GCSE Examiners' Report

Physical Education (Short 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.***

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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 performance of candidates in the 2025 series was consistent with that of 2024. Entry demographics remain largely unchanged, with the majority of candidates continuing to be 16-year-old males.

Demand and Structure:
The paper maintained a consistent structure and level of demand in line with previous series. Candidates approached the paper with a similar level of proficiency as in 2024.

Question Format:
Higher attempt rates were noted for questions offering structured response formats, such as multiple-choice, tick-box, matching tasks, and tables. These formats continue to support candidate engagement effectively.

Assessment Objective Performance:
Candidates continued to perform more strongly on AO1 (knowledge and understanding) questions. In contrast, performance on AO2 (application) and AO3 (analysis/evaluation) questions remains weaker.

Use of Sporting Examples:
Candidates often failed to apply their knowledge to relevant sporting contexts. The inclusion and development of applied sporting examples remain an area for improvement.

Analytical and Evaluative Responses:
Most candidates continue to describe rather than assess or evaluate in AO3 questions. Increased focus is required to improve access to marks in these higher-level responses.

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-Examination Assessment (NEA)

Assessment Accuracy and Compliance:

The practical assessment component remains stable, with static tasks and criteria. Inaccuracies in assessment were most common in:
- Team sports, particularly where insufficient participant numbers were available.
- New centres or those not responding to previous feedback.
- Team sports were generally assessed more accurately than individual activities.
- Smaller centres must take care to select activities that align with available resources and candidates.

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 vital to support assessment.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION (SHORT COURSE)

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COMPONENT 1: INTRODUCTION TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Component

The demand of the questions was comparable to those in previous years, with statistical data suggesting that the difficulty of the paper was similar to that of 2024 with a broadly similar spread of marks. The mean mark for 2025 sits at 22.2 marks out of 60 (total) compared with 21.5 from 2024.

A high number of candidates attempted all questions with an average attempt rate of 89% compared with 85.6% in 2024. The highest attempt rate of 99.8% was focused on Q1a(i), a multiple-choice question, followed by Q2(b), and Q3b(i) both with an attempt rate above 99% The lowest attempted question with a data value of 68.6% was Q5d (the final question on the exam paper) closely followed by Q5c(ii) with an attempt rate of 68.9% (the penultimate question on the exam paper).

The most difficult questions on the paper were Q1(b) and Q4a(ii) both with a Facility Factor score of 0.20. There were other questions with a facility factor of less than 30, indicating a lack of accessibility for candidates. These were for the following questions: Q1a(ii) (ff=0.24) Q3a(iii) (ff=0.33) Q4a(i) (ff 0.29) Q4b (ff=0.22) Q 5c(i) (ff=0.25) 5c(ii) (0.24).

The most accessible questions proved to be in Q1a(i) (ff=0.87) Q2(b) (ff=0.93) and Q5(a) (ff=0.85).

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As expected, candidates continue to do better with AO1 rather than AO2 / AO3 extended questions. Also, as in previous years there is a higher attempt rate to questions where there is a framework provided for the candidate response, e.g. multiple-choice style questions; tick box options; matching terms with descriptions, and table completion format.

- The paper allowed for student performance to be assessed against the full range of Assessment objectives, with an appropriate distribution of weightings in line with the specification requirements.
- The questions covered a broad range of topics from the specification, including the following content areas: Health Fitness and Wellbeing; The contribution physical activity makes to health and fitness; Consequences of a sedentary lifestyle; Components of fitness; Methods of training; Training zones; Principles of training and exercise; Data Analysis, Muscular-skeletal system; Cardio-respiratory and vascular system; Aerobic and anaerobic exercise, Short and long term effects of exercise; Muscle contractions, and Lever systems.
- There was a very good range of marks accessed across the cohort of candidates, with few candidates scoring zero and a limited number of more able candidates accessing marks in the high 50's bracket. The paper proved to be accessible to all ability ranges with some candidates failing to attempt to make a response to some questions throughout the paper.
- Only the very top candidates with a high level of knowledge and understanding were able to gain the AO3 marks available throughout the paper. There was a sufficient number of candidates who were able to apply their knowledge to practical sporting examples to achieve the AO2 objectives.

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Comments on individual questions/sections

The focus of this section will be on those questions that were deemed the least accessible and/or the most challenging, based on the data stated above (low ff).

However, it is important to recognise the content that was well understood or well answered.

These were as follows:

- Identifying components of fitness.
- Identifying consequences of a sedentary lifestyle.

Q.1 **(a)** **(ii)** With a ff of 0.24 (mean 0.2 out of 1), many candidates provided an incorrect definition often referring to muscles, rather than joints, and using terms associated to stretch, rather than range of movement.

(iii) Many candidate responses were basic recognising how flexibility benefits a sports performer but lacked a developed explanation of the importance of flexibility to the **gymnast**.

(b) With a lower attempt rate of 79.9% and the lowest ff of 0.20 (mean 0.8 out of 4), candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge of all 3 FID principles and were basic in their explanation of them. Lack of application to an example restricted access to the marks available for a detailed explanation.

Q.2 **(a)** Despite a high attempt rate of 96.1%, with a ff of 0.31 (mean 0.6 out of 2), a high number of candidates were unable to provide correct definitions for both health and fitness.

(b) Many candidates were able to provide a basic explanation for each of the consequences identified but struggled to develop their responses with further detail to explain the impact of these consequences on an individual. Mean score for this question was 1.8 (out of 4).

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Q.3 **(a)** **(ii)** Use of incorrect terminology restricted candidates' ability to gain credit with this question. Terms such as "kneecap" and "shoulder blade" were too vague and the mark scheme required candidates to know the correct names for the bones at each of the joints.

(iii) A significant number of candidates confused the "hamstrings" and "quadriceps" muscle groups, associating them with the incorrect movement, thus losing credit. Correct use of terminology for the movements was essential, so where candidates used terms such as "bending" and "straightening" no credit was awarded.

Q.4 **(a)** **(i)** A large proportion of candidates were incorrect in their identification of the method of training, represented in the heart rate graph, with "fartlek" training being the most common incorrect response.

(ii) The least accessible question (alongside Q1b) with a ff of 0.20 and mean of 0.8 (out of 4), can in some way be attributed to the incorrect identification of the method of training in the previous question. Although error is not carried forward and candidates can be credited for their justification there were limitations as to how they could apply their knowledge and keep it relevant to the data in the graph.

Q.5 **(c)** **(i)** With an ff of 0.25 (mean 0.3 out of 6), many candidates provided an incorrect definition. Attempt rate for this question was also down, at 76.2%, compared with other questions on the paper.

(ii) With an attempt rate of 68.9% (second lowest), candidates commonly accessed credit for a basic explanation linked to an "increase" to explain the change to minute ventilation during exercise. However, they did not develop their explanations to access further credit beyond this. Since many candidates showed a lack of knowledge for the term "minute ventilation" in the previous question, it might be suggested that candidates were unable to answer or give a correct response on how it changed during exercise.

(d) The lowest attempted question throughout the whole paper (68.6%), with a mean of 1.2 (out of 4), candidate responses were largely basic with reference to "cooling down" / "prevent overheating" and "sweating". Whilst developed analysis was restricted to the more able candidates, many students failed to specifically make a link to the effect on the performance of the sports performer, restricting maximum marks being achieved.

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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:

- Two different activities in the role of performer.
- One individual and one team sport from the approved lists of activities in the specification.

This Unit will be marked out of 40 and is worth 40% of the qualification. The assessment is of two activities of which one must be a team and one as an individual. Both activities are worth 40 marks (40%) and is linked to AO4.

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

A wide range of sports were observed throughout the moderation process. In general, team sports were assessed more accurately than individual sports. This remains a concern from previous years as is something that needs addressing within centres. Cross moderation between activities is crucial for accurate assessment. There were instances where team sports did not meet the assessment criteria due to an insufficient number of participants, which prevented a full-sided game from being played. This issue must be addressed in future assessments.

Smaller centres should take particular care when selecting sports for moderation, ensuring they can provide the necessary number of pupils to meet specification requirements. This will help candidates access the full range of marks and align with the expected standards. Candidates may be assessed via video evidence where necessary. While this can be an effective method, it relies heavily on the quality of the footage. The video must clearly support the marks awarded, and candidates must be easily identifiable throughout the performance.

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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. Please note that Kick boxing cannot be offered as Boxing. Kick boxing is not on the specification and is a different activity entirely to Boxing.

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.

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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.

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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 (Short Course) | 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.

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