

GCSE Examiners' Report

Physical Education (Full Course)

GCSE

Summer 2025

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Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and component level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

Component 1: Written Examination

The overall mean performance was similar to 2024, indicating that the paper was comparable in both demand and accessibility. Candidates continued to perform more strongly on AO1 (knowledge and understanding) questions. In contrast, AO2 (application) and AO3 (analysis/evaluation) questions, especially those requiring extended responses, remained more challenging for many.

Accessible questions included Q1, 3(e), 3(f), 4(b) and 5(a), all primarily AO1, requiring recall of knowledge, with minimal application (3f). Questions 4(a), 4(c), 5(b), and 5(c) were less accessible items.

Key messages for centres:

- Continue to support knowledge recall, while placing greater emphasis on application and evaluation skills.
- Encourage deeper analysis and use of comparative and contextual responses, especially for AO3 tasks.

Component 2: Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)

Assessment Accuracy and Compliance:

Assessment of practical activities was generally accurate with the mean stable and similar to previous series. However, improvements are still needed:

- Team sports must include full-sided, competitive matches.
- There was an increase in entries for activities such as boxing and badminton, though these activities are often missing key full competitive elements required by the specification.

Key messages for centres:

- The moderation day must be fully recorded, and that footage must be submitted within one week of the moderation event.
- The quality of video evidence and the clear identification of candidates is vital to support assessment.

Personal Analysis Evaluation (PAE):

- The "Recommendations for Future Improvement" section continues to be an area requiring further attention.
- Annotation should be detailed and specific, guiding moderators through the rationale for awarded marks. Annotations should also link clearly with assessment criteria.
- Internal standardisation must be prioritised in larger centres to ensure consistency in assessment across different assessors.
- Centres must ensure that each candidate's written work aligns with their chosen practical activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (FULL COURSE)

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COMPONENT 1: INTRODUCTION TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Component

Candidates continue to do better with AO1 rather than AO2 / AO3 extended questions.

Question 1 generally had the highest attempt rate overall (99.4% attempt rate), and questions 5(a), 4(b), 3(e), and 3(f) were deemed to be the most accessible. The majority of these were AO1-level responses, requiring straightforward identification of knowledge and little application. Notably, 3(f) involved application of the skeletal system in relation to protection, which candidates handled relatively well despite the applied element. These questions were predominantly 'identify' style, which likely contributed to the stronger performance.

In contrast, later questions, specifically Questions 4(a), 4(c), 5(b), and 5(c) had noticeably lower attempt rates, all falling below 96%. These questions also correlated with lower performance levels, reflected in their lower facility factors (ff).

- Question 4(a) was an AO3 question focused on participation and data analysis. Many candidates did not fully meet the demands of the question. Despite its accessible topic, it had an unexpectedly low facility factor of 0.52
- Question 4(c) required direct comparison of muscle fibre types. Some candidates struggled with the comparative nature of the question, defaulting instead to listing characteristics without directly comparing them. This resulted in a facility factor of 0.61.
- Question 5(b) involved AO1 level identification of a type of muscle contraction. The question had a facility factor of 0.54, indicating moderate difficulty.
- Question 5(c) focused on principles of training, performance was hindered by poor application. Candidates were required to relate their responses to a specific training method shown in a figure, which many failed to do adequately. The facility factor was 0.55.
- The lowest-performing question was Question 3(b), which addressed the skill continuum. Candidates often failed to apply their knowledge effectively to a specific sporting skill. It had the lowest facility factor on the paper (ff= 0.46) and a mean score of just 1.4 out of 3 marks.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 (a)** This question consisted of several smaller components. Part (i) was an AO1 question requiring identification of the plane of movement. In Part (ii), candidates typically scored either full marks or half marks. Part (iii) asked for a full explanation of antagonistic muscle action; however, some candidates only described the antagonist muscle and its function rather than explained. Most responses referenced the biceps and triceps. Part (iv) and (v) were simple identify AO1 responses. There was a 100% attempt rate on this question, with a facility factor of 0.60 and a mean mark of 5.4 out of 9, indicating that candidates found it relatively accessible.
- (b)** Candidates were required to explain reaction time in the context of a sprint hurdler. The AO1 mark was awarded for demonstrating an understanding of what reaction time is, while the AO2 marks focused on explaining its relevance and significance to a hurdler. Most candidates tried to apply their response specifically to a hurdler rather than providing a general explanation. The use of key terminology was important in achieving marks. While many candidates referred to the sprint start in their answers, some also discussed the hurdler's reaction to the approaching hurdles.
- (c)** Part (i) was generally answered well. Part (ii) was the first analysis question on the paper, requiring candidates to analyse why failing to warm up and cool down would be a disadvantage for a sports performer. Overall, candidates demonstrated strong knowledge of the indicative content. However, to achieve AO3 Band 4 marks, responses needed to specifically address the impact of not warming up on the performer. Some candidates instead focused on the benefits of warming up, which, while gaining some credit, did not fully meet the demands of the question. As a result, the quality of writing was not always aligned with the question's requirements. Despite this, the question was generally answered well (mean = 4.3 out of 7 marks).
- (d)** Part (i) was an AO2 question that required candidates to explain how funding can benefit an elite performer. Some candidates were limited in their responses, often listing what would be available, such as access to better coaching, without explaining how these resources would positively impact performance. To achieve full marks, responses needed to clearly link the support provided by funding to its effect on the athlete's performance.

Part (ii) required candidates to outline a disadvantage of the media's influence on sport. Many responses were limited by focusing on general effects of the media, rather than specifically addressing its impact on the sport itself. Candidates were encouraged to use examples involving a sport or performer to strengthen their answers. For instance, stating that the media invades a performer's privacy is too generic unless it is linked to how this invasion negatively affects the sport, such as causing distractions, loss of focus, or affecting performance and public perception. Overall, 1(d) had a facility factor of 0.58.

- Q.2 (a)** This question required candidates to analyse the energy systems and their importance in team sports and produced a facility factor of 0.56. AO1 marks were awarded for demonstrating knowledge of the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems, while AO3 marks focused on the analysis of their importance within a team sport context. High-level responses often distinguished between the two components of the anaerobic system: the ATP-PC system and the lactic acid system. Overall, candidates tended to analyse the anaerobic system more effectively.
- (b)** Part (i) required candidates to explain varied practice. Responses were generally basic and tended to earn only 1 AO2 mark instead of the full 2. The concept of boredom was included in the mark scheme primarily because so many candidates referenced it in their answers. However, the intention of the question was for candidates to focus on practice-based explanations rather than simply highlighting variety. Examples provided were often weak and did not effectively illustrate the type of practice being described.

Part (ii) was a straightforward AO1 identification question. Overall, both parts had a facility factor of 0.51.

- (c)** This question used the command word discuss, which required candidates to present both an advantage and a disadvantage of using technology for coaches in sport. Many candidates failed to address the disadvantages, which limited their AO3 marks to a sub-maximum of 2 out of 4. While the advantages provided were often detailed and well explained, the lack of balance in responses prevented many from reaching the top band. This had a mean of 2.1 out of 4 which reflects the comments above.
- (d)** Overall, this question had a facility factor of 0.68 highlighting its accessibility.

Part (i) required an explanation of how heart rate can be used to assess fitness levels. This AO2 question allowed candidates to focus on indicators of both fitness and lack of fitness. Most responses centred around the idea that a lower resting heart rate is a sign of improved fitness, often supported by the explanation that more blood is pumped per beat due to cardiovascular adaptations. Other valid points from the mark scheme were used less frequently.

Part (ii) required a direct comparison, and the structured table provided helped guide candidates' responses effectively.

- (e)** This multiple-choice question was generally answered well (mean = 0.7 out of 1 mark); however, statement 3 was also a popular choice among candidates, indicating some misunderstanding.
- (f)** This extended writing question was another 'discuss' command word. AO1 marks were awarded for knowledge of the factors that affect participation levels, while AO3 marks focused on analysing the impact of a sedentary lifestyle on physical, mental, and social health. A facility factor of 0.65 was reached. To achieve full marks, responses needed to address both sides of the discussion, highlighting not only the negative effects of inactivity but also the positive impact of exercise on an individual's overall wellbeing. While a fully balanced argument was not essential, some acknowledgment of the benefits of physical activity was required to fully meet the demands of the command word.

- Q.3**
- (a) With an attempt rate of 99.8% and a mean mark of 0.8 out of 1, most candidates were able to correctly identify the type of movement at the shoulder.
 - (b) This question had the lowest facility factor on the paper (0.46), indicating that candidates found it difficult to access. AO2 marks were awarded for justifying why the tennis serve is considered a complex skill. Candidates who focused solely on the theoretical aspects remained at a sub-maximum of 2 marks. To gain the additional mark and reach full AO2 credit, responses needed to apply the theory directly to the tennis serve, demonstrating a clear link between the concept and the skill in context.
 - (c) This question was structured in a way that clearly guided candidates to address both the advantages and disadvantages of using verbal guidance. As a result, responses could be succinct yet still achieve full marks. Common answers included links to visual guidance and the difficulty verbal guidance may pose for cognitive performers. A strong facility factor of 0.62 was achieved.
 - (d) Part (i) required candidates to explain the information processing model using sporting examples. Many candidates performed well, providing strong explanations supported by relevant and specific examples. However, those who did not score highly tended to give overly generic responses and failed to clearly distinguish between the different stages of the model.

Part (ii) saw many candidates writing in full sentences, but their points were not always clearly expressed, requiring examiners to interpret the intended meaning.

The remaining sub-sections of the question were generally answered well, with candidates demonstrating a sound understanding of the content. Overall, a facility factor of 0.56 with a mean of 5.1 out of 9 marks was achieved.

- Q.4**
- (a) This question produced a mean mark of 4.2 out of 8. It required candidates to evaluate factors affecting activity levels in relation to the data provided, which showed an overall increase. Many candidates treated it as a straightforward question about barriers to participation and simply listed common barriers in sport. Higher level candidates went beyond this by using the data to evaluate reasons for the increase, rather than merely stating factors. Thus, accessing higher AO3 marks. Some also noted that the increase in participation was not substantial, which allowed them to access higher-level marks through more nuanced analysis. AO1 marks were awarded for demonstrating knowledge of factors affecting participation. In addition, many candidates did not engage with the data at all which was reflected in the marks awarded.
 - (b) These were straightforward AO1 questions that candidates generally answered well. The facility factor was high at 0.83.
 - (c) This question had the lowest attempt rate on the paper, 93.6%. This was another comparison question requiring a direct comparison of the characteristics of muscle fibres. Common responses included fibre colour and contraction speed.
 - (e) AO1 responses required candidates to identify the long-term effects of exercise on the muscular, skeletal, and cardio-respiratory systems. Many candidates answered well, though common errors included attributing effects to the wrong system.

- Q.5**
- (a)** Most candidates correctly identified the training method. The facility factor was high at 0.84.
 - (b)** With a facility factor of 0.54 many candidates did not correctly identify the type of muscular contraction.
 - (c)** This question required candidates to apply their knowledge of specificity and overload to the training shown in the figure. Most candidates engaged well with the figure, though some provided more general responses that strayed off-topic. AO1 marks were awarded for understanding what specificity and overload mean, while AO2 marks were given for explaining and expanding on these concepts in relation to the specific training method illustrated. The mean mark produced was 3.5 out of 6.
 - (d)** Overall, a mean of 7.3 marks out of 12 was achieved.

Part (i) required definitions of power and muscular endurance, along with relevant and specific examples for each. Some examples provided were too generic and could apply to multiple fitness components, whereas higher-level candidates gave more precise and appropriate examples.

Part (ii) asked candidates to name and describe a recognised test for the components mentioned in Part (i). This was generally well answered for muscular endurance, but descriptions of power tests were often weaker.

Part (iii) was answered well with most responses being, identifying strengths and weaknesses.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (FULL COURSE)

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COMPONENT 2: THE ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Component

The assessment objectives for Component 2 are as follows:

- AO4 (40%) Demonstrating and applying relevant skills and techniques in physical activity and sport.

Learners will be assessed in:

- Three different activities in the role of player/ performer in at least one individual and one team sport (30%).
- Learners are also assessed through an analysis and evaluation of their performance in one of their chosen activities (10%).

Candidates demonstrated a wide variety of activities, with a noticeable increase in participation in sports such as boxing and badminton. However, not all centres met the necessary criteria for these activities, with some missing key competitive elements. Moderators also highlighted the importance of including full-sided competitive matches in team sports to satisfy the assessment requirements. Overall, marking across practical activities was generally consistent among centres.

Moderation process

A successful moderation process is based on:

- A significant sample to make an informed judgement.
- Articulating the process based on Performance Tasks and Assessment Criteria.
- Evidence of work that supports the report.

The Moderation Visit is to assess the centre's ability to assess accurately and consistently.

Centres are reminded of the requirement to film the live moderation day in its entirety and then submit this film within a week of the moderation taking place. Please see guidance on the subject website.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Administration

EDPE1 And EDPE2 forms

All EDPE1 and EDPE2 forms must be fully completed and submitted to the moderator by **1st March** or **at least two weeks prior** to the agreed moderation date, whichever is earlier. Each form should be clearly annotated, with the relevant activities identified.

This is especially important for events such as athletics and swimming, where moderators need to know the specific individual event that each candidate is participating in (e.g., *Athletics – 100m*).

There has been noticeable improvement in meeting deadlines during this series, with most centres submitting their forms on time. However, some forms still lack the necessary annotations. It has also been observed that some centres have modified the forms. Please note:

- EDPE1 forms must list candidate numbers in ascending order.
- EDPE2 forms must list candidate numbers in rank order.

Forms must not be altered or adapted in any way. Additionally, it is helpful to indicate the format of certain activities, for example, whether badminton is being played as singles or doubles.

Candidate Authentication Sheet (CAS)

Each candidate must also have a Candidate Authentication Sheet (CAS) available for the moderator. This form should include a full breakdown of the candidate's practical profile, with individual activity marks and a total score. The CAS must be **signed and dated by both the candidate and the teacher**. Centres must ensure that candidates are made aware of the **GDPR section** of the CAS. This section outlines how the EDUQAS may use audio-visual or written coursework for training and CPD purposes. Moderators have reported improvements in CAS submission, with more centres now providing completed practical profiles, signatures, and GDPR acknowledgements as required. It is essential that centres upload all of these CAS sheets to IAMIS.

Practical Performance

Most centres adhered to the specification and applied the marking criteria appropriately. However, there were some cases where centres did not meet the required standards, particularly due to the absence of competitive situations. This limited candidates' opportunities to demonstrate the full range of skills needed to access marks in the higher bands. Every sport must include a competitive element, and all team sports must be observed in a full-sided game. Short clips showing isolated skills do not provide sufficient evidence for moderators to make informed and accurate judgements.

Team Games

To ensure accurate assessment, centres must provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate the full range of skills required to access all mark bands. Marks cannot be awarded if candidates do not meet the assessment criteria. Small-sided games limit the ability to make accurate decisions and demonstrate tactical awareness. Full-sided games allow candidates to show effective communication, positional play, and appropriate strategic use. Candidates should be observed playing in a defined position, which is not possible in small-sided formats.

If a full-sided game cannot be arranged for moderation purposes, centres must provide supplementary video evidence or alternatively select a different team activity, such as a racquet sport in a doubles format, which requires fewer participants. These issues were especially noticeable in sports like football and basketball. However, there were some excellent examples of accurate assessment in team sports such as hockey, football, netball, and rugby. In these cases, full-sided games were played, allowing pupils sufficient time to warm up, settle into the game, and perform at their optimum level.

Boxing

Boxing is becoming increasingly popular among centres. However, moderators have noted that performances often consist of isolated skills. While these demonstrate a candidate's technical ability, they lack the level of challenge needed to showcase physical attributes or apply skills in a pressured, competitive environment. Evidence of boxing is strongest where pupils participate as part of a club and are regularly involved in sparring and competitive scenarios.

For the 2026 assessment series, centres are advised to ensure they follow the specification requirements, which state that candidates must perform in a competitive boxing context. This will provide a more appropriate level of challenge and allow candidates to effectively demonstrate their skills, techniques, and strategies under pressure.

Badminton

As highlighted in the 2024 report, there has been a rise in the number of centres offering Badminton. While some centres are assessing it accurately, the overall quality of evidence remains weaker compared to other sports. There is often a limited range of skills and techniques demonstrated, and in many cases, candidates struggled to keep score or officiate their own matches due to insufficient knowledge of the rules and regulations. When offering Badminton, it is essential that it is played on a proper badminton court, with adequate ceiling height to prevent interference from the shuttle contacting the roof. A regulation height net must also be used. To ensure consistency, Badminton should be cross moderated with other sports.

Centres are strongly encouraged to identify candidates clearly using bib numbers, for example, and to provide corresponding information linking candidates to specific courts. This would significantly improve the clarity and effectiveness of the assessment process.

Athletics

Athletics continues to be offered as a third activity by many centres. When candidates are members of athletics clubs and compete regularly, the evidence provided is of high quality and assessments are generally accurate. In contrast, evidence gathered solely from school lessons is often weak, with marking tending to be overly generous. It is essential that pupils are assessed in a competitive environment to ensure validity.

Candidates must also compete in events appropriate for their age group, using the correct implements and weights for throwing events. Video evidence should clearly show the distances achieved in throws and jumps, as well as recorded times for track events.

Supplementary materials such as results sheets and scorecards can further support the assessment. As with Badminton, it is important that Athletics is cross-moderated with other activities to maintain consistency and accuracy in marking.

Personal Analysis Evaluation (PAE)

The Personal Analysis Evaluation (PAE) is intended to enable candidates to apply relevant theoretical knowledge and to collect, analyse, and present performance data. It is important to note that candidates are not assessed on whether improvement has taken place in their chosen activity, but rather on the quality of the evidence they produce in line with the assessment criteria.

Moderators have reported that the overall standard of PAEs has been good, with most being assessed accurately. In 2024, 'monitoring' was identified as an area for development, and reports suggest that centres have made clear improvements in this aspect. However, the 'Recommendations for Future Improvement' section continues to be an area requiring further attention. Where candidates have attempted this section, their responses often show only a basic or limited understanding of the factors influencing future performance. Centres are advised to dedicate time to teaching and exploring these factors in depth to help candidates access the higher mark bands in 2026.

It is essential that centres annotate PAE's clearly and in detail, providing justification for the marks awarded. Annotations should guide the moderator through each stage of the PAE, helping to make the assessment decisions transparent. Despite improvements, moderators are still reporting limited annotation in some submissions, making it unclear how marks have been allocated.

For centres with larger cohorts, internal standardisation, both within and across teaching groups is strongly recommended. Moderators have observed inconsistencies where candidates awarded the same mark were assessed by different staff, leading to discrepancies in assessment quality.

Additionally, there have been cases where candidates completed their PAE based on a sport they did not offer as part of their practical performance. Centres must ensure that each candidate's coursework aligns with their selected practical activities.

Use of IAMIS for Submitting Moderation Evidence – Support for Centres

Centres must enter candidates' marks into the IAMIS system by **5th May**. It is strongly recommended that this is done as close to the moderation date as possible. Additionally, centres are required to upload video footage from the moderation day to IAMIS within one week of the moderation taking place. For efficiency, it is advisable to upload the marks and video footage at the same time.

Moderators have reported some issues with the uploading process this year. To avoid complications, it is advisable to upload all documentation to IAMIS alongside the video evidence. This includes:

- All PE1 and PE2 forms
- Any written coursework included in the moderation sample
- Candidate Authentication Sheets (CAS) for all candidates
- Any supporting documentation provided to the moderator on the day, such as candidate identification sheets.

There has been a noticeable improvement in the 2025 series, with many centres uploading marks on or near their moderation date. However, a small number of centres continue to submit their data late, occasionally requiring moderators to follow up just before the deadline. While there has been a reduction in data transfer errors, some discrepancies still arise during checks, particularly between PE1 forms and the information entered into IAMIS.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 02922 404271

Email: physicaleducation@eduqas.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [GCSE Physical Education | Eduqas](#)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | Eduqas](#)

CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

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We support our education communities by providing trusted qualifications and specialist support, to allow our students the opportunity to reach their full potential.



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