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Edexcel GCE

Centre Number

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Government and Politics

Advanced Subsidiary

Unit 2: Governing the UK

Thursday 9 June 2016 – Afternoon
Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

Paper Reference

6GP02/01

You do not need any other materials.

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **two** questions, **one** from Section A and **one** from Section B.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
– *there may be more space than you need.*

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
– *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- You will be assessed on your ability to organise and present information, ideas, descriptions and arguments clearly and logically, taking into account your use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.

Turn over ►

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PEARSON

**Answer TWO questions, ONE from Section A and ONE from Section B.
Section B starts on page 14.
It is advised that you divide your time equally between both questions.**

SECTION A

Answer EITHER Question 1 OR Question 2.

1 Study the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Parliament

Committee work is an important aspect of Parliament's role; both Houses refer legislation to committees for detailed discussion and approval. These legislative committees are part of the process of making laws. House of Commons Select Committees are largely concerned with examining the work of government departments. There is a Commons Select Committee for each government department, examining three aspects: spending, policies and administration. Some committees have a non-departmental role that crosses boundaries, such as the Public Accounts or Environmental Audit Committees. Other Commons Committees are involved in a range of ongoing investigations, like administration of the House itself or allegations about the conduct of individual MPs.

Findings of the committees are reported to the Commons, printed, and published on the Parliament website. The government then usually has 60 days to reply to a committee's recommendations. Particularly influential have been the televised sessions and subsequent hard-hitting reports issued by the Home Affairs Committee concerning immigration, the performance of the Border Agency and the relationships between police, media and a high profile criminal investigation. Similarly, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee attracted much attention for its intense questioning of witnesses when it looked into phone hacking allegations by the media and in its pre-appointment hearing for the Government's preferred candidate as Chair of the BBC Trust, Rona Fairhead, CBE.

Following the adoption by the House of recommendations from the Reform of the House of Commons Committee (which was chaired by the former MP, Dr Tony Wright) the majority of Select Committee Chairs are now elected by their fellow MPs. This applies both to departmental committees and non-departmental ones, which include Political & Constitutional Reform, Procedure and Public Administration committees. There is also a Backbench Business Committee, which has been established with the ability to decide business in the Commons Chamber and in Westminster Hall on days, or parts of days, set aside for non-government business.

(Source: adapted from <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/committees/select/> (2014))

- (a) With reference to the source, outline **three** types of committees operating in the House of Commons. (5)
- (b) With reference to the source and your own knowledge, how effective are the Commons committees? (10)
- (c) Excluding committees, assess the means by which Parliament is able to control the executive. (25)

(Total for Question 1 = 40 marks)



2 Study the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Prime Minister and Cabinet

There is no constitutional definition of the British Prime Minister's (PM) role or any authoritative specification of the office's functions, powers and responsibilities. They are a matter of convention and usage, not statute, and are thus, to a large degree, flexible and subject to variation and change over time. Official guidance on the PM's role is limited. The draft *Cabinet Manual* describes the PM as head of the government, chief adviser to the Sovereign, and chair of the Cabinet. The PM is thus responsible for appointing ministers, orchestrating the Cabinet committee system, and the overall organisation of the executive and allocation of functions between ministers and departments (this latter role is also noted in the *Ministerial Code*). The PM also has responsibility for dismissing ministers. The Cabinet is described in the *Cabinet Manual* as 'the ultimate decision-making body of the UK Executive', while the PM is said to 'usually take the lead on significant matters of state'.

In our view, the Prime Minister's role and powers cannot and should not be considered as separate from the role of the Cabinet in our system of government. Effective and successful Cabinet government needs a strong Prime Minister (and in the coalition context a strong Deputy Prime Minister too) to set the tone and provide a sense of direction and overall strategy.

The advent of coalition government in May 2010 impacted on powers and responsibilities normally regarded as belonging to the Prime Minister alone. Under the *Coalition Agreement for Stability and Reform*, the Prime Minister was obliged to consult and agree with the Deputy Prime Minister over the appointment, reshuffling and sacking of ministers. The PM hires and fires but must fully consult, and the allocation of posts between the parties in the coalition is expected to operate on a 'one-in, one-out' rule to maintain the agreed balance between the two coalition partners. The Prime Minister's patronage power in all governments is subject in practice to political constraints, but during the 2010 coalition this was a new formal limitation.

(Source: adapted from Professor K Theakston and Dr. T Heppell (2012) www.parliament.uk, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpolcon/writev/842/m9.htm>)

- (a) With reference to the source, outline **three** aspects of the Prime Minister's role in relation to ministers and their departments. (5)
- (b) With reference to the source and your own knowledge, what impact has coalition government had on the office of Prime Minister? (10)
- (c) To what extent is the Prime Minister free from effective political constraints? (25)

(Total for Question 2 = 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 40 MARKS



SECTION B

Answer EITHER Question 3 OR Question 4.

EITHER

- 3** 'Arguments in favour of further constitutional reform are more convincing than those against.' Discuss.

(Total for Question 3 = 40 marks)

OR

- 4** To what extent are judges better guardians of rights and civil liberties than Parliament or the executive?

(Total for Question 4 = 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 40 MARKS

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Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: **Question 3** **Question 4**

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(Total for Question = 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 40 MARKS

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS



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