



ASSESSMENT and  
QUALIFICATIONS  
ALLIANCE

## General Certificate of Education

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# Government and Politics 5151/6151 2008

Material accompanying this Specification

- Past Papers and Mark Schemes
- Reports on the Examination
- A Teacher's Guide

# SPECIFICATION

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# Background Information

## 1 Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Specifications

### 1.1 Advanced Subsidiary (AS)

Advanced Subsidiary courses were introduced in September 2000 for the award of the first qualification in August 2001. They may be used in one of two ways:

- as a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer decisions about specialism;
- as the first half (50%) of an Advanced Level qualification, which must be completed before an Advanced Level award can be made.

Advanced Subsidiary is designed to provide an appropriate assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the first half of a full Advanced Level qualification. The level of demand of the AS examination is that expected of candidates half-way through a full Advanced Level course of study.

### 1.2 Advanced Level (AS+A2)

The Advanced Level examination is in two parts:

- Advanced Subsidiary (AS) – 50% of the total award;
- a second examination, called A2 – 50% of the total award.

Most Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level courses are modular. The AS comprises three teaching and learning modules and the A2 comprises a further three teaching and learning modules. Each teaching and learning module is normally assessed through an associated assessment unit. The specification gives details of the relationship between the modules and assessment units.

With the two-part design of Advanced Level courses, centres may devise an assessment schedule to meet their own and candidates' needs. For example:

- assessment units may be taken at stages throughout the course, at the end of each year or at the end of the total course;
- AS may be completed at the end of one year and A2 by the end of the second year;
- AS and A2 may be completed at the end of the same year.

Details of the availability of the assessment units for each specification are provided in Section 3.



## 3

## Availability of Assessment Units and Entry Details

### 3.1 Availability of Assessment Units

Examinations based on this specification are available as follows:

	Availability of Units		Availability of Qualification	
	AS	A2	AS	A Level
January	1, 2, 3	4	✓	✓
June	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6, 7 and 8	✓	✓

### 3.2 Sequencing of Units

Candidates are strongly advised to follow the sequencing of units noted below:

AS

1 → 2 → 3

A2

4 → (5 or 6 or 7) → 8

### 3.3 Entry Codes

Normal entry requirements apply, but the following information should be noted.

The following unit entry codes should be used:

AS	A2
Unit 1 - GOV1	Unit 4 - GOV4
Unit 2 - GOV2	Unit 5 - GOV5
Unit 3 - GOV3	Unit 6 - GOV6
	Unit 7 - GOV7
	Unit 8 - GOV8

The **Subject Code** for entry to the Advanced Subsidiary only award is 5151.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the Advanced Level award is 6151.

At the beginning of the course centres must inform AQA on Form A (Early Information) of the approximate number of candidates to be entered for the examination so that information may be sent to centres.

### 3.4 Classification Codes

Every specification is assigned to a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCE qualification with the same classification code, will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

The classification code for this specification is 4830.

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### 3.5 Private Candidates

This specification is available to private candidates. Private candidates should write to the AQA for a copy of '*Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates*'.

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### 3.6 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

AQA pays due regard to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in its administration of this specification.

Arrangements may be made to enable candidates with disabilities or other difficulties to access the assessment. An example of an access arrangement is the production of a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment. Special consideration may be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances.

Further details can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document:

*Access Arrangements and Special Consideration*

*Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examination*

*GCE, AEA, VCE, GCSE, GNVQ, Entry Level & Key Skills*

This document can be viewed via the AQA web site ([www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk))

Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

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### 3.7 Language of Examinations

All Assessment Units in this subject are provided in English only.

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# Scheme of Assessment

## 4

## Introduction

### Rationale

This specification provides an approach to Government and Politics that allows candidates to acquire knowledge and understanding of the political dimension within their own and other societies. This includes knowledge and understanding of patterns of authority and power and the articulation and aggregation of different interests. Candidates' understanding of political systems will be facilitated by the requirement to study different levels of government and to compare the practices of systems of government. Candidates will have the opportunity to study the politics of other systems, political ideas or particular issues in more detail. The synoptic element will assess candidates' understanding of the connections between the different elements of the specification.

This GCE Government and Politics specification complies with:

- a. the Subject Criteria for Government and Politics;
- b. the GCSE and GCE A/AS Code of Practice;
- c. the GCE Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Qualifications-Specific Criteria;
- d. the arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria.

This qualification is a recognised part of the National Qualifications Framework. As such Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level provide progression from Key Stage 4, through post-16 studies and form the basis for entry to higher education or employment. It accommodates the needs of adult learners who have developed an interest in this subject.

This qualification can provide progression opportunities for candidates wishing to pursue a career in political research or education.

### Prior level of attainment and recommended prior learning

It is not necessary for candidates to have studied GCSE Politics before commencing work on this specification and no prior knowledge of politics is necessary.

It is recommended that candidates should have skills at least equivalent to GCSE English Language, Grade C. It would also be beneficial if they had knowledge of Key Skills, level 2, Application of Number.

# 5

## Aims

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- 5.1 This Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level specification should encourage candidates to:
- a. develop a critical awareness of the nature of politics and the relationship between political ideas, institutions and processes;
  - b. acquire knowledge and understanding of the structures of authority and power within the political system of the United Kingdom, and how these may differ from those of other political systems;
  - c. acquire knowledge of Government and Politics and of the rights and responsibilities of individuals in order to encourage participation by candidates within their society.
- 

### 5.2 Knowledge and Understanding

- 5.2.1 Advanced Subsidiary candidates will be required to:
- a. include, where appropriate, reference to current political debates about issues specified in the criteria;
  - b. take into account the need to develop knowledge and understanding within the context of the political system of the UK, including its local, national and European (EU) dimensions, and include some comparisons with other political systems.

- 5.2.2 Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level candidates will be required to address the following issues:
- a. the essential characteristics and inter-relationships of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary;
  - b. the adequacy of existing political arrangements for ensuring representative democracy and full participation;
  - c. the rights and responsibilities of the individual;
  - d. ideologies, theories and traditions.

At Advanced Subsidiary Level the above would be studied in a manner which facilitates progress to the A2 specification content.

- 5.2.3 In addition, Advanced Level requires candidates to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the context of the political system of the United Kingdom, with greater range and depth than at Advanced Subsidiary Level, in at least one of the following areas:
- a. the politics and government of another state;
  - b. comparative politics;
  - c. political ideologies or political thought.

### 5.3 Skills

Advanced Subsidiary or Advanced Level candidates will be required to:

- a. comprehend, synthesise and interpret political information in a variety of forms, for example, written, oral, visual and numerical sources;
- b. analyse and evaluate:
  - (i) political institutions, processes and behaviour;
  - (ii) political arguments and explanations;
  - (iii) the relationship between institutions, processes, behaviour and values, ideologies, and concepts;
- c. identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied;
- d. select and organise relevant material to construct arguments and explanations leading to reasoned conclusions;
- e. communicate arguments and explanations with relevance, clarity and coherence, using vocabulary appropriate to the study of Government and Politics.

# 6

## Assessment Objectives

### 6.1 Assessment Objectives

The assessment objectives for Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level are the same.

A01	Recall, select and deploy their knowledge of Government and Politics accurately showing understanding of relevant political concepts and theories;
A02	Analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations, and identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied;
A03	Communicate arguments and explanations in a clear and structured manner, making use of a range of relevant evidence and appropriate political vocabulary.

### 6.2 Quality of Written Communication

The quality of written communication is assessed in all assessment units where candidates are required to produce extended written material. Candidates will be assessed according to their ability to:

- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter;
- organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate;
- ensure text is legible, and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

The assessment of the quality of written communication is included in Assessment Objective 3 (AO3).

## 7

## Scheme of Assessment - *Advanced Subsidiary (AS)*

The Scheme of Assessment has a modular structure. The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) award comprises three compulsory assessment units.

### 7.1 Assessment Units

<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Written Paper</b>	<b>1 hour</b>
<b>33<math>\frac{1}{3}</math>% of the total AS marks</b>	<b>60 marks</b>	

#### Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour

This unit assesses Module 1 of the AS Subject Content and consists of structured stimulus/data response questions of varying length. The questions allow for both short answers and those of a more extended nature. Candidates are required to answer either Question 1 or Question 2 and either Question 3 or Question 4. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 7.2.

<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Written Paper</b>	<b>1 hour</b>
<b>33<math>\frac{1}{3}</math>% of the total AS marks</b>	<b>60 marks</b>	

#### Parties and Pressure Groups

This unit assesses Module 2 of the AS Subject Content and consists of structured stimulus/data response questions of varying length. The questions allow for both short answers and those of a more extended nature. Candidates are required to answer either Question 1 or Question 2 and either Question 3 or Question 4. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 7.2.

<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Written Paper</b>	<b>1 hour</b>
<b>33<math>\frac{1}{3}</math>% of the total AS marks</b>	<b>60 marks</b>	

#### Features of a Representative Democracy

This unit assesses Module 3 of the AS Subject Content and consists of structured stimulus/data response questions of varying length. The questions allow for both short answers and those of a more extended nature. Candidates are required to answer either Question 1 or Question 2 and either Question 3 or Question 4. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 7.2.

**7.2 Weighting of Assessment Objectives for Advanced Subsidiary**

The approximate relationship between the relative percentage weighting of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) and the overall Scheme of Assessment is shown in the following table:

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)			Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	1	2	3	
AO1 Recall, select and deploy knowledge	16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	50
AO2 Analyse and Evaluate	10	10	10	30
AO3 Communicate	6 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	6 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	6 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	20
<b>Overall Weighting of Units (%)</b>	<b>33 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>33 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>33 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>100</b>

Candidates' marks for each assessment unit are scaled to achieve the correct weightings.

## 8

## Scheme of Assessment - Advanced Level (AS+A2)

The Scheme of Assessment has a modular structure. The Advanced Level award comprises three compulsory assessment units from the Advanced Subsidiary Scheme of Assessment; two compulsory assessment units (4 and 8) and one optional unit from 5, 6 or 7 from the A2 scheme of assessment.

### 8.1 AS Assessment Units

Unit 1 16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> % of the total A Level marks	Written Paper 60 marks	1 hour
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Unit 2 16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> % of the total A Level marks	Written Paper 60 marks	1 hour
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Unit 3 16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> % of the total A Level marks	Written Paper 60 marks	1 hour
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### 8.2 A2 Assessment Units

Unit 4 15% of the total A Level marks	Written Paper 80 marks	1½ hours
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#### Comparative UK/USA Government

This unit assesses Module 4 of the A2 Subject Content. The unit consists of one structured essay question based on stimulus material and three essay questions which require extended answers. Candidates are required to answer Question 1 and one other question from a choice of three. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 8.4.

Unit 5 or 6 or 7 15% of the total A Level marks	Written Paper 80 marks	1½ hours
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#### The Politics of the USA

This unit assesses Module 5 of the A2 Subject Content. The unit consists of one structured essay question based on stimulus material and three essay questions which require extended answers. Candidates are required to answer question 1 and one other question from a choice of three. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 8.4.

**OR**

The Politics of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

This unit assesses Module 6 of the A2 Subject Content. The unit consists of one structured essay question based on stimulus material and three essay questions which require extended answers.

Candidates are required to answer Question 1 and one other question from a choice of three. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 8.4.

**OR**

Ideas in Contemporary British Politics

This unit assesses Module 7 of the A2 Subject Content. The unit consists of one structured essay question based on stimulus material and three essay questions which require extended answers. Candidates are required to answer Question 1 and one other question from a choice of three. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 8.4.

Unit 8 20% of the total A Level marks	Written Paper 80 marks	2 hours
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Government and Politics – Synoptic Module

This unit assesses Module 8 of the A2 Subject Content. The unit consists of essay questions based on stimulus material. Questions will be set on each of the four topics detailed in the subject content paragraph 17.3. Candidates are required to answer all questions in one of the four sections on the written paper. Candidates are required to use the knowledge and understanding and the skills contained in paragraph 17.2. Questions will be structured so that candidates can draw material from different parts of the course. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 8.4.

8.3 Synoptic Assessment

The Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Criteria state that Advanced Level specifications must include synoptic assessment (representing at least 20% of the total Advanced Level marks all of which must be externally assessed).

This is an assessment that tests candidates’ understanding of the connections between the different elements of the subject ensuring that they have an overall grasp of the subject and not merely six separate modules of knowledge. Unit 8, Government and Politics, satisfies this requirement and is therefore a compulsory unit for all candidates. All the marks for Unit 8 are allocated to synoptic assessment.

Any one or more areas of the Subject Content may be assessed by means of integrated themes which draw all the Subject Content together. The topics of Power, Participation and Representation, Political Culture and Continuity and Change are detailed in the Subject Content, paragraph 17.3.

#### 8.4 Weighting of Assessment Objectives for Advanced Level

The approximate relationship between the relative percentage weighting of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) and the overall Scheme of Assessment is shown in the following table.

Assessment Objectives		Advanced Level Assessment Units (AS + A2)								Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
		Unit Weightings (%)								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
AO1	Recall, select and deploy knowledge	$8\frac{1}{3}$	$8\frac{1}{3}$	$8\frac{1}{3}$	6	6	6	6	8	45
AO2	Analyse and evaluate	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	8	35
AO3	Communicate	$3\frac{1}{3}$	$3\frac{1}{3}$	$3\frac{1}{3}$	3	3	3	3	4	20
Overall Weighting of Units (%)		$16\frac{2}{3}$	$16\frac{2}{3}$	$16\frac{2}{3}$	15	15	15	15	20	100

Candidates' marks for each assessment unit are scaled to achieve the correct weightings.

# Subject Content

## 9

## Summary of Subject Content

### 9.1 AS Modules

#### **MODULE 1 – Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour**

Political Culture and Voting Behaviour. Electoral Systems.

#### **MODULE 2 – Parties and Pressure Groups**

Political Parties. Pressure Groups and Protest Movements.

#### **MODULE 3 – Features of a Representative Democracy**

Representative Institutions. Central Government.

### 9.2 A2 Modules

#### **MODULE 4 – Comparative UK/USA Government**

The Constitutional Framework. The Legislature. The Executive. The Judiciary.

#### **MODULE 5 – The Politics of the USA**

Political Parties. Pressure Groups. The US Electoral Process and Direct Democracy. The Political Culture and Voting Behaviour.

#### **MODULE 6 – The Politics of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales**

Political Culture. The Democratic Process and Resolution of Conflict. Representative Institutions and Constitutional Change. The United Kingdom and European Union context.

#### **MODULE 7 – Ideas in Contemporary British Politics**

Political Culture and Political Traditions. Political Parties: Ideas, Ideologies and Pragmatism. Continuity and change. Alternative Ideology: Environmentalism.

#### **MODULE 8 – Government and Politics – Synoptic Module**

Knowledge and understanding and skills developed during the course are assessed under the broad topics of power, participation and representation, political culture and continuity and change.

10

# AS Module 1

## *Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour*

### 10.1 Political Culture and Voting Behaviour

The nature of politics:-

politics and the involvement of the individual;  
political culture.

Changing composition of the electorate in socio-economic and demographic terms, including gender, class, age and ethnicity.

Theories and debates concerning the determinants of voting behaviour in general elections:-

patterns of voting;  
stability and volatility;  
impact of tactical voting;  
factors affecting turnout;  
significance of by-elections;  
concept of 'swing';  
influence of opinion polls, media and campaigns.

### 10.2 Electoral Systems

UK electoral systems which operate at different tiers of government, including major proposals for reform.

Arguments for and against majoritarian and proportional systems:-

first-past-the-post;  
alternative vote;  
list;  
single transferable vote (STV);  
additional member system (AMS);  
first-past-the-post and variants of this;  
understand the likely outcomes of such systems;  
concept of the mandate.

Aspects of other electoral systems which enhance understanding of British electoral systems.

Nature and use of referendums within the UK.

## AS Module 2

### *Parties and Pressure Groups*

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#### 11.1 Political Parties

The roles and functions of the major political parties:-  
ideologies and traditions;  
structure and organisation;  
selection and deselection procedures for leaders and candidates;  
finance and membership;  
policy making procedures;  
programmes, policies and manifestos,  
changing party images, consulting wider opinion, involvement of non-party members.

The working of the major political parties at local, national and European levels.

#### 11.2 Pressure Groups and Protest Movements

Typologies of pressure groups to include cause and interest groups, “insider” and “outsider” groups.

Modes of operation:-

consultation with parties, elected representatives, government, civil servants, EU, at appropriate levels;  
direct action and public campaigns.

Finance and resources.

Evaluation of role, power and influence of pressure groups in the political system.

12

## AS Module 3

### *Features of a Representative Democracy*

#### 12.1 Representative Institutions

Main functions, roles and effectiveness of Parliament:-  
the House of Commons and House of Lords;

representation;

scrutiny and accountability;

legislative process;

composition;

reform and modernisation.

The composition and powers of:-

the European Parliament;

the Council of Ministers and the European Council;

the European Commission.

Parliamentary sovereignty:-

implications for the EU, devolved institutions and local government.

#### 12.2 Central Government

The Prime Minister and the Cabinet system:-

roles, powers and resources of the Prime Minister;

roles and functions of the Cabinet;

the Cabinet Office and Cabinet committees;

Prime Minister/Cabinet relations.

Ministers and the Civil Service:-

roles and characteristics of the Civil Service;

resources of ministers and civil servants;

debates about the power of, and relations between, ministers and civil servants.

13

## A2 Module 4

# Comparative UK/USA Government

### 13.1 The Constitutional Framework

Comparison of the nature of the constitutions. Codified and uncodified; rigid and flexible constitutions; Parliamentary sovereignty and sovereignty of the US Constitution; separation of powers; checks and balances.

Comparison of powers of and relationships between different levels of government.

Comparison of citizens' rights, open government and freedom of information.

### 13.2 The Legislature

Comparison of Congress and Parliament; bicameralism:-  
House of Representatives and Senate;  
House of Commons and House of Lords.

Comparison of the composition of Congress and Parliament; terms of office.

Comparison of the main functions, powers and effectiveness of Congress and Parliament; finance, legislation, oversight and scrutiny.

Comparison of the relationships between the upper and lower chambers in the UK and USA.

Comparison of the representative roles of MPs and Members of Congress.

Comparison of the roles of Congressional and Parliamentary Committees.

### 13.3 The Executive

Comparison of the roles, powers and functions of government of the UK (Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office, the Cabinet System) and USA (President, Cabinet, Executive Office of the President).

Comparison of Prime Ministerial and Presidential Government.

Comparison of the relationships between the executive and legislative branches of government; accountability; executive dominance; gridlock.

The roles and characteristics of the US Federal Bureaucracy and the UK Civil Service.

### 13.4 The Judiciary

Comparison of the roles and powers of judicial institutions in judicial review and constitutional interpretation (including The European Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights).

Comparison of the political significance of the judiciary, including the recruitment, appointment and independence of senior members of the judiciary in the UK and US.

14

## A2 Module 5

### *The Politics of the USA*

#### 14.1 Political Parties

Two party system dominance in the USA and explanations for the absence of successful third parties.

Recent and contemporary organisation of political parties at federal and state levels.

The ideologies and traditions of the Republican and Democrat parties and issues concerning the main differences in their programmes and policies.

Recent and contemporary internal divisions within the Republican and Democrat parties and their effects.

#### 14.2 Pressure Groups

US political pluralism and social diversity: developments and examples.

Types and classification of pressure groups including examples of ethnic, gender, moral, economic and citizens' rights organisations.

Activities of pressure groups and the significance of their influence on the American political system. Relative importance compared with political parties.

The role and significance of Political Action Committees.

#### 14.3 The US Electoral Process and Direct Democracy

Elections and the Constitution. Presidential and Congressional (mid-term) Elections: the recruitment of candidates (Presidential, Vice-Presidential and Congressional).

Factors and issues influencing candidate selection. Primaries and Caucuses. The National Nominating Conventions. The workings of the Electoral College and its impact on campaigns.

The importance of money and the role of the media in recent and contemporary American election campaigns.

The use of referendums. Initiatives and propositions at state level. Debates concerning their use.

#### 14.4 The Political Culture and Voting Behaviour

Diversity and fragmentation in modern political life, (socio-economic, religious, ethnic and regional).

The dominant ideology; sources of and influence on American politics, issues and controversies.

The major determinants of voting behaviour.

The causes and consequences of split ticket voting.

The causes and consequences of high levels of abstention and significance of differential abstention in recent and contemporary US politics.

15

## A2 Module 6

# *The Politics of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales*

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### 15.1 Political Culture

The historical context and cultural, social and economic dimensions of the Northern Ireland conflict.

The nature of Scottish Nationalism including the significance of culture, former statehood, and the claims of economic and political self-determination.

The nature of Welsh Nationalism including the significance of culture, language and religion.

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### 15.2 The Democratic Process and the Resolution of Conflict

The growth of, and responses to, paramilitary organisations and sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. The peace process in Northern Ireland.

Party politics in Scotland, including voting patterns and party political perspectives on the issues of devolution and independence.

Party politics in Wales, including voting patterns and party political perspectives on the issues of devolution and independence.

Political circumstances leading to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament.

Political circumstances leading to the establishment of the Welsh Assembly.

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### 15.3 Representative Institutions and Constitutional Change

Political institutions relevant to the government of Northern Ireland. The main political initiatives, proposals and solutions advanced since the 1970s, and the position adopted towards them by the main political organisations in Northern Ireland and by the London and Dublin Governments.

The main political institutions relevant to the government of Scotland, including the Scottish Parliament.

The main political institutions relevant to the government of Wales, including the Welsh Assembly.

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### 15.4 The United Kingdom and European Context

The cases for and against devolution and independence, including the implications for England, the UK and Europe.

The role of Westminster, Whitehall and the European Union in the government of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Party political perspectives, and the views and policies of the “London government” on the issues of devolution, independence and the government of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

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16

## A2 Module 7

### *Ideas in Contemporary British Politics*

#### 16.1 Political Culture and Political Traditions

The tradition of conservatism.

Parliamentary and revolutionary socialism. Liberalism, neo-liberalism and its relationship to the New Right.

The “Green Movement” and the “laws of ecology” in terms of the effects and consequences of human activity on the global environment.

#### 16.2 Political Parties: Ideas, Ideologies and Pragmatism

Conservatism as pragmatism and ideology; conservative views on human nature, authority, private property and libertarianism; conservative attitudes towards state intervention and the free market. The meaning of liberalism; liberal ideas concerning the individual, capitalism and welfare.

The contested definitions of socialism. Socialist values concerning community, class analysis and Marxism, co-operation, egalitarianism, pacifism and public ownership.

#### 16.3 Continuity and Change

Contemporary conservatism – from One Nation Toryism to New Right Libertarians – and the resulting political crisis and division regarding the importance of national sovereignty within conservatism.

The ideas of the Liberal Democratic Party, their evolution and their influence on ideas in contemporary British politics.

The debate within the Labour Party about the ends and means of achieving socialism – Clause 4, revisionism, welfarism, social democracy, communitarianism, stake-holding and the Third Way.

#### 16.4 Alternative Ideology: Environmentalism

‘Green’ ideology and its rejection of industrialisation and growth as political goals. Preference for a global approach, sufficiency, a conservator economy and self-reliance, decentralisation and local democratisation.

The political exponents of ‘green’ ideology, and the impact of ‘green’ ideas on the major parliamentary parties.

The impact and response of environmental issues on recent governments’ policy agendas as well as on public opinion.

## A2 Module 8

### Government and Politics – Synoptic Module

#### 17.1

Synoptic assessment is defined by the Subject Criteria as follows:

The drawing together of knowledge, understanding and skills learned in different parts of the A level course. It involves the explicit assessment of understanding of the connections between the areas of study.

In the broadest sense the study of Government and Politics inevitably involves a synoptic approach. Knowledge and understanding is demonstrated by identifying parallels, linkages and associations as a means of explanation. The study of government and politics inevitably involves establishing the links between ideas, theories, concepts and practices; and seeing parallels between one political system, or sub-system, and another. These are the skills that enable us to make sense of political phenomena and governmental systems.

The synoptic assessment in this A2 Government and Politics specification is included in this module. The assessment will take the form of questions based on stimulus material. Candidates will be required to make connections between the different modules they have studied in order to emphasise the relationships between concepts, institutions, ideologies, theories and traditions of the political systems studied.

The knowledge and understanding and skills required in this module are detailed in paragraph 17.2. The broad topics under which this knowledge and understanding and skills will be tested are given in paragraph 17.3. Questions will be set in such a way that candidates will be able to draw material from different parts of the specification, and will focus upon broad topics as detailed in paragraph 17.3. Each question will assess the objectives as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the specification. The weighting of each assessment objective is given in paragraph 8.4.

#### 17.2 Knowledge and Understanding

Students are required to address the following issues:

- a. current political debates;
- b. the essential characteristics and inter-relationships of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary;
- c. the adequacy of existing political arrangements for ensuring representative democracy and full participation;
- d. the rights and responsibilities of the individual;
- e. ideologies, theories and traditions.

In this specification candidates are required to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the context of the political system of the United Kingdom by studying Comparative UK/USA Government (Module 4). Candidates will have studied the Politics of the USA (Module 5) or the Politics of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Module 6) or Ideas in Contemporary British Politics (Module 7).

## Skills

Candidates are required to:

- a. comprehend, synthesise and interpret political information in a variety of forms, for example, written, oral, visual and numerical sources;
- b. analyse and evaluate;
  - political institutions, processes and behaviour;
  - political arguments and explanations;
  - the relationships between institutions, processes, behaviour and values, ideologies, concepts;
- c. identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied;
- d. select and organise relevant material to construct arguments and explanations leading to reasoned conclusions;
- e. communicate arguments and explanations with relevance, clarity and coherence, using vocabulary appropriate to the study of Government and Politics.

## 17.3

Candidates will be required to address the knowledge and understanding and the skills contained in paragraph 17.2 within the following broad topics.

### Power

Candidates will be required to use their knowledge and understanding from elsewhere in the specification about elites, social class, political organisations, including theories and concepts associated with these topics, to explain parallels, comparisons and contrasts in political and governmental systems and sub-systems they have studied.

### Participation and Representation

Candidates will be expected to bring together material on political parties, elections, voting behaviour, pressure groups and the mass media; they should be able to discuss parallels, comparisons and contrasts between the different political and governmental systems and sub-systems they have studied.

### Political Culture

Candidates will be required to use theories and concepts and empirical evidence to draw parallels and make comparisons and contrasts regarding the values, beliefs and attitudes that shape political behaviour in the political and governmental systems and sub-systems they have studied.

### Continuity and Change

Candidates will be required to analyse patterns of continuity and change within the political and governmental systems and sub-systems which they have studied.

## Key Skills and Other Issues

18

# Key Skills – Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence

### 18.1 Introduction

The National Qualification in Key Skills requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of *Application of Number, Communication and Information Technology*. (Copies of the Key Skills Units may be obtained directly from QCA.)

The units for the ‘wider’ Key Skills of *Improving own Learning, Working with Others and Problem-Solving* are also available. The acquisition and demonstration of ability in these ‘wider’ Key Skills is deemed highly desirable for all candidates, but they do not form part of the Key Skills Qualification. Copies of the Key Skills Units may be downloaded from QCA’s web site ([www.qca.org.uk/keyskills](http://www.qca.org.uk/keyskills)).

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- A. What you need to know.
- B. What you must do.
- C. Guidance.

Candidates following a course of study based on this specification for Government and Politics can be offered opportunities to develop and generate evidence of attainment in aspects of the Key Skills of *Communication, Application of Number, Information Technology, Working with Others, Improving own Learning and Performance*. Areas of study and learning that can be used to encourage the acquisition and use of Key Skills, and to provide opportunities to generate evidence for Part B of the units, are signposted below. More specific guidance on integrating the delivery of Key Skills in courses based upon this specification is given in the AQA specification support material.

### 18.2 Key Skills Opportunities in Government and Politics

The multi-skilled nature of Government and Politics that calls upon candidates’ abilities to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills, makes it possible to assist candidates to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Key Skills and to produce evidence of their application. The matrices below signpost the opportunities for the acquisition, development and production of evidence for Part B of five of the Key Skills units at *Level 3*, in the teaching and learning modules of this specification. The degree of opportunity in any one module will depend upon a number of centre-specific factors, including teaching strategies and level of resources.

## Communication

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C3.1a Contribute to discussions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.1b Make a presentation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.2 Read and synthesise information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.3 Write different types of documents	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Application of Number

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
N3.1 Plan and interpret information from different sources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N3.2 Carry out multi-stage calculations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N3.3 Present findings, explain results and justify choice of methods	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Information Technology

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
IT3.1 Plan and use different sources to search for and select information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IT3.2 Explore, develop and exchange information, and derive new information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IT3.3 Present information including text, numbers and images	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Working with Others

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
WO3.1 Plan the activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.2 Work towards agreed objectives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.3 Review the activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Improving own learning and performance

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
LP3.1 Agree and plan targets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.2 Seek feedback and support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.3 Review progress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The signposting in the five tables above, represents the opportunities to acquire and produce evidence of the Key Skills which are possible through this specification. There may be other opportunities to achieve these and other aspects of Key Skills via this specification, but these are dependent on the detailed course of study delivered within centres.

There are no immediately obvious opportunities for generating evidence, as required in the Key Skills unit for *Problem Solving* in this specification. However, it is acknowledged that, as teaching proceeds, opportunities to acquire and produce evidence may evolve.

18.3 Key Skills in the Assessment of Government and Politics

The ‘main’ Key Skill *Communication* must contribute to the assessment of Government and Politics. Aspects of *Communication* are an intrinsic part of Assessment Objective AO3 and hence will form part of the assessment requirements for Units 1-8.

18.4 Further Guidance

More specific guidance and examples of tasks that can provide evidence of one or more Key Skills are given in the AQA specification support material.

## 19

# Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues

## 19.1 Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and Cultural Issues

The Study of Government and Politics provides many opportunities to develop candidates' understanding of ethical, moral and cultural issues.

Candidates should be made aware that society is made up of a range of different groups from varied social, cultural and religious backgrounds. Political decisions are influenced by the ethics and moral and cultural values of the groups and their governments. Module 1 explores this issue and Module 6 provides ample opportunity for candidates to develop these ideas.

Candidates should be encouraged to develop an understanding that differing values and attitudes exist, and to reflect on these and their own beliefs within society. For example, the study of ideologies, theories and traditions of government will help candidates to understand how individual rights and responsibilities are incorporated into political systems. Modules 3, 4 and 7 are particularly appropriate in this respect.

## 19.2 European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen papers. Candidates are required to study different levels of government from the local to the European Union (EU) and to compare, at appropriate points, British practice with that in other systems, (for example, see Module 1). By this means the specification will enhance the development of the European dimension. Module 6 contains a separate section, 15.4, which deals with the United Kingdom and the European Context.

## 19.3 Environmental Education

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report *“Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education”* 1993 in preparing this specification and associated specimen papers. The specification is designed so that it can be used as a medium for improving environmental education. For example, the subject content includes Green economics and candidates should be familiar with the response of the major political parties to Green issues (Module 7, paragraph 16.4).

## 19.4 Avoidance of Bias

AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and associated specimen papers to avoid bias of any kind.

# Awarding and Reporting

## 20

## Grading, Shelf-Life and Re-Sits

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### 20.1 Qualification Titles

The qualification based on this specification has the following titles:  
AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Government and Politics  
AQA Advanced GCE in Government and Politics

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### 20.2 Grading System

Both the Advanced Subsidiary and the full Advanced Level qualifications will be graded on a five-grade scale: A, B, C, D and E. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

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### 20.3 Shelf-Life of Unit Results

The shelf-life of individual unit results, prior to the award of the qualification, is limited only by the shelf-life of the specification.

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### 20.4 Assessment Unit Re-Sits

Each assessment unit may be re-taken an unlimited number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result will count towards the final award. Candidates who wish to repeat an award must enter for at least one of the contributing units and also enter for certification (cash-in). There is no facility to decline an award once it has been issued.

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### 20.5 Minimum Requirements

Candidates will be graded on the basis of work submitted for the award of the qualification. Zero marks rather than absent will be recorded where no mark for a component has been submitted.

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### 20.6 Awarding and Reporting

This specification complies with the grading, awarding and certification requirements of the GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2006/07 and will be revised in the light of any subsequent changes for future years.

# Appendices

## A

### Grade Descriptions

The following grade descriptors indicate the level of attainment characteristic of the given grade at Advanced Level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at each specific grade. The descriptors should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives (as in Section 6) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

- Grade A** Candidates demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of political institutions and processes and the relationship between them producing answers which fully address the requirements of the question and demonstrating excellent contextual awareness. They produce answers which include detailed and comprehensive interpretations or explanations and provide accurate evidence and up to date examples to substantiate and illustrate points made.
- Candidates confidently apply a wide range of well developed concepts and theories, using appropriate political vocabulary, to analyse and synthesise political information and to construct cogent and coherent arguments and explanations.
- Candidates provide analyses which display a sophisticated awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified together with well developed comparisons. There is a clear and full evaluation of political institutions, processes, behaviour, arguments or explanations.
- Candidates communicate arguments, explanations and conclusions with clarity and produce answers with a clear sense of direction culminating in a conclusion which flows from the discussion.
- Grade C** Candidates demonstrate sound knowledge of political institutions and processes and the relationships between them producing answers with a clear attempt at addressing the requirements of the question and demonstrating sound contextual awareness. They produce answers which include developed and effective interpretations or explanations and provide clear evidence backed up by good examples to illustrate points made.
- Candidates apply a range of developed concepts and theories, using political vocabulary to analyse and synthesise political information and to construct clear arguments and explanations.

Candidates provide analyses which display an awareness of differing viewpoints and a recognition of issues. There is a clear recognition of parallels and connections together with some comparisons. There is good evaluation of political institutions, processes, behaviour, arguments or explanations.

Candidates communicate arguments, explanations and conclusions well and produce answers with a conclusion clearly linked to the preceding discussion.

**Grade E** Candidates demonstrate an outline knowledge of political institutions and processes and some relationships between them producing answers with a limited attempt at addressing the requirements of the question. They may demonstrate contextual awareness covering part of the question. They produce answers which include a partial but reasonably effective attempt at interpretation or explanation with some not very detailed examples to illustrate points.

Candidates use a limited range of concepts and theories to consider political information and begin to construct arguments and explanations.

Candidates offer limited analysis which shows some awareness of differing viewpoints. There is a recognition of basic parallels and connections together with limited comparisons. There is a simple attempt to evaluate political institutions, processes, behaviour, arguments or explanations.

Candidates communicate arguments and conclusions adequately with straight forward narrative and/or explanation. A conclusion may be offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.

**B**

## Overlaps with other Qualifications

There are limited points of overlap in terms of the knowledge required in Government and Politics and GCE Citizenship. The perspective required and context in which the knowledge is applied are distinctly different in Government and Politics.

**C**

## Resources

AQA provides information on resources that can be used when delivering this course in the Teachers' Guide. AQA will provide an updated list of resources on a regular basis.

Teachers are advised to keep candidates informed of regular and contemporary developments in Government and Politics. This can be achieved by using sources such as:

- a) Newspapers,
- b) Journals, such as *Politics Review* and *Talking Politics*;
- c) Websites, for example, provided by the Government, Universities and newspapers.

These sources of information should be used for all modules as, where appropriate, candidates will be given credit in their answers for referring to recent and contemporary developments. Candidates studying Module 7 will find these sources particularly helpful in keeping them up-to-date.