

Markscheme

May 2026

Global Politics

Higher level

Paper 3

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General marking guidance

Expect a range of approaches in student responses

Examination questions encourage independent thinking among students. Expect a range of appropriate responses. Examiners should be aware that in some cases, students may take a different approach that, if appropriate, should be rewarded. If in doubt, check with your team leader.

Marking accurate and relevant knowledge and examples

For all questions, there is no single “correct” answer. Examiners must be prepared to award full marks to answers which demonstrate accurate and relevant knowledge.

Given the nature of the HL extension, students should be expected to have a good understanding of their case studies and to apply that understanding to the specific demands of the questions.

For example, explanations in this markscheme indicate likely points that students may include in their answer: they are not exhaustive, and examiners should credit other valid points not listed.

Additionally, in cases where a question asks for a certain number of items, read all answers and mark positively up to the maximum marks. Disregard incorrect answers.

Unless demanded by the question, explicit stand-alone definitions are not required: understanding of terms may sometimes be conveyed as effectively through the way they are woven into the response.

About extended responses

It should be recognized that, given time constraints, answers for Q3 are not intended to reflect a fully polished extended response that addresses the full range of possible examples, issues and topics. Use the provided markbands in conjunction with the marking notes to award marks for this question.

1. Using **two** examples, distinguish between non-state actors and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). [3]

“Distinguish” is a command term that requires making clear the differences between two or more concepts or items.

- Non-state actors are individuals or groups that participate in global politics but are neither states nor composed of states. They are not established by treaty and operate largely independently of states. Specific examples may include non-governmental organizations, labour unions, multinational corporations, social movements, and violent non-state actors.
- An IGO is an organization whose members are sovereign states. It is almost always established by a treaty, operates under international law and exists to serve the common interests of its members.

Students are expected to:

- Provide an appropriate, specific example of a non-state actor
- Provide an appropriate, specific example of an intergovernmental organization
- Clearly explain the difference(s) between the two terms

Students may provide two real-world examples that distinguish between non-state actors, or they may provide an example of an IGO and an NGO; either approach is acceptable.

If the response provides only one appropriate, specific example of either term or only a brief/unclear explanation of the distinction between the two, award **[1]**.

If the response provides only appropriate, specific examples but does not clearly explore the difference between non-state actors and IGOs or distinguishes between the two terms, but both examples are not appropriate and specific, award **[2]**.

If the response clearly explains the distinction between the two terms using appropriate, specific examples, award **[3]**.

Other relevant points not listed may also be rewarded.

2. The stimulus refers to health as an issue requiring collective action and involving a wide range of actors.
- (a) With explicit reference to a political issue in one of your researched case studies, explain the involvement of any two non-state actors. [4]

This question should be assessed using the following notes and corresponding markbands.

“Explain” is a command term that requires giving a detailed account, including reasons or causes.

While the preamble references a political issue related to health, students are **not** expected to identify a health-related global political challenge.

Students are expected to contextualize a political issue by using relevant and accurate knowledge, though an extensive explanation is not required. A political issue should relate to how power is distributed, how it operates within social organization and/or how people engage with matters that affect their lives.

The more the political issue is narrowed, the more likely students will be able to engage in a clear analysis. For example, the civil war in Sudan as a political issue would be difficult to fully and clearly analyse, whereas mass killings during the RSF’s takeover of El Fasher in October of 2025 would be more likely to be effectively analysed.

Students are expected to identify *and explain* the involvement of **two** non-state actors *in the context of their political issue*. For example, in the case of the war in Sudan, a student could explain the role of the Rapid Support Forces (a violent non-state actor) in the mass killings and Amnesty International’s (an NGO) campaign that calls for a Sudan-wide arms embargo. Simply identifying the RSF and Amnesty would not meet the demands of the question; an *explanation* of their “involvement” is required.

Students will not be given credit for identifying states or IGOs as an example of non-state actors. However, should students identify a political issue alongside only states or IGOs, award **[1]** mark for identifying the political issue.

When applying the markbands, consider:

- the extent to which the political issue was narrowed and the context was explained.
- students’ use an IGO or state actor as one of their examples or only provide an example of one non-state actor or both examples are vague, award a maximum of **[2]** marks; the demands of the question have not been understood.
- how well the non-state actor has been explained in the context of the political issue.

For a **[4]** mark response, expect a narrowed political issue as well as a detailed explanation of the political issue and how specific non-state actors are involved.

Marks	Description
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The demands of the question are partially addressed • The response is mostly descriptive. • Some knowledge of the political issue is demonstrated, but it is not all relevant or accurate.
3–4	The demands of the question are addressed. • The response provides a clear analysis of a political issue. • Relevant and accurate knowledge of the context is demonstrated.

- (b) Based on the political issue in your researched case identified in 2(a), recommend a course of action that would enhance cooperation between different actors.

[6]

This question should be assessed using the following notes and corresponding markbands.

“Recommend” is a command term that requires presenting an **advisable** course of action with appropriate supporting evidence/reasons in relation to a given situation, problem or issue. An advisable course of action is prudent, sensible and will avoid problems if it is enacted.

The recommendation must address the identified political issue in part (a) of the question. A poor identification or articulation of a political issue in part (a) may impact the extent to which the recommendation effectively addresses the political issue (though students do sometimes clarify their political issue in 2b and it is that clarified political issue – not a different one – that we will use as our reference for marking this question). Only **one** recommendation is required, and students may include any actors (they are not restricted to non-state actors as was the case in 2(a))

Examiners should consider the following when evaluating how clearly and effectively the recommendation addresses the identified political issue. The recommendation should:

- identify actors that can cooperate to address the political issue.
Recommendations that explain how cooperation will be enhanced most clearly answer the demands of the question.
- outline a clear course of action that would **increase cooperation** among different actors (individuals, groups, organizations) to address the issue.
Recommendations that do not address the demands of the question, award a maximum of **[3]** marks.
- present an advisable course of action that effectively addresses/responds to the identified political issue.

Most often, to access the top markband, recommendations will need to provide evidence to support specific actions, approaches or changes. This could include (but is not limited to):

- discussion of how the course of action will enhance cooperation between different actors. They must address the demands of the question for the recommendation to be deemed clear and well supported.
- reference to other cases where similar solutions have been introduced successfully.
- previous proposals or calls to action by specific actors involved in the political issue.
- theoretical approaches or models of analysis which favour certain approaches for particular issues.
- reference to elements (frameworks, mechanisms or agreements) which may already be in place that could facilitate the implementation of the recommendation.

Students must identify and explain **only one** of the following issues related to their recommendation:

- a challenge to enacting the recommendation
- an implication – what might need to be considered or acted upon in order to enact the recommendation?

- an unintended consequence – something that may occur because of the recommendation that policy makers may not have initially considered.

Where a student provides a vague/unclear (1-2) or adequate recommendation (3-4) but also offers a possible challenge, implication or unintended consequence, consider awarding an additional mark given that consideration of challenges, implications or unintended consequences is only acknowledged in the top markband.

Marks	Description
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	A recommendation is presented, but it is vague or unclear. • The recommendation does not clearly address the identified political issue.
3–4	An adequate recommendation is presented. • The recommendation addresses the identified political issue. • Possible challenges or implications are not considered.
5–6	A clear and well supported recommendation is presented. • The recommendation addresses the identified political issue effectively. • Possible challenges, implications or unintended consequences are considered.

3. The stimulus mentions that IGOs increasingly play an active role in international politics by shaping agendas and influencing negotiations. With reference to one of your researched case studies and **two** of the HL topic areas, examine how IGOs help in addressing global political challenges.

[15]

This question should be assessed using the following notes and corresponding markbands.

“Examine” is a command term that requires a consideration of an argument or concept in a way that uncovers assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.

The demands of the question

The question requires reference to one case and two HL extension topic areas (borders, environment, equality, health, identity, poverty, security, technology). Note that the eight HL topic areas and global political challenges should be treated as interchangeable. If students refer to topic areas as GPCs, that is acceptable. On a different note, in the context of this question, the final phrase “global political challenges” can be interpreted broadly and is similar to a political issue.

The central expectation of the question is for students to examine how IGOs help address global political challenges (a political issue). As stated in the question, the case study and the two topic areas/GPCs are to be referenced as part of the examination of the prompt and are intended to support the analysis of the question. Still, while the case study and topic areas are key components for students to reference when answering the question, they should not dominate the essay to the point that students lose focus on the question. The focus of the response must be on how IGOs help (or do not help) to address global political challenges.

The overarching statement for each markband relates to the extent to which the demands of the question are understood and addressed. If reference is made to two topic areas but no continuous reference is made to a particular case (or if this is done superficially), award a maximum of **[9]** marks. If students do not address or do not understand the demands of the question, award a maximum of **[7]** marks.

Relevant and accurate knowledge and justification of claims

Throughout the response, students should justify their claims by drawing on specific, detailed knowledge from their case study. Students should also demonstrate a good understanding of how each of the two topic areas relates to the ways IGOs address global political challenges.

Supporting examples

Students may reference other cases and examples related to their central case study. Introducing these examples does not mean students are not addressing the demands of the question; the examples may strengthen the analysis if they are effectively developed within the context of their case study. However, the discussion of two distinct case studies should be viewed as a student not understanding the demands of the question and a maximum of **[7]** marks awarded.

The case study should be explained in the context of how IGOs help address global political challenges. The more effectively this is done, the more a student’s examples can be considered developed.

The specific content of the response will vary depending on the case study and HL topic areas selected by the students, but the focus should be on a clear examination of the ways IGOs address global political challenges.

Diverse perspectives

The two topic areas may be cornerstones for exploring perspectives, and this is perfectly acceptable. However, these perspectives must be examined in the context of the case study and the question.

Exploring and evaluating diverse perspectives may also include students examining how IGOs hinder or are ineffective in addressing global political challenges.

Effective exploration and evaluation of perspectives may include examining the interconnectedness of the topic areas.

Marks	Description
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	The response shows limited understanding of the demands of the question. • The arguments are poorly structured and unclear. • There is little relevant knowledge present. • The response is descriptive or is based on unsupported generalizations.
4–6	The response shows some understanding of the demands of the question. • The response is structured to an extent, but the organization lacks clarity or coherence. • There is limited justification of the claims presented. • Some relevant knowledge is present. • Some examples are mentioned but they are not developed or their relevance is unclear. • Diverse perspectives are not identified.
7–9	The response indicates an understanding of the demands of the question, but these are only partially addressed. • The response presents an adequate structure and organization. Arguments are clear and coherent. • Most of the main claims are justified. • Relevant and accurate knowledge is present. • Supporting examples are partly developed. • Diverse perspectives are identified, but not explored.
10–12	The demands of the question are understood and addressed. • The response is well structured and organized. Arguments are clear, coherent and well supported. • All of the main claims are justified. • The response demonstrates relevant and accurate knowledge. • Supporting examples are adequately developed. • Diverse perspectives are explored.
13–15	The demands of the question are understood and addressed, and that possible implications are considered. • The response is well structured, balanced and effectively organized. Arguments are clear, coherent and compelling. • All of the main claims are justified and evaluated. • Relevant and accurate knowledge is used effectively throughout the response. • Supporting examples are effectively developed. • Diverse perspectives are explored and evaluated.