



A-Level **Physical Education**

7582/1

Report on the examination

Version: 1.0
June 2025

Further copies of this report are available from aqa.org.uk

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

General comments

The mean mark for this paper, in the region of 50 marks, was higher than that in 2024 which was approximately 45.7 marks, continuing an upwards trend from approximately 43.5 in 2023. This mean is now back above the pre Covid high of 47 which was achieved in 2019. This is a positive as this was generally considered to be a difficult paper both anecdotally and based on the inclusion of two synoptic questions, 3 AO3 short answer questions, and two 15-mark quantitative questions. This combination arose due to limitations in the item banking paper construction model.

The mean marks for each section of the paper were approximately:

Section A = 16.4 (13.6 in 2024)

Section B = 17.5 (15 in 2024)

Section C = 15.5 (17.2 in 2024)

Both Section A and Section B had a notable increase in the mean mark from 2024 to 2025. The drop off in the mean mark for Section B appears to be due to students finding questions 18, 19, and 20 challenging.

Students appear to be continuing to manage their time more effectively. They continue to be more concise, specifically addressing the question set, when answering extended response questions.

While there was little evidence of students missing out questions across the paper generally, questions 4 (4.1 and 4.2) and 10.2 stand out in this regard. Between 3.5% and 5% did not attempt to answer these questions. This suggests there may be weakness in the knowledge and understanding of PNF and the DCR process.

Multiple choice questions were accessible across the paper as only 2 questions fell outside of the 0.65 to 1.00 mean mark range, where last year it was 4. These questions did not discriminate well with all having a discrimination score below the minimum desired level of 0.35. These questions are deliberately accessible to a wider range of students, and it is not always the highest performing students who are able to access the mark available.

The main area for improvement across the paper continues to be students' ability to access AO3 marks, where they are required to analyse or evaluate. They often lack the required depth of analysis and breadth of evaluation to access higher marks on these questions. This is particularly the case in short answer AO3 questions where AO1 and AO2 content is not credited, exposing students' lack of AO3.

Section A

Question 3

Question 3 was generally answered well with students understanding the need to describe and not just state the mechanisms. This resulted in a mean score in the region of 1.75. Skeletal muscle pump, respiratory pump, and valves were the most common responses. Student most often lost marks due to an inability to describe how the respiratory pump works, not being able to link it to changes in volume or pressure in the thoracic cavity. Suction pump of the heart and smooth muscle were seen much less often.

Question 4.1 and 4.2

Mean marks of 1.14 and 1.17 respectively show that students either knew both or neither which is understandable given the closely linked nature of the questions. It is enforced as the most common error was to mix up the answers, linking the wrong proprioceptor to the wrong stage of PNF in both responses. Where students were able to identify the correct proprioceptor, they were very often able to explain the role with only a limited number of students achieving 1 mark for either question.

Question 5

As with the majority of AO3 short answer question students found this challenging. This is reflected in a mean score of around 0.9. However, this was pulled down by nearly 50% of students who attempted the question being awarded 0 marks. When students were able to access marks over 30% achieved 2 or 3. Most commonly students did not analyse in enough detail by highlighting the role that vasodilation and vasoconstriction play in the redistribution of blood. Answers which only generally referred to redistribution without links to these key terms (or the role of precapillary sphincters) were not credited.

Question 6

The first of the 8-mark questions was synoptic drawing on content from Paper 1 Section A – VO_2 max testing and Paper 2 Section A – Validity and reliability. This was the middle scoring of the 3 8-mark question across the paper with the mean mark being around 41.5% of the marks available. The best answers were those which were able to combine AO2 application of the test to footballers with AO3 evaluative statements regarding validity and reliability. This combination of the two topics is required for top band answers in synoptic questions and means that those students who always write in a set structure of all AO1; then all AO2; and finally, all AO3 can sometime be limiting the mark they can achieve.

Question 7

The first 15-mark question on the paper used the full spread of marks from 0 to 15. Most students, over 70%, were awarded marks in band 2 or 3 in the range of 4 to 9. Students generally demonstrated good knowledge of Type I muscles fibres but tended to focus on what Type IIx didn't have. Students need to be encouraged to describe things with information about what they do have where possible. This was particularly important as knowledge of the high ATPase levels and glycogen stores in Type IIx muscles fibres was key to making the link to the anaerobic energy systems that they use to resynthesise ATP. Stating that Type IIx muscle fibres had low mitochondria, for example, only led students to explain why they could not use the aerobic system effectively, which did not directly answer the question.

Section B

Question 10.1 and 10.2

Just over 50% of students were able to identify the first stage of the general information processing model. The most common error was to confuse this model with the central components of Whiting's model.

Nearly 50% of students were also able to achieve all 3 marks for describing the DCR process. However, bigger gaps in knowledge were evident as this was the question with the highest non attempts across the paper. Approximately 5.5% of students did not provide an answer.

Question 11

Question 11 highlighted the importance of students understanding the link between command words and the depth of response required. 'Explain' is most commonly an AO2 command word requiring students to use at least one connective to identify the reason for their initial answer. The near 30% of students who did not achieve marks on this question commonly 'stated' strategies offering no explanation. The best answers highlighted three different strategies and were able to identify why they would work without repetition of the question wording.

Question 12

Question 12 was the best answered of the short answer AO3 questions with a mean mark in the region of 1.33. This mean was boosted by over 17% of students achieving full marks compared to around 6% and 3% on the other short answer AO3 questions. Where students performed well, they were able to link appropriate advantages or disadvantages of whole-part-whole practice to the different stages of learning, often picking up additional marks for suggesting more appropriate alternatives.

Question 13

The highest scoring of the 8-mark questions, question 13 highlighted a difference in students' depth of understanding of operant conditioning and insight learning. Where students were often able to accurately describe operant conditioning, using key terminology, and provide sporting examples this was not the case for insight learning. Often mistaken labelled as trial-and-error learning which it isn't students understanding often seemed surface level. This was made more evident when they attempted to apply it to learning passing in football. Few students were able to do this with any clarity or depth.

Question 14

Section B also had the highest scoring of the three 15-mark questions, explaining why it was the highest scoring section overall. Here the breadth of the question, containing three distinct topics, seemed to make the question more accessible, with most students able to access at least one to a good standard in their response. This allowed the question to overcome the normal decrease in mean marks normally seen with a synoptic question. Students' knowledge of selective attention was generally the strongest with SAQ training and caffeine lacking real depth in some cases. Students were frequently able to give ways each method would improve response time, but limitations were harder to come by, especially those with clear links to the question.

Section C

Question 17.1 and 17.2

Question 17 was the most accessible with both 17.1 and 17.2 scoring highly in terms of mean as a % of the total available mark. Students recall of national partner of Sport England allowed over 45% of students to achieve full marks. Where marks were dropped many stated two national governing bodies which, as per previous mark schemes, were only credited once.

17.2 on the service provided by local partners saw an even higher 57% of students access both marks. Where students dropped marks, they named national programmes such as This Girl Can, which are not targeted at the needs of the local area, or stated aims of local partners such as increasing participation which were not credited.

Question 18

As mentioned in the general comments the run of questions starting with this one and continuing to question 20 was particularly challenging for students. While this was the most accessible of the three it was still the fourth lowest scoring on the paper in terms of mean as a % of the total available mark at around 35%. Nearly a third of students did not produce a credit worthy answer and another third were awarded only one mark. Where students missed out on marks it was most often due to a lack of explanation. They stated characteristics but did not understand the requirement to go beyond this and identify why that meant it was deemed suitable for women to play.

Question 19

This was a very open question with a wide range of possible answers; however, students appeared to lack fundamental knowledge of what social change was despite it being a specification term and included in the Subject Specific Vocabulary. Where students did have ideas on what constitutes social change, they struggled to answer the question giving examples rather than evaluating the statement which referred to sport being 'a powerful force for bringing about social change'. This resulted in a mean mark of 0.9 the same as A5.

Question 20

This was the lowest scoring of the 8-mark answers as students were generally unable to demonstrate knowledge of NGBs which specifically applied to athletics during this time period. As there are only three sports in this area of the specification students are expected to have a detailed knowledge of how they developed including key dates, people, organisations, competitions, changes etc. This level of application continues to be missing in many examples of students work. Without this it was challenging to move beyond 2 or 3 marks as there was little else evident other than general knowledge of NGBs with some very generic analysis. Nearly 70% of students were awarded a mark in the 1-3 range. Only 10% of students were able to achieve a mark in band 3 or higher.

Question 21

The second quantitative 15-mark question on the paper had a similar mean score to the first at around 6.6. Answers which were awarded lower marks mistook the question as being about barriers to female participation despite very clear signposting. As a result, answers tended to have a very negative skew despite the obvious increase in prize money in the table. They also discussed factors which were not relevant at an elite level. Answers which were awarded the highest marks were able to give a balanced evaluation, highlighting both the positive impact of the factors but also the limitation which mean the gap to men is not closing faster.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.