![Government of Western Australia - School Curriculum and Standards Authority logo]

# Summary report of the 2017 ATAR course examination:
# Politics and Law

| Year | Number who sat | Number of absentees |
|------|----------------|---------------------|
| 2017 | 867 | 7 |
| 2016 | 903 | 19 |

## *Examination score distribution – Written*
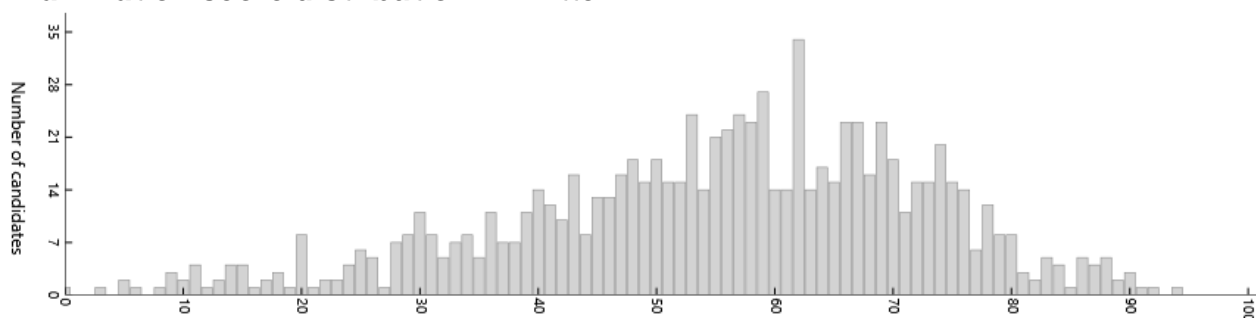


## *Summary*
Attempted by 866 candidates     Mean 54.81%  Max 93.50%  Min 3.00%

Section means were:
Section One: Short answer       Mean 56.97%
Attempted by 866 candidates     Mean 17.09(/30) Max 30.00  Min 0.50

Section Two: Source analysis      Mean 55.94%
Attempted by 866 candidates     Mean 11.19(/20) Max 19.50  Min 0.50

Section Three: Essay Part A Unit 3    Mean 54.15%
Attempted by 842 candidates     Mean 13.54(/25) Max 23.00  Min 0.00

Section Three: Essay Part B Unit 4    Mean 54.53%
Attempted by 849 candidates     Mean 13.63(/25) Max 24.00  Min 0.00

## *General comments*
Most candidates completed the paper answering the appropriate number of questions in each of the sections. There were more scripts this year where candidates did not attempt an essay in Section Three of the paper. Questions 2, 3 and 7 were attempted by an overwhelming proportion of candidates compared to Question 8, which was attempted by the least number of candidates for any question on the paper. Question 7 tended to be answered by too many candidates in a similar way and it reflected a learned response rather than an understanding of the issues involved in the question. The issue of reading the question carefully and answering the question directly, is still a problem. This was especially the case in Question 3 part (b) and Question 4 part (b) when the focus was to distinguish between two elements; there were too many candidates merely stating what those two elements were. Key terms central to an understanding of the Australian political and legal system, such as 'division of power' and 'constitutional monarchy', are still not known. Evaluation is still proving problematic for candidates and this was most apparent in part (d) of each question, in Section Two. Evaluation, in Section Three essay questions, was done better by more candidates. There were some excellent papers; however, a higher proportion of papers were awarded lower marks.

*Advice for candidates*
- Know key definitions and be able to explain their significance within the political and legal system.
- Ensure that you respond directly to the question asked.
- Ensure that examples are up to date.
- Be able to support generalisations with specific examples.
- Be able to qualify a statement and discuss the exceptions and/or anomalies.
- Understand what is required when evaluating.
- Understand information, rather than just learn information.
- Be able to use information to argue a point of view, and then be able to argue against that point of view using relevant and up to date information.
- Do not try to predict questions and learn a response.

*Advice for teachers*
- Ensure that examples are up to date and that the underlying principles and concepts of the Australian political and legal system are known.
- Encourage students to go beyond what is in a text book and seek out other examples and developments within that topic.
- Ensure students see the interconnection between the various parts of the syllabus. None of the points can really be taught in isolation.

## Comments on specific sections and questions

### Section One: Short answer (30 Marks)
Question 3 had the highest mean (63.3%), whilst Question 2 had the lowest mean (50.7%), even though it was the most attempted question in this section. Too many candidates did not answer all parts to each question.

### Section Two: Source analysis (20 Marks)
More candidates attempted Question 5 (495) than Question 6 (370), but the mean was higher for Question 6. This was due to the much lower mean for parts (c) and (d) in Question 5 compared to Question 6.The evaluation required in part (d) of both questions was not done well.

### Section Three Essay Part A Unit 3 (25 Marks)
Question 7 was the most popular question in this section and the question where the pre-prepared response was most evident. Question 8 was the least popular question and one in which candidates appeared to have prepared a Prime Ministerial power response which did not suit the question asked.

### Section Three Essay Part B Unit 4 (25 Marks)
Both Questions 9 and 10 were answered soundly and candidates used some useful examples. There was a notable lack of contemporary examples used to answer both questions, which detracted from responses.