



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE In Politics

Advanced Subsidiary

Paper 2: UK Government (8PL0/02)

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the last candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the first.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than be penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme – not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification/indicative content will not be exhaustive. However, different examples of responses will be provided at standardisation.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, a senior examiner must be consulted before a mark is given.
- Crossed-out work should be marked **unless** the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Marking guidance for levels-based mark schemes

How to award marks

The indicative content provides examples of how students will meet each skill assessed in the question. The levels descriptors and indicative content reflect the relative weighting of each skill within each mark band. Confirmation of the marks assigned to Assessment Objectives is provided at the top of each mark scheme. This has been provided to further reflect the balance between the assessment objectives as described in the relevant level descriptors.

Capping statements

Where applicable and to ensure that candidates are awarded marks for fully meeting the requirements of the question, additional capping statements have been indicated in the mark schemes. Such statements indicate where and how candidates will be limited in their achievement if they fail to fully address the requirements of the question. For instance, where questions require candidates to refer to 'thinkers' or 'engaging with sources'.

Finding the right level

The first stage is to decide which level the answer should be placed in. To do this, use a 'best-fit' approach, deciding which level most closely describes the quality of the answer. Answers can display characteristics from more than one level, and where this happens markers must use the guidance below and their professional judgement to decide which level is most appropriate.

Placing a mark within a level

After a level has been decided on, the next stage is to decide on the mark within the level. The instructions below tell you how to reward responses within a level. However, where a level has specific guidance about how to place an answer within a level, always follow that guidance. Statements relating to the treatment of students who do not fully meet the requirements of the question are also shown in the indicative content section of each levels based mark scheme. These statements should be considered alongside the levels descriptors. 3 Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Politics – Sample Assessment Materials – Issue 2 August 2022 © Pearson Education Limited 2022 Markers should be prepared to use the full range of marks available in a level and not restrict marks to the middle. Markers should start at the middle of the level (or the upper-middle mark if there is an even number of marks) and then move the mark up or down to find the best mark. To do this, they should take into account how far the answer meets the requirements of the level:

- if it meets the requirements fully, markers should be prepared to award full marks within the level. The top mark in the level is used for answers that are as good as can realistically be expected within that level
- if it only barely meets the requirements of the level, markers should consider awarding marks at the bottom of the level. The bottom mark in the level is used for answers that are the weakest that can be expected within that level
- the middle marks of the level are used for answers that have a reasonable match to the descriptor. This might represent a balance between some characteristics of the level that are fully met and others that are only barely met.

When a candidate has produced an answer that displays characteristics from more than one level, examiners must use their professional judgement to decide what level should be awarded.

Paper 2: UK Politics mark scheme

Section A

Guidelines for marking Questions 1a and 1b
Marks are awarded for AO1 only.
Marks are awarded for showing depth of knowledge and understanding.

Level	Mark	AO1 Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	• Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories, and issues. • Makes superficial links of knowledge and understanding to a particular context. • Uses a narrow range of knowledge and understanding to support arguments/ideas.
Level 2	4–7	• Demonstrates some accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories, and issues. • Makes some effective links of knowledge and understanding to a particular context. • Uses a broad range of knowledge and understanding to support arguments/ideas.
Level 3	8–10	• Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories, and issues. • Makes fully effective links of knowledge and understanding to a particular context. • Uses a comprehensive range of knowledge and understanding to support arguments/ideas.

Question number	Indicative content
	Describe, using examples, the features of the Royal Prerogative.
1(a)	AO1 (10 marks) Candidates may refer to the following features of the Royal Prerogative: • Royal Prerogative powers were originally those held by the Monarch, but which have now transferred to the Prime Minister and some other members of the Cabinet. • They are not defined in any statute and form part of the uncodified aspect of the UK constitution. • One major Prerogative Power held by the PM and that is she/he has the power to appoint all Ministers and certain senior positions in UK political life.

	• As part of the Royal Prerogative the PM decides on honours to be issued to notable individuals. • The PM has the power under the Royal Prerogative to sign Treaties with other Countries and International agencies. Accept any other valid responses.
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Question number	Indicative content
	Describe the role and composition of the Supreme Court.
1(b)	AO1 (10 marks) Candidates may refer to the following aspects regarding the role of the Supreme Court: • The Supreme Court acts as a final independent appeal court for the UK – deciding on major constitutional matters and issues of great public significance. There is no higher legal authority. This means it is the final court for all criminal and civil law cases in the UK. • The role of the Supreme Court is to decide if the UK Government has acted within its powers – such as the proroguing of Parliament under Boris Johnson. It also rules on disputes between devolved bodies. • The role of the Supreme Court has the power to refer matters back to Parliament if it finds any legislation to be incompatible with the Human Rights Act (HRA). • The Supreme Court is composed of twelve judges. One president, one deputy president and ten others. • The appointment of Supreme Court Judges is initially carried out by an independent commission with the subsequent agreement of the PM and formal appointment by the King. Accept any other valid responses.

Section B

Guidelines for marking Question 2
Marks are awarded for AO1 and AO2 only.
Marks are awarded for showing depth of knowledge and understanding (AO1) but this has to be based on the material presented in the source.
Marks are awarded for illustrating clarity of analysis (AO2) but this has to arise from the context presented by the source.
No marks are available for making a judgement or reaching any form of conclusion (AO3).

In AO2 political information means source.		
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	• Demonstrates superficial knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, with limited underpinning of analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Limited analysis of political information with partial logical chains of reasoning, which make simplistic connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).
Level 2	4–7	• Demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, many of which are selected appropriately in order to underpin analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Mostly focused analysis of political information with clear, logical chains of reasoning, which make mostly relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).
Level 3	8–10	• Demonstrates comprehensive and precise knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, which are carefully selected in order to underpin analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Consistent and sustained analysis of political information, with coherent logical chains of reasoning, which make convincing connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).

Question number	Indicative content Using the source, explain the significance of the Salisbury Convention for the House of Lords.
2	AO1 (5 marks), AO2 (5 marks) Candidates may demonstrate the following knowledge and understanding (AO1) when considering the significance of the Salisbury Convention: • The Salisbury Convention is significant as it implies that the House of Lords does not block legislation contained in the governments winning manifesto. • The Salisbury Convention is a significant convention and has operated continuously by the House of Lords and it is seen as not in need of codification. • In times of a coalition or a hung Parliament – the government lacks a majority to secure a full mandate for its manifesto. • The dramatic changes of leadership in Government since 2019 has modified policy and cast doubt on manifesto pledges. Candidates may refer to the following analytical points (AO2) when considering the significance of the Salisbury Convention: • The significance essentially means that the House of Lords bows to the democratically elected chamber the Commons. • Even though the Salisbury Convention is not a codified rule it is largely followed by the Lords as part of its role as a revising chamber making it significant. • When there is a hung parliament and a coalition, the Salisbury Convention may be less significant as there is no democratically mandated manifesto. • The changes in government policies and direction with the turnover of leaders since 2019 raises the question of whether the Salisbury Convention is less significant as it does not apply in these circumstances. Accept any other valid responses.

Guidelines for marking Question 3

Marks are awarded for AO2 and AO3 only.

Marks are awarded for illustrating clarity of analysis (AO2) but this has to arise from the context presented by the source.

No AO1 marks are available for repeating knowledge or understanding from the source or for introducing own knowledge and understanding if it is not linked to providing clarity to the AO2 & AO3 points arising from the source.

AO2 and AO3 require candidates to analyse and evaluate the sources and develop their answers, showing comparative analytical and evaluative skills to address the question.

Candidates should focus their comparison on analysing the similarities and differences of the viewpoints given in the sources.

Candidates who *do not* undertake any comparative analysis of the source cannot achieve beyond Level 1.

There are no AO1 marks available. *Do not* give credit to responses where candidates demonstrate knowledge alone. Any knowledge used must support their analysis and evaluation.

In AO2 and AO3 political information means source.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	- Limited comparative analysis of political information with partial logical chains of reasoning, referring to similarities and/or differences within political information, which make simplistic connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). - Makes superficial evaluation of political information, constructing simple arguments and judgements, many which are descriptive and lead to limited unsubstantiated and unjustified conclusions (AO3).
Level 2	4–7	- Mostly focused comparative analysis of political information with clear, logical chains of reasoning, drawing on similarities and/or differences within political information, which make mostly relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). - Constructs mostly relevant evaluation of political information, constructing mostly focused arguments and judgements, many which are substantiated and lead to some specific conclusions, that are sometimes justified (AO3).

Level 3	8–10	• Consistent and sustained comparative analysis of political information, with coherent logical chains of reasoning, drawing on similarities and differences within political information, which make convincing connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs coherent and sustained evaluation of political information, constructing effectively substantiated arguments and judgements, which are consistently substantiated and lead to precise conclusions that are fully justified (AO3).
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Question number	Indicative content
	Using the sources, assess whether the uneven nature of devolution is a major problem.
3	A02 (5 marks), A03 (5 marks) Candidates may refer to the following comparative analytical points (A02) when assessing the similarities and differences between the sources: • A similarity is that both sources agree that the process of devolution is endorsed by the major parties. • Another second similarity is that both sources agree that the process of devolution has been uneven across the UK. • Source 2 feels that it is a successful course to have uneven devolution in the UK and that this develops the democratic process. By contrast Source 3 rejects uneven devolution to be unfair and damaging to UK democracy. • Source 2 endorses the progress of regionalism in England. Source 3 in contrast belittles the flow of regionalism in England and adds that the English do not favour it. Candidates may refer to the following comparative evaluative points (A03) when assessing the similarities and differences between the sources: • We can conclude that whatever the final shape of the devolution settlement in the UK it is now a permanent feature of the UK constitution and is here to stay. • Both sources agree on the uneven nature of the process. However, Source 2 takes this to be the sign of flexibility and the capacity for different processes to suit different areas. By contrast Source 3 concludes that this means uneven outcomes for UK citizens as a whole and that is unfair • We can conclude if we adopt the approach of Source 2 a gradual approach to devolution considering cultural sensitivities is the best way forward and in tune with democratic principles OR We can conclude with source 3 that this piecemeal roll out of devolution is frustrating and problematic as it has different implications across the UK and in the process damages UK democracy. • If we agree and support the conclusion of Source 2, the gradual roll out of regionalism across England is flexible and works best when it is implemented with local agreement and takes note of local preferences. OR We can support the conclusion reached by Source 3 that regionalism in England is both a failure because of its uneven nature and that it lacks any political power by not being able to pass legislation and that seems unfair when compared with the wider devolution process.

	Accept any other valid responses.
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Section C

Guidelines for marking Questions 4a and 4b
AO1 (10 marks) Marks here relate to knowledge and understanding. It should be used to underpin analysis (AO2) and evaluation (AO3)
AO2 (10 marks) Candidates should form analytical views which support and reject the view presented by the question.
AO3 (10 marks) Candidates are expected to evaluate the information and arguments presented. They may rank the importance of the prior analysis. They should be able to make and form judgments and they should reach reasoned conclusion.
Candidates must consider both views in their answers in a balanced way. The judgement a candidate reaches about these views should be reflected in their conclusions. Candidates who have <i>not</i> considered both views in a balanced way cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–6	• Demonstrates superficial knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, with limited underpinning of analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Limited analysis of aspects of politics with partial logical chains of reasoning, which make simplistic connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Makes superficial evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing simple arguments and judgements, many of which are descriptive (AO3).
Level 2	7–12	• Demonstrates some accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, some of which are selected appropriately in order to underpin analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Some emerging analysis of aspects of politics with some focused, logical chains of reasoning, which make some relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs some appropriate evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing occasionally effective arguments and judgements, some are partially unsubstantiated and lead to generic conclusions, without much justification (AO3).
Level 3	13–18	• Demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, many of which are selected appropriately in order to underpin analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Mostly focused analysis of aspects of politics with logical chains of reasoning, which make mostly relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs mostly relevant evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing mostly focused arguments and judgements, many are substantiated and lead to some focused conclusions, that are sometimes justified (AO3).
Level 4	19–24	• Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, which are selected appropriately in order to underpin analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Focused analysis of aspects of politics with logical chains of reasoning, which make relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs relevant evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing focused arguments and judgements, which are substantiated and lead to focused conclusions that are mostly justified (AO3).
Level 5	25–30	• Demonstrates comprehensive and precise knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, which are carefully selected in order to underpin analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Consistent and sustained analysis of aspects of politics, with coherent, logical chains of reasoning, which make convincing connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs coherent and sustained evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing effectively substantiated arguments and

		judgements, which are consistently substantiated and lead to precise conclusions that are fully justified (AO3).
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Question number	Indicative content
4(a)	‘The Prime Minister’s power depends largely on the Cabinet.’ How far do you agree that the Prime Minister’s power depends largely on the Cabinet? AO1 (10 marks), AO2 (10 marks), AO3 (10 marks) Candidates may demonstrate the following knowledge and understanding (AO1) in response to the view: Agreement • The Prime Minister (PM) must have full approval of the Cabinet in order to deliver on key policies. • The PM needs the Cabinet when major decisions arise, the PM cannot rule alone. • The Cabinet will contain the so called ‘big beasts’ that is important people within the Cabinet who carry influence and importance. • Cabinet appointments means making compromises for the PM to satisfy all wings or sections of the party. Disagreement • The PM has the balance of power with the Cabinet as they hire and fire members of it. • The PM who has won a recent General Election and seen as the brand image of the party can dominate the Cabinet. • The PM shapes and drives the agenda of Cabinet and of government policy. • The PM operates with kitchen cabinets and inner cabinets where he or she decides important matters without the input of full cabinet. Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when agreeing with the view: • The PM must have a united Cabinet, willing to fully support policy and legislation put forwards. Open dissent or difficulties can slow the work of government. (AO2) Cabinet members can resign in protest – but these may damage both the PM and policy initiatives. Thus, often the PM must acquiesce with Cabinet. • The PM is not a singular figure of government – but part of a team, unlike a President the PM is not directly elected. (AO2) We can conclude that the Cabinet is a reminder of the collective nature of government in the UK. (AO3) • The PM works within a Parliamentary system and it contains leading influential figures of the party – who by nature of their expertise must be in Cabinet and be listened to. The PM will also have a personal debt to many Cabinet colleagues who assisted the PM to the office. (AO2) Hence we soon arrive at a verdict that the PM is as much in debt to the Cabinet for arrival and survival (AO3)

- A PM must appoint all wings of the party to ensure wider support out in wider political circles. Johnson and Truss narrowed their Cabinet to those who agreed with them, but this has only a short-term time span. (AO2) Johnson was confronted with multiple resignations from his Cabinet just over two years after they were appointed. A lack of trust from the Cabinet signals the end of the road for any PM. (AO3)

Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when disagreeing with the view:

- The PM has the clear upper hand with the Cabinet as they can 'hire and fire' and this is a considerable power base used to dominate others. (AO2) The PM often must withstand Cabinet resignations and fallout from re-shuffles but new supported enter as possible troublemakers leave. (AO3)
- Success or prospective success in general elections adds weight to the PM in dealing with their Cabinet, if a PM is delivering on elections (and in policy areas) then their position is all the stronger. (AO2) Hence a PM can build up their power over time with regards to the Cabinet and increase their power base. (AO3)
- The PM determines the shape and nature of policy, setting the Cabinet agenda – the PM also leads the response to events as they arise. (AO2) Thus ideas and policy responses start with the PM by determining the framework of a governments plans taken by the Cabinet. (AO3)
- Prime Ministers increasingly rely on a small group of senior advisers and present policy to the full cabinet as agreed governmental action. (AO2) This means that effectively of major decisions the cabinet is bypassed. (AO3)

Accept any other valid responses.

Question number	Indicative content 'Parliament is no longer sovereign.' How far do you agree that Parliament is no longer sovereign?
4(b)	AO1 (10 marks), AO2 (10 marks), AO3 (10 marks) Candidates may demonstrate the following knowledge and understanding (AO1) in agreement and disagreement with the view: Agreement • Parliament has lost sovereignty to the general public as a result of the increased use of referendums. • Some argue that sovereignty resides now with the government and with the Cabinet and PM. • The creation of devolved bodies has significantly shifted sovereignty away from Parliament. • It is also suggested that some sovereignty has been lost to a more powerful Supreme Court. Disagreement • Parliament retains legal sovereignty in the UK as the ultimate law maker. • Governments have been and can be removed by Parliament as occurred in 1979 – with a Vote of Confidence – which brought in Thatcher. • The Supreme Court recently endorsed the supremacy of Parliament as they ruled that the prorogation of Parliament by Johnson in 2018 was beyond its powers. • When the need arises Parliament can change the UK constitution, and reclaim political sovereignty, such as leaving the EU, changing devolution and accepting foreign court's jurisdiction such as the ECHR. Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when agreeing with the view: • Parliament has given away its decision making in allowing the outcomes of referendums to have the highest authority. In so doing creating devolution and our exit from the EU (AO2). We can conclude that Parliament would have preferred not to sanction leaving the EU but bowed to the wishes of the people in the outcome of the referendum. (AO3) • There is a case that Parliament as it is now dominated by a strong executive (government). As such Parliament is now far weaker and has reduced sovereignty due to powerful governments Cabinets and dominant PMs (AO2) It is easy to reach a verdict that sovereignty has slowly but surely drifted from Parliament to the executive. (AO3)

- After 1997 with the emergence of devolution across the UK Parliament has lost the sovereign power over several areas of political life – such as rights over agriculture in Scotland and power over some public services in Wales and there are further examples (AO2) This has led to the conclusion that Parliament has surrendered many areas of its sovereignty to the devolved bodies . (AO3)
- The Supreme Court since its creation has now a stronger legal basis to challenge Parliament or decide matters which have an impact on it. (AO2) Hence the legality of the proroguing of Parliament by Johnson was decided not by Parliament but by the Supreme Court. In a similar fashion it can ask Parliament to look again at legislation if it conflicts with aspects of the HRA. (AO3)

Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when disagreeing with the view:

- The UK Parliament remains the only sovereign law maker in the UK. It grants permission (but can rescind this) to lower bodies with devolution. (AO2), We can conclude that as we remain a unitary state Parliament will remain at the apex of this system. (AO3)
- Parliament do remove governments and also have demonstrated the threat to remove governments and individual ministers with votes of no confidence. (AO2) We can conclude that the government itself cannot remove Parliament there is a clear flow towards Parliament in terms of authority. (AO3)
- When the Supreme Court was asked to decide where sovereign power lies between the government and Parliament, they unanimously decided that power was with Parliament. (AO2) As Boris Johnson's prorogation was deemed unlawful Parliament was recalled and made political life difficult for Johnson before the 2019 election. Parliament had triumphed over government. (AO3)
- Parliament is the only body that can change the UK's constitution. It took the UK into Europe and laws it passed removed it from that body. No devolved body has supremacy over the UK Parliament. Parliament accepted the ECHR into UK law but has the power to reject this and allow a UK based Bill of Rights (AO2) We can conclude that no major change to the UK's political system can occur without Parliamentary approval. (AO3)

Accept any other valid responses.

