GCE Examiners' Report

Physical Education

GCE

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 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.
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Executive Summary

Overall performance across the qualification was positive, with candidates demonstrating secure knowledge and understanding across both examined and non-examined components. Performance was broadly comparable with previous series, and assessments successfully differentiated across the full ability range. A consistent theme across Units 1 and 3 was that candidates generally demonstrated stronger AO1 knowledge and understanding than AO2 application and AO3 analysis and evaluation. Candidates who successfully linked theoretical concepts to practical sporting contexts and developed balanced evaluative responses achieved the highest marks.

Unit 1 & 3: Exploring and Evaluating Physical Education

Across both examined units, candidates demonstrated strong knowledge and understanding of exercise physiology, training methods, skill acquisition, sports psychology and socio-cultural influences on participation. Performance was typically strongest on shorter AO1 recall and explanation questions, where candidates showed secure understanding of key concepts such as laboratory testing, physiological adaptations, energy systems, aggression, and factors influencing participation in sport.

Candidates also demonstrated strengths in data interpretation, performance analysis and the application of theoretical concepts when questions provided clear sporting contexts. Extended responses often contained good subject knowledge and relevant examples. The principal area for improvement was AO2 application and AO3 analysis and evaluation. Many candidates understood concepts such as transfer of learning, personality theories, food fuel usage, commercialisation, cognitive dissonance and participation factors, but did not consistently apply their knowledge to the specific demands of the question. Extended responses frequently lacked balanced discussion, counterarguments, detailed analysis or justified conclusions. Centres should continue to develop examination technique, particularly the interpretation of command words and the application of theoretical content to sporting scenarios.

Units 2 & 4: Improving & Refining Personal Performance (NEA)

Assessment and moderation outcomes were generally positive, with most centres demonstrating good organisation and accurate application of marking criteria. Practical performances were appropriately assessed in the majority of cases, with many candidates performing at Band 4 or above. Coaching and officiating evidence was also generally strong, particularly where candidates demonstrated effective communication, organisation, decision-making and subject knowledge.

The Personal Performance Profile (PPP) and Investigative Research components continued to show strengths in self-analysis, performance profiling and the use of performance data. Many candidates effectively used fitness testing, performance analysis and coach feedback to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The main area for development across both coursework elements remains evaluation. While candidates could often identify weaknesses and establish targets, many found it more difficult to evaluate progress, justify programme adaptations and make detailed recommendations linked to their original analysis. Centres should continue to develop candidates' evaluative skills and ensure that coursework annotations clearly demonstrate where assessment criteria have been met.

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Administrative standards were generally high. Centres are reminded to continue following moderation protocols, ensure all evidence is clearly labelled on IAMIS, maintain clear candidate identification throughout video evidence, and submit recordings and supporting documentation within the required timescales.

Preparing for Future Series

Across the qualification, candidates perform best when demonstrating knowledge and understanding but are less successful when required to apply, analyse and evaluate in detail. Centres should focus on developing examination technique, contextual application of theory, balanced evaluative responses, and the effective use of evidence within coursework.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GCE

Summer 2026

UNIT 1: EXPLORING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Unit

The WJEC AS Physical Education examination assesses knowledge, understanding and application across three key areas of the specification: exercise physiology, performance analysis and training; sports psychology; and skill acquisition. Candidates are required to demonstrate their understanding of theoretical concepts within these areas, apply their knowledge to sporting situations and performers, and analyse and evaluate factors that influence performance and participation in physical activity and sport. Questions may assess a range of skills, including explanation, interpretation of performance data, application to practical examples, and critical evaluation of training methods, psychological theories, and learning processes.

The performance of candidates in this series highlighted a recurring theme across a number of questions: many candidates possessed sound subject knowledge but struggled to apply or evaluate that knowledge in the context required by the question. Centres should continue to place emphasis on developing examination techniques alongside content knowledge.

The WJEC AS Physical Education examination assesses candidates across three Assessment Objectives, with 24 marks allocated to each AO. AO1 assesses knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin performance and participation in physical activity and sport, requiring accurate recall and explanation of key concepts and theories. AO2 assesses the application of this knowledge to sporting situations and contexts, rewarding candidates who can make clear links between theory and practice. AO3 assesses candidates' ability to analyse and evaluate, requiring them to consider the effectiveness of concepts, strategies, and approaches, and make justified judgements.

The overall performance of this assessment was comparable with the previous series, with a broadly similar spread of candidate achievement. Overall, the assessment differentiated effectively across the ability range.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 (a) This question required candidates to analyse data presented in a graph showing lactate thresholds. Candidates were expected to interpret the information provided and explain the effects of training on lactate threshold, making explicit reference to the data in the figure to support their analysis. With an attempt rate of 99.8% and a facility factor of 0.67, the question proved to be accessible for almost all candidates. Most candidates demonstrated strong analytical skills and were able to accurately interpret the trends shown, applying their knowledge effectively to analyse the impact of training on lactate threshold.

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(b) Candidates needed to outline one advantage and one disadvantage of laboratory-based testing. With an attempt rate of 99.9% and a facility factor of 0.92, this was the most accessible question on the paper. Performance was generally very strong, with most candidates demonstrating secure knowledge and understanding of the topic. The most common valid responses identified the high levels of accuracy and control associated with laboratory testing as an advantage, and the cost of equipment and facilities as a disadvantage. These responses were often developed sufficiently to secure full marks. These responses were often developed sufficiently to secure full marks.

(c) This question assessed candidates' understanding of the impact of a cool down on the removal and fate of lactic acid. With an attempt rate of 99.0% and a facility factor of 0.49, the question was of moderate difficulty and differentiated effectively between candidates of different abilities. An AO1 mark was awarded for demonstrating secure knowledge and understanding of a cool down, which many candidates were able to do successfully.

Higher-achieving candidates explained how maintaining an elevated heart rate and blood flow during a cool down increases oxygen transport to the muscles, thereby accelerating recovery and facilitating the removal of lactic acid. The most successful responses also demonstrated knowledge of the fate of lactic acid through the Cori cycle, which was required to access the highest marks.

Weaker candidates often described the general removal of lactic acid following exercise without specifically linking this process to the effects of a cool down and therefore did not fully address the demands of the question. Others demonstrated limited knowledge of the fate of lactic acid, with few making accurate reference to the Cori cycle.

Q.2 **(a)** **(i)** Candidates needed to identify joints, movements and the lever systems operating at the knee and wrist joints. With an attempt rate of 99.9% and a facility factor of 0.52, the item was of moderate difficulty. A strength of responses was candidates' ability to understand the knee joint more effectively than the wrist joint. However, many candidates were unable to identify the correct order of lever operating at the knee joint, which limited their overall performance and prevented access to full marks.

(ii) This question assessed candidates' ability to describe the antagonistic muscle action in relation to the figure showing the knee in extension. With an attempt rate of 98.6% and a facility factor of 0.52, the item was of moderate difficulty. Higher-achieving candidates were able to describe the agonist and antagonist involved in the movement and apply key terminology associated with antagonistic muscle action accurately. Weaker responses either referred to other joints within the leg or were limited to a basic description of antagonistic muscle action, with little reference to the movement shown in the figure. Consequently, these responses did not fully meet the demands of the question.

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Q.3 **(a)** Candidates needed to outline the three planes of motion and provide specific examples of sporting actions that occur within each plane. With an attempt rate of 98.4% and a facility factor of 0.62, the item was accessible to most candidates. It was not sufficient to simply name the planes; candidates were also required to outline the direction of movement associated with each plane.

Stronger responses accurately outlined the planes and supported their answers with appropriate sporting examples and directional descriptions. Weaker responses tended to name the planes without providing sufficient detail regarding the direction of movement, limiting their ability to access full marks.

Very few candidates used the term horizontal plane, with transverse plane being the more commonly used term. Both terms were accepted.

(b) Candidates were required to outline a method of flexibility training. With an attempt rate of 98.6% and a facility factor of 0.55, the item was of moderate difficulty. Many weaker candidates referred only to general stretching, which was sufficient to gain one mark. Higher-achieving candidates were able to identify a specific flexibility training method, such as PNF stretching or passive stretching, and provide an accurate outline of how the method is performed.

Stronger responses demonstrated both knowledge of the specific training method and an understanding of the procedures involved, enabling them to access the higher mark bands.

Q.4 **(a)** This question assessed candidates' ability to assess how transfer of learning affects the acquisition of new skills. Although attempted by 98.8% of candidates, the facility factor of 0.58 indicated that the question provided a suitable level of challenge while remaining accessible to the majority. AO1 marks were awarded for knowledge and understanding of the different types of transfer, and many candidates demonstrated secure knowledge in this area.

The assessment element of the question required candidates to focus on the impact that transfer has on learning new skills. Weaker responses tended to describe the various types of transfer without considering their effect on skill acquisition, limiting access to the higher mark bands.

Stronger responses were able to apply their knowledge directly to the question and assess how different forms of transfer influence learning. In particular, the most effective answers made accurate use of retroactive, proactive and bilateral transfer to support their assessment. However, this level of application and evaluation was relatively uncommon.

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(b) This question was attempted by 99.4% of candidates and had a facility factor of 0.68, indicating that the question was accessible to most candidates. The question required candidates to explain why the ATP-PC (creatine phosphate) energy system is the predominant energy system used during speed-based activities.

Higher achieving candidates were able to relate the characteristics of the ATP-PC energy system directly to the component of fitness, speed. These responses demonstrated a clear understanding of how the system provides energy rapidly and is therefore suited to short-duration, high-intensity activities.

To access the top band, candidates needed to make explicit links between the ATP-PC energy system and speed performance, highlighting that the system can break down energy stores very quickly, enabling maximal effort to be sustained for a short period.

(c) This question was attempted by 99.8% of candidates and had a facility factor of 0.46, indicating that the question provided an appropriate level of challenge. The question required candidates to assess food fuel usage for an endurance performer. Although a marathon runner was provided as an example, candidates were not required to refer specifically to marathon running, provided their response was linked to an endurance activity.

AO2 marks were accessible through explaining the importance of different fuel sources, particularly carbohydrates and fats. This was a common strength, with many candidates demonstrating a sound understanding of the role these fuels play during endurance performance. Candidates were often able to explain that carbohydrates provide energy for exercise and that fats are an important fuel source during longer-duration activities.

The assessment element proved more challenging, which is reflected in the lower facility factor of 0.46. While many candidates assessed carbohydrate loading and hydration strategies effectively, fewer were able to assess why carbohydrates are the preferred fuel source during endurance exercise compared with fats. Stronger responses recognised that carbohydrates can be broken down and used more quickly to produce ATP, making them more suitable for higher-intensity endurance efforts, whereas fats provide a larger but slower-released energy supply.

As a result, many responses lacked the depth of assessment required to access the highest marks.

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Q.5 **(a)** There are no significant areas to highlight for this question.

(b) This question was attempted by 99.4% of candidates and had a facility factor of 0.73, indicating that the question was accessible to the majority of candidates. The question required candidates to explain how the plateau effect can be avoided when learning a new skill.

An AO1 mark was available for demonstrating knowledge and understanding of what the plateau effect is. The remaining AO2 marks were awarded for explaining strategies to overcome or avoid the plateau effect, rather than simply describing its consequences.

Common responses included breaking the skill down into smaller parts and making practice more enjoyable or varied. While these approaches were often identified correctly, stronger responses developed these points by explaining how such strategies would maintain motivation, increase engagement, improve learning, and enable the performer to continue making progress.

Higher-level candidates were able to make clear links between the strategy used and its impact on skill acquisition and continued improvement. These responses demonstrated a deeper understanding of how appropriate practice methods can help performers overcome periods where progress appears to slow.

(c) This question was attempted by 99.1% of candidates and had a facility factor of 0.40, indicating that it was a challenging question for many candidates. The question required candidates to analyse, with reference to the interactionist theory, how personality may impact sporting performance.

Overall, this question was not answered well by many candidates. Successful responses needed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the interactionist theory and apply this theory to sporting situations by analysing how personality traits and environmental factors interact to influence performance.

While many candidates were able to explain the interactionist theory accurately, they often failed to develop their answers by analysing the impact this interaction has on sporting performance. A common weakness was that candidates simply described different personality types without making clear reference to the interactionist theory. As a result, these responses lacked the application and analysis required by the question.

The low facility factor of 0.40 reflects the difficulty candidates had in moving beyond recall of personality theories and applying their knowledge to performance situations. It was evident that many candidates did not fully address the specific demands of the question and instead relied on general knowledge of personality.

Stronger responses applied the interactionist theory directly to sporting examples and analysed how the interaction between inherited personality characteristics and situational factors, such as the environment or competitive pressure, can influence performance outcomes.

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Q.6 (c) This question was attempted by 99.9% of candidates and had a facility factor of 0.64, indicating that the question was accessible to most candidates and allowed a wide range of responses. This question required candidates to discuss the economic and social factors that influence participation in sport. A range of assessment objectives were assessed within this extended-response question.

AO1 knowledge of social and cultural factors was generally very strong and reflected the expected standard of AS level candidates. Many responses demonstrated a broad understanding of the factors affecting participation, particularly through discussions of opportunity, provision and esteem. This knowledge was often supported by secure AO2 application and explanation, resulting in many well-developed responses.

The AO3 element was generally weaker. The majority of responses focused on areas of social differentiation within the specification, including gender, race, social class and disability. Time and financial constraints were also common themes. Candidates frequently referenced strategies aimed at increasing participation, such as Kick It Out and This Girl Can, using these examples effectively to support their arguments.

A common limitation was the lack of counter argument or alternative viewpoints within the discussion. Candidates who failed to consider opposing perspectives were unable to fully develop the discussive element of their response and, consequently, missed opportunities to access the highest AO3 marks. The facility factor of 0.64 reflects that while many candidates demonstrated sound knowledge and application, the discussive demands of the question provided greater challenge.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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UNIT 2: IMPROVING PERSONAL PERFORMANCE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Unit

Unit 2 is a Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) accounting for 16% of the full qualification (or 40% of AS). It includes three key components:

- Practical performance in one activity (as a player/performer)
- Performance as a coach or official (with coaching remaining the preferred choice)
- A Personal Performance Profile (PPP)

Moderation in 2026:

- Most centres opted for live moderation. Some smaller centres used remote moderation via video evidence uploaded to IAMIS.
- CPD and early communication with appointed moderators effectively prepared centres for the correct protocols.
- The majority of candidates were accurately assessed, and moderation days were well organised.

Key Reminders for Centres:

- Advance Notification: Please inform moderators in advance of any candidate absences and have a contingency plan in place.
- Filming Requirement: The entire live moderation day must be recorded and submitted within one week of the completion of the moderation.
- Moderator Communication: Ongoing dialogue with moderators is encouraged to ensure a smooth and effective moderation process.
- When uploading to IAMIS, please ensure to label all evidence accurately so that it is easy to identify.
- Centres are reminded to ensure that candidates are easy to identify in all cases of uploaded video evidence.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Practical Performance

Assessment of practical activities continues to improve with nearly all assessments in the correct band. The most effective evidence included video footage of the candidate in a variety of Rich Tasks / competitive situations. Major games are still the most popular activities. Application of assessment criteria in these activities was largely accurate with the majority of candidates placed in the correct band. Most candidates assessed were in Band 4 or the top of Band 3. Very few candidates were assessed as being in Band 2 or lower.

Centres are once again reminded to arrange for candidates to perform in the best facilities possible to allow them to clearly evidence where they have accessed marks. The most effective centres had pre-organised bibs or numbers to ensure that candidates were easily recognisable before the activities had started. They also provided these identification lists to the moderator at the start of the day to ensure a fast and effective programme. Centres are also encouraged to ensure that all video evidence clearly shows where and why candidates have accessed certain marks.

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Centres are also reminded that all video evidence (including any video recordings on the day) ensures that candidates are clearly identified. The video footage should be accompanied with player ID lists when uploading evidence onto IAMIS.

Coaching / Officiating

Coaching remains the preferred option for nearly all candidates. Candidates assessed as being in the top band delivered progressive sessions demonstrating excellent communication, appropriate organisational skills, and high-quality feedback. The assessment of coaching was largely accurate.

Candidates who opted to officiate tended to regularly officiate at school and in the wider community. Most of these candidates were secure in the correct application of rules, movement around the field of play and the use of correct hand signals etc.

Candidates being assessed in off-site activities should ensure that they have appropriate video evidence of their coaching/officiating to support the mark awarded. Centres are reminded to ensure that candidates can be clearly seen and heard during the filming of all coaching / officiating sessions.

Personal Performance Profile (PPP)

Assessment of the Personal Performance Profile (PPP) was generally accurate in terms of banding and standardisation. The majority of candidate work was assessed as being at the top of Band 2/bottom of Band 3.

Once again, a small minority of candidates struggled to produce any quantitative data (mainly due to performing at a lower level). This was often due to the nature of the sport/ activity itself. Some centres overcame this issue by getting candidates to include objective data e.g. fitness or skill test results and performance analysis statistics, along with informative coach feedback. They used this information to set appropriate SMART targets which usually included technical and physical fitness targets. Candidates at the top end applied the relevant theory when justifying their target selection.

Centres are reminded to annotate candidates' Personal Performance Profiles to highlight where marks have been awarded and the assessment criteria has been applied.

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UNIT 3: EVALUATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Unit

This component comprised five questions with a range of sub-questions carrying between 2 and 20 marks, incorporating both short and extended response. A balanced assessment of AO1, AO2 and AO3 skills was evident throughout.

Overall, the paper was accessible and provided appropriate opportunities for candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, application and analytical skills. Coverage across the specification was broad, and responses suggested that most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of the subject content. Performance was generally strongest on the shorter-response questions, including Questions 1(b)(i), 2(b) and 4(a), where candidates achieved mean marks of 2.2/3, 2.4/3 and 1.5/2 respectively.

Stronger responses were characterised by a clear focus on the requirements of the question, particularly in the application AO2 items (notably 2(c), 2(d) and 4(b)) and the extended AO3 responses in Questions 3(c) and 5. These candidates demonstrated secure subject knowledge, applied concepts effectively to the given context and constructed well-reasoned responses that addressed the demands of the command words.

Responses demonstrating more limited achievement often reflected confusion between key concepts or only partial understanding of the question requirements, particularly in Questions 2(c) and 4(d)(ii). Question 2(c) proved particularly challenging, with a mean mark of 1.6 out of 4, while candidates also found Question 4(d)(ii) demanding, achieving a mean mark of 2.8 out of 6. In some cases, responses lacked sufficient depth or failed to apply knowledge effectively to the context provided. There was also evidence that some candidates were less successful in interpreting the demands of the extended response questions, particularly Questions 3(c) and 5.

A small proportion of candidates did not attempt all questions, limiting opportunities to demonstrate the full range of their skills and knowledge. Questions 2(c) and 2(d) had the lowest attempt rates on the paper (both 93.3%), suggesting that candidates found this section more challenging than others. However, attempt rates across the remainder of the paper was consistently high, indicating strong engagement with the assessment overall.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1 comprised five questions from Topic 3.1 of the specification and included both AO1 and AO2 assessment objectives.

Q.1 (a) Most candidates successfully applied the ‘identify’ command word, reflected in a mean mark of 1.4 out of 2. Marks varied according to the accuracy of knowledge relating to short-term responses of the respiratory system.

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(b) **(i) & (ii)** Similar to Question 1(a), most candidates recognised the need to provide three long-term adaptations and their effect on performance. Marks differed according to the accuracy of adaptations identified and their relevance to the musculoskeletal system.

(c) This was one of the most challenging questions AO1 (3 marks). Candidates who simply listed the stages of carbohydrate loading were limited in the marks available. Higher-scoring responses outlined the stages clearly, demonstrating an understanding of the command word requirements.

(d) AO1 (4 marks)- many candidates scored 3/4 marks. The higher-scoring candidates linked how the supplements improved performance.

Question 2 comprised four questions from Topics 3.1 and 3.2 of the specification and included both AO1 and AO2 assessment objectives.

Q.2 **(a) & (b)** AO1 (6 marks) performed well, with candidates clearly having knowledge in fluid resistance and drag.

(c) This was one of the more demanding questions on the paper, with a mean mark of 1.6 out of 4 and one of the lowest attempt rates (93.3%). The question required candidates to explain how spin is applied within the context of tennis. Higher scoring responses demonstrated accurate knowledge of how spin is generated before applying this knowledge to tennis situations. Lower-scoring responses either lacked technical accuracy or focused solely on tennis examples without explaining how spin is applied.

(d) One of the most challenging questions AO2 (4 marks) attribution theory. Candidates generally have some knowledge of the theory but could not apply the theory to how it could be used by a coach.

Question 3 comprised three questions from Topics 3.3 and 3.4 and assessed AO1, AO2 and AO3 skills.

Q.3 **(a) & (b)** AO2 (12 marks) both linked to information processing, many candidates scored half marks and lost marks for not referring to Figure 3 or failed to provide examples.

(c) This 10-mark AO3 question was generally accessible, with a mean mark of 5.5 out of 10. Higher-scoring responses demonstrated balanced analysis supported by relevant knowledge and application. Lower-scoring responses often lacked sufficient discussion detail or did not fully address the requirements of the command word.

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Question 4 comprised five questions from Topic 3.3 of the specification and included AO1, AO2 and AO3 assessment objectives.

Q.4 **(a)** This question was answered well overall, with a mean mark of 1.5 out of 2. While some candidates showed confusion between the two types of aggression, most were able to successfully contrast them.

(b) Candidates generally performed well, achieving a mean mark of 2.6 out of 4. Higher-scoring responses explained at least two theories of aggression in appropriate detail. Lower-scoring responses tended to provide limited explanation or focused on only one theory.

(c) This was a very accessible question with many scoring 3/4 marks. Candidates demonstrated knowledge of the strategies a coach would use to control aggressive behaviour.

(d) **(i)** Many candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of the triadic model.

(ii) This was one of the more challenging questions on the paper, with a mean mark of 2.8 out of 6. Candidates were required to analyse cognitive dissonance theory and persuasive communication theory. Responses that analysed only one method, or demonstrated inaccurate understanding of one of the theories, were unable to progress beyond the lower bands.

Q.5 was the 20-mark extended-response question and primarily assessed AO3 skills, while also allowing candidates to demonstrate AO1 knowledge and AO2 application. The question was generally well attempted (99.3% attempt rate), with a mean mark of 10.7 out of 20. Stronger responses provided a balanced and sustained discussion, supported by accurate knowledge and relevant application. Lower scoring responses tended to be descriptive rather than analytical and often lacked the depth required to access the higher bands.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GCE

Summer 2026

UNIT 4: REFINING PERSONAL PERFORMANCE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overview of the Unit

The NEA is worth 24% of the full qualification (40% of the AS qualification). It comprises of the following areas:

- Practical performance in one activity as a player/performer, coach or official.
- Investigative Research.

Moderation in 2026

In 2026, most centres opted for live practical moderation days. Some smaller centres opted for a remote moderation and uploaded video evidence to IAMIS.
Centres are becoming more informed and aware of the protocols for both live and remote moderation. Most centres followed correct protocol and ensured effective organisation of the live and remote moderation days. Most candidates continue to be accurately assessed.

Key Reminders for Centres:

- Centres are reminded that the moderator should, whenever possible, be informed prior to the day of candidates who are unable to participate in/attend the moderation.
- Centres are also reminded of the need to film the live moderation day in its entirety and then submit this film within a week of the moderation taking place.
- Centres are encouraged to maintain communication with moderators to ensure a smooth and effective moderation process.
- When uploading to IAMIS, please ensure to label all evidence accurately so that it is easy to identify.
- Centres are reminded to ensure that candidates are easy to identify in all cases of uploaded video evidence.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Practical Performance (Performer / Coach / Official)

Assessment of practical activities continues to improve in accuracy with nearly all assessments in the correct band. Most candidates chose to be examined in the role of performer. As was the case in Unit 2 there were many outstanding performers who secured marks at the highest level. Most candidates were assessed as being in Band 5 or towards the top of Band 4. For off-site activities, the most effective evidence included video footage of the candidate in a variety of competitive situations. Teachers' assessments were generally accurate with marking criteria correctly applied.

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Centres should try to arrange for candidates to perform in the best facilities possible to allow them to perform at their optimum level on moderation day. The most effective centres had pre-organised bibs or numbers to ensure that candidates were easily recognisable before the activities had started. They also provided these lists to the moderator at the start of the day to ensure a fast and effective programme. Centres are encouraged to ensure that any video evidence clearly shows where and why candidates have accessed certain marks and that it is authenticated within the qualification start date.

A small minority of candidates elected to be assessed as coaches or officials. Generally, these candidates had been coaching or officiating for a significant amount of time, and many held several qualifications to support their marks. The majority of these candidates coach or officiate regularly, either in a school setting e.g. extra-curricular activities/assisting with the coaching of school teams, or coaching / officiating activities in clubs within the wider community. The most effective sessions were well-planned, demonstrated excellent subject knowledge and were delivered with excellent communication skills. Aims of the sessions were clear, organisation was effective with smooth transitions between activities and constructive feedback was also given. As a result, a significant number of candidates had been assessed as being in the top of Band 4 or in Band 5.

Centres are reminded to ensure that the video recording of the day allows candidates and their performances to be clearly identified (both from a visual and auditory perspective). The video footage should also be accompanied with player ID lists / team sheets when uploading evidence onto IAMIS.

Investigative Research

In 2026, the strongest aspect of candidates' work was once again the initial self-analysis of their performance. Many candidates used a combination of fitness testing, coach feedback and performance/notational analysis to produce a sound analysis of their current performance, whilst also providing appropriate quantitative data.

The majority of centres are getting more effective at helping students to generate quantitative data. The evaluation aspect of the project continues to be an area that candidates find the most challenging. Centres are reminded to ensure that the evaluation section links closely to the initial analysis of performance.

A small number of centres failed to annotate candidates' work. The centres that provided detailed annotations were generally more accurate in the application of assessment criteria. All centres are encouraged to annotate candidates' Investigative Research projects. Annotation should clearly highlight where marks have been awarded and where the assessment criteria has been applied.

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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 2240 4271**
Email: **physicaleducation@wjec.co.uk**
Qualification webpage: https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/physical-education-gcse/ -tab_keydocuments

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