

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

**OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in
Physical Education**

H555

For first teaching in 2016

H555/02 Summer 2025 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 2 series overview

Paper 2 covers psychological principles and how they influence sports performance, and assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3. Section A consists of 1 or 2 mark short answer questions totalling 10 marks from skill acquisition and sports psychology. Section B contains questions ranging from 2 to 6 marks, with Question 6 examining skill acquisition and Question 7 examining sports psychology. Question 8 in Section C is an extended response 10 mark question covering different topics from the course.

To be successful in the sports psychology unit, candidates need to be able to recall, understand and evaluate content as well as apply sporting examples to a range of theoretical concepts studied throughout the course.

Candidates who were successful in this unit generally recalled knowledge, exhibited the ability to apply understanding to a range of sporting situation and gave consistent and thorough explanations when requested.

Candidates who were less successful in this unit generally struggled with recall and did not successfully apply sporting examples to support or demonstrate theoretical concepts or gave unbalanced and limited responses.

This question paper worked effectively to allow a wide spread of marks to help candidates to benefit from a fair and thorough assessment of their knowledge, understanding and application.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- gave accurate, logical and concise responses and well thought out structured coherent responses - were able to apply knowledge to the specific requirements of the question - used subject-specific technical terminology throughout - understood the command words - read the detail of the question, and focused their response on the specific area of the topic being examined - defined key terms accurately without repeating words from the term - evidenced secure knowledge of theories /models - used appropriate sporting examples where required - managed their time effectively - knew the topics on the specification and did not confuse them.	- misunderstood question requirements - showed partial recall rather than full understanding - gave responses that lacked depth of knowledge - were less successful with subject-specific terms, mixed up key concepts, leading to inaccurate responses - lacked understanding of key theoretical concepts, and showed confusion between models - wrote whatever they know about a topic rather than focusing on the specific part being examined - didn't use sporting examples when requested - were less successful in the extended response questions - defined terms by repeating terms they were meant to be defining - struggled with timings and either did not respond all questions or did not have time to finish Question 8 - confused topics, e.g. Bandura's self-efficacy with Bandura's social learning or Steiner's model with Tuckman's model - did not make enough discrete points for marks available, instead repeated themselves or wrote extraneously.

Section A overview

Section A covers short response questions from skill acquisition and sports psychology. Candidates performed successfully in this section.

Question 1 (a) and (b)

1 Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false by putting a tick (✓) in the relevant box.

(a) A type A personality is likely to be patient. Tick (✓) **one** box.

True ☐

False ☐

[1]

(b) An introvert personality lacks concentration. Tick (✓) **one** box.

True ☐

False ☐

[1]

These questions were well responded to. Some candidates placed a cross in the box, however they were given the mark if placed in the correct box, however this showed that some are not following the instructions in the question.

Question 2

2 Give **two** somatic stress management techniques.

1:

2:

[2]

The specification clearly names the techniques to learn; this should be a straightforward question. However, some candidates gave 'cognitive' stress management techniques or were vague in their response.

Question 3

- 3 Define intrinsic feedback and give **one** advantage of this type of feedback.

Definition:

.....

Advantage:

.....

[2]

This question was less successfully responded to. Many candidates defined intrinsic feedback as 'feedback that comes from within the performer' rather than information from proprioceptors/ kinaesthesia.

Exam technique tip

When defining or describing terms, always use different words. Do not repeat a word you're defining in its definition.

Question 4

- 4 Identify the stage of learning being described in the following examples.

A rugby player can consistently perform a dummy dodge to outwit an opponent.

Stage of learning:

An ice skater can perform a jump but often wobbles when landing.

Stage of learning:

[2]

This question was successfully responded to.

Question 5

- 5 Give **two** examples of somatic responses to anxiety.

1:

2:

[2]

Many candidates gained full marks in this question providing a full range of responses from the mark scheme.

Section B overview

This section includes questions from the skill acquisition part of the course in Question 6, and sports psychology in Question 7. Questions 6 (c), 6 (d), 7 (a) (i), 7 (a) (ii), 7 (b) (ii), 7 (c), and 8 proved to be particularly good differentiators, allowing most candidates to gain some marks, while the more successful candidates stretching their response to obtain the highest marks.

Question 6 (a) (i)

6

(a) Skills are classified in different ways.

(i) Explain the following terms:

Simple skill:

.....

Closed skill:

.....

High organisation skill:

.....

[3]

This was a straightforward question that was generally successfully responded to and showed clear understanding of classification skills.

Question 6 (a) (ii)

(ii) Define the terms bilateral transfer and negative transfer.

Bilateral transfer:

.....

Negative transfer:

.....

[2]

Bilateral transfer was rarely defined accurately, often repeating the word 'transfer' in the definition.

Definitions of negative transfer were much more successful, other than the occasional instance when they used the word negative in the response.

More successful candidates were able to give accurate definitions and use correct terminology.

Question 6 (b) (i)

(b)

- (i) According to Atkinson and Shiffrin's multi-store memory model a hockey player receiving a pass will use selective attention to filter relevant from irrelevant information.

Give **one** example of information that the hockey player should filter as relevant and **one** example that should be filtered as irrelevant.

Relevant information:

Irrelevant information:

[2]

Candidates successfully responded to this question, easily able to identify relevant and irrelevant cues that a hockey player receiving a pass would encounter. Common responses included for relevant: pace of ball/puck, colour of ball, and irrelevant: the crowd.

Question 6 (b) (ii)

- (ii) Explain Craik and Lockhart's levels of processing memory model.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [3]

Candidates successfully responded to this question, which is particularly pleasing to see, so it is clearly well taught and well understood. Many candidates gained full marks early on in their response demonstrating solid knowledge of the key terms and understanding of the three different levels of processing. A few candidates talked about the multi-store model of memory which did not gain marks.

Question 6 (c)

(c) Explain how an individual learns a new skill according to operant conditioning.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [4]

This question was a good differentiator enabling less successful candidates to access low marks and those that had a deeper understanding to access full marks. Less successful simply named aspects of operant conditioning, e.g. trial and error, punishment, failing to secure marks. More successful candidates explained how each concept enabled a skill to be learned, e.g. trial and error by experimenting with different responses.

Commonly credited points included points about positive reinforcement, punishment and trial and error. Thorndike's laws were covered fairly frequently and less so were attempts to explain shaping and manipulation of the environment.

Question 6 (d)

(d) Evaluate the use of verbal and manual guidance for an expert performer.

Verbal:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Manual:

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [6]

This was a good differentiator with only the most successful responses gaining full marks. The question needed candidates to focus their response on an expert when evaluating verbal and manual guidance, rather than a generalised evaluation of them.

Many candidates wrote about the types of guidance too generally and didn't apply their thinking to an expert performer. Another common error was candidates referring to beginners. This meant they wrote lots, but did not gain marks as they were not responding to the question.

Assessment for learning



Students should be taught to identify the command word of the question – *here 'evaluate'*, then spot the topic the question is about – *here 'manual and verbal guidance'*, then spot the specific focus of the topic – *here 'for an expert performer'*. Then look if there is anything else the question requires, such as examples – *here, no*.

Question 7 (a) (i)

7

(a)

(i) Weiner's model of attribution categorises the reasons performers give for their success or failure.

Using your knowledge of Weiner's model, give a **sporting** example of an attribution for each of the categories below.

Internal, stable:

.....

External, stable:

.....

Internal, unstable

.....

External, unstable

.....

[4]

Many candidates showed some knowledge of the model. Some did not use a sporting example in their response, and some gave an attribution but did not use it within the sporting context as a reason for success or failure. This meant their responses were descriptions of having high ability, difficult opponents etc rather than reasons for success/failure in sport. Candidates who understood what the question required them to do responded successfully.

Question 7 (a) (ii)

(ii) Attributing externally could have both positive and negative effects on a performer.

Discuss why this could be the case.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Common less successful responses to this question didn't give a context to points being made, therefore giving an effect but not linking the effect to an outcome.

Some candidates referred to 'blaming success on' showing some confusion around terminology.

Candidates that stated an outcome and a positive or negative effect gained marks as they showed they understood attribution as a concept and the question.

Misconception



A common misconception was that self-serving bias is a negative effect.

Exemplar 1

Discuss why this could be the case.

By attributing ^{failure} externally it may retain pride and prevent learned helplessness develop which is positive. However by attributing ^{failure} externally it may prevent improvement as it will not increase motivation due to hiding the real reasons for failure which may prevent mastery orientation occurring.

The response shown was given full marks.

Their initial point achieves point 2 for stating a positive effect of using external attributions for failure (retain pride), had they not stated 'failure' their response would be too vague, as without the context it is unclear when each effect occurs. They go on in the same sentence to repeat point 2 (prevent learned helplessness). They go on to refer to using 'external attributions for failure prevents improvement,' securing point 1 for a negative effect, again making extra creditworthy points showing excellent knowledge; 'hides the real reasons for failure, prevents mastery orientation.'

Question 7 (b) (i)

(b)

(i) Describe the terms emergent leader and prescribed leader.

Emergent leader:

.....

Prescribed leader:

.....

[2]

Candidates were successful in this question, commonly referring to emergent leaders coming from the group and prescribed leaders being selected by a higher authority or being brought into the group from outside.

Question 7 (b) (ii)

(ii) A young player may develop leadership skills by watching their coach.

Using knowledge of theories of leadership discuss if this alone is enough to make the young player become a good leader.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

This question required candidates to consider whether just watching a coach is enough to make a young player a good leader and formulate a response using theories of leadership to support their arguments. Less successful responses referred to how someone becomes a leader according to leadership theories but did not use them in the context of the question, although they did secure some marks for this.

More successful candidates used their knowledge of leadership theories as evidence to support or contradict the statement.

Exemplar 2

A young player may develop leadership skills by watching their coach.

Using knowledge of theories of leadership discuss if this alone is enough to make the young player become a good leader.

Bandura's theory of social and observational learning suggests it is enough as they observe and copy behaviours of significant others e.g. coach. However, this disregards ~~that~~ the trait theory which suggests leadership qualities are innate and stable and not learned by watching a coach. However, it could be due to both ^{factors} which is explained by the interactionist theory which states that ^{good} leadership traits are innate but interact with the environment so are only present if the scenario requires good leadership. ~~Also~~

The following example shows a response where the candidate directly responds to the question and secures full marks early on in their response. It also shows good practice whereby the candidate has taken time to interact with the question ensuring they understand the requirements. They achieve mark scheme points 1, 2 and 3. It also covers points 5 and 6.

Exemplar 3

Trait theory suggests player must be born with innate traits of a leader. Suggests leaders are born not made. e.g. Confidence.

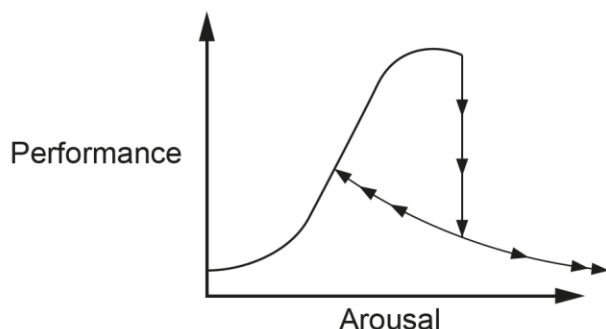
Social learning theory suggests performer can learn leadership from coach. e.g. player observes and copy's coach.

Interaction theory: suggests interaction between trait and situation. It suggests a person must be born with the trait for it to emerge when the situation asks for it. e.g. player may be lazy ^{at home} outside but if coach is sick they will take charge.

The following example uses the leadership theories to explain how someone becomes a leader but doesn't refer to how these theories support/contradict the statement in the question. It still achieves 2 marks for points 1 and 5 on the mark scheme.

Question 7 (c)

(c) The graph shows catastrophe theory.



Use the graph to explain catastrophe theory.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [5]

Knowledge and structure of responses meant candidates often were successful. Many less successful responses were brief, for example, recognising that there is an optimal point of arousal but not always making a link with performance. Some candidates were unclear about cause and effect. To gain marks they needed to show that arousal has an impact on performance, for example as arousal increases, performance increases, or performance increased due to arousal increasing, rather than arousal and performance both increase. The most successful responses referred to cognitive and somatic arousal/anxiety within their responses and as a 5 mark question this enabled the full range of marks to be used making this a solid differentiator.

Question 7 (d)

(d) A sports team has better players than their opposition but is losing the match.

Use Steiner's model to explain why the team might be under-performing in the match.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [4]

Candidates that knew Steiners model scored well on this question. Common responses included motivation problems/social loafing and co-ordination problems/Ringelmann effect and explanations went on to include reasons why these problems occurred.

Some less successfully talked about Tuckmans stages of group formation, although if written in the right context could still access marks some of the marks.

Section C overview

This section contains one extended response question, covering AO1, AO2 and AO3. The question clearly states what the candidate needs to do and where in the response. There was no need to use sporting examples in the self-efficacy part of the question as they are not asked for. Candidates are not required to write an introduction if it simply repeats the question or a conclusion if it repeats points they have already made. Candidates simply need to respond to the question asked in as much detail as possible, showing their depth and breadth of knowledge and ability to apply examples (where identified).

Question 8*

- 8*** A sports coach can use different practice types to help performers learn skills and build their confidence.

Using sporting examples, explain the practice types that a sports coach might use to help a performer improve their passing.

Analyse how a coach might raise a performer's level of self-efficacy according to Bandura's theory.

[10]

Candidates who performed well tended to	Candidates who did less well tended to
- write with a clear planned structure - name practice type, - define / describe practice type - explain reasons for using practice type - apply an example of passing (then repeated this for numerous practice types) - analyse how the four sources can raise self-efficacy - use accurate and specific examples of passing drills for multiple different types of practice - explain how each practice type would benefit a sports performer, with specific focus on improving passing - the most successful responses included examples of passing to support explanations of suitable practice types - use the correct terminology for all four sources to raise self-efficacy and gave an in depth analysis of each - write in a logical and coherent structure.	- identify a limited range of practice types - describe practice methods repeating the word in the name of the practice type,, e.g. whole practice is practising skills as a whole - give no/a limited explanation of how the practice type would help the performer improve passing so did not develop their response - fail to 'use' sporting examples to show the use of different practice types when passing - use non-passing examples for sporting examples - show limited knowledge of self-efficacy - lack use of specific terminology from self-efficacy and unable to name the four sources - write about Bandura's Social learning theory/model of observational learning - lack structure in their response - only cover one aspect of the question.

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