

# Commentary on candidate evidence

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

## Candidate 1

### Section 3: Social Issues

#### Analyse the extent to which social mobility is possible. (25 marks)

The candidate was awarded **20 marks**.

In your answer you must:

- ◆ use two contrasting theories
- ◆ use the study by Blanden and Machin, 'Up and Down the Income Ladder in Britain', 2008
- ◆ link this study to your chosen theories

Introduction can achieve up to 4 marks. These can be attained in a number of ways and can be credited throughout the essay (not just at the beginning of the essay).

Marks can be credited for any point relating to social mobility, social class, consequences of social class/mobility and any other point relevant to the topic.

The first mark was awarded for the definition of social class where they point out that 'Social class is a type of stratification usually based on occupation, income and status.'

The candidate then explains that there are many different ways to measure social class. They claim 'There are different ways to measure social class, for instance, Marxists measure social class by their relationship to the means of production. The UK govt. use a seven scale system based on occupation, income and status.' Accurate and detailed explanation here and two examples are given gaining another mark.

The candidate is awarded a further 1 mark for explaining that 'Your social class of origin also has a huge impact of an individual's life quality.' and then giving specific examples such as life expectancy and educational attainment.

The candidate was awarded a mark as they explain social mobility in UK and backs this up with a finding from OECD.

Candidates have been asked to apply two theories to the issue of social mobility.

This part of the essay can gain up to 14 marks, up to 7 marks for each theory.

The question has not stipulated any theory therefore candidates can use any two theories. No marks should be given for generic points about the theory, even if they are accurate.

The candidate was awarded **6 marks** for Theory 1, Marxism.

The first mark was awarded because the candidate explains that Marxists claim social mobility can occur but is not frequent and when it does occur it is usually short range. The candidate also provides an example of short-range mobility.

A further 3 marks were awarded for the developed point made. The candidate explains how through control of the base and superstructure the bourgeoisie limit the proletariat's life chances including mobility. Then an example of structural inequality in education and then tie this back to the issue of social mobility.

There is some repetition but the example of elite self-recruitment limiting opportunities gained 1 mark. The candidate gained a further mark as they introduce the concept of social closure and explain it.

The candidate was awarded **5 marks** for Theory 2, functionalism.

The candidate was awarded 1 mark at the beginning of paragraph 3. They gave a clear and accurate definition of meritocracy and its relationship to social mobility.

1 mark was given for the explanation of inequality and how it can be an incentive to social mobility in the third paragraph, '... it gives those in lower classes something to aim for ie to work harder and gain social mobility.'

2 marks were awarded for the explanation of effective role allocation. The candidate explained Davis and Moore's concept and links this to social mobility; '...and this gives opportunities for social mobility.'

A further mark was awarded for the candidate's critique of the notion of effective role allocation, using the example of footballers as a job that can gain very high rewards but is not as functionally important to society. '...this theory could be disproved as it is not always the case that the most important jobs in society gain the best rewards (eg top football players are paid a fortune but are not all that useful to society).

The candidate was awarded **5 marks** for the Study: Blanden and Machin, Up and Down the Income Ladder in Britain 2008.

1 mark was awarded for the candidate linking the study to theory and the issue of social mobility. The candidate states, 'This study backs up the Marxist view that there is little social mobility and chances of mobility are tied to your class of origin.'

1 mark was given for the finding, 'The study found that rates of mobility in the UK were lower than in most comparable countries, for instance, in USA and Germany.'

1 mark was given for the finding, 'The study also found that mobility was heavily reliant on parental background. Those from the poorest fifth dropped in terms of educational attainment as school progressed even if they began in the academically brightest group. Those from the richest backgrounds but the least abled improved.'

A further 1 mark was awarded for the development of this finding in relation to mobility where the candidate stated, 'This suggests that due to class, different individuals receive a variety of opportunities which can limit an individual's ability to progress.'

In the final paragraph the candidate gives an overall analysis of the study about the decline in social mobility, 'Blanden and Machin conclude that the decline in intergenerational mobility that occurred between 1958 and 1970 is unlikely to continue for cohorts born from 1985 to 2000, and mobility is likely to remain at the low level observed for the 1970 cohort.' This was awarded 1 mark.

Overall, candidate was awarded **20 marks** in total.

## Candidate 2

### Section 3: Social Issues

**Describe two findings of Goldthorpe's (1972) Oxford Mobility Studies. (4 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **4 marks**.

This candidate was awarded 2 marks from paragraph 2 for a correctly stated finding 'over two thirds of the service class had started off in either the working class or the service class.' with additional explanations of the reasons for this finding.

A further 2 marks awarded from paragraph 3 for a correctly stated finding 'downward mobility was on the decline - but more men in the working classes were unemployed.' with additional explanations of the reasons for this finding.

Candidate exceeds requirements for maximum mark, giving a third finding. Question asks for **two** findings, so markers would credit the highest-scoring two findings given by the candidate.

**Evaluate this research study. (6 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **6 marks**.

This candidate was awarded 3 marks from paragraph 1 for a strength of the study linked to social mobility. 'it provided robust sociological evidence of the extent of limited social mobility... highlighted that the UK was an 'open' system of stratification, at least to some extent, able to move from a lower class job to a better class higher paid job than their parents.'

A further 3 marks awarded from paragraph 2 for a weakness/criticism of the study linked to social mobility. 'a Feminist critique weakness of this study... sample was based on the occupations of 10,000 men and sons, regardless of the occupation of any women/mothers/daughters, in UK households, which may well have been the higher earner. There was no evidence gathered about the extent to which daughters achieved social mobility – so the study did not arguably study 'social mobility' but rather 'male social mobility'.'

Candidate exceeds requirements for maximum mark, giving additional detailed evaluation with insightful comment and reference to additional research study (B&M) which potentially could have scored a further 3 marks.

**Analyse the issue of social mobility using Marxism and any other contrasting theory. (15 marks)**

Candidates have been asked to apply two theories to the issue of social mobility.

Candidates can gain up to 15 marks, up to 8 marks for any one theory. The question has stipulated Marxist theory must be used therefore candidates must use Marxism and any other contrasting theory to score full marks. No marks should be given for generic points about the theory, even if they are accurate.

Theories must therefore be linked to the issue of social mobility.

Candidates can apply the theory to social mobility and can evaluate the theories' explanations of social mobility.

The candidate was awarded **8 marks** for Theory 1, Marxism, 3 marks were awarded for the developed point made in paragraph 1. The candidate explains how mobility is limited, short range 'People in lower classes have very little opportunity to achieve upward social mobility and economic success and is likely to only be short-range when mobility is achieved, on occasion' and makes a further point about social reproduction 'Capitalism encourages social reproduction, whereby children of the Bourgeoisie become the next generation of wealthy privileged Bourgeoisie adults, and children of the working class Proletariat most likely become Proletariat adults' linked to conflict resulting from unequal distribution of power in Capitalist economies. 'Bourgeoisie having power and privilege over the Proletariat, in institutions such as access to Private education, or in the economy such as limiting wages to maximize profits. This creates conflict'.

The candidate gained a further 2 marks in paragraph 2 where social mobility and education are correctly linked. 'Education for example, benefits the wealthy classes most, as they access Private schools or highest performing schools in affluent areas, ensuring the ruling class children benefit from education, to get the highest paid jobs, whilst lower income kids learn obedience punctuality and following rules, ....more likely to achieve lower grades and will have more limited employment opportunities, becoming the next generation of working class adults. Thus, education reinforces class inequality.'

Some repetition in paragraph 3 but explanation of low wages and high profits to limit social mobility and maintain wealthy class privilege is given an additional 1 mark. 'one class has power to exploit the other... which prevents those on lowest incomes from achieving increasing wealth, and from becoming a home owner or renting better housing, affording private healthcare or access to the best education, which limits their opportunities for upward social mobility,'.

In paragraph 4, the candidate scores an additional 2 marks for explanations of the 'myth of meritocracy', social inequality and limited social mobility. 'create a meritocracy myth of 'working hard for one's own benefit' Therefore, despite all their extra hard work, these workers will never achieve the level of social mobility their effort deserves, nor achieve the income levels achieved by the owning class. This maintains social inequality and limits social mobility'.

Hence the candidate gained a total of **8 marks** for this theory but continues to give further evaluation in paragraphs 5 - and an example of this evaluation – in

paragraph 6, potentially scoring an additional 3 marks. 'The lack of challenge to this exploitation prevents the working class from doing as Marx predicted - taking control of the means of production and redistributing the wealth to achieve equity, social justice and social mobility... No employee of Amazon, regardless of bonus payments, will achieve upward social mobility to achieve the income level of owner Capitalist Jeff Bezos.'

Further evaluation is given of the same theory, Marxism, in additional 4 paragraphs, including linking private education of MPs to social mobility.

Candidate has therefore exceeded requirements for this theory. No additional marks above max available can be awarded for additional evaluation of a single theory.

The candidate was awarded **7 marks** for Theory 2, Functionalism.

The candidate was awarded 2 marks for the first paragraph, linking social mobility to value consensus and higher value occupations gaining higher rewards. They gave a clear and accurate definition of value consensus and its relationship to social mobility 'social inequality is functional/ beneficial for society as a whole. Surgeons... some social positions/ occupations in society are of more value than others, and therefore are deserving of higher pay and rewards.'

A further mark is awarded for then linking differential pay/rewards (paragraph 1) to explanations in paragraph 2 of inequality, functional prerequisites, and inequality serving as motivation to achieve mobility are given with example of surgeon/cleaner. This evaluation/exemplification is continued into the next paragraph. 'Society needs people to do unskilled work, but the better rewards of higher classes serve to motivate these people to work harder to achieve upwards social mobility.'

The candidate was awarded 2 marks in paragraph 3 of the second theory, Functionalism section, for Saunders' explanation of the motivation to achieve social mobility created by inequality. Further explanation of meritocracy and linked to social mobility, with examples given of higher paid surgeons due to their harder more skilled work and efforts. 'Saunders who highlighted that those who have achieved upwards social mobility, motivates others in lower classes to work harder to achieve the same level of luxury, wealth and reward. Functionalism argues that social mobility is achieved through differing levels of effort/hard work.'

2 marks were awarded in paragraph 5 of the Functionalism section for the weakness/Feminist criticism, with examples given 'gender discrimination of the glass ceiling prevents social mobility for many women... lack of women in CEO positions in UK's top companies, or lack of women in the highest paid jobs even in female-dominated professions'

A further 1 mark could have potentially been awarded for the final paragraph linking wealth and unequal access to expensive University education and achieving social mobility. 'Thus the meritocracy claim of Functionalism falls, when

we consider the majority of those accessing expensive University education in England, come from wealthy background families, whilst those who work equally hard but are from lower income families, can not afford the privilege of an education at a top University, further limiting their chances of achieving equivalent social mobility.'

However, although a maximum of 8 marks are available for any one theory, the candidate having scored 8 marks for one theory already (Marxism), can only access up to the remaining 7 marks available for a second theory, hence maximum mark of 15 has been awarded, although the candidate has exceeded requirements for maximum 7 marks for this second theory.

In total, the candidate was awarded **15 marks** for this section.

## Candidate 3

### Section 3: Social Issues - Education Essay

Pupils are asked to analyse a social issue other than social mobility. This candidate has chosen education.

The candidate gained **23** out of **25 marks**.

Candidates can gain 4 marks for the Introduction section of the essay in a number of different ways for instance by defining terms used or giving explanation as to the causes of differential achievement.

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

The candidate gained 1 mark for their comments in paragraph one stating that a number of factors can contribute to attainment, exemplifying gender, social class and ethnicity. 'Many factors can contribute to an individual's chance of attaining highly- Including gender, social class and ethnicity.'

A further 1 mark was awarded for the candidates comments in paragraph two on Covid highlighting inequalities between those from more deprived and more affluent backgrounds.

1 mark was also awarded in paragraph two as the candidate explains that evidence shows higher attainment for pupils who go to school in more affluent areas, citing 5 Highers as a measure.

The candidate was awarded 1 mark for their comments in the second last paragraph where they point out that, 'educational attainment inequality is an ongoing social issue'. continuing to explain that, 'league tables highlight the highest attaining schools in the most affluent areas of Scotland, and many of the lowest attaining schools in some of the most deprived areas. Schools and Government re prioritizing equity and closing'.

#### Theory 1

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

2 marks were awarded for the first paragraph in this section. This is a developed point linking the inequalities of capitalism to the life chances of the proletariat and specifically to education.

A further 1 mark is awarded for paragraph two of the section on Marxism as the candidate explains the impact of institutions such as education on individuals.

1 mark was awarded for the information in the third paragraph of this section as the candidate explains, '...education is used by Bourgeoisie to control the working class Proletariat and socializing them to accept this layout in society' and



that education is used to make proletariat do what they are told and, '...to prepare them for future work.'

The candidate was awarded 1 mark for their point on the strength of Marxists explanation of educational inequalities, particularly the myth of meritocracy in paragraph four in this section. 'A strength of Marxism is that it argues against meritocracy that claims education is based on the people who try the hardest will get the highest awards such as in education. It argues that society does in fact not run on meritocracy but runs on class division that means the bourgeoisie class essentially 'buy' their way in education that the proletariat cannot do.'

A further 1 mark was awarded for the candidates explained weakness of Marxism on education. In paragraph five of this section, the candidate criticises Marxism as it ignores the impact of other factors such as gender and age on attainment and focuses too heavily on social class.

### **Study Section (7 marks)**

Candidate includes two studies – only one study required – so candidate's two studies are marked and is credited with the marks for the highest-scoring study only.

#### **Study 1 – Kingdon & Cassen**

This candidate was awarded **7 marks** for this study.

Paragraph 1 of this study section gives a correct finding of the study – explaining both gender and background differences in attainment. '...boys outnumber girls as low achievers by three to two. ...Coming from a deprived background boys still struggle more.' 1 mark awarded.

Paragraph 2 of this study section gives a correct finding of the study – explaining the link between free school meal entitlement and lower attainment and that boys and girls had similar levels of free meal entitlement. 'Eligibility for free school meals is strongly associated with low achievement. This shows that although there is an equal amount of boys and girls living in deprivation, it must be affecting boys educational attainment more than girls.' 1 mark awarded.

Paragraph 3 of this study section gives a correct finding of the study – explaining how pupils' socio-economic background impacts more on attainment than school quality. '...schools make a difference to pupils outcomes. ...students social and economic circumstances are some of the most important factors explaining their educational results.' 1 mark awarded.

Paragraph 4 of this study section gives an evaluation of the study linked to the question – pointing out that the study does not only consider one variable linked to educational attainment differences 'One strength of this study is .... gender, race and social class... gives a better overall view ... it is evident many factors contribute to each individuals attainment..' 1 mark awarded.

Paragraph 5 of this study section gives an evaluation of the study linked to the question – pointing out that the study sample size increases reliability as conclusions can be linked to education in the wider community ‘Another strength ...it is a large sample size therefore a good representative of the total population. .... a larger portion of different types of people so is reliable ...’ 1 mark awarded.

Paragraph 7 of this study section links the study to Marxist theory showing the link between attainment and social class. ‘This study supports the claims of the Marxist theory ...going to a good school in an affluent area will increase individuals attainment whereas going to a school in a more deprived area will have lower attainment.’ 1 mark awarded.

Paragraph 7 of this study section again links the study to Marxist theory showing the link between class and attainment levels in school attended ‘...pupils will achieve accordingly to what school they go too, and it’s most likely that bourgeoisie will go to higher attaining schools .... This supports the claims of Marxism ...’ 1 mark awarded.

### **Theory 2 – Labelling (7 marks)**

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

This candidate was awarded 1 mark from paragraph 1 of the Labelling section of the essay. 1 mark for a correctly stated feature of Labelling theory, linked to education. No marks would be awarded for a generic feature of labelling (internalising a label) but because the candidate links this to labelling of a pupil and a pupil living up to the label, this is awarded a mark).

A further 1 mark awarded from paragraph 2 of the labelling section for correctly explaining various stages of the labelling process; again, this is not generic, but rather linked to the topic of education and the impact of this process on pupil behaviour. ‘...*pupils behavior is interpreted through the lens of the teachers fully formed assumptions...*’

A further 1 mark awarded from paragraph 3 of the labelling for explaining self-fulfilling prophecy, linked to education - how teacher predictions of attainment results in higher/ lower attainment of pupils so labelled. ‘*Conversely, those labelled as ‘trouble makers’ or ‘less able’ are given easier work, are de-motivated and do not try hard, resulting again in the prediction of low attainment coming true.*’

A further 1 mark awarded from paragraph 4 of the labelling section for explaining how interaction between pupil and teacher can impact on pupils. ‘...small scale interactions between individuals within the classroom. This means it explains how a small interaction between pupils and teachers can have a wider impact...’

A further **1 mark** awarded from paragraph 5 of the labelling section for a correct evaluation of labelling theory linked to education – and how this increases awareness for teachers, of the impact of stereotyping pupils and the impact of

this on pupil attainment. '...it gives guidance for teachers in terms of not stereotyping pupils in classes. This means the theory makes teachers more aware of how labeling individuals can affect their attainment and stops them from assuming things about certain pupils...'

A further **1 mark** awarded from paragraph 6 of the labelling section for a correct evaluation of labelling theory linked to pupil rejection of the label, thus giving a weakness of the theory's explanations for educational attainment inequality.' Against the labelling theory argument of 'internalizing the label' in actual fact, conversely, a pupil may well reject the label rather than internalize it, and try harder to 'prove the teacher wrong' and ultimately do well in school, despite being labelled a low achiever.'

## **Study 2 – Rosenthal & Jacobson**

This candidate was awarded **6 marks** for the (additional) Rosenthal & Jacobson study.

1 mark for a correct finding of the study, that children labelled more able, performed better in tests, and the finding is linked to labelling/ internalising the label. '...children who were labeled more able scored significantly higher in their tests ... if a child is told they are more able... they will live up to this and internalize it.'

1 mark for a correct finding of the study, that teachers had lower expectations of pupils who needed most support, spending more time supporting those pupils they believed to be more able and the impact of this on attainment. '...teachers tended to have low expectations for students who needed high expectations the most. ...teachers focused on making sure those already achieving highly continued to do so, and spend less time focusing on those who actually needed...'

1 mark for a correct finding of the study, that pupils were warmed up or cooled down according to presumed ability/ labels given. '...pupils were 'warmed up' with additional, challenging work tasks, if labelled a high achieving pupil by the teachers, whilst those labelled as low achievers were 'cooled down' and given less challenging work ... causing different levels of progress between the two equally able groups of pupils.'

1 mark for a negative evaluation of the study, that the sample size was small so conclusions can not be generalised to other schools. 'One weakness ....it was not a representative of the whole population of typical of 'schools in the country' and therefore results and conclusions can not be generalized to the wider population of schools.'

1 mark for a positive evaluation of the study, that the study provided evidence of the impact of teachers' prejudice on attainment. 'A strength of this study is the study provided robust research evidence highlighting the impact teachers' assumptions and prejudice and labelling can have on the attainment of learners

in their classrooms. This study helped improve teaching and learning in classrooms...'

1 mark for linking the study findings and attainment differences, to labelling theory. 'Rosenthal and Jacobson study supports the labeling theory ... individuals can in fact internalise their labels and live up to what's expected of them. ...pupils who got labelled something positive succeeded higher than those who got labelled more negatively...'

As the candidate was awarded **7 marks** for the Kingdon & Cassen study, the higher scoring study is credited. 7 'study' marks are therefore awarded for the first, rather than the lower scoring second study.