Course report 2025

National 5 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:   20,348

Number of resulted entries in 2025:   21,327

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	10,199	47.8	47.8	87
B	6,814	32.0	79.8	74
C	3,458	16.2	96.0	61
D	774	3.6	99.6	48
No award	82	0.4	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

Portfolio

The portfolio performed similarly to previous years with a full range of marks achieved by candidates.

Feedback suggests that teachers and lecturers possess a clear understanding of the standards required for the assessment.

Feedback also indicates that it was felt to be fair and accessible for all candidates, with marker comments suggesting that there were questions in the assessment accessible to C candidates, as well as questions to challenge A candidates. The majority of candidates understood what was required and were able to complete the whole portfolio.

On the whole, all questions performed as expected.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Portfolio

Question 2(a) — Many candidates were able to explain the challenges faced when gathering data and linked it back to the reliability of the data.

Questions 2(b) and 2(f) — Most candidates were able to identify methods of data collection and relevant targets.

Question 2(c) — Descriptions were short and concise, allowing most candidates to achieve marks for the process and the data collection method.

Question 2(e) — Most candidates described a strength and development need for both factors. Candidates were able to clearly use short and concise descriptions of performance.

Question 2(h) — Most candidates clearly understood how to describe approaches to performance development.

Question 3(c) — Most candidates were able to describe the process of monitoring their programme of work.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Portfolio

Question 1 — Candidates found it challenging to provide responses that include sufficient detail in the context and impact to clearly explain factors impacting performance. For example, factors such as 'motivation', 'concentration', 'sadness',

'happiness', 'etiquette' and 'team dynamics' proved challenging for candidates to provide full and clear explanations.

'Confidence' continues to be incorrectly included in mental factor responses.

Question 2(d) — Many candidates gave relevant reasons for using an identified method but lacked reasoning in their responses to explain the benefit of these reasons on the performance development process.

Question 2(i) — Candidates found it challenging to justify their decisions. Some candidates were able to include a 'decision' and 'explanation'; however they did not have a clear link between this and the 'personal reasoning', or did not give enough reasoning for the decision made to access marks.

Question 3(d) — Candidates were able to access the full mark range; however, many candidates found it challenging to evaluate relevant aspects of the Personal Development Programme (PDP). Many responses did not provide enough relevant detail in the judgement of the identified aspect of the PDP. Responses which did make judgements on relevant aspects of the PDP still lacked evaluation of personal value linked to the performance development process rather than an overall performance. This resulted in limited access to marks.

Question 3(e) — Candidates found it challenging to make a judgement and determine the value of its impact on performance and provided an explanation of a factor without evaluation. Some candidates found it challenging to demonstrate depth or breadth of knowledge of both factors to access the full mark allocation.

Question 3(f) — Many candidates identified current aspects of performance that required development; however, their justification of the actions to be used to develop future performance lacked detailed personal reasoning.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Portfolio

Section 1 — Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that a clear 'factor', 'context' and 'impact' on performance are included for each response. Candidates must also ensure that the impact demonstrates a linked understanding to the context included in the response. An example of an acceptable response is included below:

'Having bad concentration has a negative impact on my performance while at an Irish dancing competition. For example, when I went up on stage to dance, I saw someone practicing their dance at the back of the hall and I started to focus on their dance and lose concentration on my own dance. As a result of my lack of concentration, during my dance I forgot what move I was supposed to do next causing me to mess up my dance, meaning I did not get marked highly.'

Centres should be aware that 'confidence' is an emotional factor and marks will not be awarded in this question if candidates use 'confidence' as a mental factor.

Question 2(d) — Candidates should ensure that they provide a reason why the method was used and an explanation of its benefits. Candidates should also be aware that reasoning around reliability and validity must have a 'so what?' to ensure knowledge is not repeated from Question 2(a).

Example of an acceptable response: 'Once the 12 minute cooper test is complete I write down my number of metres on my log sheet, then compare my score to the national norms then store my sheet in a safe place as a permanent record. The impact of this is that I can redo the 12 minute cooper test at any time and use my score sheet to compare my new improved score to my old score'.

Question 2(e) — Candidates must describe their current strengths and development needs in their own performance. If candidates only quote statistics or information from data collection to identify a strength or development need they will not achieve

marks. Similarly, if candidates describe improvement that could be made to a development need they will not achieve marks.

Question 2(f) — It is recommended that targets link to identified development needs in question 2(e).

Question 2(g) — Candidates should ensure that their responses clearly explain the impact of setting targets when creating their PDP.

Example of an acceptable response: 'It is important to set targets when creating a personal development programme because you need to see if the personal development programme has worked or if you need to change it and by setting targets if you achieve them you will know if the personal development programme has worked or if you need to change it to obtain your goal.'

Question 2(i) — A candidate's justification must give a decision, explanation and personal reasoning. Decisions may come from any area of the PDP other than the justification of approaches. Personal reasoning is demonstrated by acknowledgement of how the decision made will benefit their performance development during the PDP.

Example of an acceptable response: 'A decision I made was to complete my training sessions with a friend. My friend was at a higher skill level and ability than me which meant that I was motivated to work hard in order to keep up. This increased the rate of my progress, meaning I was reaching my goal quicker.'

Question 3(d) — Candidates must identify an aspect from their PDP, make a positive or negative judgement and then make a value judgement back to the PDP on whether it was effective or not. The value must link back to the impact on the PDP or training process and not performance in a game or performance situation.

Example of an acceptable response: 'The training partners were effective because it pushed me to try my hardest to do the same as my partner, leading me to improve more than I would have. This leads to an impact on my 6 week programme because I was more motivated which led to me improving faster.'

Question 3(e) — Candidates must evaluate their performance after the PDP has taken place. Candidates should place a positive or negative value in relation to the factors and make a judgement on the impact on performance. Candidates must show that they understand that this is the end impact of the performance development process. The majority of candidates accessing high marks in this question evaluated two different aspects of performance for each factor.

Candidates can access 2 marks for evaluating the impact of one aspect of performance in each factor. This is demonstrated in the marking instructions additional guidance column (in the portfolio coursework assessment task on the Physical Education subject page of our website).

Question 3(f) — Candidates must state where they are in their current performance, the action they will take to improve in this area, and give personal reasoning as to why they will take this action. Candidates may write about any factor but responses must be related to their chosen portfolio activity.

Candidates must ensure that reasoning gives a detailed justification of the action taken, for example, why this action will ensure improvement in performance or exemplify a clearly linked performance development impact.

Example of an acceptable response: 'I want to focus on my secondary weak shot, the net shot. In order to improve this I will implement a basic feeder drill into my PDP. By doing a basic feeder I can repeatedly get the basics down to hit the shot and as a result of doing it over and over again, I will get the muscle memory down to play the shot.'

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](#).