

POLITICS

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 36

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As ever the range was great, from the acutely observed, scholarly, clearly written essays to the essays written by students who feel that the only requirement is to have a personal view on an issue. Too many essays are tangential to politics or even irrelevant and unfortunately some of these are well researched and well written.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: research question

Too frequently questions are lengthy and convoluted.

Criterion B: introduction

Often the introduction repeats the abstract, sometimes word for word. But mostly this aspect is well done.

Criterion C: investigation

Usually if the question is well focused, so is the investigation. Probably the best worked criterion, setting the frame for what follows.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

Again, usually well done, though too often based upon shallow internet sources.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

The need to show awareness of different views is frequently ignored. Balance seems to be considered an optional extra by many.

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

This criterion sorts out the essentially descriptive answer from the answer that moves on to a higher level. Students need a sound conceptual frame to score the top marks here. This is difficult if all the student has read is taken from the internet.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject:

Useful criterion for distinguishing between focused and tangential work.

Criterion H: conclusion

Some are excellent, others brief and vague.

Criterion I: formal presentation

Only a small minority of students follow the rubric concerning references. A minority do not know what an essay is and show no grasp of what constitutes a paragraph.

Criterion J: abstract

It seems that a number of students have no idea what to include here. The component parts required are clearly outlined in the EE guide, and supervisors should ensure that candidates know the purpose of an abstract and how this differs from an introduction or conclusion.

Criterion K: holistic judgement

Supervisor comments should seek to address the wording of this criterion in the comments that they make, as the examiner takes the feedback into consideration where appropriate. Supervisors are able to evidence through their comment, elements and work of the candidate not entirely obvious through the body of the EE.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Material available on the internet can be excellent, but if no contact is made with more reflective, scholarly material, like books, then the essay is likely to be shallow and descriptive in character. So many students have few or no books in their bibliography. Tutors should help their students here.