GCE A Level Examiners' Report

Physical Education

A Level

Summer 2026

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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 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

Overall performance across the qualification was stable and consist with previous years, with candidates demonstrating secure knowledge and understanding across a broad range of theoretical and practical content. Across all components, candidates were generally strongest when demonstrating AO1 knowledge and understanding, particularly on shorter-response questions requiring recall, identification and description. The most successful candidates combined accurate subject knowledge with effective application to sporting contexts and produced balanced analytical and evaluative responses. A recurring theme across the qualification was that candidates often understood the content but did not always meet the specific demands of command words, particularly in AO3 questions requiring analysis, assessment, evaluation and discussion.

Components 1 and 2: Written Examination Components

Across both examined components, candidates demonstrated strong knowledge in areas including recovery, personality, feedback, barriers to participation, biomechanics, sport psychology, anatomy and physiology, and sport in society. Performance was generally strongest on AO1 questions, where candidates were able to identify, outline and describe key concepts accurately. Mathematical and biomechanical calculations were also generally well answered when candidates selected appropriate formulae and showed their workings.

A key strength was candidates' ability to recall theoretical knowledge and apply it successfully in structured sporting contexts. Higher-performing responses consistently used accurate PE terminology, incorporated relevant sporting examples and maintained focus on the requirements of the question.

The principal area for improvement was AO3 performance. Across both components, candidates often relied on description rather than analysis or evaluation. Assessment questions frequently elicited explanations of concepts rather than judgements about their effectiveness. Extended responses were often unbalanced, with candidates addressing only one side of an argument when discussion or evaluation was required. Common weaknesses included limited application to the stimulus material, insufficient use of figures provided within questions, and failure to explain fully the significance of evidence presented.

Centres should continue to focus on developing candidates' understanding of command words, particularly the distinctions between identify, outline, describe, analyse, assess, evaluate and discuss. Greater emphasis should also be placed on applying theory to sporting examples and supporting judgements with evidence.

Component 3: Improving Personal Performance in Physical Education

Moderation outcomes were stable, with centres generally assessing candidates accurately and making appropriate use of the assessment bands. A broad range of practical activities continued to be offered, and assessment was most effective where candidates performed in genuinely competitive environments supported by appropriate supplementary evidence.

The standard of coaching evidence continues to improve, with many candidates demonstrating effective planning, communication and technical knowledge. Live moderation remains the preferred approach, particularly where it allows moderators to observe candidate interaction and verbal feedback more clearly.

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The Personal Performance Analysis and Evaluation (PPAE) component remains a significant strength across centres. Candidates generally produced strong initial analyses supported by quantitative data and demonstrated increasing confidence in monitoring and adapting training programmes. The highest-performing candidates were able to synthesise research, justify recommendations and produce evidence-based evaluations of programme effectiveness.

Areas for improvement include the depth of evaluation within Sections 3 and 4 of the PPAE, greater use of internal standardisation across practical activities, and ensuring all coursework is clearly annotated to identify where assessment criteria have been met.

Key Themes

Across the qualification, candidates would benefit from further development of application, analysis and evaluation skills. Centres should continue to emphasise command word interpretation, the use of subject-specific terminology, balanced extended responses and application of theory to practical sporting contexts. For non-examined assessment, continued focus on annotated coursework, high-quality evidence, accurate candidate identification and timely submission through IAMIS will support effective moderation.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GCE A level

Summer 2026

COMPONENT 1: EXPLORING CONCEPTS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Component

Questions with the lowest facility factor included: Question 4a, Question 5c (joint equal lowest) and Question 3b. Question 5c and 3b also had the lowest attempt rate by candidates, suggesting a lack of knowledge in this particular area of the specification.

Questions that were widely accessed by the majority of candidates included: Question 1b ii and 1d with 100% attempt rate. Question 5a had the highest facility factor on the paper suggesting most candidates knew this answer when they attempted to answer the question.

Most candidates demonstrated good subject knowledge when accessing AO1 marks in questions across the paper. The majority of candidates demonstrated sound knowledge on the topics of recovery, video analysis, personality, antagonistic pairs, feedback and disadvantage groups and barriers to participation.

Candidates were able to access marks on these questions often when they were attempted.

For several questions on the paper, candidates sometimes failed to gain marks due to not matching their responses to the command word at the start of the question or creating a relevant response that answered the whole question. This was often evident in Question 2c for cognitive and somatic techniques, where lots of description was often shown.

For AO1 questions in particular, paying attention to the mark weighting for the question may help them to gain full marks in their response and applying the level of detail expected at advanced level. Knowing the difference between identify, outline and describe will help candidates respond with the correct level of detail for these questions.

The evidence suggests that nearly all centres would benefit from strengthening candidates' understanding of command words across the assessment objectives, particularly those associated with AO3, including assess, analyse and discuss.

Centres would benefit from advising students that demonstrating the correct PE terminology would allow them to access more marks and higher marks in higher order questions.

Nearly all candidates would benefit from improved examination technique such as carefully reading and answering the question that they are asked. This would facilitate access to higher marks in the written examination, paying particular attention to words like ‘effectiveness’ (candidates can reference when something is effective and where something might not be as effective as something else) and ‘using sorting examples.’ This will always require application of theory to achieve maximum marks.

Where a figure is present it is advised that the figure is used in their response.

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Candidates have also missed out on marks for vague responses or responses that failed to demonstrate good or excellent levels of description, justification, explanation, application, analysis, assessment and evaluation.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 (b) (ii) Facility factor: 0.63 Average mark: 1.9/3

Candidates often struggled to outline a test in its entirety and were often a little too vague in elements of the protocol for a correct test for speed. Candidates doing well outlined the test well, covering the aspects required and showed good knowledge of the testing protocols for speed.

(c) Facility factor: 0.62 Average mark: 2.5/4

This question was well attempted, but is the first instance of candidates not fully applying their responses to the command word and demonstrating enough levels of justification in the topic area.

(**d) Facility factor: 0.67 Average mark:4.7/6**

Many candidates showed good knowledge of the topic area but often didn't fully explain and use examples in enough detail to achieve the full 6 marks allocated for the question.

Q.2 (b) Facility factor: 0.56 Average mark: 2.8/5

One of the more difficult questions based on the responses from candidates. Candidates struggled with 'assessing the effectiveness' of the techniques and often described them without going into any level of higher than basic assessment. When, where and for who were used in responses that were higher scoring stating that the effectiveness could change based on various circumstances.

Q. 3 (b) Facility factor: 0.46 Average mark: 2.7

Many candidates were able to achieve marks here and could correctly explain Magnus forces. Where some candidates failed to maximise the marks available were with incorrect application of the direction of force and at times, not fully explaining how the force is created and then can influence the flight path of a football.

(e) (i) Facility factor: 0.55 Average mark: 2.2/4

Candidates needed to apply glycaemic index knowledge for a nutrition programme and often did not have enough application of the information they clearly demonstrated, meaning they often didn't achieve maximum marks.

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(e) (ii) Facility factor: 0.48 Average mark: 1.9/4

Similarly, candidates were vague and often generalised protein and its benefits rather than justifying the use of whey and casein, with many candidates falling to allude to the benefits of the slow acting casein protein in compassion with the fast-acting whey protein.

Q.4 (a) Facility factor: 0.43 Average mark: 2.1/5

Candidates often failed to apply the various reasons that a world record holder would have high levels of self-efficacy, often focusing on the performance accomplishments and not looking at the other factors that a world record holder would have/use to improve/maintain self-efficacy. Answers were often vague not showing understanding of the theory around self-efficacy.

Q.5 (c) Facility factor: 0.43 Average mark: 1.3/3

Candidates often struggled to answer this question accurately and showed limited understanding of Cashmore's three levels of globalisation in sport. While some candidates were able to identify the levels correctly, many did not address the command word 'outline' and therefore failed to provide sufficient detail or explanation of how the levels related to the scenario.

(**e) Facility factor: 0.74 Average mark: 7.4/10**

Depth and description were often a reason for candidates not achieving higher marks on this question as well as candidates not fully using the figure provided at the beginning of the question in their responses. Candidates achieving higher marks utilised the whole of the figure along with depth in their descriptions.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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COMPONENT 2: EVALUATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Component

This component assessed candidates across all three assessment objectives. AO1 required candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key concepts from anatomy and physiology, biomechanics, sport psychology, sport in society, and sport and exercise physiology. AO2 required candidates to apply this knowledge to practical sporting contexts and specific biomechanical calculations, while AO3 assessed candidates' ability to analyse, evaluate, assess and discuss a range of contemporary issues affecting sport. The paper provided an appropriate balance of short-response questions alongside extended-response items, allowing candidates to demonstrate both breadth and depth of understanding across the specification.

Overall, candidates demonstrated secure knowledge across much of the specification, with many performing confidently on the shorter AO1 questions requiring identification, outline and description. Candidates generally coped well with the range of topics presented, including biomechanics, anatomy, sport psychology, Americanisation, technology in sport and government and political involvement in sport. The mathematical calculations at AO2 were accessible to most candidates and many demonstrated sound understanding when applying formulae correctly, especially in relation to calculating average speed.

Performance was strongest where candidates carefully interpreted the command words and fully applied their knowledge to the sporting context provided. The most successful responses combined accurate subject knowledge with relevant sporting examples and clear development of ideas, particularly in the higher-mark AO3 questions. Candidates who planned extended responses, maintained focus on the demands of the question and reached balanced, evidence-based judgements were rewarded accordingly.

Less successful responses often lacked sufficient application, analysis, evaluation and discussion. In a number of questions, candidates relied on generic textbook knowledge rather than applying their answers to the context provided. Extended responses sometimes became descriptive, with limited analysis or discussion, and some candidates addressed only one side of an argument when questions required balanced consideration especially in relation to the impact of government and politics on sport. A number of candidates also failed to distinguish between similar command words such as identify, outline and describe, resulting in responses that did not fully access the mark bands as candidates were often identifying when they should have been outlining and, describing when they should have been identifying.

Future candidates would benefit from continued practice in applying theoretical knowledge to practical sporting situations and developing balanced AO3 responses supported by appropriate examples. Centres should continue to emphasise careful reading of command words and encourage candidates to use subject specific terminology accurately while ensuring that extended responses remain focused on the requirements of the question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Candidates generally performed well on the shorter AO1 questions requiring identification, recall and basic description. Those candidates achieving above 50% of the mean on these

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questions demonstrated secure knowledge of anatomical terminology, synovial joints, proprioceptors, types of practice and the stages of learning.

The most successful candidates demonstrated precise subject knowledge, used accurate terminology and answered exactly what was asked without providing unnecessary additional information.

Less successful candidates achieving less than 50% of the mean mark/s available occasionally confused similar anatomical terminology for example in question 1aii (3 marks) some candidates referred to joint types outside of synovial joints such as cartilaginous (slightly moveable) and fibrous (fixed) joints and in question 1aiii – ligaments (2 marks) some candidates described tendons rather than ligaments. Some candidates also, provided responses that were too vague for the mark allocation or failed to distinguish between command words such as identify, describe and outline for example many candidates could identify strategies for managing aggressive behaviour as part of question 1cii (2 marks) but the question was asking them to outline the strategies not simply list them.

The following items in at AO1 in question 1 had high facility factors: 1(a)(i)- movements at the ankle when a cyclist pedals their bike (ff=0.97) and an attempt rate of 99.5 and a mean mark of 1.9 out of the 2 marks available on this question.

The following items in at AO1 in question 3 had high facility factors: 3(b)(i) - stages of learning (ff=0.94) and an attempt rate of 96.3 and a mean mark of 2.8 out of the 3 marks available on this question. 3(b)(iii)- types of practice (ff=0.96) and a mean mark of 1.9 out of the 2 marks available on this question.

At AO2, the calculation questions were also generally well answered, with many candidates selecting and applying the correct formulae and therefore getting the correct response. On these calculation questions, those candidates who achieved less than 50% of the mean marks available selected the incorrect formulas or omitted workings, thus limiting opportunities to gain method marks. However, there was a clear differentiation between candidates' knowledge of average speed for question 2(a) (ii)(2 marks) when compared to their knowledge of angular velocity for question 2(a)(i) (2 marks).

The following items in question 2 had high facility factors: 2(a)(ii) - average speed (ff=0.90) and an attempt rate of 98.4 and a mean mark of 1.8 out of the 2 marks available on this question.

Candidates also, generally demonstrated a sound ability to apply theoretical concepts to practical sporting situations. The contextualised questions on cycling, discus throwing and sports injuries enabled many candidates to relate their theoretical knowledge to real sporting examples.

Higher-performing candidates consistently applied theory directly to the scenario provided rather than simply recalling information. Their responses linked scientific and biomechanical principles to the practical demands of the activity and developed their explanations using appropriate sporting examples.

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Clear examples of this are demonstrated within question 1(b) (8 marks) – Newton's Laws and their application to cycling as there was strong application from higher candidates, some candidates explained the laws but did not apply them to cycling and, some only covered one or two laws.

Where candidates were less successful, responses often remained descriptive and lacked application to the specific sporting context. In some cases, candidates reproduced memorised definitions without explaining how they related to the performer or situation described within the question.

At AO3 where the extended response questions required candidates to evaluate, analyse and discuss there was a clear differentiation between candidates. The strongest responses achieving above 50% of the mean marks available demonstrated balanced evaluation, clear analysis and well-developed discussion supported by relevant sporting examples and evidence. Successful candidates addressed both positive and negative aspects where appropriate, reached justified conclusions and maintained a consistent focus on the command word throughout.

Candidates achieving the highest marks organised their responses logically, used specialist terminology accurately and supported their arguments with contemporary sporting examples. They demonstrated their ability to synthesise knowledge from across the specification rather than relying on isolated facts.

Less successful responses were candidates achieved less than 50% of the mean marks available were frequently descriptive rather than analytical. Some candidates considered only one side of an argument despite command words such as evaluate, assess and discuss requiring balanced judgement. Others relied on generic examples that were not fully developed or failed to link evidence back to the question.

Centres should continue to develop candidates' understanding of the differing demands of higher-order command words and encourage responses that move beyond description to supported analysis and evaluation.

Both questions 2(c) (8 marks) – Americanisation and question 4 (20 marks) - Government and Political Involvement in Sport were excellent discriminators as strong candidates produced balanced assessments and discussion with examples. Weaker candidates wrote everything they knew about either government involvement in sport or provided a political timeline of events without discussing the impact.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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COMPONENT 3: IMPROVING PERSONAL PERFORMANCE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Component

The NEA is internally assessed and externally moderated. The range of activities assessed continues to demonstrate the diversity available within this qualification. Centres are required to undertake live moderation, although recorded evidence was used for offsite activities or to provide supplementary evidence to support candidate's marks.

The range of activities assessed continues to demonstrate the diversity available within this qualification. Assessment should normally take place within a full-sided competitive environment or competitive event.

Centres are generally placing candidates in the correct band.

Centres should provide audio visual footage using recommended formats.

The standard of coaching evidence continues to improve.

The assessment of the PPAE remains very good.

Uploaded coursework should be annotated.

Centres should remember to upload the recorded activities seen during the moderation day as well as candidates written coursework and Candidate Authentication Sheets

Comments on individual questions/sections

Practical

Centres used the full range of marks effectively within the assessment bands. Live moderation does not always provide sufficient opportunity for candidates performing at the highest level to demonstrate the full range of their ability. Centres are encouraged to provide supplementary evidence to support candidates where appropriate.

As outlined in Appendix D of the specification, assessment should normally take place within a full-sided competitive environment or competitive event. Centres should avoid relying on drills or modified games, as these may restrict candidates' opportunities to demonstrate the required performance standards.

Centres are generally placing candidates in the correct band and using the full range of marks available within the assessment bands to provide accurate assessments. Centres are encouraged to use internal standardisation across practical activities to ensure consistency of assessment.

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Most centres provided good supportive visual evidence using the new platform on IAMIS. However, it is important to accurately identify individual candidates particularly in team or group activities to support the moderation process. Continuous, extended passages of play are preferable to edited highlight compilations, as they provide moderators with a more accurate representation of performance.

Centres should provide audio visual footage using recommended formats to facilitate the moderation process.

Coaching

The standard of coaching evidence continues to improve. Good practice is to introduce the session aims and objectives (session plan). Some centres continue to rely on isolated drills rather than richer, game-based coaching activities that allow candidates to demonstrate a wider range of coaching skills.

Live moderation remains the preferred approach, as video evidence does not always capture candidates' verbal communication effectively.

The level of the individual or group coached, and the aspect of the activity chosen to coach should also be considered. These can impact on the level of technical knowledge the coach is able to demonstrate.

Personal Performance Analysis and Evaluation

The assessment of the PPAE remains very good. Candidates are producing work that clearly covers the assessment criteria in each of the 4 sections. Many centres are now reducing the volume of the PPAE and producing concise and succinct coursework.

Section 1: 'The initial analysis of performance' is generally very good with centres identifying both strengths and weaknesses using a range of quantitative data when analysing performance using various methods.

Section 2: 'Evaluate the research, including data, to make recommendations and plan for improving performance' is an area where better candidates clearly identified a particular strength, Higher-performing candidates synthesised relevant research effectively and demonstrated how it informed recommendations for improving their own performance.

Section 3: 'Complete the training programme and analyse its effectiveness'. Most candidates are now able to demonstrate monitoring & changes explained to training programmes, analysing their own performance and of the training programme using quantitative data. This is still an area that some candidates find difficult and good practice is to analyse pre and post training programme data making use of the information gathered in section 1

Section 4: 'Evaluate the programme and identify strategies to improve future performance'. This requires a detailed evaluation of strengths and weakness of the programme. Better candidates were able to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the programme, synthesise information to draw logical conclusions and make well-supported recommendations for future improvement.

Uploaded coursework should be annotated to show where students have accessed the marks that have been awarded which would support the moderation process.

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Submission of evidence on IAMIS

Centres should remember to upload the recorded activities seen during the moderation day onto IAMIS. This should include information to clearly identify candidates filmed in each activity.

Centres should also upload the course work with annotation and copies of the student declaration sheets. This is a specification requirement and essential to support the moderation process.

Centres should be reminded to upload evidence in a timely fashion; centre marks are submitted by the first Friday in March so practical evidence of performance or coaching and written coursework should be uploaded as soon as IAMIS opens to support the moderation process.

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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: 029 2026 5485
Email: physicaleducation@eduqas.co.uk
Qualification webpage: https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/physical-education-asa-level/ - tab_keydocuments

See other useful contacts here: Useful Contacts | Eduqas

CPD Training / Professional Learning

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