting as far as Bill Clinton, leave alone George W Bush. As a result they wrote in a one-dimensional way about the powers of the states and power of the federal government. Among the small number of excellent responses there was a recognition that President George W Bush's approach does not easily fit in with Republican models, and that the states themselves are increasingly taking a lead, over the environment and social policy, for example, rather than passively waiting for the next Washington initiative.

Weakest candidates provided a historical survey of Federalism.

Stronger candidates were able to analyse how the relationships between the states and Washington DC has changed in recent decades but in very general terms.

Strongest candidates analysed in detail how the relationships between the states and Washington DC has changed in recent decades, illustrated with recent examples.

## Route C, Unit 6: 6502 - Comparative UK and US Politics

### Introduction.

All four questions addressed issues which have been asked about before in synoptic exams, although they may have approached the topics from an unfamiliar direction

Candidates could achieve good marks for answers which made effective narrow comparisons of the two political systems but top marks were reserved for candidates who produced genuinely synoptic responses drawing on a range of topics studied over the two years of the course.

### Question 1

Compare and contrast the power of US and UK pressure groups.

The popularity of this question was surpassed only by question 4.

It provided an opportunity for students to discuss the impact of pressure groups in terms of shaping public policy in the UK and USA.

A substantial proportion of candidates failed to recognise that this is the most meaningful benchmark of Pressure Group power, tending instead to equate size and wealth with effectiveness. Another common misconception was that a greater number of access points is a sufficient condition for Pressure Groups effectiveness, without any discussion of how effectively they are used. This level of analysis was often accompanied by a very limited range of illustrations, typically the NRA, NAACP, NFU and Fathers for Justice.

Skilled candidates defined what they would look for as examples of 'power', e.g. getting legislation passed, or gaining the most media attention. Often, they recognised that mass membership and wealth did not necessarily guarantee acceptance of policies and that many insider groups in the UK with less support and reduced finances could achieve more than the large pressure groups which operated in the US.

Weaker candidates tended to produce simplistic analysis, equating the larger size of Pressure Groups, and range of access points available, in the USA with greater power without any supporting arguments.

Stronger candidates offered narrow comparisons of the Pressure Groups in the UK and USA, with examples, but omitting relevant strands from other topics such as the effect of devolution and the EU on the parties.

Strongest candidates produced effective analysis of Pressure Groups in both countries in recent decades, considering a range of relevant factors drawn from a range of topics covered throughout the course.

## Question 2

**“Neither the British nor American constitutions effectively protect civil rights.” Discuss.**

This was a popular question, although less so than questions 1 & 4.

In view of the initiatives on both sides of the Atlantic to reduce traditional liberties in the name of improving security in the wake of terrorist attacks, this question provided a timely opportunity for students to discuss which constitutional framework is more effective at protecting civil liberties, particularly at a time of crisis when those protections are subject to the greatest tests.

The main distinction between stronger and weaker responses was the range of the discussion and the balance between the two systems. Stronger candidates were able to confidently analyse the impact of developments such as EU law and the Human Rights Act while weaker candidates tended to limit their discussion to comparisons between codified and uncodified constitutions. Similarly, stronger candidates were able to analyse both the UK and USA in depth while weaker candidates tended to explore the US constitution in greater depth than the UK.

Weakest candidates tended to produce simplistic analysis of the constitutional checks of the two Governments, with some illustrations.

Stronger candidates tended to produce narrow comparisons of the constitutions of the UK and USA, with illustrations, omitting relevant strands from other topics such as the effect of judiciaries and the EU.

Strongest candidates produced effective analysis of differing viewpoints on how well civil liberties have been protected in both countries, particularly since 9/11 and 7/7, considering a range of relevant factors drawn from a range of topics covered throughout the course.

## Question 3

**‘Judges in both the USA and UK judges are “politicians in robes”’. Discuss.**

This was a popular question, although less so than questions 1 & 4.

It provided an opportunity for students to discuss the extent to which judges tend to stray outside the realm of applying laws to (in effect) make laws through judgements that shape public policy.

Comparative questions on the judiciary have, in the past, proved challenging for a majority of candidates as they have often been able to write at much greater length and in much greater depth about the US judiciary than the British resulting in many imbalanced responses. This trend was evident again this year although it was gratifying to see that it was substantially less marked than in previous years.

The weakest candidates provided descriptive accounts of the operation of the judiciaries in the two countries, typically illustrated with some cases from the USA

Stronger candidates tended to provide effective analysis of the extent to which judges are “politicians in robes” in the USA but a much less effective analysis of whether judges in the UK fit this description.

Strongest candidates, who provided a higher proportion of the responses than in the past, effectively analysed the role of the judiciary in both countries in recent decades, considering a range of relevant factors drawn from a range of topics covered throughout the course. At this level candidates demonstrated a strong understanding of the changing nature of the UK judicial landscape, with a very good working knowledge of the HRA and the impact of the EU on UK judges decision-making powers with good examples of apparently politicised rulings as well the potential counterbalancing effect of a Judicial Appointment Commission and removing the highest court from the House of Lords.

## Question 4

**Why is the legislature more powerful in the US presidential system than in the UK’s parliamentary system?**

This very straightforward question was by far the most popular.

It provided students with an opportunity to discuss the powers and operation of the two legislatures and draw conclusions about the overall impact they make in their respective political systems.

All candidates had at least a basic working knowledge of the constitutional strengths and weaknesses of the US and UK legislatures. However, only a small proportion recognised the full range and scope of the relevant issues that could be discussed. Comparisons between the fusion of the legislature and executive in the UK and separation of powers in the USA were found in all responses, together with the greater ability of Congress to constrain the executive. Frequently, however, this discussion was limited to the passage of legislation and the ability to remove the Head of Government from office, with scrutiny overlooked. This approach often meant that foreign affairs was not considered and that the relationship between legislatures and judiciaries was omitted. At the other end of the scale, those candidates who recognised that range as well as depth is rewarded in this paper extended their discussion to issues such as the extent to which Congress is subject to manipulation by Pressure Groups and the impact of devolution and EU membership on Parliament.

Weakest candidates produced superficial descriptions of the operations of the two legislatures, possibly with illustrations, but with minimal analysis.

Stronger candidates tended to provide narrow comparisons of the legislatures of the UK and USA, with illustrations, often overstating the contrasts in the levels of party discipline between Congress and Parliament and omitting relevant strands from other topics.

Strongest candidates effectively compared and contrasted the powers of the two legislatures, considering a range of relevant factors drawn from a range of topics covered throughout the course.

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

This was a good test of students, but with slightly more challenging questions than in previous papers. Questions 3 and 6 were significantly more challenging. Neo-colonialism and colonialism proved difficult concepts to explain for some students. The polarity was much more challenging in that previous questions had asked candidates to describe a particular form of polarity and its impact on security, this time students could not simply describe bipolarity and the relative stability of the Cold War. Instead they had to discuss much more complex issues.

### Question 1

International law was quite popular and reasonably well done. Most candidates discussed the ICC and ICJ and the limits on their powers imposed by the refusal to accept their rulings by powers such as the USA. Better answers showed very good knowledge of courts and of the strengths as well as the weaknesses of international law. They contained good analysis of the sovereignty and power issues. Unfortunately many candidates declined to even define international law, and very few mentioned the prosaic areas of international law such as postal services and shipping regulations.

### Question 2

EU expansion caused some confusion, amongst a minority of candidates, over the nature of EU expansion particularly with regard to Turkey whose membership was imminent to many and effected to a few. A surprisingly large number of answers failed to spell out the widening v deepening issue and even fewer identified the UK's support for widening as a means of averting deepening. A distressingly large number quoted immigration as a major issue. Better answers contained excellent knowledge and analysis of the expansion of the EU to 27 states, with emphasis on the governance of the EU as well as on finance and economic problems.

### Question 3

Colonialism and neo-colonialism was perhaps, the most challenging of the short questions. Most candidates had a good knowledge of neo-colonialism though a surprising number omitted mention of MNCs. However, few knew much about colonialism with only a small minority making the point that although the imperial powers plundered the colonies they also made some contribution to their economies, cultures and governance. Zimbabwe was a popular example but not an appropriate one. Answers were polarised and this question proved an excellent discriminator.

### Question 4

The IMF was a relatively straightforward question that prompted competent answers. The majority outlined the philosophy of the IMF and lambasted its SAPs but few bothered to mention the roles of corruption and incompetence in inducing poverty in the LDCs. Again Zimbabwe, an excellent example of the latter point, was often quoted as an example of IMF wickedness.

## Question 5

EU supranationalism was relatively straightforward. Many candidates successfully argued around supranationalism and intergovernmentalism but surprisingly few specifically mentioned the idea of pooling sovereignty. The examples chosen were valid though (as occurred in question 2) many wrongly believe that the European Convention on Human Rights is a product of the EU!

## Question 6

Polarity was a challenging question because of the amount of material and the problem of analysing theoretical global orders. The majority believed that bipolarity was the route to world order but few considered the plethora of wars fought under the indirect guidance of the super-powers. Surprisingly many candidates seemed to lack a clear understanding of what polarity meant although different polarities seem to be understood. Strong candidates skilfully discussed the extent to which each of these promote global stability, and the extent to which order is dependent on the aims of the leading powers and less on polarity.

## Question 7

The UN gave candidates the opportunity to list UN failures. Some of the better answers did identify that the UN was as much a victim as some of its clients with states failing to provide adequate support. A clear definition of peacekeeping (as opposed to peacemaking) would have helped, but there was a general failure of candidates to give sophisticated analysis. Success in A2 requires candidates to give such analysis. Moreover, few candidates had up to date knowledge, such as of the 2005 summit on UN intervention.

## Overall

This was a good, testing paper which clearly discriminated between strong and other candidates. The general standard was high with most candidates using clear expression and demonstrating analytical skills. A minority had difficulties with timing; usually through being too lavish with the first question. A surprisingly large number had trouble with the rubric of the paper; many failed to follow the clear instructions for answering each individual question within the appropriate space.

## Route D, Unit 5: 6504 - Issues in International Politics

The general standard of script was high with most candidates using clear expression and demonstrating analytical skills. The short answer questions were more challenging questions than in previous papers. However the paper was extremely topical and so strong candidates and those with an interest in the subject were able to display their knowledge. The overall quality of scripts was higher than in previous years. Candidates and centres should be commended. It was relatively straightforward to differentiate between candidates with relevant, up to date knowledge and those without. Strong candidates were able to provide good to excellent answers. Weaker candidates struggled to provide detailed knowledge, balance and analysis. A fundamental differential in all questions was whether the candidate ignored or recognised the key terms in each question.

### Question 1

**How effective have recent war crimes trials been?**

This question was a good discriminator. Unfortunately a lot of students couldn't offer specific examples of any of the recent trials and instead of discussing the effectiveness of such recent trials, they discussed WW2 in detail and Nuremberg. There were some outstanding answers though, with details and analysis including the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, the ICC etc.

### Question 2

**Assess the impact of the Doha round of negotiations on world trade.**

This question was less popular but was chosen by candidates who had specific knowledge of Doha and the WTO and was usually answered well.

### Question 3

**To what extent has Russia begun to reassert its power?**

This was a popular question, but unfortunately a number of candidates tried to write about the Cold War superpower status of the USSR and how this had dissolved in the 1990s. This was not a 'Russia superpower' question. Strong candidates on the other hand discussed oil and gas, Iran, nuclear defence shields, poisoned former spies and expelled diplomats.

## Question 4

Why has the issue of permanent membership of the UN Security Council become more controversial?

Strong candidates showed excellent knowledge and analysis of the role of the UNSC in preserving global order and stability, and sophisticated analysis of the issue of permanent membership and of calls for SC reform.

Very few candidates noted 'more controversial', and few were aware of recent attempts to reform the UNSC.

## Question 5

'The "war on terror" has been counterproductive.' Discuss.

This question was extremely popular, but too many candidates offered unbalanced and highly descriptive accounts of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Good answers contained knowledge and analysis of the degree to which the War on Terror has been successful. They also included full examples and balance was shown.

## Question 6

To what extent is the USA an effective 'world policeman'.

Strong candidates provided excellent knowledge and analysis of the role the US plays as the only superpower. Such candidates skilfully discussed the extent to which the US does promote global stability, and the extent to which order is dependent on the willingness and ability of the US to police the world. A good differentiator was that many candidates bypassed any discussion on the effectiveness of the USA, but preferred instead to describe recent conflicts and US intervention.

## Question 7

Discuss the extent to which the opposition to the EU constitution has derailed the process of achieving an 'ever closer union'.

This was probably the least popular of the essay questions, and many candidates struggled to relate the importance of the EU Constitution to closer union. Others described the Constitution in great detail but did not address the question asked. Strong answers included knowledge and analysis of the impact of the referendums against the EU constitution. Good candidates discussed the extent to which the process of ever closer union has continued, giving recent examples to reinforce their arguments.

## Route D, Unit 6: 6505 - International Politics and the UK

This was a good, testing paper which clearly discriminated between strong and other candidates. The general standard was high with most candidates using clear expression and demonstrating analytical skills. It was relatively straightforward to differentiate between those candidates with relevant, up to date knowledge and those without. Strong candidates were able to provide good to excellent answers. Weaker candidates struggled to provide detailed knowledge, balance and analysis. Question 4 was the most straightforward, and probably therefore the most popular.

Questions 1 & 2 were more challenging variants on topics which had been asked before, whilst the environment question was completely new, albeit entirely topical and synoptic. Very few candidates answered question 3: Some who did so, were poor, others were very good, there was little middle ground.

### Question 1

'The UK's position on the UN Security Council enables her "to punch above her weight".' Discuss.

Many candidates recognised this quote from Douglas Hurd and a number displayed excellent knowledge of Britain's role in international politics and the extent to which she 'punches above her weight'. There was some very good analysis of the extent to which permanent membership of the UNSC enables Britain to play such a role. However a number of candidates refused to answer the question asked. This is a common error in all examinations. One of the aims of the examiner is to prevent candidates from writing their 'Blue Peter answer' which has been prepared earlier! Thus questions are set which force students to use their knowledge to answer a particular question. In this question too many candidates wrote an essay on the extent to which the UK is a great power. Of course, much of the material for such an essay is relevant to this question, but the essay has to be written as an answer to the specific question asked.

### Question 2

To what extent is there a political consensus in the UK over how the 'war on terror' is conducted?

Again, there was a problem of candidates not answering the question, and a number simply described the 'war on terror'. There were a number of answers which displayed excellent knowledge and analysis of the way the War on Terror is being conducted by the UK and of the extent to which there is political consensus. As well as the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq the better candidates also assessed domestic legislation designed to protect against terrorism. There were a number of misunderstandings however. Some candidates wrongly stated that the Conservatives would not have fought in Iraq had they known there were no WMDs. Many candidates overstated the importance of the Respect party and believed that George Galloway had left the Labour party because he was so appalled at Labour policy. Also, surprisingly few candidates noted that the UK government has begun to distance itself from the term 'war on terror'.

### Question 3

To what extent have global environmental issues divided the major UK political parties?

Although this question was the least popular, there were some answers which displayed excellent knowledge and analysis of the ways in which the environment has become a key issue in domestic and international politics.

They analysed party attitudes to the environment and the reasons for such an emphasis on 'green' issues.

### Question 4

'EU policies and recent initiatives have fuelled Euro scepticism in the UK.' Discuss.

This question revolved around the familiar theme of euro scepticism, and so was an approachable question. This question revolved around the familiar theme of euro scepticism, and so was an approachable question. Some candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge and analysis of the history of euro scepticism in the UK. There was very good awareness of recent EU policies and initiatives such as the Constitution, the single currency, and EU expansion. Differentiation was possible because many candidates had good knowledge of euro scepticism in the UK but were less successful in analysing the impact of recent EU policies and initiatives and, crucially they gave less balance. For example too much emphasis may be placed on CAP, and not enough on the growing support for the majority EU stance on the War on Terror. CAP is not a recent policy, but was set up to promote food production in a continent that had experienced dire food shortages.

# Statistics

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## Unit 1 (6491) People and Politics

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	54	48	42	36	31
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	57	50	43	37	31
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	29	25	21	18	15
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	60	54	49	44	39
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

## Route A Unit 5 (6495) EU and European Issues

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	64	59	54	49	45
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Route A Unit 6 (6496) Policy Making in the UK

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	63	56	49	42	35
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

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

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	59	53	47	41	35
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Route B Unit 5 (6498) Other Ideological Traditions

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	59	53	48	43	38
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Route B Unit 6 (6499) Ideological Developments in the UK

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	65	59	53	47	41
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

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

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	59	54	49	44	40
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Route C Unit 5 (6501) Governing the USA

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	60	54	48	43	38
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Route C Unit 6 (6502) Comparative UK and US Politics

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	61	55	49	43	37
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

### Route D Unit 4 (6503) Introduction to International Politics

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	60	53	47	41	35
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Route D Unit 5 (6504) Issues in International Politics

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	59	54	49	45	41
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Route D Unit 6 (6505) International Politics and the UK

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	64	58	52	46	41
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

#### 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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