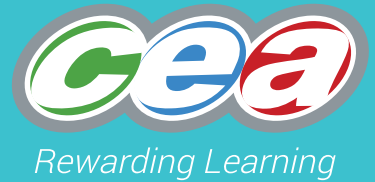


GCSE



CCEA GCSE Specification in Government and Politics

Version 2: 8 June 2017

For first teaching from September 2017

For first assessment in Summer 2018

For first award in Summer 2019

Subject Code: 4830



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1 Introduction

This specification sets out the content and assessment details for our GCSE course in Government and Politics. We have designed this specification to meet the requirements of:

- Northern Ireland GCSE Design Principles; and
- Northern Ireland GCE and GCSE Qualifications Criteria.

First teaching is from September 2017. We will make the first award based on this specification in Summer 2019.

This specification is a unitised course. The guided learning hours, as for all our GCSEs, are 120 hours.

The specification supports the aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives, as well as its objectives:

- to develop the young person as an individual;
- to develop the young person as a contributor to society; and
- to develop the young person as a contributor to the economy and environment.

If there are any major changes to this specification, we will notify centres in writing. The online version of the specification will always be the most up to date; to view and download this please go to www.ccea.org.uk

1.1 Aims

This specification aims to encourage students to:

- develop a lifelong interest in government and politics;
- form their own beliefs about political issues and events and engage with a subject that affects us all on a day-to-day basis;
- consider important political concepts such as power, authority, accountability, who has power and how it is exercised;
- think critically about the political systems in which they live and how they might participate in those systems; and
- develop as effective and independent learners able to analyse and critically evaluate a range of differing viewpoints.

1.2 Key features

The following are important features of this specification.

- It offers opportunities to build on the skills and capabilities developed through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- It is an engaging and highly relevant specification that enhances students' understanding of political issues and the impact of politics on their everyday lives.
- It develops students' knowledge and understanding of local, national and international politics and provides a secure foundation for those who wish to go on to study Government and Politics at GCE level.
- It promotes skills that provide a basis for progression not only to GCE level study but also directly into employment, higher education or vocational training.
- It is a unitised specification which gives teachers and students flexibility and choice.
- Assessment is through two externally set examinations. Both are structured and include short recall, source based and evaluative questions.

1.3 Prior attainment

Students do not need to have reached a particular level of attainment before beginning to study this specification.

1.4 Classification codes and subject combinations

Every specification has a national classification code that indicates its subject area. The classification code for this qualification is 4830.

Please note that if a student takes two qualifications with the same classification code, schools, colleges and universities that they apply to may take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same may occur with any two GCSE qualifications that have a significant overlap in content, even if the classification codes are different. Because of this, students who have any doubts about their subject combinations should check with the schools, colleges and universities that they would like to attend before beginning their studies.

2 Specification at a Glance

The table below summarises the structure of this GCSE course.

Content	Assessment	Weightings	Availability
Unit 1: Democracy in Action	External written examination One tier of entry 1 hour 30 mins There are three sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A includes questions that require short answers, recall and definitions. • Section B includes questions on source material. • Section C includes extended, evaluative questions. 	50%	Summer from 2018
Unit 2: International Politics in Action	External written examination One tier of entry 1 hour 30 mins There are three sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A includes questions that require short answers, recall and definitions. • Section B includes questions on source material. • Section C includes extended, evaluative questions. 	50%	Summer from 2019

Students must take at least 40 percent of the assessment (based on unit weightings) at the end of the course as terminal assessment.

3 Subject Content

We have divided this course into two units. This section sets out the content and elaboration for each unit.

The following assessment objectives are generic and set out the skills students develop using the content below as the context. Students should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions, processes, terms and issues (AO1);
- apply knowledge and understanding of political information to contexts and actions (AO2); and
- analyse and evaluate a range of evidence, including differing viewpoints, relating to political issues, debates and actions to construct reasoned arguments and make substantiated judgements (AO3).

3.1 Unit 1: Democracy in Action

In this unit, students gain an awareness of the basic concepts related to political participation: the importance of elections in a democracy and the different ways in which young people can make their voices heard. The unit seeks to enhance students' understanding of decision-making and the role of political parties and pressure groups in a democracy. Students explore different views on issues such as education, the economy and immigration, as well as considering the role of the media in reporting political events and influencing public opinion. This unit allows students to appreciate the importance of political participation and how political participation may take different forms.

Content	Elaboration of Content
Political ideas and concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ideas of power, authority and accountability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – why we need rules – who makes them – why this matters • The key features of a democracy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – free and fair elections – protection of rights – separation of powers – freedom of the press • The key features of a dictatorship, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rule by one person or party – lack of free and fair elections – absence of rights – coercion

Content	Elaboration of Content
<p>Political parties in a democracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of political parties in a democracy and whether political parties contribute to democracy • Traditional left and right wing views on the major issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the economy – education – the environment – immigration • The policies of British parties – including similarities and differences – on the major issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the economy – education – the environment – immigration • The policies of the five largest political parties in Northern Ireland – including similarities and differences – on the major issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the economy – education – the environment – immigration
<p>Political information in a democracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types of media in contemporary society, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – television – print – e-media – radio – social media • Rights and responsibilities of the media in a democratic society: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – freedom of the press – accurate reporting – informing and influencing public opinion – holding those in power to account – respecting people’s privacy and dignity

Content	Elaboration of Content
<p>Political information in a democracy (cont.)</p> <p>Taking action in a democracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power of different types of media in contemporary society, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the impact of ownership on content – the influence of the media on a daily basis and during election campaigns • How politicians use the media for political messaging • Arguments for and against greater state control of media actions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the findings of the Leveson Inquiry – media success in holding those in power to account • The range of actions an individual citizen can take to achieve their aims and hold the powerful in society to account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – petitioning – demonstrating – voting – joining a pressure group – joining a political party • Different types of pressure groups, their aims and campaigns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cause – sectional – insider – outsider • Tactics used by different pressure groups to try to achieve their aims and why these vary, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – nature of cause – relationship with government – membership base • The effectiveness of tactics used by pressure groups

3.2 Unit 2: International Politics in Action

In this unit, students gain an awareness of the challenges posed by an increasingly interdependent world. The unit allows students to explore a variety of organisations that operate on a global scale and how they respond to important global issues **such as conflict resolution and migration**. Students consider the local and national response of governments, individuals and groups to political issues and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions.

Content	Elaboration of Content
<p>Interdependence</p> <p>The European Union</p> <p>Conflict and its resolution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why countries are increasingly interdependent and issues that might require international co-operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – globalisation – technological developments – trade – conflict – international terrorism – environmental issues • The origins and aims of the European Union (EU), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – political union – single market – freedom of movement • The UK referendum on membership of the EU, 23 June 2016 • Arguments for and against membership of the EU • Factors that cause conflict within and between countries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cultural, moral and religious differences – economic and trade factors – desire for security – desire for independence – leaders' quest for popularity • The United Nations (UN) Security Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – its origins and aims – its decision-making process, including the right to veto • The role of the UK in the UN: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – why it is a member – the role it plays on the UN Security Council

Content	Elaboration of Content
<p>Conflict resolution in practice – Northern Ireland (cont.)</p> <p>Migration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in safeguarding the rights of Northern Ireland’s citizens • Ongoing challenges to peace in Northern Ireland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – dealing with the legacy of the past – other divisive issues such as flags and parades • Different causes of migration, including push and pull factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – war, poverty and human rights abuses – social and economic reasons • Differences between the following groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – refugees – asylum seekers – internally displaced people – economic migrants • The legal protections offered to migrants, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the European Convention on Human Rights – the Human Rights Act 1998 • The work of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, in attempting to help refugees, including aims, methods and current operations • Economic and social benefits of migration, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tax revenue – filling the skills gap – cultural diversity • The UK government response to increased migration, including the Immigration Act 2016 • Efforts to support and protect the rights of migrants (with at least one local, one national and one international example) by groups, charities and/or non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Assessment opportunities

For the availability of examinations and assessment, see Section 2.

This is a unitised specification; candidates must complete at least 40 percent of the overall assessment requirements at the end of the course, in the examination series in which they request a final subject grade. This is the terminal rule.

Candidates may resit individual assessment units once before cash-in. The better of the two results will count towards their final GCSE grade unless a unit is required to meet the 40 percent terminal rule. If it is, the more recent mark will count (whether or not it is the better result). Results for individual assessment units remain available to count towards a GCSE qualification until we withdraw the specification.

4.2 Assessment objectives

There are three assessment objectives for this specification. Candidates must:

- AO1** demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions, processes, terms and issues;
- AO2** apply knowledge and understanding of political information to contexts and actions; and
- AO3** analyse and evaluate a range of evidence, including differing viewpoints, relating to political issues, debates and actions to construct reasoned arguments and make substantiated judgements.

4.3 Assessment objective weightings

The table below sets out the assessment objective weightings for each assessment component and the overall GCSE qualification.

Assessment Objective	Unit Weighting (%)		Overall Weighting (%)
	External Assessment		
	Unit 1	Unit 2	
AO1	16	16	32
AO2	16.5	16.5	33
AO3	17.5	17.5	35
Total Weighting	50	50	100

4.4 Quality of written communication

In GCSE Government and Politics, candidates must demonstrate their quality of written communication. They need to:

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

Quality of written communication is assessed in responses to questions and tasks that require extended writing.

4.5 Reporting and grading

We report the results of individual assessment units on a uniform mark scale that reflects the assessment weighting of each unit. We determine the grades awarded by aggregating the uniform marks that candidates obtain in individual assessment units.

We award GCSE qualifications on a grade scale from A* to G, with A* being the highest. The nine grades available are as follows:

Grade	A*	A	B	C*	C	D	E	F	G
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If candidates fail to attain a grade G or above, we report their result as unclassified (U).

5 Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded depends in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Description
A	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically recall, select and use knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions, processes, terms and issues precisely and effectively.</p> <p>For AO2, candidates characteristically demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political information through reasoned and well substantiated explanations.</p> <p>For AO3, candidates characteristically provide evaluation that displays a sound awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear recognition of issues. They construct reasoned arguments and make substantiated judgements.</p>
C	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically recall, select and use knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions, processes, terms and issues with accuracy and relevance.</p> <p>For AO2, candidates characteristically demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political information through structured descriptions and explanations.</p> <p>For AO3, candidates characteristically provide evaluation that displays some awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues. They construct valid arguments with appropriate support.</p>
F	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically recall, select and use limited knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions, processes, terms and issues.</p> <p>For AO2, candidates characteristically demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of political information, providing narrow descriptions instead of explanations.</p> <p>For AO3, candidates characteristically show some basic awareness of differing viewpoints. They attempt a simple evaluation with limited support.</p>

6 Curriculum Objectives

This specification builds on the learning experiences from Key Stage 3 as required for the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum. It also offers opportunities for students to contribute to the aim and objectives of the Curriculum at Key Stage 4, and to continue to develop the Cross-Curricular Skills and the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. The extent of the development of these skills and capabilities will be dependent on the teaching and learning methodology used.

6.1 Cross-Curricular Skills at Key Stage 4

Communication
<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate meaning, feelings and viewpoints in a logical and coherent manner, <i>for example exploring the ideas of power, authority and accountability and explaining why we need rules, who makes them and why this matters;</i> • participate in discussions, debates and interviews, <i>for example a class discussion on the effectiveness of the UN Security Council in resolving conflict;</i> • interpret, analyse and present information in oral, written and ICT formats, <i>for example analysing different viewpoints about the success (or otherwise) of NATO in conflict resolution and presenting these findings in the form of a class debate, an essay or a PowerPoint presentation;</i> and • explore and respond, both imaginatively and critically, to a variety of texts, <i>for example analysing the different opinions about political issues presented in different forms of media (which may include print, broadcast and e-media) to critically evaluate these viewpoints.</i>
Using Mathematics
<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use mental computation to calculate, estimate and make predictions in a range of simulated and real-life contexts, <i>for example exploring the features of different electoral systems (first past the post and the single transferable vote) to predict the different types of governments formed as a result of using these systems;</i> and • interpret and analyse a wide range of mathematical data, <i>for example looking at election statistics to compare and contrast the voter turnout figures for different age groups and suggesting reasons for the differences.</i>

Using ICT

Students should be able to make effective use of information and communications technology in a wide range of contexts to access, manage, select and present information, including mathematical information, *for example*:

- *using social media to select and present information or news stories about political issues and events;*
- *exploring attempts at conflict resolution by the UN and NATO in different countries through archive images, news, audio and video materials; and*
- *using ICT to present information both in class and online.*

6.2 Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities at Key Stage 4

Self-Management

Students should be able to:

- *monitor, review and evaluate their progress and improve their learning, for example considering their performance in assessment tasks and consulting mark schemes and teacher feedback to set purposeful targets that allow for an improvement in future assessment; and*
- *effectively manage their time, for example completing set tasks within given timeframes and designing a timetable for end of topic review tests.*

Working with Others

Students should be able to:

- *learn with and from others through co-operation, for example discussing their different opinions about the ongoing challenges to peace in Northern Ireland; and*
- *listen actively to others and influence group thinking and decision-making, taking account of others' opinions, for example working in groups to consider the policy differences of British parties on the major issues of education, the economy and the environment.*

Problem Solving

Students should be able to:

- identify and analyse relationships and patterns, *for example the relationship between politicians and the media and whether the media is successful in holding those in power to account;*
- propose justified explanations, *for example explaining why citizens are more likely to participate in pressure groups than in political parties;*
- reason, form opinions and justify their views, *for example formulating their own views on key political issues such as the need for referenda in a democracy and providing reasoned arguments against or in support of various political statements;*
- analyse critically and assess evidence to understand how information or evidence can be used to serve different purposes or agendas, *for example considering how media reporting of political issues and election campaigns is influenced by ownership and how this impacts on public opinion;*
- analyse and evaluate multiple perspectives, *for example exploring the policy differences of a variety of political parties on issues such as education, immigration and the environment;*
- explore unfamiliar views without prejudice, *for example exploring the key features of a dictatorship and considering how they differ from those of a democratic system;* and
- weigh up options and justify decisions, *for example considering the advantages and disadvantages of the different options available to increase political participation through voting.*

Although not referred to separately as a statutory requirement at Key Stage 4 in the Northern Ireland Curriculum, **Managing Information** and **Being Creative** may also remain relevant to learning.

7 Links and Support

7.1 Support

The following resources are available to support this specification:

- our Government and Politics microsite at www.ccea.org.uk and
- specimen assessment materials.

We also intend to provide:

- past papers;
- mark schemes;
- Chief Examiner's reports;
- planning frameworks;
- centre support visits;
- support days for teachers; and
- exemplification of examination performance.

7.2 Examination entries

Entry codes for this subject and details on how to make entries are available on our Qualifications Administration Handbook microsite, which you can access at www.ccea.org.uk

Alternatively, you can telephone our Examination Entries, Results and Certification team using the contact details provided.

7.3 Equality and inclusion

We have considered the requirements of equality legislation in developing this specification and designed it to be as free as possible from ethnic, gender, religious, political and other forms of bias.

GCSE qualifications often require the assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications that prepare students for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

During the development process, an external equality panel reviewed the specification to identify any potential barriers to equality and inclusion. Where appropriate, we have considered measures to support access and mitigate barriers.

We can make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to reduce barriers to accessing assessments. For this reason, very few students will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

It is important to note that where access arrangements are permitted, they must not be used in any way that undermines the integrity of the assessment. You can find information on reasonable adjustments in the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*, available at www.jcq.org.uk

7.4 Contact details

If you have any queries about this specification, please contact the relevant CCEA staff member or department:

- Specification Support Officer: Arlene Ashfield
(email: aashfield@ccea.org.uk)
- Education Manager: Ann Marie Bale
(email: ambale@ccea.org.uk)
- For a full list of contacts within CCEA visit our website at www.ccea.org.uk/examiner-centre-support/examinations-support/key-contacts

Summary of Changes since First Issue

(Most recent changes are indicated in red on the latest version)

Revision History Number	Date of Change	Page Number	Change Made
Version 1	N/A	N/A	First issue
Version 2	8 June 2017	10 20	Wording changed Subject Officer added

