



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**AS
GOVERNMENT & POLITICS – UNIT 1
2160U10-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

GCE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

UNIT 1 – GOVERNMENT IN WALES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

Marking guidance for examiners

Summary of assessment objectives for Unit 1

The questions in Section A assess AO1. The questions in Section B assess both AO1 and AO2. The questions in Section C assess both AO1 and AO3. The assessment objectives focus on the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues (AO1); the ability to interpret and apply political information to identify and explain relevant similarities, differences, and connections (AO2), and the ability to analyse and evaluate the areas of government and politics studied to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions (AO3).

The structure of the mark scheme

The mark scheme for Section A, Section B and Section C has two parts:

- an assessment grid advising bands and associated marks that should be allocated to responses which demonstrate the characteristics needed in AO1, AO2 and AO3.
- advice outlining indicative content which can be used to assess the quality of the specific response. The content is not prescriptive, and candidates are not expected to mention all the material referred to. Examiners should seek to credit any further admissible evidence offered by the candidates.

Deciding on the mark awarded within a band

- The first stage for an examiner is to use both the indicative content and the assessment grid to decide the overall band.
- The second stage is to decide how firmly the characteristics expected for that band are displayed.
- Thirdly, a final mark for the question can then be awarded.

Organisation and communication

This issue should have bearing if the standard of organisation and communication is inconsistent with the descriptor for the band in which the answer falls. In this situation, examiners may decide not to award the highest mark in the band.

Level Descriptors

Using 'best fit', decide first which set of level descriptors best describes the overall quality of the answer. The following grid should inform your decision as to which band the answer belongs. (N.B. The majority of questions follow a four-band structure. However, when the question has three bands 'Adequate' as a descriptor has been removed.)

Stamps and annotations used for GCE Government and Politics

Stamp	Annotation	Meaning/use
	Application	<u>Application</u> of political knowledge. Used for AO2
	Correct	Where the comment is correct and/or demonstrates understanding of the factual and/or political material expressed
	Development	Where the argument being presented has gone beyond assertion and utilises supporting material. Used for AO3
	Incorrect	Where the comment is incorrect and/or misunderstands the factual and/or political material expressed.
	Narrative	Valid information is deployed ineffectively – it does not answer the set question
	Not relevant	Invalid information is deployed – it is irrelevant to the set question
	Question mark	The information presented is unclear or vague and/or it is difficult to follow the logic used
	Supported judgement	Notes a clear and supported judgement. Also used for effective summative judgement. Used for AO3
	Underline – Green	Green underline AO1 (knowledge and understanding). Use vertical line for larger areas.
	Underline – Blue	Blue underline AO2 (similarities, differences and connections). Use vertical line for larger areas.
	Underline – Yellow	Yellow underline AO3 (analysis and evaluation). Use vertical line for larger areas.
	Comment box	Using mark scheme terminology provide a brief summative comment for the final mark awarded for each question

	AO1	AO2	AO3
Thorough	- Aware of a wide range of detailed and accurate knowledge. - Demonstrates fully developed understanding that shows relevance to the demands of the question. - Evidence/examples are well chosen. - Precision in the use of terminology.	- Knowledge and understanding are consistently applied to the context of the question. - Is able to form a clear, developed and convincing interpretation of evidence that is fully accurate. - Is able to fully identify and explain similarities, differences and connections where relevant.	- Analysis and evaluation skills are used in a consistently appropriate and effective way. - An effective and balanced argument is constructed. - Detailed and substantiated evaluation that offers secure judgements leading to rational conclusions.
Reasonable	- Has a range of detailed and accurate knowledge. - Demonstrates well developed understanding that is relevant to the demands of the question. - Evidence/examples are appropriate. - Generally precise in the use of terminology.	- Knowledge and understanding are mainly applied to the context of the question. - Is able to form a clear and developed interpretation of evidence that is mostly accurate. - Is partially able to identify and explain similarities, differences and connections where relevant.	- Analysis and evaluation skills are mostly used in a suitable way and with a good level of competence and precision. - An accurate and balanced argument is constructed. - Detailed evaluation that offers generally secure judgements, with some link between rational conclusions and evidence.
Adequate	- Shows some accurate knowledge. - Demonstrates partial understanding that is relevant to the demands of the question. - Evidence/examples are not always relevant. - Some use of appropriate terminology.	- Knowledge and understanding are partially applied to the context of the question. - Is able to form a sound interpretation of evidence that shows some accuracy. - Makes some attempt to identify and explain similarities, differences and connections where relevant.	- Analysis and evaluation skills are used in a suitable way with a sound level of competence but may lack precision. - An imbalanced argument is constructed. - Sound evaluation that offers generalised judgements and conclusions, with limited use of evidence.
Limited	- Limited knowledge with some relevance to the topic or question. - Little or no development seen. - Evidence/examples are not made relevant. - Very little or no use of terminology.	- Knowledge and understanding are applied in a weak manner to the context of the question. - Can only form a simple interpretation of evidence, if at all, with very limited accuracy. - Makes weak attempt to identify and explain similarities, differences and connections where relevant.	- Analysis and evaluation skills are used with limited competence. - Unsupported evaluation that offers simple or no conclusions.

Section A Mark bands for Question 1 and Question 2

Band	Marks	AO1
3	5–6	Thorough knowledge and understanding shown, using a range of relevant evidence/examples.
2	3–4	Reasonable knowledge and understanding shown with some use of evidence/examples.
1	1–2	Limited knowledge and understanding shown with limited evidence/examples.
	0	Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

01 Using examples, briefly describe the role of peers in the UK Parliament. [6]

In briefly describing the role of peers in the UK Parliament, candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the role of peers in the UK parliamentary system. In demonstrating this knowledge and understanding candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on the role of peers.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- Peers have the ability to initiate laws as well as scrutinise legislation from the House of Commons.
- Peers' roles can be influenced by conventions, for example the Salisbury Convention limits peers' ability to block or significantly delay legislation contained within the governing party's election manifesto.
- Cross-party peers and 'life peers' offer independent expertise to the work of the chamber.
- Peers check and challenge the work of the government through their committee activities.

02 Using examples, briefly describe works of constitutional authority relating to the UK Constitution. [6]

In briefly describing works of constitutional authority, candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of those works in relation to the UK Constitution. In demonstrating this knowledge and understanding candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on the works chosen.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (1867) provided a detailed insight into the British political system and helped to define the role of a constitutional monarchy.
- AV [Albert Venn] Dicey's *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* (1885) offered an analysis of the rule of law, the importance of parliament and the relationship between the government and the judiciary.
- [Thomas] Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* (1844) gave a detailed description of parliamentary procedures and their evolution in light of constitutional conventions that affect Parliament.
- The Cabinet Manual (2011), a comprehensive guide to the operationalising of UK government, outlines, for example, the functioning of government and its relationship with Parliament.

Section B
Mark bands for Question 3 and Question 4

Band	Marks	AO1	Marks	AO2
4	7–8	• Thorough knowledge and understanding of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are well-chosen. • Depth and range to material used. • Effective use of terminology.	13–16	• Thorough application of political knowledge to the source. • Thorough interpretation of the issue raised in the set question. • Thorough explanation of relevant connections within the set question.
3	5–6	• Reasonable knowledge and understanding of the impact of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are appropriate. • Depth and range to material used, but not in equal measure. • Good use of terminology.	9–12	• Reasonable application of political knowledge to the source. • Reasonable interpretation of the issue raised in the set question. • Reasonable explanation of relevant connections within the set question.
2	3–4	• Adequate knowledge and understanding of the impact of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are not always relevant. • Depth or range to material used. • Some appropriate use of terminology.	5–8	• Adequate application of political knowledge to the source. • Adequate of the impact of the issue raised in the set question. • Adequate explanation of relevant connections within the set question.
1	1–2	• Limited knowledge and understanding of the impact of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are not made relevant. • Very little use of terminology.	1–4	• Limited application of political knowledge to the source. • Limited interpretation of the issue raised in the set question. • Limited explanation of relevant connections within the set question.
	0	Response not creditworthy or not attempted.		

03 Read the extract below and answer the question that follows.

Extract A

The civil service: what is its role?

The UK Civil Service is permanent and politically impartial. Civil servants continue in post when governments change and are forbidden from offering political advice to ministers – a role performed instead by special advisers.

However, the civil service is not independent. Its fundamental role is to serve actively the government of the day in policy development and delivery. This does not simply mean following ministers' instructions: good governance requires ministers to draw on a range of evidence that is objective and balanced before making decisions. Hence, civil servants provide such advice on the pros and cons of policy options – even if that sometimes contains unwelcome messages. Civil servants also translate policy decisions into action, implementing the policy direction set by ministers.

[Extract adapted from: "The civil service: what is its role", from UCL's *The Constitution Unit Blog*, July 2023,
<https://constitution-unit.com/2023/07/11/the-civil-service-what-is-its-role/> – accessed
17 October 2024]

Using Extract A as well as your own knowledge, explain the impact of the civil service on the way the UK is governed. [24]

In explaining the impact of the civil service on the way the UK is governed candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to interpret and apply accurate and relevant information. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on identifying and explaining the connections between the civil service and the administering of government in the UK.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- The extract states that the civil service is permanent, and while it is apolitical, it is not independent. It is a bureaucratic instrument of government that assists the government of the day in enacting its policies.
- The most senior civil servants – permanent secretaries – are in daily contact with government ministers and advise Cabinet ministers on policy decisions.
- Civil servants have an impact on the implementation of government policy.
- Critics of the civil service, some of whom refer to it as "the Blob", argue that it is a negative force on a potentially radical and transformative government, for example, figures from across the political spectrum, from Thatcher to Benn, have criticised the civil service for its inertia.
- The public deterioration in the relationship between the civil service and government ministers in the Johnson government highlighted the tensions in the relationships between government ministers and senior civil servants.

04 Read the extract below and answer the question that follows.

Extract B Mark Drakeford, in a speech made in June 2021. At the time the speech was made, Mr Drakeford was the First Minister of Wales

First Minister sets out ideas to strengthen 'fragile' Union

"Wales's future is best served by having strong devolution, so decisions about Wales are made in Wales, and by being a strong and equal partner in a revitalised United Kingdom

For this to happen, the way the Union works must change. And the need for change is urgent, the Union has never been this fragile. If matters continue in their current vein the case for the break-up of the UK will only increase.

Too often we see the UK government act in an aggressively unilateral way, claiming to act on behalf of the whole UK, but without regard for the status of the nations and the democratic mandates of their government.

It's time for relationships to be reset."

[Extract adapted from "First Minister sets out ideas to strengthen 'fragile' Union", Welsh Government Press Release, June 2021, <https://www.gov.wales/first-minister-sets-out-ideas-to-strengthen-fragile-union> – accessed 17 October 2024]

Using Extract B as well as your own knowledge, explain the impact of devolution on the United Kingdom. [24]

In explaining the impact of devolution on the United Kingdom candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to interpret and apply accurate and relevant information. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer which is focused on identifying and explaining the connections between devolution and the governance of the UK.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- The extract mentions the negative impact of devolution, with emphasis on how Welsh government feels the UK government has imposed a muscular form of unionism and ignored the democratic mandates of devolution.
- Devolution has led to increasing conflict between various governments within the UK.
- The UK Supreme Court has been empowered to resolve disputes around issues around devolution relating to devolution-based issues including a second Scottish referendum on independence.
- Devolution has been characterised by prime ministers such as Boris Johnson as "a disaster" as it has led to increasing calls for the break-up of the Union.
- Devolution has enabled governments in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and across areas of England to introduce policies that fulfil the needs of their population, for example, free prescriptions in Wales and different levels of income tax in Scotland.
- Devolution has enabled policy experimentation across a range of issues that have enriched governance in the UK.

Section
Mark bands for Question 5, Question 6 and Question 7

Band	Marks	AO1	Marks	AO3
4	9–10	- Thorough knowledge and understanding of the set question. - Evidence/examples used are well-chosen. - Depth and range to material used. - Effective use of terminology.	10–12	- Thorough analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the set question. - Thorough discussion with well-developed and balanced arguments. - Structure is logical. - Writing demonstrates accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. - An appropriate conclusion is reached based on evidence presented.
3	6–8	- Reasonable knowledge and understanding of the set question. - Evidence/examples used are appropriate. - Depth and range to material used, but not in equal measure. - Good use of terminology.	7–9	- Reasonable analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the set question. - Reasonable discussion with well-developed and balanced arguments. - Structure is mostly logical. - Writing demonstrates reasonably accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. - A reasonable conclusion is reached based on evidence presented.
2	3–5	- Adequate knowledge and understanding of the set question. - Evidence/examples used are not always relevant. - Depth or range to material used. - Some appropriate use of terminology	4–6	- Adequate analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the set question. - Adequate discussion with well-developed and balanced arguments. Or Reasonable discussion with only one side of the argument. - Structure is adequate. - Writing demonstrates some errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. - A superficial conclusion is reached.
1	1–2	- Limited knowledge and understanding of the set question. - Evidence/examples used are not made relevant. - Very little use of terminology.	1–3	- Limited analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the set question. - Limited discussion. - Answer lacks structure. - Writing demonstrates many errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. - No conclusion.
	0	Response not creditworthy or not attempted.		

05 “Welsh government is not effectively scrutinised by the Welsh Parliament.”
To what extent do you agree with this statement? **[22]**

In evaluating the efficacy with which the Welsh Parliament scrutinises the government of Wales, candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate relevant evidence to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and to draw conclusions. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer which is focused on the evidence that supports and counters the idea that the Welsh parliament scrutinises the Welsh government effectively.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

For

- There is an insufficient number of members in the Welsh Parliament to staff the committee system effectively, for example, the controversial 20mph speed limit reforms weren't fully scrutinised at committee due to staff shortages.
- The Welsh government controls most of the timetable within the Plenary.
- There is a lack of expertise and experience among members to effectively challenge the First Minister and other government ministers on their respective portfolios and their expenditure of an annual budget of around £24 billion.
- Memorandums of understanding, for example the one that existed between Labour and Plaid Cymru, lessen the chance of effective scrutiny in some areas as an opposition party is committed to supporting the government on many areas of policy.

Against

- The Welsh government has a committee system that can, when fully staffed, effectively scrutinise government departments.
- There is a committee for the scrutiny of the First Minister specifically as well as all other areas of government.
- The Plenary sessions enable members to question all government ministers regarding issues within their portfolio.
- Committees such as the Finance Committee have been effective in revealing issues around Welsh government expenditure in recent years.
- There are mechanisms within the Welsh Parliament that enable members to raise issues and challenge the Welsh government, for example, 90-second motions.
- The Welsh government does not usually have a significant majority within the parliament, and this encourages a more collaborative relationship between parliament and government.

06 “Backbench MPs have significant power within the UK Parliament.” Discuss. [22]

In evaluating the power of backbench MPs within the UK Parliament, candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate relevant evidence to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and to draw conclusions. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer which is focused on the evidence that supports and counters the idea that backbench MPs have significant power within the UK Parliament.

Responses may include but are not limited to the following points:

For

- Backbench MPs can propose a Private Members Bill that can highlight a specific issue that's important to them or their constituents, for example, Barry Gardiner's Private Members' Bill on employment and trade union rights (2021).
- Some individual MPs secure the successful passage of their Private Members' Bills into law.
- An individual backbench MP can work on a specific select committee and scrutinise the work of a government department with detail and efficiency.
- Backbench MPs have the power to vote on legislation and thus have a democratic power within the structure of the UK parliament.
- Backbench MPs can table amendments to legislation during the legislative process.
- Individual MPs can form all-party parliamentary groups to highlight issues that are important to the individually and fight for change in these areas.
- Former Cabinet ministers on the backbenches can exercise power in a variety of ways, for example criticising the prime minister of the day.

Against

- The majority of MPs follow the demands of their political party and chief whips when voting on prospective legislation. Consequently, they do not utilise their individual agency or influence.
- Many MPs regard their time on the backbenches as a stepping stone to becoming a member of the government. As such, their views can be malleable and susceptible to pressure from above.
- Private Members' Bills are highly unlikely to succeed without the consent or support of the majority governing party.
- The government has control of the membership of public bill committees and can influence members in their scrutiny of prospective legislation.

07 “The rule of law is the most important constitutional principle in the UK.” Discuss. [22]

In evaluating the importance of the rule of law in the UK Constitution, candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate relevant evidence to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and to draw conclusions. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer which is focused on the evidence that argues in favour of, and against, the importance of the rule of law within the UK constitution.

Response may include, but are not limited to the following points:

For

- Increasing scope of Supreme Court to rule on constitutional issues, for example, devolution, the prorogation of parliament, the role of parliament in triggering Article 50.
- The scope and usage of Judicial Review to ensure that the rule of law is followed across all areas of public life.
- The recent focus on ensuring that governments act in a lawful manner has emphasised the importance of the rule of law in our constitutional arrangements, for example when making military decisions.
- The focus on ensuring judicial independence so that the rule of law is applied equally to all citizens, the Lord Chancellor and all ministers have a statutory duty to uphold the independence of judges.

Against

- Parliamentary sovereignty remains the central principle of the UK's constitutional arrangements.
- Parliament remains the highest authority within the UK's constitutional arrangements: it is the supreme legal authority that can make or unmake any law.
- Government ministers can undermine the judiciary and the rule of law through political decisions and actions.
- There are other important constitutional principles, such as constitutional monarchy and parliamentary government, which are important within the UK Constitution.