

GCE AS/A LEVEL



WJEC GCE AS/A Level in
**GOVERNMENT
AND POLITICS**
APPROVED BY QUALIFICATIONS WALES

SPECIFICATION

Teaching from 2017

For award from 2018 (AS)
For award from 2019 (A level)

Version 3 June 2020

This Qualifications Wales regulated qualification is not available to centres in England.

A hand in a dark suit sleeve is shown from the right, placing a white ballot paper into a dark ballot box. The background is a solid blue color.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS

Version	Description	Page number
2	'Making entries' section has been amended to clarify resit rules.	19
3	We have amended references to The National Assembly of Wales and AMs to reflect the changes implemented in May 2020.	8 & 10



WJEC GCE AS and A LEVEL in GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

For teaching from 2017

For AS award from 2018

For A level award from 2019

This specification meets the Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics and the GCE AS and A Level Qualification Approval Criteria which set out the requirements for all new or revised GCE specifications developed to be taught in Wales from September 2017.

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GCE AS and A LEVEL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (Wales) SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

This specification is divided into a total of 4 units, 2 AS units and 2 A2 units. Weightings noted below are expressed in terms of the full A level qualification.

AS (2 units)

AS Unit 1: Government in Wales and the United Kingdom

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

20% of qualification

80 marks

A mixture of structured questions and extended response questions.

Section A

Two compulsory questions.

Section B

One question from a choice of two.

Section C

Two questions from a choice of three.

AS Unit 2: Living and participating in a democracy

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

20% of qualification

80 marks

A mixture of structured questions and extended response questions.

Section A

Two compulsory questions.

Section B

One question from a choice of two.

Section C

Two questions from a choice of three.

A Level (the above plus a further 2 units)

A2 Unit 3: Political concepts and theories

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes

30% of qualification

120 marks

A mixture of structured questions and extended response questions.

Section A

Two compulsory questions.

Section B

Two questions from a choice of three.

Section C

One compulsory question.

A2 Unit 4: Government and politics of the USA

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes

30% of qualification

120 marks

A mixture of structured questions and extended response questions.

Section A

Two compulsory questions.

Section B

Two questions from a choice of three.

Section C

One compulsory question.

This is a unitised specification which allows for an element of staged assessment. Assessment opportunities will be available in the summer assessment period each year, until the end of the life of the specification.

Unit 1 and Unit 2 will be available in 2018 (and each year thereafter) and the AS qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2018.

Unit 3 and Unit 4 will be available in 2019 (and each year thereafter) and the A level qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2019.

Qualification Number
listed on [The Register](#):
GCE AS: 603/1987/2
GCE A level: 603/1979/3

Qualifications Wales Approval
Number listed on [QiW](#):
GCE AS: C00/1169/9
GCE A level: C00/1157/8

GCE AS and A LEVEL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and objectives

This WJEC GCE in Government and Politics provides a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. It encourages learners to develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards, politics and to recognise its importance in their own lives and to society.

The WJEC GCE AS and A level in Government and Politics specification encourages learners to develop:

- knowledge and understanding of contemporary political structures and issues within Wales and United Kingdom (UK)
- knowledge and understanding of broader global political structures and issues
- knowledge and understanding of the influences and interests which have an impact on decisions in government and politics
- knowledge and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups
- an awareness of the changing nature of politics and the relationships between political ideas, institutions and processes
- the ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate political information to form arguments and make judgments
- an interest in, and engagement with, contemporary politics.

This specification gives learners an opportunity to produce extended written responses and demonstrate the quality of their written communication, including appropriate use of punctuation and grammar.

1.2 Prior learning and progression

Any requirements set for entry to a course following this specification are at the discretion of centres. It is reasonable to assume that many learners will have achieved qualifications equivalent to Level 2 at KS4. Skills in Numeracy/Mathematics, Literacy/English and Information and Communication Technology will provide a good basis for progression to this Level 3 qualification.

This specification builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills established at GCSE.

This specification provides a suitable foundation for the study of government and politics or a related area through a range of higher education courses, progression to the next level of vocational qualifications or employment. In addition, the specification provides a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for learners who do not progress to further study in this subject.

This specification is not age specific and, as such, provides opportunities for learners to extend their life-long learning.

1.3 Equality and fair access

This specification may be followed by any learner, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or cultural background. It has been designed to avoid, where possible, features that could, without justification, make it more difficult for a learner to achieve because they have a particular protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The specification has been discussed with groups who represent the interests of a diverse range of learners, and the specification will be kept under review.

Reasonable adjustments are made for certain learners in order to enable them to access the assessments (e.g. candidates are allowed access to a Sign Language Interpreter, using British Sign Language). Information on reasonable adjustments is found in the following document from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational Qualifications*.

This document is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk). As a consequence of provision for reasonable adjustments, very few learners will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

1.4 Welsh Baccalaureate

In following this specification, learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to develop the skills that are being assessed through the Skills Challenge Certificate within the Welsh Baccalaureate:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Digital Literacy
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Planning and Organisation
- Creativity and Innovation
- Personal Effectiveness.

1.5 Welsh perspective

In following this specification, learners should be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective if the opportunity arises naturally from the subject matter and if its inclusion would enrich learners' understanding of the world around them as citizens of Wales as well as the UK, Europe and the world.

2 SUBJECT CONTENT

This specification will enable learners to develop a wide range of skills including: the ability to comprehend, synthesise and interpret political information; critically analyse and evaluate political knowledge, leading to reasoned conclusions; identify connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the areas studied; select relevant material to construct and communicate arguments clearly and coherently using appropriate political vocabulary.

At AS learners will develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the political system of Wales and the UK, through the study of two compulsory units. The first unit focuses on the process of government, looking at parliamentary structures, core executives and multi-level governance in both Wales and the UK as a whole. The second unit focuses on participation and voting behaviour, electoral systems, political parties and pressure groups/protest.

For learners who continue to A level, there will be further specialisation at A2 through two compulsory units. The political concepts and theories unit concentrates on developing a critical knowledge of four key ideological traditions and their contemporary relevance to Welsh and global politics. The government and politics of the USA unit focuses on the ideas and institutions that underpin the American political system.

2.1 AS UNIT 1

Government in Wales and the United Kingdom

Unit 1 serves as an introduction to how Wales and the UK is governed today. Through the study of the Constitution; Welsh Parliament (Senedd Cymru) and Parliament; Welsh and UK Government; The Supreme Court and the EU, learners will be able to discuss, analyse and evaluate the key themes, issues and debates surrounding governance in Wales and the UK.

1.1 Sovereignty, power and accountability

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
1.1.1 The British Constitution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its nature: uncodified, unitary and flexible. • Its sources: Statute Law (including The Government of Wales Acts, 1998 and 2006); Common Law; Conventions; Works of Constitutional Authority and European Law and Treaties (including Treaty of Rome, 1957; Treaty of Accession, 1972; Maastricht Treaty, 1992 and Treaty of Lisbon, 2009). • The principles of the constitution: Parliamentary Sovereignty; Rule of Law; Parliamentary Government; Constitutional Monarchy and EU membership. • Its reform: Debates regarding the effectiveness of the British Constitution and whether it needs reform.

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
1.1.2 The Judiciary in the UK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constitutional role of the Supreme Court. • The power of the Supreme Court: The Highest Court of Appeal; Separation of Powers and the Independence of the Judiciary; Constitutional judicial review and the usage of the doctrine of ultra vires. • Examples where the Supreme Court has ruled on constitutional matters. • Debates about a legal jurisdiction for Wales.
1.1.3 The British Constitution in a global context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key constitutional statutes and treaties governing the UK's relationship with international bodies (including the EU, NATO and the UN). • The UK, Brexit and a changing world.

1.2 The Government of the UK

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
1.2.1 How government works in the UK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The core executive. • The roles, powers and resources of the Prime Minister of the UK. • The Cabinet systems in the UK: composition; roles and functions; Collective and Ministerial Responsibility. • Prime ministerial government in the UK. • The role of the Civil Service.
1.2.2 How Parliament works in the UK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure, role and powers of Parliament: the legislative process; the work of committees; the roles and influence of backbench MPs and peers; the role of the Opposition; parliamentary privilege. • The effectiveness of Parliament in its roles of legislation and scrutiny.
1.2.3 How government is made accountable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary scrutiny of the executive: forms and effectiveness. • PMQ/MQ's and the work of committees. • Parliamentary Sovereignty: theory and practice; executive dominance and elective dictatorship. • Debates on where power actually lies in the UK.

1.3 How devolution works in the UK

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
1.3.1 How government works in Wales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roles, powers and resources of the First Minister of Wales. • The Cabinet system in Wales: composition; roles and functions; Collective and Ministerial Responsibility.
1.3.2 How The Welsh Parliament (Senedd Cymru) works.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure, role and powers of the Welsh Parliament: the legislative process; the work of committees; plenary; the roles and influence of MSs; the role of the Opposition; the scrutiny of Government. • Debates over the effectiveness of the Welsh Parliament in its roles of legislation and scrutiny.
1.3.3 The impact and development of devolution on the UK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of devolution on the UK; including the different roles and powers of the Scottish Parliament and Government; the Welsh Parliament and Government; the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive, as well as devolution in England.

2.2 AS UNIT 2

Living and participating in a democracy

Unit 2 is an introduction to the concept of active citizenship; the rights and responsibilities of citizens, some of the ways in which citizens can participate in a democracy and the importance of citizen engagement. Learners will be able discuss, analyse and evaluate the key themes, issues and debates, and it is expected that learners will investigate contemporary developments and examples.

2.1 Citizenship and rights

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
2.1.1 Citizenship in a democracy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of citizenship (including global citizenship). • Freedom, equality, participation and active citizenship, the Rule of Law; protection under the law; rights of minorities; positive discrimination. • Main sources of rights for a citizen of the UK, including: the European Convention on Human Rights; Human Rights Act 1998; a British Bill of Rights; relevant contemporary legislation including that on racial and gender equality.
2.1.2 The importance of rights and possible conflict of rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant rights of citizens: freedom of expression, association, religion; right to petition; right to privacy; rights to enjoyment of liberty and fair trial. • Debates about what rights citizens should have. • Debates about conflicts over the enjoyment of rights: limits to freedom of expression; the media and privacy.
2.1.3 The protection of human rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the judiciary (including Judicial Review). • The European Convention on Human Rights. • The Human Rights Act and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. • Debates about whether citizen's rights are protected sufficiently in the UK.

2.2 Participation through elections and voting

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
2.2.1 The importance of participation in a democracy and effects of non-participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and indirect democracy. • Turnout; apathy; abstention; pluralism; elitism; legitimacy. • Explanations of why some people/ groups in society participate more than others; debates around the effects of this.
2.2.2 Electoral systems in the UK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Past the Post; Additional Member; Party Lists and Single Transferable Vote electoral systems: their advantages and disadvantages including debates about coalition and minority governments and about fairness and proportionality. • The effect of voting systems on party systems in Wales and the UK. • Key elections (at all levels) in Wales, including examples. • The use of referendums in Wales and the UK including examples and advantages and disadvantages.
2.2.3 Voting behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models of voting behaviour (sociological, rational choice and valence models) including the main long-term and short-term factors influencing voting behaviour: campaigns; candidates; the influence of the media. • Reasons for and the extent of party loyalty and partisan dealignment in Wales and the UK.

2.3 Participation through political parties, pressure groups and political movements

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
2.3.1 Political parties and participation in politics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of political parties in Wales and the UK and their differing ideologies and platforms/ manifestos; leadership and candidate selection within the main parties. • The roles and importance of party members. • Debates about party and candidate funding; 'cash for influence'.
2.3.2 Pressure groups and participation in politics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarities and differences between parties and pressure groups. • Different types of pressure groups with examples. • How pressure groups exert influence: access points; methods including direct action and lobbying; use of the media; membership. • Factors influencing pressure group success with examples. • Debates about whether pressure groups strengthen or weaken democracy.
2.3.3 Social movements and participation in politics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarities and differences between pressure groups and social movements. • Membership and aims of social movements; methods and resources including use of new technologies. • The global nature of some social movements. • The women's movement and the environmental movement as examples of social movements. • Debates about the effectiveness of social movements.

2.3 A2 UNIT 3

Political concepts and theories

Unit 3, political concepts and theories, involves the study of political theories and their application. Learners will develop a critical knowledge and understanding of a range of ideological traditions: liberalism, conservatism, socialism, communism and nationalism, and their contemporary relevance. In studying the impact of political ideas on global politics learners are expected to study at least two global regions from Africa, The Americas, Asia and Europe.

3.1 Liberalism

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
3.1.1 Fundamental values and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Origins of Liberal ideas; Classical and Modern Liberalism: human nature; liberty; natural rights; individualism; equality; pluralism; rationalism; justice; toleration.
3.1.2 Liberal views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts of political liberalism; democracy; liberal state; social contract; liberal democracy; constitutionalism and the rule of law. Negative and positive freedoms and rights. Concepts of economic liberalism; laissez-faire and libertarian views of the market; the New Right. Debates about the role of the state in ensuring equality; equality of opportunity; equality of outcome. The impact of liberal ideas on Welsh political parties and movements. The impact of liberal ideas on global politics.

3.2 Conservatism

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
3.2.1 Fundamental values and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Origins of Conservative ideas; Traditional; Authoritarian and New Right; elitism, individualism; pragmatism; tradition and order; organic society; hierarchy; natural inequality; authority; property; libertarianism.
3.2.2 Conservative views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts of political and moral conservatism; natural inequality/aristocracy; institutions underpinning this: the family; the church; the nature of authority from above. Conservative debates on immigration; integration; rights of minorities; welfare. Economic conservatism; laissez-faire and intervention; the role of the markets; neo-liberalism. The impact of conservative ideas on Welsh political parties and movements. The impact of conservative ideas on global politics.

3.3 Socialism and Communism

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
3.3.1 Fundamental values and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Origins of Socialist ideas; Social Democracy; Democratic Socialism and Communism: gradualism; revolution; class conflict; social justice; equality; community; proletariat; bourgeoisie.
3.3.2 Socialist views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts of political Socialism; class; society; equality; Marxism; revolutionary and parliamentary Socialism. Concepts of economic Socialism; views on Capitalism; property and public ownership; ownership of the means of production; collectivism; wealth redistribution; ethical socialism. The impact of socialism on Welsh labour movement. The impact of socialist ideas on global politics.

3.4 Nationalism

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
3.4.1 Fundamental values and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Origins of Nationalist ideas; Civic; Ethno-cultural; Liberal and Conservative Nationalism: identity politics; nation; nation state; sovereignty; patriotism; organic community; xenophobia.
3.4.2 Nationalist views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National consciousness; defining a nation and a nation state; national sovereignty; the role of history; language; culture and national symbols in promoting collective identity. Concepts of political Nationalism; government promotion of nationalist values and citizenship; ethnicity; institutions; separatism and self-determination. The impact of nationalism on Welsh political parties and movements. The impact of nationalist ideas on global politics.

2.4 A2 UNIT 4

Government and politics of the USA

This unit introduces learners to the government and politics of the USA through an examination of three related themes: democracy in America, governance and participation. Learners will analyse critically the ideas and institutions that underpin the American political system. In the assessment of this unit credit will be given for appropriate references to contemporary developments, issues and debates in the areas covered.

4.1 Democracy in America

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
4.1.1 Equality, liberty and republicanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The origins of and the principles underpinning the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. The importance of the Constitution.
4.1.2 Federalism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theories of federalism. Federal vs state power.
4.1.3 The Bill of Rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of the Bill of Rights. Contemporary debates about civil rights and civil liberties in the USA: gun ownership; death penalty and privacy.

4.2 Government of the USA

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
4.2.1 US Congress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Constitution and Congress. How Congress works; (e.g. majority and minority leaders; Speaker of the House; the legislative process; the committee system; seniority; filibuster; parties in Congress; gridlock; log-rolling and pork-barrelling). Debates about the relationship of Congress with the executive and judicial branches of government.
4.2.2 The US President home and abroad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The enumerated powers of the President. Limitations and constraints from the Constitution, Congress and the Supreme Court. Debates concerning the relative power and influence of the Cabinet and the Executive Office of President. The developing role of the US President at home and abroad including debates about the effectiveness and power of the US President and Imperial Presidency.

4.2.3 The US Supreme Court.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constitutional role of the Supreme Court and the nature of judicial power. • The status of the Constitution and the Supreme Court's role in upholding it. • The impact of the landmark cases of Marbury vs Madison (1803) and McCulloch vs Maryland (1819). • Debates and controversies surrounding the nomination, appointment and tenure of Supreme Court justices. • The political significance of the Supreme Court: debates about the impact of the ideological, gender and religious composition of the Supreme Court. • Approaches to legal reasoning: precedents and analogies; judicial restraint and strict constructionism v. judicial activism; debates over key decisions in historical and contemporary cases. • Debates about the effectiveness of the Supreme Court in protecting citizens' rights.
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4.3 Participation and democracy in US politics

Key Concepts	Content and amplification
4.3.1 Elections in the US.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of presidential elections: the invisible primary; primary and caucus systems; the national nominating conventions; presidential and vice-presidential 'tickets'; the Electoral College. • The influence of money and media in US elections; including campaign finance reform and regulation; the roles of PACs (Political Action Committees); super-PACs; other advocacy groups and the impact of social media.
4.3.2 Voting Behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term determinants of voting behaviour in the US, including: socio-economic status; race and ethnicity; region. • Core voting coalitions and partisanship. • Short-term and recency determinants of voting behaviour; including: campaign factors such as candidates, issues and incumbency; swing states and independent voters.
4.3.3 Political parties in the US.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US political spectrum. Democrats and Republicans: their differing ideologies, values and policies. • The extent of division and unity within the main parties: factions including the Religious Right; Tea Party; Progressive Democrats; New Democrats. • Reasons for two-party dominance; the significance of third parties and independent candidates.

3 ASSESSMENT

3.1 Assessment objectives and weightings

Below are the assessment objectives for this specification. Learners must:

AO1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues

AO2

Interpret and apply political information to identify and explain relevant similarities, differences, and connections

AO3

Analyse and evaluate the areas of government and politics studied to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.

Approximate assessment objective weightings are shown below as a percentage of the full A level, with AS weightings in brackets.

	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
AS Unit 1	10% (25%)	4% (10%)	6% (15%)	20%
AS Unit 2	10% (25%)	4% (10%)	6% (15%)	20%
A2 Unit 3	9%	9.5%	11.5%	30%
A2 Unit 4	9%	9.5%	11.5%	30%
Total	38%	27%	35%	100%

4 TECHNICAL INFORMATION

4.1 Making entries

This is a unitised specification which allows for an element of staged assessment.

Assessment opportunities will be available in the summer assessment period each year, until the end of the life of the specification.

Unit 1 and Unit 2 will be available in 2018 (and each year thereafter) and the AS qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2018.

Unit 3 and Unit 4 will be available in 2019 (and each year thereafter) and the A level qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2019.

A qualification may be taken more than once. However, if any unit has been attempted twice and a candidate wishes to enter the unit for the third time, then the candidate will have to re-enter all units and the appropriate cash-in(s). This is referred to as a 'fresh start'. When retaking a qualification (fresh start), a candidate may have up to two attempts at each unit. However, no results from units taken prior to the fresh start can be used in aggregating the new grade(s).

If a candidate has been entered for but is absent for a unit, the absence does not count as an attempt. The candidate would, however, qualify as a resit candidate.

The entry codes appear below.

	Title	Entry codes	
		English-medium	Welsh-medium
AS Unit 1	Government in Wales and the United Kingdom	2160U1	2160N1
AS Unit 2	Living and participating in a democracy	2160U2	2160N2
A2 Unit 3	Political concepts and theories	1160U3	1160N3
A2 Unit 4	Government and politics of the USA	1160U4	1160N4
AS Qualification cash-in		2160QS	2160CS
A level Qualification cash-in		1160QS	1160CS

The current edition of our *Entry Procedures and Coding Information* gives up-to-date entry procedures.

There is no restriction on entry for this specification with any other WJEC AS or A level specification.

4.2 Grading, awarding and reporting

The overall grades for the GCE AS qualification will be recorded as a grade on a scale A to E. The overall grades for the GCE A level qualification will be recorded as a grade on a scale A* to E. Results not attaining the minimum standard for the award will be reported as U (unclassified). Unit grades will be reported as a lower case letter a to e on results slips but not on certificates.

The Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) is used in unitised specifications as a device for reporting, recording and aggregating candidates' unit assessment outcomes. The UMS is used so that candidates who achieve the same standard will have the same uniform mark, irrespective of when the unit was taken. Individual unit results and the overall subject award will be expressed as a uniform mark on a scale common to all GCE qualifications. An AS GCE has a total of 200 uniform marks and an A level GCE has a total of 500 uniform marks. The maximum uniform mark for any unit depends on that unit's weighting in the specification.

Uniform marks correspond to unit grades as follows:

Unit weightings	Maximum unit uniform mark	Unit grade				
		a	b	c	d	e
Unit 1 (20%)	100	80	70	60	50	40
Unit 2 (20%)	100	80	70	60	50	40
Unit 3 (30%)	150	120	105	90	75	60
Unit 4 (30%)	150	120	105	90	75	60

The uniform marks obtained for each unit are added up and the subject grade is based on this total.

	Maximum uniform marks	Qualification grade				
		A	B	C	D	E
GCE AS	200	160	140	120	100	80
GCE A level	500	400	350	300	250	200

At A level, Grade A* will be awarded to candidates who have achieved a Grade A (400 uniform marks) in the overall A level qualification and at least 90% of the total uniform marks for the A2 units (270 uniform marks).