

# Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for each question of the question paper

## Candidate 1

### Question 3

**‘Liberalism shares many similarities with other ideologies.’**

**Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland and any other country/countries you have studied. (30)**

The candidate was awarded **25 out of 30 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

#### Analysis

The response was awarded **7 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate’s response includes detailed points of analysis throughout, and the analysis is integrated with points factoring in a range of international comparators. Coverage includes analysis of liberalism combined with conservatism, individualism, populism and socialism. Issues relating to the economy, free market, healthcare, education and individual choice are discussed within these theoretical contexts. The ideas of others are also well-integrated with the candidate’s own views. The candidate references information about political structures, industrial relations and public services such as healthcare and education. The response clearly demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the set question and interlinks points about liberalism sharing similarities with other ideologies.

#### Comparison

The response was awarded **5 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate draws comparisons between the UK and a range of international countries to formulate their overall argument. There is information about France, the US, the Netherlands, Denmark and Portugal. These international comparators form a key part of the response throughout, as they were well-integrated into the line of argument. The candidate uses phrases such as *‘This can also be seen in...’*, *‘This is in contrast to...’* and *‘Additionally, a liberal government like that of ...’* which clearly indicates that they are comparing, rather than simply ‘dropping in’ international information.

### Evaluation

The response was awarded **7 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes a range of evaluative comments throughout the response, and these are well-evidenced. Judgements are made, for example, *'this can be seen in the UK although not to the same extent of...'* and *'however, individualism, conservatism and liberalism differ greatly...'*, *'only disagree on...'*. The candidate suggests that individualism, conservatism and liberalism only disagree on the item of protectionism over globalisation. The candidate regularly uses the wording of the question to consider whether liberalism shares many similarities with other ideologies, before finally judging that liberalism is fundamentally different to conservatism and socialism.

### Synthesising information to structure and sustain lines of argument

The response was awarded **6 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate has a strong line of argument, which flows throughout the response. The response integrates analysis and evaluation and comes to a clear overall conclusion that liberalism is fundamentally different to conservatism and socialism. This judgement follows logically from the arguments made throughout the main body of the response.

## Question 5

**'Political developments often have constitutional consequences.'**

**Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland and any other country/countries you have studied. (30)**

The candidate was awarded **17 out of 30 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

### Analysis

The response was awarded **5 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

This candidate's response analyses a wide range of factors relevant to the question including the legislative process involving gun control, powers of the president, role of the judiciary and devolution. Analysis builds to making evaluative judgements and evidence is provided from across the UK, USA, Germany, New Zealand and Scotland. However, the depth and quality of treatment in terms of applying relevant supporting evidence from each is varied. Analytical comments are not integrated in-depth with internal comparators, nor with ideas and arguments of others.

### Comparison

The response was awarded **3 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The bulk of the response is devoted to comparing the UK to the US and New Zealand, in relation to the distinct differences of each country's constitutional set-up. This response looks at the legislative process. It looks at Scottish and wider

UK issues of gun control and devolution and how both impacted on the UK constitution in terms of legislative reform. Comparable analysis and evidence are drawn with New Zealand in terms of gun control measures impacted by their constitution. Points of comparison could have been made throughout the response and supported by more relevant and contemporary evidence. The candidate does not make points of comparison which are integrated into and form a key part of their line of argument.

### **Evaluation**

The response was awarded **5 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes valid, reasoned points relevant to their line of argument. Reasoned consideration is also adhered to in terms of alternative arguments and evidence, for example in global contexts of the US, UK and New Zealand: *'However, a major problem is that...'* and *'However, New Zealand's constitution often...'* Evaluation lacks underlying rationale and the candidate does not make clear judgements of alternative arguments and evidence. The candidate also does not integrate points of evaluation throughout their line of argument and include reasons for discounting or accepting alternatives to clearly support their conclusion.

### **Synthesising information to structure and sustain lines of argument**

The response was awarded **4 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The overall conclusion provides an overall judgement of the question with a clear line of argument supported by valid reasoning. The overall conclusion is not derived from a sustained line or argument developed by organising, linking or sequencing ideas throughout the response. The overall conclusion also does not include a convincing response to at least one relevant counter argument. Moreover, the line of argument does not integrate points of analysis and evaluation in the preceding discussion to support their overall judgement.

## **Question 7**

**You are researching the role of social media in shaping public opinion.**

**To what extent would online surveys be more effective than focus groups for investigating this issue?**

**In your answer you should make reference to relevant examples. (15)**

The candidate was awarded **13 out of 15 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

### **Analysis**

The response was awarded **5 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate analyses several key aspects linked to the given scenario, for example *'... The majority of voters have access to the internet...accessible for a*

*wide range of voters.* Relevant and contemporary supporting evidence is also provided, such as You Gov, Jeremy Corbyn and Brexit. Analytical comments are clearly evaluated, for example *'This is in contrast to focus groups...'* and *'...websites can crash .... which puts off participants....'*. The candidate does not integrate knowledge of social science research to illustrate a clear understanding of the question so is not awarded full marks for this component.

### **Evaluation**

The response was awarded **5 out of the 6 marks** available for this element. The candidate's evaluative comments clearly address the scenario in question and show both the benefits and limitations of social media compared to online surveys. Ethical factors are also considered in relation to the specified research method when discussing issues relating to anonymity. The candidate cannot be awarded full marks as they do not make evaluative comment comparing both of the specified methods. The response is rather disjointed and discusses each method in an isolated manner.

### **Conclusion**

The response was awarded **3 out of the 3 marks** available for this element.

The conclusion contains a clear judgement as to the preferred method of online surveys in relation to the specified scenario. The candidate's line of argument integrates well with their preceding analysis and evaluation. Valid reasons for preferring and rejecting alternative methods are also specified.

## **Question 8**

### **To what extent can Source A be considered trustworthy? (15)**

The candidate was awarded **8 out of 15 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

#### **Analysis**

The response was awarded **4 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate analyses key aspects of the source, including the authorship, sample size and type. The points about telephone surveys and the link to the original publication are not expanded upon fully enough. Doing so would have allowed the candidate to score more highly in this element. The structure of having a 'positives' section, followed by 'negatives', limits the depth and quality of analysis and evaluation made. The candidate does not secure full marks for this section as they do not link the analytical and evaluative comments.

#### **Evaluation**

The response was awarded **3 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes reasoned points of evaluation about the trustworthiness of the source, for example *'This... allows... accurate representation... also...'* and *'This means that participants from certain regions will not be able to share their*

*views to the extent ...*'. Strengths and weaknesses of the source are also addressed to make a clear overall judgement on the trustworthiness of the source. However, there is a distinct lack of knowledge about social science research referred to in the response. Moreover, judgements on the strengths and weaknesses are unsupported by reference to additional alternative research or sources which could help increase the trustworthiness of the source.

### **Conclusion**

The response was awarded **1 out of the 3 marks** available for this element. The conclusion makes a clear, quantified judgement about the extent to which the source can be trusted. However, this does not follow on from a coherent line of argument supported by reasons/evidence. In addition, the line of argument does not integrate valid points of analysis and evaluation to support the overall judgement expressed in the concluding remarks.

**Candidate 1** was awarded a total of **63 out of the 90 marks** in the question paper.

## Candidate 2

### Question 14

**‘Non-custodial sentences are the most effective method of dealing with crime.’**

**Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland and any other country/countries you have studied. (30)**

The candidate was awarded **25 out of 30 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

#### Analysis

The response was awarded **6 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate’s response makes a range of relevant analytical points which are linked to evaluative comments. There is also contemporary supporting evidence from a comparator country. Best practice is to start with non-custodial sentencing, as the isolated factor in the question. However, the candidate begins by looking at custodial sentences, including purposeful activity and rehabilitation. This leads into non-custodial sentencing. The candidate looks at electronic tagging, fines, recidivism rates, success of alternatives and perceptions of soft justice. The response clearly demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the set question and interlinks points about economic and social costs throughout.

#### Comparison

This response was awarded **6 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate draws comparisons between the UK and a range of international countries to formulate their overall argument. There is information about the US, South Africa, Finland and Switzerland. These international comparators include the extent of the similarity or difference and are supported by relevant and contemporary evidence. In addition, the points of comparison are integrated and form a key part of their argument, introduced at the beginning of the response and form a key part of the response throughout. The candidate uses language such as *‘this shows that’* which clearly indicates that they are comparing, rather than simply ‘dropping in’ international information.

#### Evaluation

This response was awarded **7 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes a range of evaluative comments throughout the response which are also well-evidenced. Judgements are made, for example, that *‘Electronic tagging is extremely effective at reducing reoffending...’*. The candidate shows reasoned consideration of custodial sentences using international comparators such as Brazil and makes an evaluative judgement that custodial offences are ineffective. The candidate gives reasons for discounting custodial sentences, such as stating that Brazil has a much higher recidivism rate than Scotland.

**Synthesising information to structure and sustain lines of argument**

This response was awarded **6 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate has a sustained line of argument, which flows throughout the response. The response integrates analysis and evaluation and comes to a clear overall conclusion that non-custodial sentences and being 'soft on crime' is most effective. The overall conclusion also considers a response to custodial sentences.

**Question 11**

**'Criminal behaviour is best explained by sociological theories of crime.'**

**Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland and any other country/countries you have studied. (30)**

The candidate was awarded **25 out of 30 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

**Analysis**

This response was awarded **7 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate's response makes relevant comments and explores a number of theories and factors which explain crime. Although the question stem looks for sociological theories, the candidate starts with biological factors, which is not best practice. There is detailed and well-supported analysis of biological factors such as the MAOA gene. The candidate recognises the link between biological causes and sociological and environmental factors. There are detailed points of analysis of sociological/environmental factors throughout and this analysis is integrated with points about a range of international comparators from Finland, Sweden and the US.

**Comparison**

This response was awarded **6 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

Several points of valid comparison are made across this response. A Finnish study of prisoners found that the presence of the MAOA gene increased the likelihood of reoffending by 13 times. There was also a clear link with poverty and crime shown by a study in Sweden. The points of comparison are made throughout their response and are supported by relevant and contemporary evidence.

**Evaluation**

This response was awarded **6 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

There is evidence of evaluation throughout the response, with the candidate regularly linking back to society or the environment. Biology and genes are also explored as alternative factors. There is also an evaluation of theorists such as Becker, Durkheim and Merton.

### **Synthesising information to structure and sustain lines of argument**

This response was awarded **6 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The overall conclusion comes to a clear judgement that follows from their line of argument. They state that criminal behaviour is multifaceted and not just sociological or biological. There is also a response to a counter-argument. However, their overall conclusion needs to go further and be based on several points of analysis or evaluation in order to access a higher mark.

## **Question 15**

**You are researching the role of social media in portraying young offenders.**

**To what extent would online surveys be more effective than focus groups for investigating this issue?**

**In your answer you should make reference to relevant examples. (15)**

The candidate was awarded **8 out of 15 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

### **Analysis**

This response was awarded **4 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate analyses both methods, online surveys and focus groups, while looking at an alternative method, official statistics. There are some generic points made on strengths and weaknesses of the methods. Although the candidate has interpreted the scenario as the focus group containing young offenders rather than how they are portrayed on social media, it was deemed to be creditworthy. However, it could not gain full marks, as it did not link the most relevant aspects with knowledge of social science research methods.

### **Evaluation**

This response was awarded **3 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

Evaluations are made about both research methods and there is a consideration of ethics regarding an online survey to do with privacy and age. However, the interpretation of the focus group as being solely of young offenders, limited the marks in this element to 3.

### **Conclusion**

This response was awarded **1 out of the 3** marks available for this element.

The overall conclusion is brief and is let down by its focus on young people's 'usage of social media', which is not the scenario laid out in the question.

## Question 16

### To what extent can Source B be considered trustworthy? (15)

The candidate was awarded **12 out of 15 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

#### Analysis

This response was awarded **5 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate analyses key aspects of the source, including the authorship, the figures/ tables of presented data, methodology and the date of the source. It does not achieve full marks as it does not link sufficient aspects with knowledge of social science research.

#### Evaluation

This response was awarded **5 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

There are evaluative comments made about the authorship, the figures/ tables of presented data, methodology and the date of the source. Reference is made to being able to check the information and further clarify it, for example *'Di Rollo, whose credentials can be checked easily'* and this helps move this response into the 5-6 marks zone. However, this aspect could be further explored and developed as there is no reference to alternative approaches that would increase the trustworthiness of the source.

#### Conclusion

This response was awarded **2 out of the 3 marks** available for this element.

The conclusion makes a clear, quantified judgement about the extent to which the source can be trusted and lists the advantages and disadvantages covered that led them to this conclusion. This was judged to be enough to gain 2 marks, but further depth is needed.

**Candidate 2** was awarded a total of **70 out of the 90 marks** in the question paper.

## Candidate 3

### Question 9

**‘Judicial independence is the key to an effective judicial system.’**

**Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland and any other country/countries you have studied. (30)**

The candidate was awarded **26 out of 30 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

#### **Analysis**

This response was awarded **8 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate’s response includes detailed points of analysis which integrates a range of international comparators throughout. Coverage includes looking at judicial independence, alongside a range of alternative factors, namely the consequences of lifetime appointments, the separation of powers and the rule of law. The candidate makes an interesting point about how the Brexit ruling would have been handled, had the Supreme Court not been set up. There is up to date reference to the leaked US Supreme Court documents on plans to overturn *Roe v Wade* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*. The ideas of others are also integrated with the candidate’s own views, with the candidate referencing AV Dicey and Senator Elizabeth Warren. The response clearly demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the set question and interlinks points about judicial independence and other key factors throughout.

#### **Comparison**

This response was awarded **6 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes points of comparison about the UK and US throughout, which is valid in relation to the distinct differences of each country’s judicial set-up. Points of comparison are supported by relevant and contemporary evidence. The evidence about the US is particularly strong.

#### **Evaluation**

This response was awarded **7 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes reasoned points of evaluation, showing consideration and evaluation of alternative arguments too. Judgements are made, for example, on the difference between the idealism of the separation of powers and the reality of politicisation of the court, the differences in the powers of each court: *‘a key difference to note...’* and in relation to where judicial independence is much stronger. The candidate integrates their points of evaluation throughout their line of argument. The candidate does not include a reason for discounting or accepting alternatives in their overall conclusion, which precludes them from scoring more highly in this element.

**Synthesising information to structure and sustain lines of argument**

This response was awarded **5 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The response has a line of argument, supported by detailed reasons and evidence. The overall conclusion is well-written and follows from the points made throughout. However, the candidate does not include a response to at least one relevant counter-argument, coming to the judgement that judicial independence is the key to an effective judicial system, without mentioning the important alternative factors raised in the main body of their answer, namely the separation of powers or independent appointments.

## Candidate 4

### Question 10

**‘Human rights and civil liberties are adequately protected by the law.’**

**Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland and any other country/countries you have studied. (30)**

The candidate was awarded **16 out of 30 marks** because they achieved the following marks in each assessable element:

#### **Analysis**

This response was awarded **5 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate’s response covers a range of points relative to the question. The introduction is good and sets out the coverage and analysis to come of prisons, IPCC, legal aid and terrorism, as well as the international comparator countries to be looked at – Norway and the US. The response analyses relevant aspects of these issues as they relate to the question and includes relevant supporting evidence from the UK and both comparator countries. However, the candidate lacks a full understanding of the question. For example, across the response, analysis is too focused on human rights and civil liberties and does not adequately analyse the aspect of the question that requires an understanding of the role of the law in protecting these. There are also deficiencies, for example, in the analysis of legal aid, which is simplistic and does not demonstrate a grasp or understanding of the more nuanced aspects of this issue.

#### **Comparison**

This response was awarded **3 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate draws comparisons between the UK, Norway and the US. There is information about Norway’s prisons and recidivism rates and some US states’ use of capital punishment. These international comparators are supported by relevant and contemporary evidence. However, comparisons lack qualitative comment on the extent of similarity or differences to the UK.

#### **Evaluation**

This response was awarded **4 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes reasoned points of evaluation related to the question and these are used to support the candidate’s overall judgement. Judgements are made, for example, that *‘Norway’s law has long-term benefits for the country’s economy as well as for its prisoners within and after release and provides ... would be significantly beneficial in the UK’* and *‘...legal aid, civil liberties are ultimately disregarded and unprotected by the law, ruling out those most vulnerable in an unfair approach’*. The candidate does not consider alternative arguments or evidence which suggests the law does adequately protect human right and civil liberties.

**Synthesising information to structure and sustain lines of argument**

This response was awarded **4 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate has a line of argument, which builds and supports the conclusion offered. The overall conclusion offers a judgement that overall human rights and civil liberties are not adequately protected by the law and offers a straightforward reason for this. However, the inherent flaws in the analysis, such as the failure to consider protections in law, and the lack of engagement with counter-arguments prevents the candidate from being awarded any more marks in this element.