



Physical Education National Courses: National 3 to Advanced Higher

Acceptable activities for assessment research paper

This paper was commissioned by SQA to clarify the definition of what constitutes an acceptable physical education activity for assessment purposes.

It should be used by centres for guidance in conjunction with our published documents.

Components of Physical Education

The important distinction to be made when deciding which activities are suitable for assessment in certificated physical education is to distinguish between those which are and remain educative, and thus embody the principles of the Curriculum for Excellence, and the criteria which make them such, and those which are sport or recreation. This distinction is important to ensure that the qualifications gained through the certificated courses enshrine and promote the principles and values of physical education rather than the principles and values of sport or recreation per se. It is these principles and values that make physical education unique and justify its place on the Scottish curriculum. The principles and values of sport and recreation can be obtained through other available national qualifications.

Underpinning the principles and values of physical education is the centrality of holistic growth in the four domains of 'affective (emotional), social, cognitive (mental) and physical' (ASCP) learning and development, and understanding that the interaction of each is concomitant for successful outcomes. The aim being that ASCP experiential learning 'in, about and through' physical education is of the highest quality. The activities suitable for assessment should enable all learners opportunities to experience development in, and exhibit application of, the holistic process to the best of their abilities.

What makes physical education unique?

Certificated physical education should be a continuation of the factors which define physical education as part of the broad general education of the Scottish curriculum. That being, the subject is physical *education*: not physical activity, physical training, physical exercise or sport. However, each of these parts contribute to the whole of the subject. Physical education is the only subject on the curriculum where the body is both the 'focus of' and the 'medium for' learning.

What makes physical education educative?

Assessment should allow learners to perform to the best of their ability in activities which combine appropriate fitness, technical ability and cognitive functioning. Combining understanding of affective-emotional, social, cognitive-mental and movement skills allows learners to correctly prioritise and apply movement and thinking skills, leading to intelligent performance of high quality.

Criteria of educative physical activities

Assessment should enable physically educated learners to demonstrate competence of their development in the ASCP domains, both individually and in groups, and in competitive and non-competitive contexts.

In the affective-emotional (intra-personal) domain, broad general education physical education should establish learners' strong sense of self-worth and confidence, leading to resilience, assertiveness and independence. It should help learners understand their attitudes and beliefs enabling them to regulate their behaviours. Learners should be able to demonstrate self-control and self-discipline and be able to manage their emotional responses in different and challenging physical activity contexts.

In the social (interpersonal) domain, broad general education physical education establishes learners' conduct of respect in positive and constructive relationships, underpinned by responsibility for moral and ethical behaviour towards others (fair play). Learners should be able to both lead (organise) and support (motivate) others with empathy in contexts requiring cooperation, collaboration and compromise.

In the cognitive-mental (intelligent performance) domain, broad general education physical education establishes learners' knowledge and understanding of generic and specific concepts. Pivotal, maintaining a safe emotional and physical environment for all is central. Generic concepts include the ability to make judgements and decisions, apply solutions based on cue recognition to correctly identify and solve problems creatively. Specific concepts include the ability to interpret activity relevant rules, tactics and strategies, to appreciate aesthetic composition and to apply appropriate movement techniques.

In the physical (kinaesthetic awareness) domain, broad general education physical education establishes learners' mastery of both generic and specific complex movement skills and patterns. Movement should become effective, efficient and economic, and technique should be performed with consistent control and fluency. High standards in performance should demonstrate the whole range of skills required for, and across, activities in performance contexts.

Broad general education physical education establishes learners' understanding of the two components of fitness: 'fitness from' for health (protection from disease), and 'fitness for' performance (agility, endurance, strength, speed, flexibility), and that these two components are inextricably interlinked. Learners should understand how each component contributes to and affects the other, and what actions they require to undertake to enable them to cope with the demands of activity for both health and performance.

Assessment in certificated physical education should afford learners the opportunity to exhibit both their development in these four domains, and their understanding of fitness, to the best of their ability.

Activities which qualify as appropriate assessment contexts

The activities appropriate for assessment in certificated physical education should both be a continuation of, and further develop, the central components of curriculum for excellence. This comprises the concepts of the Significant Aspects of Learning (SAoLs) to lead to achievement of the physical education experiences and outcomes. Further, these activities should contribute to learners' physical literacy.

The SAoLs (Education Scotland 2014)

The activities selected for assessment should encompass, at least, those concepts which comprise the four aspects of the SAoLs. These reflect learning 'in, about and through' the physical.

- ◆ 'In' the physical means learners developing physical competence in the movement skills, techniques and patterns for specific physical activities, which are generic and transferable between activities.

- ◆ 'About' the physical means learners learning the rules and principles of activities, including tactics, strategies and composition, and understanding both the fitness required for, and gained from, the activity.
- ◆ 'Through' the physical means both the personal qualities and cognitive skills that are relevant for developing the learners' skills for life, learning and work.

Personal Qualities	Cognitive Skills	Physical Competencies	Physical Fitness
Motivation	Problem Solving	Kinaesthetic	Stamina
Confidence and	Focus and	Awareness	Speed
Self Esteem	Concentration	Balance and Control	Core Stability and
Determination and	Decision Making	Coordination and	Strength
Resilience	Creativity	Fluency	Flexibility
Responsibility and		Rhythm and Timing	
Leadership		Gross and Fine Motor	
Respect and Tolerance		Skill	
Communication			

Developing Personal Qualities allows learners to interact effectively in social contexts. As all learning is socially-constructed, for Cognitive Skills to be developed and applied learners need to interact positively and constructively. The appropriate physical activities will develop apposite Physical Competencies and Physical Fitness which contribute to Physical Literacy. The four components of the SAoLs can be viewed as interlocking cogs which work in unison where each turns the others.

The SAoLs comprise the skills and attributes which form the physical education experiences and outcomes. These are the Movement Skills Competencies and Concepts which learners are, by Fourth Level, to select and apply creatively, accurately and with consistency and control to achieve their highest quality performance, and to develop and sustain their fitness. Cooperation and Competition are central to high quality performance where learners have roles and responsibilities that contribute to a supportive and inclusive environment based in the self-regulated behaviour of fair play. Learners Evaluate and Appreciate their own and others' performance by analysing and reflecting strengths and targets in specific activities, and taking responsibility to improve performance based on informed judgements.

Appropriate physical activities afford learners the opportunity to develop and exhibit the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities of curriculum for excellence: successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. They afford opportunities for successful application of learning of the SAoLs and the experiences and outcomes, create contexts for the development of confidence in pressured social situations, allow opportunities for effective contribution to both team success and the development of others, and to learn how to take responsibility for safety, various roles and to play with responsibility through fair play.

Within certificated physical education, the factors which impact upon performance, the Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical, naturally develop from the ASCP domains. Mental factors relate to abilities to integrate complex motor skills with decisions about tactics and strategies to solve performance problems. Emotional factors involve learners using visual and verbal feedback to review theirs and others' contribution based on ASCP strengths and weaknesses. Social factors entail performers behaving positively, responsibly and ethically

as leaders and followers who accept decisions and resolve conflict. Physical factors require the proficient performance of sequences of complex locomotor skills from a comprehensive movement vocabulary specific to activity intentions in challenging contexts. Activities should encapsulate the holistic nature of development and afford learners the opportunity to demonstrate their highest level of MESP abilities.

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