GCSE Examiners' Report

Physical Education (Short Course)

GCSE

Summer 2026

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026



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.***

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

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

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Contents **Page**

Executive summary 5

Component 1 – Introduction to Physical Education 7

Component 2 – The Active Participant in Physical Education 10

Supporting you – useful contacts and links 13

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Executive Summary

Overall, candidates demonstrated secure engagement with both the theoretical and practical elements of the specification. Across the qualification, learners were generally more successful when demonstrating knowledge and understanding than when required to apply, analyse or evaluate information in greater depth.

Component 1: Introduction to Physical Education

Performance in component 1 was broadly positive, with candidates showing good recall of knowledge across all three areas of the specification.

Candidates performed particularly well on AO1 recall-based questions, demonstrating secure understanding of components of fitness, principles of training, and diet and nutrition.

The strongest responses combined accurate knowledge with relevant sporting examples. In particular, many candidates produced well-developed responses when considering the health benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle.

The main area for improvement was the quality of application, analysis and evaluation. While candidates often demonstrated basic understanding, many responses lacked the detail required to access the highest mark bands. Candidates frequently struggled to apply theoretical concepts to sporting situations, use technical terminology accurately, explain physiological processes in sufficient depth.

AO3 questions proved the most challenging, with many candidates' describing information rather than analysing or evaluating it.

Component 2: The Active Participant in Physical Education

Most centres offered a range of individual and team activities, enabling learners to access the full range of marks.

As in previous series, team activities were typically assessed more accurately than individual activities. Moderation identified continuing concerns regarding the accuracy of marking in athletics and badminton, where evidence often did not support marks awarded in the higher bands. Similar issues were noted in table tennis and trampolining, with candidates frequently demonstrating limited technical proficiency, tactical awareness or independence in performance despite receiving generous marks.

A recurring issue was the use of assessment conditions that did not fully meet specification requirements. In some team activities, particularly football, candidates were not assessed in the full and competitive activity, offering evidence in small-sided games, therefore, not meeting the assessment requirements. In athletics, examples included insufficient competitive conditions, inaccurate distances or measurements, and limited evidence of performance standards aligned to awarded marks.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Preparing for Future Series

Common areas for development included applying knowledge to sporting contexts, producing detailed explanations, using subject-specific terminology, and demonstrating analytical and evaluative skills.

From a centre perspective, greater emphasis is needed on assessment accuracy, internal standardisation and cross-moderation, particularly for individual activities. Centres should also ensure that all practical assessments are conducted under appropriate competitive conditions and fully comply with specification requirements.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (SHORT COURSE)

GCSE

Summer 2026

Component 1 – Introduction to Physical Education

Overview of the Component

The unit assessed a range of AO1 (knowledge and understanding), AO2 (application of knowledge), and AO3 (analysis and evaluation) that were appropriately balanced to the requirements of the specification. The questions offered a mix of low, mid and higher tariff questions to allow for candidates to be able to demonstrate recall of knowledge, application of knowledge and analysis and evaluation skills. There was broad coverage of the specification covering all three key areas of Health, Training and Exercise; Exercise Physiology, and Movement Analysis. Whilst there were some questions that were general and inclusive to allow for accessibility, many questions required sport-specific knowledge in a more detailed and applied context, allowing for differentiation amongst candidates.

The demand of the questions was comparable to those tested in previous years papers with statistical data suggesting that the difficulty of the paper was similar to that of 2025 with a broadly similar spread of marks. The mean mark for 2026 sits at 22.4 marks out of 60 (total) compared with 22.0 from 2025.

There was a notable increase in the attempt rate of questions throughout the whole paper, with an average attempt rate of 97.5% compared with 89% in 2025. The highest attempt rate of 100% was focused on Q3ci and 4b, followed by Q1b, and 3cii, both with an attempt rate of 99.8%. All four questions were AO1 focused, not requiring a written response in sentence format. The lowest attempted question with a data value of 90.1% was Q4aiii requiring knowledge of planes of movement as part of a movement analysis.

The most difficult questions on the paper were Q4aii and Q4aiii, both with a facility factor score of 0.15 and 0.14 respectively. Both questions formed part of a movement analysis, and this finding correlates to what's been highlighted above with regards to the lowest attempt rate. 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: Q1aiii (FF=0.29), Q1d (FF=0.29), Q2a (FF 0.26), Q3d (FF=0.21), Q4c (FF=0.24) and 4d (0.24).

The most accessible questions proved to be in Q1ai (FF=0.76) and Q3ci (FF=0.78)

As in previous years there was a higher attempt rate and success at gaining credit from the mark scheme 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 etc.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Comments on individual questions/sections

The most accessible questions were questions 1ai, 1c, 1b, 3ci, 4ai, and 4b, which primarily fulfilled AO1 criteria and demonstrated good recall of knowledge. Q1c required some level of application and candidates were somewhat successful at demonstrating basic application.

The least accessible questions were questions 4aii and 4aiii, both requiring the knowledge and skills to undertake a movement analysis of a given sporting action.

Content that was well understood was:
- Components of fitness linked to sports performers
- Nutrients as part of a balanced diet
- Respiratory / lung volumes
- Types of joints and naming bones

Whilst candidates were able to access marks for recall of knowledge within AO2 questions, lack of detailed explanation and application to sporting examples / contexts resulted in many responses being marked as basic level responses limiting the marks achieved.

This was most clearly evident in the following questions:

- **Q1aii-**Many responses demonstrated insufficient detail to explain each of the components of fitness in relation to how they were used as the main component of fitness for the performers identified.

- **Q1aiii**-Definitions were incorrectly learned and lacked specific appropriate terminology / wording.

- **Q3b**-Candidates demonstrated basic knowledge of breathing to move gases in and out of the body. However, few responses were developed further to explain the role of the cardio-respiratory system during sporting activity.

- **Q4c**-Candidates successfully identified several short-term effects of exercise, however, only the more able candidates developed their responses further with “why” these effects were happening to the ballet dancer.

- **Q4d-**Many responses failed to connect a sporting example to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of antagonistic muscle action.

AO3 questions are designed to allow more able and high achieving candidates to differentiate from other candidates within the cohort. General findings on these questions were as follows:

- **Q2a**-Most candidates found it particularly challenging to draw valid conclusions from the data. Many candidates repeated / regurgitated the data as their response.

- **Q2b**-Some excellent knowledge of health benefits evident across the cohort with strong links and connections made to produce extended responses that assessed the benefits of an active healthy lifestyle.

- **Q3d**-Many responses lacked appropriate detail to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of interval training and evaluations attempts were limited.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (SHORT COURSE)

GCSE

Summer 2026

Component 2 – The Active Participant in Physical Education

Overview of the Component

Learners are assessed in:

- Two different activities in the role of player/performer
- One individual sport and one team sport, both selected from the approved list outlined in the specification

As in previous years, centres continue to offer a wide range of activities, and most pupils completed the required number of sports, enabling access to the full range of marks. Administration across centres was generally accurate, with documentation completed and submitted appropriately.

However, there remain concerns regarding the accuracy and consistency of marking in a number of activities. Athletics and badminton, in particular, continue to present challenges, with evidence often not supporting marks awarded in the higher bands. In addition, there were examples where activities did not meet the requirements of the specification, limiting the validity of assessment decisions.

Centres are reminded that the entire live moderation day must be recorded and uploaded within one week of the event.

Comments on individual questions/sections

A wide range of sports were observed throughout moderation. As in previous series, team activities were generally assessed more accurately than individual activities. Cross moderation between activities remains essential to ensure consistency, yet this was not always evident across centres. Centres must ensure that the activities selected allow candidates to fully meet the assessment criteria. Where this is not possible due to cohort size or facilities, alternative activities should be considered.

Team games

To ensure accurate assessment, candidates must be observed in full-sided competitive situations. Small-sided games limit opportunities to demonstrate the range of skills, positional awareness and tactical decision-making required for higher mark bands.

This was particularly evident in activities such as football, where some centres presented significantly reduced formats (e.g. 3v3 in small spaces). In these situations, candidates were unable to demonstrate sufficient skill, knowledge or tactical understanding, yet high marks were still awarded.

For football specifically, centres are reminded that this must be played as 11-a-side to meet the requirements of the specification. If centres are unable to provide sufficient numbers, football must not be offered. As an alternative, activities such as futsal may be more appropriate, allowing candidates to be assessed in a valid competitive format.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Badminton

There continues to be an increase in centres offering badminton. While some centres assess accurately, badminton is frequently marked generously.

In many cases, candidates demonstrated:
- a limited range of recognised shots
- weak understanding of rules and scoring
- limited tactical application in competitive situations

Centres must ensure that badminton is played in an appropriate environment. This includes:
- fully marked badminton courts
- sufficient ceiling height to prevent interference with play
- regulation net height

Badminton should be cross moderated with other activities to ensure consistency of marking.

Athletics

Athletics was a significant concern across this series.

In some centres, all candidates were entered for the same athletics activity as their second sport, with limited differentiation in performance. Despite this, the range of marks awarded did not accurately reflect candidate ability.

In other centres, where a range of events was offered, performances were often generously marked. Candidates frequently did not demonstrate the level of skill, technique or performance required for higher marks.

Common issues included:
- lack of competitive environment
- candidates not performing over accurate distances or on appropriate facilities no recorded times or distances
- limited technical understanding
- marks awarded in Band 4 without meeting the required criteria
  Centres must ensure that athletics performances:
- take place in competitive conditions
- include accurate measurement of performance (times/distances)
- demonstrate appropriate technique and standard
- are cross moderated with other activities

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Table Tennis

Table tennis was observed across a number of centres. While there were some examples of good practice, the overall standard of performance was not particularly strong.

Candidates often showed:
- limited understanding of rules and scoring
- a restricted range of shots
- little tactical awareness in competitive situations

These factors limited candidates' ability to access higher mark bands. Centres must ensure that candidates demonstrate a broader range of shots and a clear understanding of the game in order to achieve higher marks.

Trampolining

Trampolining requires careful and accurate assessment and should be cross moderated with other activities. Performing a 10-bounce routine alone does not automatically demonstrate a high level of performance.

To access higher mark bands, candidates must show:
- control, precision and fluency
- appropriate height and technique
- inclusion of significantly challenging moves

Candidates must also perform their routines under competitive conditions. In some cases, performances were teacher-led, with instructions being given immediately prior to each skill. This does not reflect the independent performance required for valid assessment.

Administration and IAMIS

Centres are reminded of the importance of the accurate and timely use of the **IAMIS system.** All marks should be uploaded as close to the moderation date as possible and within the required one-week deadline, which also applies to the submission of video evidence from the moderation day.

Video footage must be clearly labelled to identify the activity being assessed. Where possible, centres should upload individual activity videos alongside the relevant candidate to support accurate identification.

It is essential that all additional materials provided to the moderator on the day are also uploaded to IAMIS. This includes:

- PE1 and PE2 documentation
- Candidate Authentication Sheets (CAS)
- all written coursework viewed during moderation (where applicable)
- candidate identification documentation

Clear, accurate and organised uploading will support the moderation process and reduce the need for follow-up communication.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

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 2240 4271
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/

Regional Rep Team

Our regional team covers all areas of England and can provide face-to-face and online advice at a time which is convenient to you.

Get in contact today and discover how our team can support you and your students.
Regional Support Team | Eduqas

Eduqas Qualifications

We are one the largest providers of qualifications for schools, academies, sixth form and further education colleges across England, offering valued qualifications to suit a range of abilities. Each and every one of our qualifications is carefully designed to engage students and to equip them for the next stage of their lives.

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

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026