

Course report 2026

Advanced Higher Physical Education, SCQF level 7

We've written this report for teachers and lecturers. We recommend you read this with the published course assessment documents and marking instructions.

The report:

- provides a summary of how each course component performed
- highlights areas of the question paper and coursework where candidates performed well and areas where they did not perform well
- has advice you might find useful when preparing candidates for assessment

For information about the project you should read the verification summary 2025-26 on the [Physical Education](#) page of our website.

We collect and prepare the statistics in course reports before we complete the appeals process.

Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 953

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 965

Distribution of course awards (including minimum mark to achieve each grade)

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	129	13.4	13.4	70
B	239	24.8	38.1	60
C	286	29.6	67.8	50
D	206	21.3	89.1	40
No award	105	10.9	100	Not applicable

We've not applied rounding to these statistics.

In this report:

- 'Most' means greater than or equal to 70%.
- 'Many' means 50% to 69%.
- 'Some' means 25% to 49%.
- 'Few' or 'a few' means less than 25%.

You can find [statistical reports](#) on our website.

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's 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 make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Senior Qualifications Scotland staff normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors use 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.

- We can adjust the grade boundaries downwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- We can adjust the grade boundaries upwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- If levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries.

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](#).

How the course assessment performed

Project

The project performed as expected.

- Stages 1(a), 3 and 4(b) were found to be the most accessible.
- Stages 1(b), 2(b) and 4(a) proved to be the most demanding.

How candidates performed

Project

Most candidates provided a clear project proposal before stage 1(a). Most candidates included information in their project which was relevant to their performance topic, however many candidates included information which lacked depth and/or quality for different stages of their project.

A few candidates achieved 'connection' marks in stages 1(b), 2(b) and/or 4(a).

A few candidates either did not provide a project proposal or provided one which included a broad range of topics. This often led to a lack of depth towards any of the performance topics across many parts of the project.

Stage 1(a)

Most candidates provided relevant explanations of the appropriateness of their selected methods.

A few candidates presented relevant features for their chosen methods but these features were not reflected in the evidence presented in appendices.

Stage 1(b)

A few candidates provided evidence of high-quality information gathered from stage 1(a) and were able to successfully analyse the information in depth. A few candidates included analysis of information which made connections between analytical points and established a different perspective and/or provided new insight.

Many candidates included evidence of information gathered which lacked quality and depth and this did not allow them to give the required depth of analysis at Advanced Higher level.

Stage 2(a)

Most candidates successfully conducted research by reviewing appropriate sources.

A few candidates presented information that was linked to the performance focus but lacked the depth or breadth of information needed to gain marks.

Stage 2(b)

A few candidates successfully analysed quality information they found in 2(a), to help them generate a Personal Development Plan (PDP) based on their breadth or depth of research from 2(a).

Most candidates did not perform well in this section. This could be because their research included in stage 2(a) lacked depth and quality. Low quality research means candidates cannot give the correct depth of analysis.

Stage 2(c)

Some candidates did not justify their targets and, as a result, did not gain marks.

Some candidates set targets which were linked to applying principles in their PDP only but with no link to their performance and, as a result, could not gain marks.

Stage 3

Most candidates produced a summary of their PDP in the main text and referred to a detailed record of their PDP implementation in the appendices.

A few candidates referred to their PDP which included incorrect approaches for their performance focus and, as a result, they could not gain marks.

A few candidates referred to their PDP which included approaches not presented in their research from 2(a) for their performance focus and, as a result, they could not gain marks.

Stage 4(a)

Most candidates did not perform well in this stage. This could be because the information they gathered lacked the quality and depth needed for analysis at Advanced Higher level.

Stage 4(b)

Many candidates successfully included generic and specific evaluative comments about the value of the process of carrying out their PDP.

A few candidates made generic evaluative comments which were either not evidenced or were contradictory to stage 3 and or stage 4(a) and as a result, could not gain marks.

Stage 4(c)(i)

Some candidates did not provide evidence of the new development need(s) being supported by information gathered from their post-PDP analysis and/or evaluation of their PDP and so could not gain marks.

Stage 4(c)(ii)

Many candidates gave explanations and showed their understanding of how meeting new development need(s) could have a positive effect on the other three factors that impact on performance.

A few candidates gave explanations and showed their understanding of how meeting new development need(s) could have a positive effect on the other three factors that impact on performances, but because they did not provided evidence to support the development need in stage 4(c)(ii) they could not gain marks.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Project

Selection and presentation of project proposal

Candidates should ensure their chosen performance topic allows for depth of study across all stages of their project.

You should not direct candidates into an activity or performance focus that is not authentic to them.

Candidates should make a personal choice by selecting an issue impacting on their performance. Candidates may select a focused topic where, potentially, several factors are included, however a clear link must be established if they take this approach.

Selecting a topic from previous courses and undertaking similar PDPs can deprive a candidate of the opportunity to advance their learning and address an authentic issue.

You should not allow several candidates to produce very similar work.

Analysis within the project

Candidates must produce detailed and quality analysis within stages 1(b), 2(b) and 4(a). Candidates should ensure the information they gather and their review of sources at relevant stages of the project are carried out with depth and quality.

Candidates must present analysis in a clear and detailed manner including full analysis for stages 1(b), 2(b) and 4(a). You can find more information in the detailed marking instructions and instructions for candidates section of the Project assessment task on our [Physical Education subject page](#).