

## Global politics

### Overall grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	E	D	C	B	A
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-6	7-13	14-20	21-26	27-34

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

A wide range of topics were submitted. Many of them well focused on global politics. However, there is an important portion of the essays submitted that could have been fine for the previous subjects (human rights, politics and peace and conflict studies) but are no longer suitable for global politics. Supervisors at times failed to explain the difference between the previous subjects and global politics. Not every work suitable for the previous subjects is necessarily appropriate for Global Politics. Many essays lacked global insight and were more historical, or descriptive of a domestic issue in their approach.

Please note that while a global politics essay can deal with “Any question that deals with how power is distributed and how it operates within social organization, and how people think about, and engage in, **their communities and the wider world** on matters that affect their lives” it must be from a global perspective, and the focus of the essay must be the global political theory.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

#### Criterion A: focus and method

The Research Questions were generally fine (with previous explained exceptions) but were sometimes too broad and did not allow for any real discussion. Methodology was very rarely explained (and hardly ever justified), while a theoretical framework was generally absent. Justification for the selection of sources was generally missing, as well.

It must be clear that if the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject (global politics) no more than 4 marks can be awarded for this criterion. Therefore, many essays where topics may have been previously appropriate for human rights, politics or peace and conflict studies but were not by nature appropriate for global politics, would have been penalised here if they lacked a global, contemporary perspective.

## Criterion B: knowledge and understanding

Many students showed a relevant application of sources; essays were structured but concepts were at times weak, and only partially effective. Use of terminology was mostly accurate, but not always enough to demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding. As per the wording of criterion B, “The essay must demonstrate an effective understanding of the place of the research question **in a broader context of global politics and the theoretical discipline, establishing links between the political issue investigated and political institutions, actors and theories.** Additionally, students should demonstrate an awareness of **how social and cultural contexts and biases can affect understandings of political issues.**”

As stated in the previous criterion, if the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject (Global Politics) no more than 4 marks can be awarded for this criterion.

## Criterion C: critical thinking

This was (and will continue to be) the most complex criterion for students. Only a few reached the higher marks. Many essays were descriptive, and critical thinking was almost always absent. Students must be helped in understanding that an essay is not merely a good description of the topic, but an engaged critical analysis and argument must feature heavily. Research skills were generally good but essays lacked theoretical framework and a good distinction between facts and theory.

Good critical thinking involves a link between theory and facts. If most of the essay is descriptive (facts) critical thinking will be lacking. Essays must be built on a good theoretical framework that should not be isolated in a special chapter of its own, but the argument should be a sustained balance of facts and analysis. Laws by themselves (treaties, declarations, constitutions, acts and so on) are not a theoretical framework. What scholars said about laws can be. There must be credible, academic sources in an essay, in order to build a strong theoretical framework.

If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject (Global Politics) no more than 3 marks can be awarded for this criterion and is a significant penalty.

## Criterion D: presentation

Presentation was generally good with the requirements generally present (title page, table of contents, page numbers).

## Criterion E: engagement

Students need more clear guidance in this criterion to move their RPPF entries from mere descriptions of the physical process of writing to a more reflective comment on the student’s research journey.

## Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

A theoretical framework in global politics is mandatory. It is not possible to achieve good critical thinking without analysing theories and contrasting them with facts.

Students should be reminded that not everything is common knowledge - without references, some facts appear to be unsubstantiated. Some other recommendations from the marking team are:

- More attention given to the choice of topic and research methods that are clearly linked to relevant concepts and issues in global politics, avoiding topics that require excessive contextualization in historical material.
- Clear identification and presentation of key terms and concepts, with explicit definitions of how they are understood and used in the essay.
- Explicit statements of research methods, with greater attention given to the criteria for selection of evidence and the assessment of reliability of sources, in particular with secondary sources.
- More systematic in-text referencing, more clearly to distinguish descriptive summary from the candidate's own interpretations and assessments.