



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel Advanced Level
In Physical Education (9PE0)
Paper 04 Performance Analysis and Performance
Development Programme

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Introduction

This report considers the moderation of component 9PE0_04 for the examination series 2025

Work for this series has been submitted for the purposes of external moderation through the Learner Work Transfer (LWT) platform on Edexcel Online.

There were no reported problems linked to uploading work onto the LWT platform. Virtually all centres used the correct up-to-date versions of the authentication sheets, which take into account potential AI tools that may have been used in the learner work, in addition to the usual requirement to clearly reference any sources used in learner work.

Centres are reminded that the most up-to-date authentication sheets can be found on the subject webpage for each series, which can be found [here](#).

Centres are thanked for their work on this component and for the regular and helpful communication that was established with moderators.

There were very few reported concerns linked to the word count, and the majority of centres provided learner work which was concisely written and of a high standard.

General Comments

Almost all the work for this component was undertaken in the performer role.

Centres are encouraged to continue to support candidates to write more succinctly and to accurately record the word count at the bottom of each page, which includes wording in text boxes. Quotes to demonstrate research should be succinct and contextualised in the candidate's work to demonstrate relevant research rather than excessive use of quotes which are not related to the key points being made by the candidate.

Performance Analysis **Physiological Component**

Much of the work submitted for this task was well-structured and of high quality, often representing the strongest section of the four assessed components. Most candidates successfully identified three appropriate components of fitness, relevant to their chosen sport, demonstrating a good level of understanding of the physical demands of performance. There was also a clear improvement in the selection of fitness tests, with increasing numbers of learners moving away from generic, outdated protocols and instead opting for more contemporary, sport-

specific assessments. This shift reflects a growing awareness of best practice in the field.

Many candidates demonstrated sound analysis of test results, making links between their scores and the physical requirements of their sport. Furthermore, the principles of reliability and validity were addressed in a large number of submissions, with some learners showing a particularly strong grasp of how these concepts apply to the fitness tests they used. In higher-scoring work, the data was not only interpreted well, but also critically examined for its limitations, enhancing the evaluative depth of the analysis. Most candidates were also able to use their fitness testing outcomes to establish clear training priorities, which served as a strong foundation for their subsequent planning.

There remain areas where learners would benefit from additional support. While most candidates chose suitable fitness components, some selected elements that were not fully aligned with the specific performance demands of their sport. In other instances, learners discussed a broader range of components than required, which diluted the focus and led to the inclusion of non-creditworthy content. Additionally, the rationale for selecting certain components was not always clearly justified, limiting the analytical strength of this section.

Although the use of contemporary tests has improved, a number of candidates still relied on traditional or less relevant testing methods, which reduced the precision and applicability of their data. The analysis of results also varied in quality; some learners relied on generalised or subjective comments rather than using comparative data to support their evaluations. In several cases, test outcomes were not analysed in sufficient depth, with little reference to peer group averages or elite performance standards. This lack of comparison limited the effectiveness of the analysis and its value in informing training decisions.

The principles of reliability and validity, while mentioned by most, were not always applied correctly or with sufficient depth. Some candidates demonstrated only a surface-level understanding, failing to consider how these principles impacted the specific tests chosen. Stronger candidates were able to articulate the potential limitations of their tests and how testing conditions may have influenced their results - a level of insight that should be encouraged more broadly across the cohort.

To support learners in developing these areas, teachers should encourage students to explore up-to-date resources from National Governing Bodies (NGB) and sport science journals, to enhance their understanding of fitness testing. Integrating practical sessions where students experience and critique different fitness tests could also help strengthen their grasp of reliability, validity, and test relevance. Additionally, guiding students in using comparative data effectively - through the inclusion of normative values, peer comparisons, and elite

benchmarks - will help deepen the quality of analysis and improve the overall standard of coursework.

Technical Component

The technical analysis task was the most consistently well-marked section across centres, with almost all candidates choosing the technical component as their focus. Most learners selected an appropriate core skill and structured their analysis effectively around the three key phases of performance: preparation, execution, and recovery. This provided a logical and clear framework for their analysis.

A key strength was the use of annotated photographs, which in many cases were of a high standard and clearly illustrated each phase of the skill. Many candidates demonstrated good awareness by comparing their technique to elite performers, and in some cases, to peers. This comparative approach enabled learners to identify both personal strengths and development needs, adding meaningful context to their technical evaluation.

High-level submissions frequently went beyond basic observation by including detailed diagrams and data, such as timing, angles, or velocity. These candidates used biomechanical insights to support their analysis and were able to provide well-justified areas for development, showing a mature understanding of skill refinement and technical efficiency. This level of work was both insightful and technically accurate, reflecting strong subject knowledge and thoughtful application.

Some candidates, however, provided only vague descriptions of performance phases and missed opportunities to include technical or biomechanical detail, which would have strengthened their analysis. In these cases, the analysis tended to be more descriptive than diagnostic, lacking the specificity needed to fully justify performance improvements.

In some submissions, although key areas for improvement were identified, the reasoning behind these choices was not explored in depth, and there was limited focus on how to refine or improve technique. Without a deeper technical understanding, some learners struggled to explain the underlying causes of technical errors or how these impact overall performance.

Another area of concern was around the word count. A few candidates failed to include the written content from their annotated diagrams in their total word count, resulting in work that exceeded the permitted limit. This oversight had implications for moderation, as it can impact the assessment of the full submission.

To address these issues, teachers can support learners by helping them develop a stronger grasp of biomechanical principles and their application to core skills. It is also important to provide guidance on how to write a technical analysis that is both concise and analytically rich, ensuring all content is included in the word count.

Tactical Component

Although only a small number of candidates chose the tactical option for this task, those who did generally approached it in a structured and thoughtful way. The majority presented their work using carefully annotated images, which helped to clearly communicate the tactical element being analysed. Initial descriptions of the chosen tactic were often detailed and accurate, demonstrating a good understanding of how the tactic functions within a competitive context.

A notable strength in several submissions was the use of data from elite-level performances to contextualise the tactic. Candidates who successfully embedded this kind of evidence were able to show how the tactic is applied in real-world competition, which strengthened the quality of their analysis and often led to higher marks. This use of performance data allowed learners to make relevant links between tactical choices and successful outcomes, and in stronger work, this was supported by visual examples and clearly labelled diagrams.

Despite the structured approach taken by many, there were several areas in which candidates would benefit from further support. One of the key limitations was the lack of supporting quantitative evidence, particularly from elite performers. In some cases, while the tactic was well described, the analysis lacked depth because it wasn't underpinned by meaningful data or measurable examples. Without these, learners struggled to show the real-world effectiveness of the tactic, which weakened the evaluative aspect of their work.

Additionally, tactical understanding across the small group of candidates who selected this option varied, with some demonstrating only a surface-level knowledge of the broader strategic application of the tactic within gameplay. These candidates often missed opportunities to explore why the tactic is used, in what situations it is most effective, and how it could be improved or adapted depending on opposition or match conditions.

To improve performance in this area, candidates should be encouraged to undertake more in-depth research into tactical aspects of performance. Teachers can support this by directing learners toward resources such as NGB publications, technical journals, sport-specific magazines, and credible online sources that regularly provide performance analysis and tactical breakdowns.

Incorporating match analysis sessions or encouraging learners to analyse their own team's performances can also be effective ways to build a stronger foundation in tactical understanding.

Performance Development Programme Planning

Candidates generally demonstrated a solid understanding of how to structure a Planning and Development Programme (PDP), with stronger submissions integrating key elements such as SMARTER targets and the principles of training into their planning. In the higher-marked work, learners did not treat these concepts as standalone definitions, but instead showed how they could be applied meaningfully to their own performance goals. This resulted in a more cohesive and reflective approach to programme design.

Many candidates provided thoughtful connections between the scientific basis of training methods and their selected exercises. For example, some learners explained the rationale behind choosing specific methods such as interval training or plyometrics in relation to their sport, demonstrating an understanding of how training approaches link to the demands of performance. Some submissions also made appropriate references to intensity levels, progressive overload, and other key training variables. Where well executed, these candidates gave detailed justifications - for example, considering drop heights in plyometric drills or lift speed in resistance training - which helped validate the structure and progression of their programme.

In terms of monitoring progress, there were some strong examples of learners using sport-specific fitness tests alongside comparisons to elite and normative data. Where this was done effectively, it enhanced the depth of analysis and showed a clear link between test outcomes and the evolving focus of the training programme.

Despite some strong work, there are several areas where candidates would benefit from further support. A common issue was that many candidates defined SMARTER targets and the principles of training in isolation, rather than applying them to the planning process. This often resulted in generic content that, while technically accurate, failed to demonstrate how these tools were being used to directly shape the programme. The lack of integration limited the evaluative depth and reduced the overall effectiveness of the task.

While some candidates referred to the science behind their training choices, this was not always detailed enough. In particular, there was often insufficient explanation of exercise selection, training intensity, and how the principle of progressive overload was applied. For instance, learners missed opportunities to discuss how increasing drop heights in plyometric drills or altering the tempo of lifts in strength training could systematically develop performance.

There was also some inconsistency in the selection of fitness tests. In some cases, candidates relied on dated or generic testing protocols, which reduced the relevance and accuracy of performance tracking. Although many learners did compare their results with elite or peer group data, the quality of comparisons varied, and some lacked the specificity needed to inform meaningful training decisions.

To address these issues, teachers should guide learners to apply theory in context, ensuring that SMARTER targets and training principles are clearly linked to the athlete's personal goals and performance gaps. Encouraging learners to justify every element of their PDP - why a method is used, how intensity is measured, and how adaptations will be tracked - will help improve the depth of analysis. Additionally, promoting research into contemporary, sport-specific fitness tests via National Governing Body websites and professional journals will ensure that learners are selecting relevant tools to monitor progress effectively throughout the programme.

Evaluation of the PDP

Many candidates demonstrated notable progress in this final section of the coursework, with an increasing number offering a balanced mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence to support their evaluations. Stronger learners effectively incorporated a variety of data sources, including coach feedback, notational analysis, and comparisons with elite or peer performers. These forms of evidence added credibility and depth to their evaluations and showed an ability to reflect critically on the effectiveness of their training.

Candidates who achieved the highest marks typically wrote in a clear, succinct, and analytical style. Rather than simply restating what had been done, they focused on evaluating the impact of the programme - identifying what worked well, what had limited effect, and why. These learners also demonstrated maturity in their ability to draw their PDP to a logical and reflective conclusion, often including thoughtful and sport-specific recommendations for future development. In the best work, candidates outlined short- and medium-term goals based on the evidence gathered, showing an understanding of how to build upon their training experience in a progressive and realistic way.

While many learners made good use of data, some candidates were still limited by an over-reliance on description rather than analysis. In these cases, the evaluation lacked critical insight and did not clearly link back to the original goals or training outcomes. Without an interpretation of the evidence, the evaluation often became a summary rather than an assessment of programme success.

Additionally, some candidates did not go far enough in considering the long-term implications of their training or in offering meaningful recommendations for future development. Where suggestions were made, they were sometimes vague or generic, lacking alignment with the specific findings from their PDP. As a result, the opportunity to demonstrate forward planning and a deeper understanding of training progression was missed.

To strengthen performance in this section, teachers should encourage learners to treat the evaluation as a chance to synthesise their entire PDP, drawing conclusions based on a wide range of evidence. With a more analytical approach and clear linkage between evidence and future planning, learners can significantly enhance the quality and impact of their evaluations.

Coaches

Only a small number of candidates chose the coach role, and where it was selected, the work generally shared the same strengths seen in performer submissions. These included structured analysis, appropriate use of data, and evidence of planning and reflection on performance outcomes. Some candidates demonstrated a good understanding of technical or tactical elements relevant to their sport and applied this effectively in their planning and delivery.

Despite these strengths, one key area often overlooked was the requirement to evaluate personal development as a coach. Many submissions focused heavily on the performer's progress while failing to reflect meaningfully on the candidate's own growth in the coaching role. Centres should remind learners that the coaching pathway requires attention to their development of coaching skills, methods, and effectiveness, and this should be explicitly addressed in the analysis and evaluation sections.

Accuracy of marking

The majority of centres marked work with a good level of accuracy, and in most cases, the centre marks aligned closely with those awarded during moderation. This reflects a sound understanding of the assessment criteria and effective application across all four tasks.

Where minor discrepancies did occur, they were generally due to centres being slightly generous in awarding marks for descriptive or less analytical content, particularly in tasks where deeper evaluation or application of theory was expected.

Overall, moderation confirmed that the majority of marking was in line with national standards, and centres are advised to continue reinforcing analytical writing and evidence-led evaluation to support strong and accurate marking.

Word Count

Moderators reported a notable reduction in the number of candidates exceeding the word count this year, which is a positive development. However, where issues still arose, they were most commonly linked to candidates not including their written analysis contained within tables or text boxes, particularly in the technical or tactical analysis sections.

Teachers should remind candidates that any written analysis they produce—regardless of whether it appears in the main body of text, in tables, or in text boxes—must be included in the final word count. Only specific visual or data-based elements are exempt.

To support centres in maintaining consistency and fairness, please note the following:

- The maximum word count for the Performance Analysis and PDP is 3,500 words.
- If the submitted evidence exceeds 3,500 words, moderators are instructed to stop moderating once the limit is reached, using professional judgement to assess only up to the word count limit.

This approach ensures parity across all learners and aligns with national standards.

The specification clearly outlines what is excluded from the word count:

- PARQs (Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaires)
- Graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, and flow charts (as long as they do not include candidate-written analysis)
- The bibliography

Teachers should advise students that exceeding the word count may prevent them from producing a concise and coherently structured piece of work, which can impact the quality of analysis and final mark awarded.

Summary

Moderators noted that much of the coursework submitted for A Level PE Component 4 was of a high standard, demonstrating strong structure and clear organisation. It was evident that candidates dedicated considerable time and engaged in extensive research to support their analysis, planning, and evaluations.

To further enhance the quality of work, centres are encouraged to guide learners toward using up-to-date, sport-specific resources. This includes exploring National Governing Bodies' websites, technical journals, and current

sport science publications. These sources provide valuable insights into contemporary fitness testing, training methods, tactical analysis, and performance evaluation. Regular use of such resources helps candidates produce more relevant, evidence-based coursework that reflects the latest practices within their chosen sports.

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