

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 1

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each element of this course assessment component.

Justifying an appropriate, complex, contemporary political/social issue (8 marks)

The candidate was awarded **5 marks** for this element.

The hypothesis and aims are clearly worded, though Aim 1 (*'To find out...'*) is suggestive of a descriptive approach. Justification of the importance is present but discussion of the issue is descriptive and historical. A sense of the wider contemporary significance of the issue is lacking. Overall, the introduction lacks detail and sophistication and falls short of the standards required for 6 marks within this mark band.

Evaluating research methodology (6 marks)

The candidate was awarded **4 marks** for this element.

A range of suitable methods were used ranging from online surveys, focus groups, interviews and other secondary research. Critical evaluation of the primary methods used and their advantages and disadvantages is offered. There is a basic attempt to discuss potential changes that could be used to improve the use of methodology. However, the references to surveying 'bigger groups' and carrying out 'more interviews' do not justify how these would improve the reliability or validity or ethical soundness of results. There is no attempt to analyse ethical issues linked with the methodologies used.

Using a wide range of sources of information (6 marks)

The candidate was awarded **3 marks** for this element.

There is an over-reliance on newspapers and BBC sources. A wider range of quality sources would have benefited this dissertation. The content of the sources cited are up-to-date and relevant to the issue. Primary research has been carried out. The evidence gathered has been used to justify the candidate's line of argument but not convincingly enough for top marks to be awarded in this element.

Analysing the issue (8 marks)

The candidate was awarded **6 marks** for this element.

Across the three chapters this candidate covers a lot of key issues. Contemporary evidence is provided in supporting the analysis and evaluation. Chapter 2 demonstrates detailed understanding and is the strongest of the three presented in relation to analysis of the issue. Chapter 1 is too descriptive and Chapter 3 is too reliant on the narrow evidence gathered from MSP/MPs.

Evaluating arguments and evidence (8 marks)

The candidate was awarded **5 marks** for this element.

Although this dissertation is written in a straightforward manner, it does attempt to provide evaluation throughout the dissertation, reflecting points back to the aims, issues and hypothesis. Chapter 2 in particular contains quality evaluation in relation to CCTV and terror attacks. There is a coherent line of argument and balanced evaluation. In places, the evaluation could be more in-depth, eg in relation to comment on the issues of body scanners and stop and search. There are some failures to offer evidence in support of evaluative comments, eg where the candidate states '*statistics show...*' when no statistics are provided.

Synthesising information to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument, leading to a conclusion supported by evidence (10 marks)

The candidate was awarded **6 marks** for this element.

Chapter 1 fails to integrate and relate source information convincingly in support of the line of argument taken. The quality of synthesis, argument and conclusions to Chapters 2 and 3 are much better. In these chapters the line of argument and evidence supports the conclusions and shows understanding of the issue. The conclusions to each chapter could be more detailed and while the overall conclusion is relevant, it is brief.

Organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions (4 marks)

The candidate was awarded **1 mark** for this element.

Footnotes are basic but satisfactory and show a consistent approach. It is arguable whether this is as sophisticated as might be expected at this level but the candidate was credited for consistency of their approach.

The bibliography does not follow appropriate academic conventions and lacks adequate detail. Provision of URL/website addresses is inadequate and not creditable.

The appendices present the e-mails sent by the candidates, but no responses or evidence of interviews, focus group findings and so forth and do not gain any credit.

Overall, the referencing is poorly organised and lacks consistency or academic detail.

Overall

It is a reasonable effort that demonstrates an understanding of the issue. It effectively advances a line of argument and comes to a reasonably persuasive conclusion. However, it is hindered by the narrow range of research conducted which prevents in-depth analysis and limits the quality of evaluation and synthesis. A more convincing introduction, stronger chapter conclusions, a stronger overall conclusion, and better organisation of the appendices, bibliography and referencing system would improve this dissertation.

Overall, this dissertation was awarded 30 out of 50 marks.