



Course report 2025

Higher Physical Education

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

For information about the performance, which is internally assessed, please refer to the 2024–25 Qualification Verification Summary Report on the [subject page](#) of our website.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2025 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 11,664

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 12,660

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	3,095	24.4	24.4	70
B	4,147	32.8	57.2	60
C	3,691	29.2	86.4	50
D	1,381	10.9	97.3	40
No award	346	2.7	100	Not applicable

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- 'most' means greater than or equal to 70%
- 'many' means 50% to 69%
- 'some' means 25% to 49%
- 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper

The question paper performed as expected.

Feedback from team leaders and markers indicated that the paper was accessible as almost all candidates accessed marks. Some questions were more challenging; however, overall candidates were able to access marks when they attempted to answer the questions.

The paper assessed a range of mandatory content. Most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge across this range of content.

When candidates were required to demonstrate higher order thinking skills, for example evaluate or analyse questions, they struggled to provide the required depth in their responses.

Evidence gathered through item analysis confirmed that a few questions proved challenging, where many candidates picked up very few marks. This led to the average mark of the paper decreasing slightly.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper

Section 1 of the paper sampled from all four factors impacting performance and included a wide range of questions relating to the course mandatory content.

Candidate performance varied across each question and each factor.

In section 2, there were opportunities for candidates to reflect on work they would have carried out as part of the performance development process in the course. Candidates were asked to describe strengths and development needs across two different factors. They were asked to identify changes made to their personal development plan. Candidates were then asked to evaluate the impact of the changes described. Most candidates performed better on questions requiring description and identification than on those requiring evaluation.

In section 3 of the question paper, candidates were presented with two tables outlining the performance demands of different types of activities across two factors and were expected to analyse the performance demands in relation to the stated factors, with particular reference being made to the type of activity provided in the table. Many candidates did not attempt this section. When candidates attempted this section, feedback from team leaders and markers indicated that questions were answered poorly, especially the analysis questions. Most candidates' attempts to analyse the performance demands did not meet the analytical depth required to access any marks.

Areas that candidates performed well in

In section 1, most candidates performed well in the description questions. Most answers were well structured and provided a depth of descriptive features and characteristics. Most candidates were able to access marks in question 1(a) and 1(b) when describing methods for collecting qualitative and quantitative data for physical

factors. Many candidates were confident in describing approaches for developing social factors in question 3(a).

In question 6(b), it was clear that most candidates had an understanding of what should be considered when receiving and/or giving feedback.

In section 2, most candidates were able to identify changes to their Personal Development Plan (PDP).

In section 3, most candidates were able to describe an appropriate approach for question 10(a) which could be used to develop emotional factors for an individual activity.

Areas that candidates found demanding

It was clear from the candidate responses that many candidates struggled to demonstrate the depth of knowledge needed to achieve high marks in questions requiring higher order thinking skills.

In section 1, question 1(c), only a few candidates made clear the importance of combining qualitative and quantitative data when identifying development needs for physical factors. Many candidates were able to explain the importance of each type of data in isolation but did not show their knowledge of combining data types to inform next steps.

In question 2(c), many candidates struggled to explain the impact social factors could have on physical factors. This was due to a self-limiting choice of social factor, which could not impact the physical factor chosen. For example, communication impacting stamina.

Also, in section 1, question 5, many candidates did not demonstrate enough understanding of development principles when producing a PDP for mental factors. It was clear that some candidates failed to make the link between the planning phase of PDP production and the implementation phase.

In section 2, question 7(a) and 7(b), many candidates identified their strengths and development needs but did not provide a sufficient description to access marks.

In question 8(b) many candidates did not provide sufficient evidence to support their evaluation of the changes identified in question 8(a). Most evaluations lacked substantiations and did not make the connection to the impact on the performance development process.

In section 3, many candidates did not attempt questions 9(a) and 9(b). Of the candidates who attempted this section, most responses provided a brief explanation of some of the performance demands of different activities without clear insight into how these could be further analysed through either an individual or team/group activity. Many candidates did not identify any activities in their responses that could have supported their analysis.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Centres should ensure candidates develop a breadth and depth of knowledge across all areas of mandatory content. It is clear that when a candidate has experienced these areas in a practical context, their responses are enhanced.

In light of performance in this question paper, candidates should review their understanding of:

- how qualitative and quantitative data can be combined to enhance the analysis of performance
- how social factors can possibly impact physical factors
- how to provide sufficient evidence to support judgements when answering evaluate questions
- the reasons to reset goals across all factors
- development principles to be considered when planning performance development for all four factors
- the performance demands of different types of activities and how these demands can impact performance in different contexts

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

Our main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and to maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, we aim to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, we hold a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of our Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. We can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).