

Moderators' report

GCSE

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

**OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in
Physical Education**

J587

For first teaching in 2016

J587/05/06 Summer 2025 series

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Introduction

Our Moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on centres' assessment of moderated work, based on what has been observed by the moderation team. These reports include a general commentary of accuracy of internal assessment judgements, identify good practice in relation to evidence collation and presentation, and comment on the quality of centre assessment decisions against individual Learning Objectives. The report also highlights areas where requirements have been misinterpreted and provides guidance to centre assessors on requirements for accessing higher mark bands. Where appropriate, the report will also signpost other sources of information that centre assessors will find helpful.

OCR completes moderation of centre-assessed work in order to quality assure the internal assessment judgements made by assessors within a centre. Where OCR cannot confirm the centre's marks, we may adjust them in order to align them to the national standard. Any adjustments to centre marks are detailed on the Moderation Adjustments report, which can be downloaded from Interchange when results are issued. Centres should also refer to their individual centre report provided after moderation has been completed. In combination, these centre-specific documents and this overall report should help to support centres' internal assessment and moderation practice for future series.

Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

Cambridge Nationals

All teachers delivering our Cambridge Nationals suite are asked to complete the Essentials for the NEA course, which describes how to guide and support your students. You'll receive a certificate which you should retain.

Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016)

We recommend all teachers complete the module on online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

Accessing our online courses

You can access all our online courses from our teacher support website [Teach Cambridge](#).

These free online courses currently cover the end-to-end NEA process for teachers. You'll find the link to the **online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **online courses** from the dropdown.

These self-paced online courses are intended for any teachers. During the course, you will engage with interactive content on subjects such as guidance on unit content, structure and administrative processes.

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

General overview

The non-examined assessment (NEA) is a compulsory component of the GCSE Physical Education qualification. It is worth 20 marks and counts as 10% of the total GCSE.

The Analysing and Evaluating Performance (AEP) component is built around one activity from the specification list within the Guide to Non-Exam Assessment and has six sections within it: evaluation, analysis, overview; assessment, movement analysis and action plan. These are completed under medium control, across a 14 hour time limit and are marked against the set criteria, using a best fit approach across all the sections.

It could be helpful to read this report for the 2025 series in conjunction with previous instalments of such reports, as much of the messaging about positive achievements in the NEA remains valid year on year. The NEA offers students the opportunity to explore an activity which is important to them and show their knowledge and understanding of that activity. A greater range of activities were covered from the specification this year, although team games, such as netball, football and rugby, were still more often seen than individual activities.

The stronger pieces of work were clearly divided into the six components of the task which facilitated candidates in meeting the criteria of the task fully. The work showed high levels of evaluation, application and analysis of performance, a robust understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their chosen performer and thorough application of how to improve the quality and effectiveness of performance.

Centres who were most accurate with their marking were ones who had used the recommended marking grid tick sheets from the Guide to NEA and had submitted them with their centre work. These centres made effective use of the mark grids, placing a specific mark for each of the six sections which supported consistent and transparent allocation of marks across student work. Furthermore, robust internal standardisation procedures were evident in these centres, ensuring consistency across all assessors and reinforcing the integrity of the assessment process. Collectively, these practices contributed to a high standard of assessment reliability across the centres reviewed and these enabled moderators to gain a full understanding of where marks had been allocated by centres.

Deadlines

Centres on the main part were organised with their submission of marks and submission of work, but there were centres who missed either the submission of marks or the submission of work deadlines, which did delay the moderation process. It is important that centres make a note of the key dates and adhere to them in the future.

Deadline for submission of marks

- **15th March** for marks to be submitted.
- Once the sample for moderation is generated, centres have **three working days** to upload and submit the work to Submit for Assessment or post the work to the allocated moderator, alongside their marking grid tick sheets.

Candidates who did well generally:	Candidates who did less well generally:
• demonstrated a clear understanding of the task requirements and applied their knowledge effectively throughout • structured their work coherently and addressed each section of the task in detail • made effective use of the support materials available • produced an in depth, comprehensive and accurate analysis of the information in each section • applied relevant theoretical aspects to a high standard in their work • chose a familiar activity that they had robust knowledge of • selected a third party to analyse, rather than themselves, which helped them to be objective about the range of strengths and weaknesses in performance, rather than allowing pre-conceived judgements to dominate their approach to the task • had work marked by the centre using the best fit approach of the OCR marking grids to assess the work effectively and so were in line with the national standards.	• demonstrated a limited understanding of the task requirements and did not fully address all sections of the NEA • lacked a clear and coherent structure and did not address some sections of the task at all or fully • did not make effective use of the support materials available • included aspects which were not credit worthy in the task • lacked clear application of relevant theoretical aspects in their work • chose an unfamiliar activity which they had reduced knowledge of • used writing frameworks or templates which restricted the candidates approaches to the task • had work marked by the centre without using the OCR marking grids or the marking grids had been adapted to assess the work and so were not in line with national standards.

Comments on each section

Evaluation

This section required candidates to include all ten fitness test results, with correct units, linked to national normative results and clearly identify if these results are a strength or a weakness of performance. Candidates then needed to back the result up with detailed examples of when they have seen the performer exemplify the component in a practical situation to justify explicitly why the result is a strength or weakness of performance.

The key requirements of this section appeared to have been understood by most candidates and the best work covered all aspects in detail and fully evaluated all ten strengths and weaknesses of physical fitness accurately. Centres which separated the evaluation section from the analysis section tended to fair better in providing balanced and fully justified reasons, which went beyond description to explaining the impact of their strengths and weaknesses on overall performance. For some centres, where over-marking was present, candidates often lacked the correct units of measurement and explicit identification of the result being a strength or weakness. They often lacked evaluative comments regarding their practical performance examples and gave descriptive statements which did not help them to justify their findings. Occasionally incorrect tests were used which lacked appropriate links to normative data.

Misconceptions



Including description of the fitness test procedure and discussing the validity of each test.

Only needing to expand on three strengths and three weaknesses, rather than including all ten fitness tests.

Not needing to categorise 'average' test results as a strength or weakness.

Including how to improve each test result in their commentary.

Analysis

This section required candidates to explain what each component of fitness allowed them to do in their activity and for their position or event and give detailed reasons why they are needed. Candidates could also use different positions or situations within their activity to explain where they may be more or less appropriate and provide a rank order of the component's importance.

From the work submitted, it was clear that most candidates understood the key requirements of the section, and some high-quality work was produced. In the best pieces of work candidates demonstrated strong understanding and application across all ten components of fitness, clearly articulating what each component enabled a performer to achieve, rather than simply providing textbook definitions. They effectively explained the relevance of each component to their chosen sport and position and the impact it would have if they were not strong in this component, justifying why some components are more critical than others depending on the demands of the role. High-level candidates went further by ranking the components in order of importance and comparing different positions within their sport to highlight how physical demands vary. For some centres, where over-marking was present, candidates showed a limited understanding of the ten components of fitness, often relying on basic definitions rather than explaining what each component allowed a performer to do. In many cases, there was a lack of clarity around why each component was important for their chosen sport or position, and some did not justify why certain components may be more relevant or less relevant. Practical examples were sometimes vague or unrelated to the sport or specific position, making it difficult to see how theory was being applied. Once again centres which separated the evaluation and analysis sections, allowed candidates to achieve more of the section criteria to gain higher marks.

Misconceptions



- Including examples from other activities, rather than their chosen activity.
- Including definitions of the fitness component, without any real depth of analysis.
- Only covering a few/some fitness components and not all ten.

Overview

This section required candidates to give an overview of the core and advanced key skills for the activity, which can be found in the Guide to NEA, including decision-making and tactical awareness and detail accurately why each are needed in the activity. Candidates should also use various positions or situations within their activity to explain where they may be more appropriate and detail the outcome of that importance. Candidates should also break down the skills from general skills such as passing, to specific skills such as short pass, long pass, etc.

From the work submitted, there was clearly some disparity from centres on how many key skills should be included in this section. The best work showed candidates demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the core and advanced skills, as well as the decision-making elements required for high-level performance in their chosen sport. They were able to clearly explain why each skill and decision-making process was important, linking it directly to the physical and tactical demands of the sport and their own playing position. For some centres where over-marking was present candidates demonstrated a basic understanding of the core, advanced, and decision-making aspects of performance but often lacked depth in their analysis. Many responses did not fully explore why each skill or decision-making element was important for their sport or position. Practical examples were often vague or disconnected from their playing role, with few candidates explaining the actual impact these skills had on performance outcomes. Decision-making was frequently underdeveloped, with minimal analysis of in-game choices or tactical awareness. Centres which separated the Overview and Assessment sections, allowed candidates to achieve more of the section criteria to gain higher marks.

Misconceptions



- Focusing on the coaching points of how to perform the skill, rather than why they are needed.
- Only including core and advanced skills from the Guide to NEA and not including decision-making and tactical awareness.
- Including their own skills which are not in the Guide to NEA.

Assessment

This section required candidates to identify explicitly which of the skills from the overview section are strengths and weaknesses of performance and back these results up with detailed examples of when they have seen the performer exemplify the skill in practical situations. Candidates may benefit from using quantitative data, such as devising observational check lists or skill-based tests, using coaches' viewpoints or data or match statistics, which may help them work out which are their strengths and weaknesses and provide them with more information to help them explain and justify the reasons why they are a strength or weakness. Candidates should also break down the skills from from general aspects such as passing, to specific skills such as short pass, long pass, etc. and could provide a rank order of the identified weaknesses.

From the work submitted, it was clear that many centres lacked clarity around how many skills should be analysed, and many candidates limited the number of skills they included and analysed which affected the number of marks they were able to achieve. The best work showed candidates using both quantitative and qualitative data to analyse performance, clearly identifying which skills and decision-making aspects from the Guide to NEA were strengths and which were weaknesses. Their analysis showed thoughtful observation and data collection, and application to their own assessment criteria to measure the consistency, accuracy, and effectiveness of key skills. Candidates demonstrated an ability to break skills down from general to specific skills and they supported their judgements with practical examples, referencing moments in training or competition where the performer successfully executed advanced techniques or, conversely, where decision-making errors led to a loss of possession or opportunity. Importantly, candidates explicitly stated which results were a strength or a weakness and often ranked the weaknesses in order of priority to guide future development. For some centres, where over-marking was present, candidates provided assessments that lacked any quantitative data, relying solely on qualitative observations and examples. Without measurable data, their assessments of strengths and weaknesses were often subjective and lacked the necessary evidence to support clear conclusions. While some practical examples from training or competition were included, these were sometimes vague and insufficiently linked to specific skills or decision-making elements. Additionally, many candidates limited their analysis to only a few strengths and weaknesses, which further restricted the depth of their evaluation. The absence of quantitative data meant candidates struggled to explicitly identify and prioritise performance areas for improvement through rank ordering. Once again, centres which separated the Overview and Assessment sections, allowed candidates to achieve more of the section criteria to gain higher marks.

Misconceptions



Not using quantitative data.

Only identifying a few/some of the skills from the Guide to NEA as strengths and weakness.

Not needing to include decision-making and tactical awareness.

Movement Analysis

This section required candidates to analyse one skill from their activity using the four joints from the specification, in preparation and execution and on both sides of the body. Candidates should include joint type, movement type, muscles used and analyse the antagonistic muscle action used at each joint. Candidates may use pictures to help them analyse the skill and it is important to note that candidates should link the correct muscle to the correct movement to the correct joint and not just unsystematically list them all. For the Skill Continua element, which was completed to a higher level than the movement aspect, candidates should place the same skill on both the environmental and difficulty continua and justify its placement using reasons from the activity and by comparing directly its placement to other skills within their chosen activity.

The more successful work was detailed and accurate for both elements of this section. In the Movement Analysis element, the best work demonstrated a detailed and accurate analysis of a single skill by clearly examining the joint types involved, the specific movements performed, and the muscle groups responsible, in line with the four joints outlined in the specification. Candidates effectively considered preparation and execution phases and both sides of the body, highlighting any bilateral differences or similarities in movement and muscle function. Additionally, candidates clearly explained the role and function of the muscles during both phases of the movement. Where there had been over-marking of this component, candidates struggled to provide a thorough analysis of the skill, often giving incomplete or inaccurate descriptions of the joint types and movements involved. There was a tendency to forego the different phases and focus on the movement in general, overlook one side of the body and include other joints not in the specification. It was not always clear which muscle and muscle action linked to which joint and candidates included unnecessary theory content which was not credit worthy.

In the Skills Continua element, the best work had candidates effectively placing their chosen skill on both the environmental and difficulty continua and providing clear and well-justified reasons for their decisions. They demonstrated a thorough understanding of the factors that influence the skill's position, such as variability in conditions, level of control required, and complexity of execution. Their justifications were supported by multiple relevant examples from their sport and used comparative statements to help show the differences between the skill placements. Where there had been over-marking of this component candidates struggled to accurately place their chosen skill on the environmental and difficulty continua, often providing vague or unsupported justifications. Their understanding of the factors affecting the skill's placement such as environmental variability, required control, and complexity was limited or superficial and justifications frequently lacked depth and were supported by few or irrelevant examples from their sport, making it difficult to see why the skill was positioned as they claimed.

Misconceptions



- Including biomechanics, such as levers, planes and axis of movement.
- Not needing to include all four joints from the specification.
- Using joints which are not on the specification, such as the ankle joint.
- Not needing to cover both sides of the body.
- Not including the same skill on both the environmental and difficulty continuum.
- Not realising that both parts of this section are weighted equally when marking.

Action Plan

This section required candidates to complete one detailed action plan based around one chosen weakness. Candidates should justify the weakness selected, include progressive drills and practices over a time frame to show how they intend to improve the weakness with detailed coaching points, include application of SMART goal-setting and principles of training and include a risk assessment for the activity.

From the work submitted, it was clear that most candidates understood the concept behind creating an action plan and the fundamental requirements of the section. In the best work candidates produced well-structured and detailed action plans targeting one specific weakness, either in skill or a component of fitness. They provided clear justifications for selecting the element to improve, demonstrating a strong understanding of how they identified this weakness through performance analysis and explaining how addressing it would benefit overall performance. Their improvement strategies were thoughtfully designed, including realistic time frames and phased, progressive drills that began with fundamental skills before increasing in complexity and challenge. Risk assessment was thoroughly considered, with appropriate warm-up and cool-down routines incorporated to ensure safety. Candidates also included precise coaching points and applied SMART goal-setting principles to create measurable and achievable objectives. The plans effectively integrated training principles such as specificity, progression, overload and FITT, culminating in drills that transitioned into game-like situations or competitive events, ensuring practical application of the improvements.

For centres where over-marking was present, candidates produced action plans that lacked focus and detail, often choosing weaknesses without clear justification or evidence from performance analysis. Many did not explain why the chosen element was a priority or how improving it would enhance overall performance. Improvement strategies were frequently vague, with little consideration of a realistic time frame or progression of drills from basic to more complex skills. Risk assessments, including warm-up and cool-down procedures, were often missing or insufficiently detailed, raising concerns about safety. Coaching points were general rather than specific, and the application of SMART goals was minimal or absent. Additionally, many plans did not fully apply training principles such as specificity, progression, overload or FITT, and few included a practical game situation or event to apply the improvements.

Although some candidates did submit fitness-based action plans which were worthy of a high-level mark, generally these tended to not be as strong as skill-based weaknesses, as they did not include as much detail and application regarding coaching points, progressive exercises, principles of training and the use of sets, repetitions and rest periods.

Misconception



Completing an action plan on more than one identified weakness.

Focusing on stating theoretical knowledge of training principles and the SMART principle, rather than application of these elements.

Not needing to show an appropriate timescale over the Action Plan.

Not needing to include a risk assessment of coaching points.

Most common causes of centres not passing

- The task is synoptic in nature and draws on the knowledge from the theoretical components. All sections of the task need to be covered as they have equal weighting in the best fit marking system.
- Centres not following the required structure of the AEP.
- Misinterpretation and lack of understanding of marking criteria, alongside not utilising the OCR marking grid tick sheets when grading the work.
- Inconsistent application of marking criteria across cohorts, alongside possible lack of appropriate standardisation.

Common misconceptions

- Candidates are advised to complete their AEP on an activity they are familiar with and have strong depth of knowledge of as this should engage and motivate them during completion.
- The AEP can be completed on an activity which is listed in the Guide to NEA and does **not** have to be completed on an activity the candidate is being assessed on for the practical performance component (J587/04).
- That some sections are more important and equals more marks for the candidate. Each section has equal weighting and importance.
- That templates and writing frames are allowed.

The use of marking grids

- It is best practice to use the marking grid tick sheets available in the Guide to NEA, which have been provided to support centres in marking the work.
- More centres this series submitted their sample of work with marking grid tick sheets, which is pleasing to see. Some centres are still not submitting them with their sample or are not using them when marking the work. Some centres don't place an individual mark per section on the marking grids, which can leave the centre marks open to interpretation by the moderator.
- These grids allow moderators to see clearly how each section is being assessed, enabling more accurate and constructive feedback to centres relating to the national standards.
- When using OCR marking grids, allocate a specific mark for each section **and** an overall average best fit, final mark to aid on marking the work as accurately as possible.
- Centres which adapt the marking grids or do not use them at all, may not be as accurate and not in line with national standards.

Avoiding potential malpractice

- Follow the **medium control procedures** listed in the Guide to NEA in section 1C.1. Work must not be marked and returned with commentary to assist the candidate improve their work and plagiarism must not take place.
- Candidates must **not** be able to access their work outside of the designated 14 hour allowed time. This includes any work completed on a computer which must be stored securely with access only made available to students for each designated session.
- **Templates or writing frames of any kind may not be used** as per the JCQ and Ofqual guidelines and this is detailed in the Guide to NEA in section 2C.1. A template is anything which guides your students in how to structure their response or gives them text to add into their response.

- You may use section 2C.1 of the Guide to NEA with your students, as this contains bullet points which can be used as headings. Do not exemplify these bullet points with tables, sub sections, sentence starters, writing frames, data or additional content.
- Where our moderators believe centres have used templates or have exceeded the time constraints, they will be reported for suspected malpractice.

Helpful resources

- [OCR Professional Development on Teach Cambridge](#) Please be aware we cannot guarantee the content on any non-OCR training that is on offer
- [OCR GCSE \(9-1\) Physical Education J587 Guide to Non-exam Assessment \(NEA\) - Version 4.6](#)
- [Exemplar AEP's](#)
- [Non Exam Assessment Support documents](#)
- [Subject updates on Teach Cambridge](#)
- [OCR Internal Standardisation Generic Guidelines](#)

Additional comments

- Please submit all NEA marks by 15th March, and make sure work is uploaded or posted within three working days of the sample request.
- Centres must make sure that the internal standardisation of marks across assessors, teaching groups and different physical activities takes place using an appropriate procedure. It is helpful to our moderators if candidate numbers, **and** full names are detailed on the candidates work for ease of identification.
- Please do not send Candidate Authentication Forms to the moderator. These should be completed and retained in the centre as part of your records.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

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Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is the exam paper builder platform for a range of our qualifications. [Find out more](#).

Free for all OCR centres with an Interchange account, it allows unlimited users per centre. We require an [Interchange](#) username to verify your centre's users for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account, please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username.

Once you have an Interchange username, use the form on [this page](#) to sign up for ExamBuilder, or ask an existing user at your centre to create an ExamBuilder account for you.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

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Online courses

Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation
- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately
- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators
- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators
- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills
- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from [Teach Cambridge](#). Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

Which courses are available?

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

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