

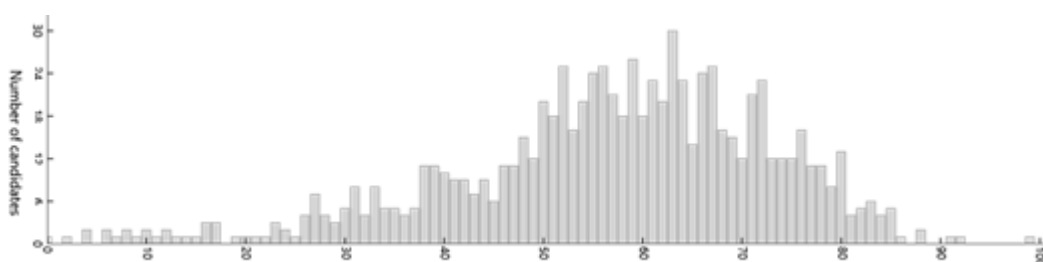


Summary report of the 2021 ATAR course examination report: Politics and Law

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2021	819	20
2020	794	12
2019	840	14
2018	892	10

The number of candidates sitting and the number attempting each section of the examination can differ as a result of non-attempts across sections of the examination.

Examination score distribution–Written



Summary

Attempted by 818 candidates Mean 56.55% Max 98.50% Min 0.00%

The written examination consisted of three sections that required candidates to answer three out of four questions in Section One and one out of two questions in Section Two. In Section Three, this was divided into parts A and B and candidates were required to answer one out of two questions in each part. The spread of marks ranged from 0% to 98.5% and the standard deviation was 16.17.

Section means were:

Section One: Short answer	Mean 63.59%		
Attempted by 816 candidates	Mean 19.08(/30)	Max 30.00	Min 0.00
Section Two: Source analysis	Mean 55.44%		
Attempted by 817 candidates	Mean 11.09(/20)	Max 20.00	Min 0.00
Section Three: Essay: Part A Unit 3	Mean 53.87%		
Attempted by 806 candidates	Mean 13.47(/25)	Max 24.00	Min 0.00
Section Three: Essay: Part B Unit 4	Mean 51.68%		
Attempted by 799 candidates	Mean 12.92(/25)	Max 24.50	Min 0.00

General comments

Most candidates completed the paper answering the appropriate number of questions in each of the sections. It is evident that most candidates are conversant with the course as reflected in the relatively high mean of 63.59% for Section One of the examination. Candidates appeared to find Question 2 more difficult than the other questions in Section One with more attempting and achieving, a higher mark for Question 4. In Section Two of the paper many more candidates attempted Question 6 than Question 5 but the mean was significantly lower for Question 6 than Question 5. Questions 7 and 10 were the more popular questions in Section Three and Question 9 had the lowest mean.

Candidates did not read questions carefully enough and thus did not address all the issues raised. This was especially evident for Question 9 where ‘the rule of law’ aspect of the claim was overlooked by most candidates. Overall Section Three essay responses were detailed. Candidates knew relevant material but too many did not use the information to write an evaluative response.

The paper allowed for discrimination between candidate performance, with a full range of marks awarded by markers.

What is meant by key terms and concepts in questions is being overlooked by many candidates. This year candidates were asked to distinguish between two terms in Questions 3 and 4 in Section One, too many merely wrote a definition of each term. In Section Three, candidates did not deal with all elements within the questions when making an evaluation, and this was also evident in responses to all four essay questions.

Advice for candidates

- Know definitions and concepts in detail and be able to explain their role and significance within the political and legal system.
- Ensure that you respond directly to the question asked and avoid irrelevant discussion.
- Break down the question to understand its focus.
- Ensure that examples are up-to-date and relevant.
- Understand what is required when evaluating and analysing.
- Understand information rather than just learn information.
- 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 use abbreviations that are not widely used.
- Do not try to predict examination questions and replicate a response you have previously written.

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 in detail and understood.
- Encourage students to go beyond what is in a text book and to seek out other examples and developments within the topic.
- Fact-check examples and information. Do not rely on one source to be correct.
- All points of the syllabus are treated equally. No one syllabus point is considered more important than any other.
- Ensure that students see the interconnection between the various parts of the syllabus including between Unit 3 and Unit 4. None of the syllabus points should be taught or understood in isolation.
- Ensure that students understand what is required when a question asks for them to: evaluate, analyse, discuss, explain, distinguish.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Short answer (30 Marks)

Most candidates did well in this section of the paper, which is reflected in the relatively high mean of 63.59% for the section. Question 2 was not done well by candidates as many overlooked the focus of each part of the question. Question 4 was attempted by more candidates than the other three questions and achieved the highest mean. Many responses reflected a lack of specific information with too many discussing issues and concepts in general terms for all question parts.

Section Two: Source analysis (20 Marks)

Question 6 was by far the more popular question in this section although the mean for Question 5 was significantly higher. The source was well understood by candidates as evidenced in the mean for part (b) responses and most attempted to explain in their own words. Parts (c) and (d) were not directly answered; instead, candidates referred to general information and did not evaluate.

Section Three: Essay: Part A Unit 3 (25 Marks)

Question 7 was more popular than Question 8 although the mean for each essay was similar. Evaluation was not done well but there were some excellent responses for both questions.

Section Three: Essay: Part B Unit 4 (25 Marks)

Question 10 was more popular than Question 9 and the mean for Question 9 was the lowest of the four essays in Section Three. Very little evaluation was evident in most responses.