

**Overview**

The Standard is about reporting on the UK political system.

It involves understanding the scope and complexity of the UK's political system – the many different institutions and administrative bodies associated with government and politics, policy-making, and the delivery of public services.

It involves knowing your legal rights in terms of access to individuals and information and recognising and learning how to deal with the public relations experts and communications advisers who mediate much of the relationship between politicians and the public, and between politicians and journalists.

This Standard is for anyone who reports on Government and politics in the UK.

## Performance criteria

### *You must be able to:*

1. research information about the work of the UK political system which you can use to inform your audience
2. use accurate information to describe aspects of the UK's political system to your audience
3. produce accurate reports of meetings at all levels of government, and meetings of other relevant public bodies
4. use archive and contemporary resources to investigate and verify reports about the activities of all levels of government, and the activities of all relevant public bodies
5. cultivate reliable contacts within government administration, and other relevant organisations, as sources of useful information and opinion
6. use suitable terms for the non-attribution of material when this is required by the source
7. double-check your sources and source information for relevance and reliability, especially where the information is politically sensitive or controversial
8. make sure that interviews are conducted with as wide a range of relevant sources as is necessary to avoid accusations of bias
9. conduct interviews within the time available
10. invoke the rights of journalists to access and disseminate information arising from, or about, the UK political systems and its personnel at all levels when appropriate
11. present the facts and arguments that are relevant to a political or administrative issue or debate
12. check that any analysis conveyed in your copy is based on sound and secure evidence, uses well-balanced argument and does not infringe regulatory or in-house compliance requirements
13. keep accurate, and comprehensive notes of interview material for the period stipulated in line with organisational guidelines
14. comply with current legal restrictions on reporting the activities of the political system

## Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

1. the principles of the separation of powers, and the principles of democratic participation and of public accountability in UK government
2. the workings of the UK's Constitution, including the role of the Monarchy and of the Houses of Lords and Commons
3. the hierarchy of the UK Parliament, its organisation, function, and the roles and responsibilities within it, including those of Members of Parliament
4. the role and function of the Civil Service, its expertise and specialisms, and its relationship to Members of Parliament and to government departments
5. the major government departments, their authority and remit, at both central and local levels, where relevant
6. UK monetary and fiscal management: the Treasury and the Bank of England, and how government is financed at all levels
7. the structure and organisation of public services throughout the UK
8. the legal and political structures of the devolved administrations in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, their differing remits, and the role and remit of elected devolved politicians
9. the legal and political structure of the European Union, its decision making processes, its relation to national policies, and impact on the UK
10. the different organisational forms of local and regional government, and the scope of their different powers and responsibilities
11. the role of locally elected mayors where applicable, Officers of the Council, their powers, accountability, and their relationship with each other
12. the variety of bodies funded by government but acting independently such as arms-length external organisations and non-departmental public bodies
13. the UK electoral systems, including the organisation and significance of wards, boroughs and constituencies
14. the UK political parties, their leaders and manifestos, their internal organisation, their sources of income, and their campaigning and lobbying activities

15. electoral law and its implications for the coverage of election campaigns, and the activities of political candidates
16. the role of public relations and communication techniques, including the concept of, and techniques for, ensuring transparency in local and central government
17. the rights and responsibilities of journalists when reporting on central and local government events and personnel, election campaigns, and candidates
18. principal information sources relevant to UK government and relevant public bodies
19. how politically sensitive material, your sources and notes may become subject to legal or police scrutiny

## Report on government and politics in the UK

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