1.6 Proportional Systems and Electoral Reform Debates in the UK: Test Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be brief but must be accurate. For levels-marked questions write a structured, developed response using named systems, accurate facts, and clear argument. The final 30-mark essay requires a judgement and evaluation.

1 Name the voting system used for elections to the Scottish Parliament, noting its general type.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State two ways in which the Additional Member System differs from a pure party list proportional representation system, using the example of the London Assembly or Scottish Parliament.

(Total for Question 2 is 5 marks)

3 Give two jurisdictions in the UK that use the Single Transferable Vote for some elections, naming the elections and the jurisdiction.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Explain briefly how the Single Transferable Vote counting process helps to achieve proportional outcomes in multi member districts such as Northern Ireland Assembly constituencies.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

5 Explain two arguments commonly made in favour of introducing a more proportional system for UK general elections, as used in devolved legislatures.

(Total for Question 5 is 5 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.6 Proportional Systems and Electoral Reform Debates in the UK: Test Pack

Question 1

identifies the Additional Member System, AMS cao **B1**

Answer: Additional Member System (AMS).

Question 2

one difference, e.g. AMS retains constituency representatives elected by FPTP **B1**

development of that difference, e.g. voters cast a constituency vote and a regional list vote **B1**

second difference, e.g. AMS uses additional regional seats to compensate for disproportionality rather than allocating all seats from lists **B1**

development of that difference, e.g. dHondt allocation aims to top up party representation to be more proportional **B1**

further development or example, e.g. London Assembly has 14 constituency and 11 London-wide list members illustrating mixed nature **B1**

Answer: Differences include that AMS retains constituency MPs or members chosen by a single member vote while pure list PR fills all seats from party lists. AMS uses a mixed ballot with a constituency vote plus a regional list vote, and regional seats are allocated by a formula such as dHondt to compensate for disproportionality rather than all seats being list seats; for example the London Assembly mixes constituency and London-wide list members to achieve partial proportionality.

Question 3

one correct jurisdiction and election, e.g. Northern Ireland Assembly elections cao **B1**

a second correct jurisdiction and election, e.g. Scottish local government elections or Northern Ireland local elections cao **B1**

Answer: Examples: Northern Ireland Assembly elections use STV; local government elections in Scotland use STV.

Question 4

identifies that voters rank candidates in order of preference **B1**

identifies the use of a quota (e.g. Droop) and transfers of surplus votes to lower preferences **B1**

explains that transfers and elimination of lowest candidates allow representation across parties and reduce wasted votes, increasing proportionality **B1**

Answer: Voters rank candidates by preference; a quota is set (commonly the Droop quota) and candidates reaching the quota are elected; surplus votes from elected candidates are transferred to remaining preferences, and the lowest candidates are eliminated with their votes transferred, so that multiple candidates from different parties can be elected and fewer votes are wasted, producing a more proportional outcome in multi member districts.

Question 5

identifies one pro argument, e.g. fairer translation of votes into seats **B1**

development of that point, e.g. smaller parties gain representation reflecting voter preferences **B1**

identifies a second pro argument, e.g. increased voter choice and reduced wasted votes **B1**

development of that point, e.g. higher turnout incentive and greater legitimacy **B1**

additional development or example, e.g. evidence from AMS in Scotland producing more balanced party representation **B1**

Answer: Arguments include that proportional systems produce a fairer translation of votes into seats, allowing smaller parties to win seats and better reflect voter preferences, and that they reduce wasted votes and increase voter choice, which can boost legitimacy and turnout; for example, AMS in Scotland has produced more balanced representation than single member systems alone.

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