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 unit.

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	WJEC 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.wjec.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 WJEC 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 unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.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	WJEC 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.wjec.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 WJEC 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 | WJEC

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Executive Summary

The overall qualification performance met expectations, although entry numbers were lower compared to 2024, with 15-year-old candidates comprising the majority of entries.

Unit 1: Written Examination

Performance in Unit 1 remained consistent with previous years, particularly among 16-year-old candidates. The paper was accessible to a wide range of abilities, with most candidates completing all questions. Its structure and level of difficulty were in line with previous series.

However, AO2 questions proved challenging for many, particularly the application of knowledge. Areas of difficulty included:

Comparing characteristics of fast- and slow-twitch muscle fibres

Explaining antagonistic muscle actions

Evaluating long-term effects of endurance training

To improve outcomes in AO2 and AO3 questions, centres are encouraged to use Item Level Data to inform targeted teaching and address specific knowledge gaps.

Unit 2: Non-Examination Assessment (NEA)

Assessment of practical activities was generally accurate. However, improvements are needed in:

- Documentation and administration.
- Uploading of practical evidence.
- Audio-visual recording quality on moderation day.

A wide variety of practical activities were performed, consistent with previous years. Mountain walking, weightlifting, and athletics increased in popularity, but require enhanced video evidence and more accurate assessment to meet standards.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION (SHORT COURSE)

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UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Unit

The paper catered for a wide range of abilities. Many candidates completed the paper and answered most of the questions.

Questions with the lowest facility factor, and therefore the most challenging for candidates included 1b(ii) (ff=0.08) 1c(ii) (ff=0.09) 2b(ii) (ff=0.08). Questions that were widely accessed by many candidates included 1a(i) (ff= 0.78) 2a(i) (ff=0.66) and 2c (ff=0.63)

The overall marks obtained needs to be improved upon by candidates having a greater in-depth knowledge of the theoretical content of the specification. Without this in-depth knowledge many candidates were unable to fully answer questions where theory had to be applied, for example, identifying methods of training, explaining the types of muscle contractions and analysing aerobic adaptations and their impact on sporting performance.

All centres would benefit from reinforcing the three assessments objectives and their weighting within the paper and the associated command words. Centres are also advised to utilise their own Item Level Data to refine teaching and learning strategies.

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Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 Question 1a(i) (ff= 0.78, mean = 0.8 out of 1) facilitated the best outcome for candidates.

(a) **(i)** Most candidates identified the correct source of energy you need to complete a marathon.

(ii) Many could justify their reasons for choosing carbohydrates. However, candidates who identified the incorrect source could not gain the marks for this question (ff=0.53).

(iii) Many candidates could not identify an appropriate method of training. Components of Fitness were manly given as an answer (ff=0.33).

(iv) Candidates that answered (iii) incorrectly could not access the marks for their explanation. It is vital that candidates read the question carefully to facilitate the correct response. Therefore, the mean and facility factor were low at 0.5 out of 2 and 0.24 respectively.

(b) **(i)** Most candidates placed the correct terms in the correct box, however, many candidates mixed up the zones (ff=0.54, mean = 2.1 out of 4).

(ii) This was a poorly answered question (ff= 0.08). Candidates did not have the knowledge of how threshold E was calculated.

(c) **(i)** Many candidates identified the correct muscles. However, a significant amount of candidates got the muscles the wrong way around (ff= 0.31).

(ii) This was one of the worst answered questions on the paper (ff=0.09, mean = 0.2 out of 2). Most candidates did not have the AO1 theoretical knowledge on types of muscle contractions.

(iii) Many candidates were able to name 2 functions of the skeletal body (ff=0.53).

(iv) Many candidates (ff= 0.42) showed good AO2 theoretical knowledge on the benefits of a cool down.

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Q.2 Question 2 produced one of the lowest facility factors on the paper (2b(ii) (ff= 0.08, mean = 0.5)

(a) **(i)** Most candidates were able to identify two main components of fitness for a javelin thrower (ff= 0.66). However, a number of candidates identified components that were not in the marking scheme. This had an effect on the following questions (mean = 1.3 out of 2).

(ii) & (iii) Despite many candidates correctly naming a test to measure the components identified in 2(a)(i), many candidates struggled to actually define the components. Marks were given to candidates if they defined an incorrect component (means = 0.6 out of 2 and 0.4 out of 1).

(b) **(i)** Many candidates identified long term adaptations as their answers (ff= 0.30).

(ii) This was the worst answered question in the paper. It was clear that most Candidates did not have the AO1 and AO2 theoretical knowledge of the aerobic adaptations they also struggled with the concept of analysing (AO3 command word) the impact on sporting performances (mean = 0.5 out of 6).

(c) This was answered well by most candidates. They showed good AO2 knowledge on the mental and social benefits of taking part in regular physical activity (ff= 0.63, mean = 2.5 out of 4).

Q.3 **(a)** **(i)** Many candidates could not correctly name the structures. Most candidates named the lungs correctly. Again, this shows a lacking in AO1 theoretical knowledge of the respiratory system (ff= 0.43).

(ii) Basic knowledge on the function of the gaseous exchange was evident in some answers (ff= 0.39). The best answers acknowledged that oxygen is breathed in and carbon dioxide breathed out.

(b) & (c) Many candidates attempted these questions, but with little reference on how technology could be used by a coach or to improve performance. The explanation aspect (AO2) was missing, they were just naming some examples of technology that could be used (3b ff= 0.47, mean = 1.9 out of 4.3c ff= 0.49, mean = 1.5 of 3).

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UNIT 2: THE ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Unit

The assessment objectives for Unit 2 are as follows:

- AO4 (50%) 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 56 and is worth 50% 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 56 marks (50%) 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.

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Comments on individual questions/sections

Administration

WJPE1 and WJPE2 forms

All WJPE1SC and WJPE2SC forms must be completed and submitted to the moderator by **1st March**. For moderations scheduled before this date, all paperwork must be sent to the moderator **at least two weeks prior** to the moderation. Each form should be clearly annotated, with the relevant activities appropriately identified. There has been an improvement in meeting deadlines, and it is encouraging to see that **more centres are now providing clear and accurate annotations** on both WJPE1SC and WJPE2SC forms. This increased attention to detail is having a positive impact on the moderation process, allowing moderators to verify marks more efficiently and accurately.

Clear annotations ensure greater transparency and help support fair and consistent assessment across all centres. It is encouraging to note **that few centres have been reported of adapting the WJPE1 and WJPE2 forms,** indicating growing awareness of the correct procedures. However, some centres are still not fully adhering to the **specific instructions** regarding how candidate information should be presented. On the **WJPE1SC form**, candidate numbers must be listed in **ascending order**. On the **WJPE2SC form**, candidate numbers must be listed in **rank order**. Following these instructions is essential to maintain consistency and ensure the moderation process runs smoothly.

Candidate Authentication Sheet (CAS)

There has been a noticeable improvement in the completion and submission of Candidate Authentication Sheets (CAS), with more centres ensuring that these are available to moderators alongside the WJPE forms. This progress supports a more efficient and compliant moderation process.

Each candidate must have an individual CAS form, which includes a clear breakdown of their practical performance profile, individual activity marks, and overall total. The declaration section must be **signed and dated by both the candidate and the teacher**, confirming that the assessment was conducted in line with WJEC regulations. Centres are also reminded to bring to each candidate's attention the **GDPR section** of the CAS. This provides important information regarding the use of audio-visual and written coursework by WJEC/EDUQAS for training and CPD purposes, ensuring candidates are fully informed and their data is handled appropriately.

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Practical Performance

Continued progress has been evident across centres in the development of performance tasks. Centres have increasingly demonstrated the ability to produce work that not only showcases candidates' access to key assessment characteristics but also supports a consistent and efficient moderation process. This progress reflects a growing confidence and competence in delivering high-quality performance skills. Furthermore, the collaborative planning between centres and moderators has played a vital role in ensuring a well-structured and effective moderation day.

However, there remain some activities that require further attention. In particular, greater consistency is needed through **internal standardisation** to ensure accuracy in assessment across all candidates. Additionally, some candidates would benefit from more **structured support** in collecting video evidence that clearly captures the required elements of performance. It is also important that all aspects of the **performance task are fully** met to provide a valid basis for assessment and moderation.

Mountain Walking

Although video evidence has improved it is still felt that candidates would benefit from more **structured support** when producing evidence. To fulfil the Mountain Walking performance task, the centre must ensure that each candidate completes a **mountain walk of at least 10km in** a challenging environment, such as rugged or mountainous terrain. During the activity, candidates must **demonstrate the application of relevant skills and techniques**, including map reading, compass use, pacing, and route planning, particularly when faced with pressure situations such as poor weather, fatigue, or route-finding errors.

Candidates should show emotional control, respond calmly to setbacks (e.g. losing the route), and make appropriate decisions under pressure. They must follow the accepted rules and conventions of mountain walking, including group safety procedures and codes such as the Countryside Code or Leave No Trace. Respect for the environment must also be demonstrated, for example by avoiding littering, staying on marked paths, and minimising disturbance to wildlife.

Centres are responsible for collecting appropriate evidence of performance, such as assessor observations, photographs, route maps, and reflective logs. While the walk can be completed individually or in a group, **each candidate's performance must be clearly identifiable for assessment purposes**.

*Once again it is important to note that evidence (images/video clip) alone of **Duke of Edinburgh expeditions is not enough to access the performance task.***

Weightlifting

Weightlifting has continued to grow in popularity as part of candidates' practical activity profiles during the series, with an increasing number of centres choosing to offer it. Centres have shown noticeable improvement in delivering this performance task, particularly in relation to safety considerations and providing an appropriate competitive context. Many now demonstrate an improved understanding of how to support candidates in performing lifts safely and effectively, under suitable supervision. Despite this progress, there remain areas for development. In several cases, candidates have only demonstrated one lift, which does not meet the **requirements of the performance task**.

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Centres are reminded that both the *snatch* and *clean and jerk* must be performed and evidenced, and this should take place within a competitive environment. Doing so allows candidates to fully demonstrate the physical characteristics, technical execution, and tactical and strategic understanding expected at this level. Weightlifting is a specialist activity and, as such, requires careful planning, appropriately qualified supervision, and adherence to safety protocols. Centres should ensure that candidates are adequately prepared and that all assessment conditions support the valid and reliable demonstration of performance.

Athletics

Centres have generally implemented performance tasks effectively, allowing candidates to demonstrate their athletic skills, techniques, and strategic awareness in competitive settings. In track events, assessment has been conducted with consistency and accuracy, enabling reliable judgments of candidates' ability to perform under pressure, maintain emotional control, and adhere to rules—such as holding their position before the starting gun or recovering composure after mid-race contact. However, there remains a notable lack of standardisation across field events. While some centres have marked generously, others have applied criteria too severely, particularly in events like javelin and discus, where technical execution—such as maintaining a controlled run-up and release in javelin or consistent form through all rounds in discus—is key to valid assessment.

To ensure fairness and comparability, it is essential that **standardisation be strengthened across all event** types, with clear benchmarks and consistent moderation to support the evaluation of performance across both track and field disciplines. It is recommended that, where possible, centres capture video evidence during Year 10 athletics competitions. This would provide a valuable reference point for assessment, particularly in demonstrating candidate performance in a live, competitive context. For those with access to such competitions video footage can offer clearer insights into technique and decision-making under pressure, helping to showcase candidates in a more accurate and supportive light.

Further guidance can be found in the performance skills section in the specification.

Use of IAMIS for Submitting Moderation Evidence – Support for Centres

In this series, the IAMIS system has been introduced as the central platform for uploading all video evidence recorded on moderation day, as well as any additional footage requested as part of the moderation sample. Centres undertaking **live moderation** are required to record all practical activities that take place on the day of moderation. It is important that this video evidence, along with the written NEA seen on the day, is uploaded to IAMIS **within one week** of the moderation taking place.

For **centres involved in remote moderation**, all requested materials must be uploaded **prior to the scheduled moderation day** to ensure smooth and timely access for moderators.

To streamline the process, all paperwork should be uploaded as a **single consolidated file**.

This file should include:

- WJPE1SC and WJPE2SC forms
- Candidate authentication sheets
- Candidate identification sheets
- Any other relevant materials used on the moderation day

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All audio-visual recordings must comprehensively capture **every activity undertaken during the moderation**, with each activity recorded in its entirety. The quality of the recordings must be **clear and high definition**, ensuring candidates are easily identifiable throughout.

Audio Visual Recording for Practical Moderation

As part of the regulatory requirements for practical moderation, all centres are reminded of the expectation to submit high-quality audio-visual recordings of all practical performance's activities seen or requested by the moderator. These recordings serve as critical evidence for activities observed on moderation day and are an essential part of the assessment process.

In preparation for the 2026 series, centres must ensure that **every activity is fully and clearly captured on video**. This is not only a regulatory obligation but also a key element in ensuring accurate and fair assessment of candidates. It is imperative that each recording meets the highest quality standards to support effective moderation.

Expectations and Best Practices:

- **Comprehensive Coverage:** Each video must clearly capture the **entire context of the activity**, for example, a full 15 v 15 Rugby match. Footage must clearly identify the characteristics of the marks awarded by the centre for each candidate being moderated in the video.
- **Candidate Identification:** Each recording must be accompanied by a **Candidate Identification Sheet**. The footage should allow for easy and consistent recognition of each candidate throughout the performance. This enables moderators to confidently attribute performance to the correct individual.
- **Video Quality:** The video must be of **sufficient resolution and clarity** to allow moderators to observe key performance details. Blurred or pixelated recordings, as well as poor lighting or excessive background noise, can severely hinder the moderation process and may result in the evidence being deemed unusable.
- **Camera Positioning:** Strategic camera placement is essential, particularly for activities with fixed camera setups such as Badminton. For example, if courts are distant from the camera, candidates may become indistinguishable. Moderators have highlighted ongoing issues with visibility and identification on such recordings, making accurate judgments difficult.
- **Consistency Across Centres:** While some centres have submitted exemplary video evidence in previous series, this **level of quality is expected from all centres** going forward.

By adhering to these expectations, centres will help ensure a fair and efficient moderation process, upholding the integrity and quality of practical assessments.

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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@wjec.co.uk
Qualification webpage: GCSE Physical Education (Short Course) | WJEC

See other useful contacts here: Useful Contacts | WJEC

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.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/

WJEC Qualifications

As Wales' largest awarding body, WJEC supports its education community by providing trusted bilingual qualifications, specialist support, and reliable assessment to schools and colleges across the country. This allows our learners to reach their full potential.

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