

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Paper 9396/02
AS Level Coursework

Key messages

This is the last series of examinations for syllabus 9396. After November 2023 it will no longer be available at AS or A level. The new AS-only syllabus 8386 is available from June 2024 in both the June and November series.

Evidence should be reviewed by centres before submission. Candidate identification is important as moderators will not be familiar with a centre's candidates.

Forms should be checked carefully before submission.

General comments

There were some high-quality performances were seen in this series. Many centres had read and then applied the coursework guidance to their marking. Some centres presented well-structured evidence that facilitated the moderation process.

However, some centres did not follow the coursework guidelines and submitted practical and/or written work where the required evidence was missing or insufficient. Centres need to provide the required evidence as stated in the coursework guidelines. The identification of candidates was not always clear. Some centres submitted evidence where the candidate had offered two activities from the same activity category and therefore marks had to be amended. Candidates were to be assessed in two different practical activities chosen from two of the different activity categories.

Administration

The paperwork submitted by some centres was excellent and well-checked. In these cases, all the rank order, the summary form and logs (where required) were complete and had been checked so that the compilation of awarded marks was correct and the moderation process could then progress.

The paperwork submitted by some other centres was not always well organised. At some centres, the marks on the rank order forms did not match the corresponding marks on the summary forms. Centres should note that a zero mark is usually used when a candidate has submitted filmed evidence or written work, but that work or evidence is not creditworthy. These candidates should be in the sample as indicated in the samples database instructions. The requirement is for two practical activities from two different activity categories and an action plan.

At some centres, marking was too generous. Centres should apply the marking criteria found in the coursework guidelines carefully and consistently across the whole range of activities submitted by their candidates.

Some centres failed to submit evidence, without initial explanation, for their candidates. Centres are reminded that candidates who did not submit any evidence should have been recorded as absent from the assessment.

Filmed evidence

The quality, quantity and type of evidence varied. Some centres produced good-quality filmed evidence. Many centres had reviewed, selected, edited and then checked their files before despatch. Centres are reminded that each candidate should have been clearly identified throughout the filmed evidence. Some

centres identified the candidate at the start of the filming but then the candidate became hard to identify, especially if the candidate was filmed from a distance. The use of coloured or numbered bibs that are worn throughout the filming is often beneficial. In activities where this is difficult, such as swimming, the camera should have remained focused on the candidate from a verbal introduction until the completion of the task or another system should be used. In some cases, the candidate was named but not identified with a numbered bib or candidate number or lane, which made identification and assessment more difficult. In some cases, the candidate was named at the start of the filmed evidence but not identified by candidate number or numbered bib and in conditioned situations where more than one candidate was present in the same footage.

For a few centres, the evidence was filmed from too far away or focused on the wrong candidate. This made identification difficult. Centres should have reviewed their evidence before submission. In some cases, low level of demand evidence was used. This was sometimes due to a candidate playing against much less able opposition or taking part in drills and skill activities that were passive and static rather than competitive and challenging.

Action Plans

Some action plans were detailed and structured in accordance with the coursework guidelines. The best action plans contained work that demonstrated detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a performance using technical language and a clear knowledge of the activity. This analysis was then linked to the goals set to improve the performance. These plans were based on the set goals and contained detailed explanations of weekly training practices and fitness sessions incorporating training principles. Action plans that were awarded higher marks tended to contain evaluations that were personal and linked back to the technical detail involved in the performance weaknesses, perhaps using specific examples. Fitness or performance testing was sometimes used to show a recorded improvement.

In this series, some centres overmarked action plans. Sometimes there was a lack of detail in these plans. For example, they may have been a simple diary of weekly training schedules without a link to the improvement of identified weaknesses and with evaluations that were superficial and very general. The coursework guidelines clearly outline how to structure the action plans. Some candidates simply listed such training activities in a weekly or daily diary with little or no evaluation of how to gauge if the suggested training plan had improved performance.

Some action plans were well-constructed and detailed and these candidates analysed their strengths and weaknesses and demonstrated an understanding of how to plan a training programme to improve the performance of a specified weakness in their skills, tactics and fitness. The methods used to achieve the goals were based clearly upon recognised training principles. A thorough and detailed evaluation was then sometimes included.

Comments on specific activities

Invasion games

Invasion games were the most popular of the activities. Candidates were sometimes filmed in conditioned drills and performing conditioned games in a competitive environment. However, sometimes the level of demand of the filmed environment did not allow candidates to show their full ability. In some cases, the level and quality of the opposition was too low, or opponents taking part in conditioned games were too passive. If the demand of the environment does not match a high level of performance, then it is difficult for candidates to access the highest marks. In some cases, the range of acquired and developed skills indicated in the guidelines was not evidenced, with centres submitting clips of one or two skills repeated in different practice situations rather than a fuller range of skills in highly competitive practice situations. In some cases, centres did not submit evidence of conditioned practices. Rubric infringements occurred most often in the invasion games category, with candidates submitting evidence of two games from category 5 as their evidence, rather than one game and an activity from another of the eleven categories.

Track and Field Athletics

Filmed evidence of track and field was sometimes very brief and did not always show a prescribed competitive situation. Some centres concentrated too much on warming-up. However, there was also evidence which more closely followed the syllabus requirements. In sprinting events for example, the filmed

performance of various starts, mid-race actions and race finishes, filmed from different angles, showed the technique and ability of some candidates clearly.

Outdoor and Adventurous activities

In Hill Walking most centres presented evidence of candidates performing skills in an appropriate environment, but some environments were more challenging than others. Whilst evidence of the actual expedition walk was submitted by many centres, the acquired skills of the use of map and compass, navigation, route planning and knowledge and application of safety were not always shown well. According to the guidelines, candidates should be assessed as individuals. They should be assessed whilst performing the acquired and developed skills in a challenging environment from different parts of the expedition. A log is required as evidence of the content, planning and execution of the expedition, but some centres did not provide this evidence.

In Mountain Biking the required log detailing the experience and other evidence to support the candidate's ability was not always submitted. The filmed evidence was sometimes taken from the rider via a helmet camera and not, as the syllabus requires, from strategic points on the course to show an overview of the candidate in action.

Cross-Country Running

Minimum distances should have been applied. There was evidence of these outlined coursework requirements in good submissions. However, in some examples there was no evidence of a race finish, pacing or of running inclines and evidence of the distance run was sometimes not included.

Dance

Evidence of most candidates in this activity was good. Candidates performed three solo dances from two genres and the marks awarded were supported by good quality evidence. However, sometimes candidates performed just one dance or did not include a written programme with their submission. At some centres not all relevant evidence was submitted.

Weight Training

Most centres had followed the guidance closely. Filming included a variety of exercises from different angles with a clear explanation of the intended improvement to be gained from such exercises. The best work included advanced techniques that were performed with control, accuracy and fluency. In this filmed evidence, the link to the improvement of a specific activity that could be made by the various exercises being performed was verbally explained. However, some centres awarded high marks to candidates who did not display advanced techniques, lacked control in their performance or often performed very basic exercises.

Swimming activities

The evidence for swimming was presented well with close correlation to the guidance by many centres. The evidence often showed various techniques involved in the specified stroke, including starts and turns. There were some excellent swimmers evidenced in this series.

Some centres did not identify the swimmers well, choosing to name the swimmer at the start of the film but not identifying the swimmer by candidate number and/or lane number whilst filming was undertaken from a distance.

In both personal survival and life-saving activities, most centres followed the guidance closely and the filmed evidence was structured to include the prescribed requirements. Accurate assessment could then be made of the candidates' effort, control and efficiency.

Additional evidence

Logs or records of performance were required in several activities in addition to other performance evidence. The best prepared centres had clearly engaged with the guidelines, where these requirements are outlined.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Paper 9396/04
A Level Coursework

Key messages

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Centres should review the syllabus documentation before submitting evidence.

Centres should ensure that candidates are identified clearly for the moderator and that candidate ID is used on the forms.

General comments

There were some strong performances that were well evidenced at some centres. Some centres did not seem to note the coursework guidelines fully before submitting evidence.

Administration

Centres should have submitted evidence of two activities and an Evaluation and Appreciation task where relevant due to the sample and cohort size.

Most centres submitted evidence that was well presented and clear. Paperwork was mostly correctly administered with summary forms, rank order forms and other evidence such as logs completed and included with the evidence. Where required, performance tables were generally consulted.

However, some centres did not include a summary form with their evidence and others did not record candidate marks on the correct forms. For example, swimming and track and field athletics require the recording of marks on particular forms that show the breakdown of marks and the calculation of the final mark. In some cases, centres did not complete the required rank order forms for each activity and/or they did not complete separate rank order forms for male and female candidates.

Filmed evidence

The quality, quantity and type of evidence varied considerably. Some centres produced good-quality filmed evidence. Many centres had reviewed, selected, edited and then checked the evidence before despatch.

For a few centres the evidence was filmed from too far away or focused on the wrong candidate. This made candidate identification difficult. Some centres did not identify the candidates at the start of the filmed evidence, or they introduced the candidate in a different setting and then did not identify the candidate in the actual performance. Candidates were typically identified by numbered or coloured bib, by numbered shirt, by coloured swimming cap, by specialist clothing or by a printed number attached to clothing.

Sometimes candidates were filmed in games or situations of low demand, where the quality of opposition or the demands of the situation were not high enough to show if and how the candidate used tactics and strategies in challenging situations.

Other centres submitted evidence of challenging and competitive situations such as high-level games, athletic events and swimming galas. In such evidence it was clear that candidates were performing at a high standard.

It is important that candidates are filmed in the most appropriate situations so that they are best able to fully demonstrate their skills and abilities in their chosen activity. Some footage was taken from such a distance that it was hard to see the candidate performing. In team games, some evidence was filmed while following the ball and not the candidate and therefore it was hard to focus on the candidate taking up positions or supporting the play. Some footage was very brief and taken from one perspective. In some circumstances it was hard to identify the candidate and evidence was presented, for example, with more than one player wearing the same number in a game or where the candidate changed their number during filming without clear record of this.

Centres are reminded that they should have reviewed the final evidence before it was submitted. Some centres did not do this and there were evidence issues as a result. In some cases centres did not check their evidence before despatch.

Comments on specific activities

Invasion games

Invasion games were the most popular activities chosen for assessment and in most cases the choice was supported by good-quality filmed evidence. Candidates were often filmed in fully competitive situations such as school, college or club fixtures. Sometimes an unedited, full-length club or school fixture was used as the situational evidence and the candidate under scrutiny was not always present on camera, since the filming tended to follow the ball or the action and not the candidate. Better submissions contained edited and/or annotated footage of the candidate at key moments during the game to showcase the required tactics and strategies.

Some candidates were filmed in less competitive situations where the quality of the opposition or the level of intensity of the activity may not have contained enough demand to allow candidates to demonstrate their skills fully. Some centres presented evidence of only training or practice drills without any evidence of a full competitive game. These centres should have consulted the coursework guidelines before submitting evidence.

Swimming activities

The quality of evidence in these activities was generally good. Some high-quality evidence showed candidates up close, from various angles and some centres used underwater cameras to film the swimmers performing starts and turns, supplemented by footage of candidates in competition. Many of these competitions were at regional level and showed candidates performing at a high standard with electronic timing supporting the timing evidence.

Other, less helpful filming was taken at one end of the pool and then followed candidates from the same position as they swam to the opposite end of the pool, thus the image of the swimmer gradually decreased in size. In such circumstances it was often difficult to see the techniques and actions of the swimmer. Some centres are reminded that there are performance assessment tables to be used in swimming activities. Some of the evidence of competitive swimming showed races that were not of the required distance and in other evidence the swimmer was filmed in only one event only. In the activities of both Life Saving and Personal Survival, there are instructions in the guidance of the tasks and procedures that must be undertaken by candidates. Most centres followed the guidance correctly. However, these guidelines were not always adhered to.

Cross-country Running

Candidates should have been assessed on a marked course in a pressured competitive situation over the specified distance. It was sometimes hard to confirm the length and variety of the course from the evidence presented, which centres should check has been presented clearly. The best evidence showed a variety of terrain and filmed the candidates at various stages of the race and included more than one other runner as competition. At some centres, the evidence presented was of just the start and finish of the race with maybe just one other competitor present. Some centres completed the competitive race on an athletics track which was not appropriate for this activity.

Track and Field Athletics

Performance tables are to be used. Some centres provided evidence of various candidates competing in the same athletics event with no evidence of other aspects. Centres did not always use the correct form to record the marks in this activity and some did not calculate the marks correctly. Other errors occurred when candidates were assessed in only one activity instead of two.

Dance

The Coursework Guidelines state that a solo dance lasting between three and four minutes should be recorded, and the evidence generally included some high-quality performances supported by the required written programme.

Outdoor and adventurous activities

Hill Walking

The evidence usually contained footage of the required expedition supported by a log. High-level marks were usually supported if candidates were assessed as individuals, during the expedition, on skills such as navigation and use of a map and where the expedition was clearly physically and technically demanding. In some cases centres filmed candidates using a group rather than individual approach to assessment which usually could not support high marks.

Mountain Biking

Candidates should be assessed whilst planning and taking part in a physically and technically challenging competition at a difficult level with the course conditions detailed. Some centres did not meet these criteria and filming was done from a camera on candidates' helmets rather than from various points of the course so that candidates' level of technical ability could be readily assessed.

Orienteering

The best evidence was of a challenging orienteering course where candidates were clearly using the map and showing orienteering skills and the permitted amount of route planning. Weaker evidence contained footage of group orienteering where candidates followed one another.

Evaluation and Appreciation task

The filmed evidence for this task was generally well presented. Footage of the observed performance was often included with the evidence either in a separate named file, or better still, immediately before the filming of the task. Candidates are not allowed to use pre-prepared notes but can use notes that have been made during the observation of the live performance. Candidates usually performed best when not continually reading from the notes, but rather using them as a prompt. The oral task should be filmed as soon as possible after that live observation. In some high-level responses the whole Evaluation and Appreciation task was filmed by a third person. In other situations, the observed performance was recorded and then the camera immediately, without pause, switched to the teacher asking the questions, filming the candidate responses to those questions. The continuation from observation to analysis usually clearly demonstrated candidate application of knowledge and supported the mark awarded.

At some centres, different candidates used the same theoretical content to evaluate the observed performance even when the activity and observed performer were very different. The Evaluation and Appreciation task is individual and applied to a specific performance, with candidates responding to what they have seen rather than what they expect to see. Actions within different observed performances required different appropriate and justified theoretical explanations. Sometimes candidates appeared to repeat a pre-learned response generically rather than responding to the specific performance under analysis. Any prompting should be open ended and transparent.

There were a number of very high-level evaluations which often included detailed knowledge of the chosen activity with the use of technical language to explain weaknesses in the performance. These also tended to contain relevant theoretical concepts to explain weaknesses. Weaker evaluations lacked detail and contained repetitive theoretical content that had little relevance to the observed performance.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Paper 9396/11
Written Paper

Key messages

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Candidates should consider the mark allocation for each question and so write in sufficient detail.

Candidates need to be prepared to apply their knowledge to demonstrate their understanding.

General comments

Presentation of work was generally clear with many strong answers seen in each of the three sections of the paper by stronger candidates. Weaker candidates generally tended to not fully meet the demands of the questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Weaker candidates sometimes confused their descriptions of the stated movements with other movement types. Other weaker candidates tended to confuse key anatomical terms in their responses leading to incorrect statements. Stronger candidates typically gave suitably precise and descriptive responses.
- (b) Some weaker candidates found this question challenging, with some confusing the biceps femoris with other muscles. Stronger candidates usually gave valid descriptive answers for the action of each muscle.
- (c) Weaker responses tended to lack the detail required for credit. Some candidates knew of the different types of muscle contraction, but fewer had sufficient knowledge to explain or apply this to the action of a sit-up.
- (d) It was common for candidates to know the types of movement, but less so the appropriate agonists. Generally, strong candidates gained credit for all aspects of this question. The agonist at the hip seemed most challenging.
- (e) (i) Many candidates answered this question successfully. Weaker candidates often did not usually have a sufficient depth of knowledge to explain hormonal control. Some candidates included irrelevant factors.
 - (ii) Most candidates showed some good knowledge in this question. Some very weak candidates found this challenging, with some tending to use incorrect units.
 - (iii) Most candidates showed a good knowledge. However, only the strongest candidates could provide a full explanation of how this was achieved.

- (f) Stronger candidates answered well, with excellent descriptions of the pulmonary circulatory system. Some weaker candidates confused the pulmonary circulatory system with the systemic system.
- (g) (i) Weaker candidates generally did not have the breadth of knowledge to attain more than partial credit in this question. Some of these candidates referred to a general effect on breathing, but many could not explain other short-term effects.
- (ii) Candidates generally knew the role of the external intercostal and the sternocleidomastoid muscles better than the internal intercostal and abdominal muscles. Stronger candidates typically gave a strong description for all muscles identified in the question.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) (i) Weaker candidates found this question challenging and some very weak candidates simply stated synonyms of the term used in the question. Some other candidates showed knowledge of one further characteristic of ability, rather than two.
- (ii) Some candidates responded too generally, providing a description of each term without a practical example. The strongest candidates were able to apply their knowledge to suitable practical examples as required by the question.
- (b) The strongest candidates commonly showed their depth of knowledge in describing a sporting example of each of the terms. However, generally, only the stronger candidates could provide a credit-worthy example for negative reinforcement.
- (c) (i) Stronger candidates could usually explain this using a sporting example. Weaker candidates often wrote about motor programmes generically without referencing a sporting example.
- (ii) Stronger candidates could usually explain the theory of open-loop control to attain maximum credit. Weaker candidates sometimes confused this theory with the theory of closed-loop control.
- (d) Only stronger candidates answered this fully correctly. Many candidates were able to successfully describe some features of the short-term memory. Some answers were limited to reference to capacity and duration.
- (e) (i) Many candidates could show some knowledge about why a quick reaction time is needed but answers often lacked the depth required to secure maximal credit. Some weak candidates gave answers that repeated the words in the question only.
- (ii) Many candidates showed a good understanding of the development of reaction time to improve response time. However, it was only the stronger candidates who showed knowledge across the breadth of the mark scheme to gain maximal credit.
- (f) Many candidates correctly described the two types of transfer. Weaker candidates sometimes described positive transfer rather than proactive transfer or seemed to not understand the terms in the question at all.
- (g) (i) In the definitions provided, many candidates could link intrinsic to 'within' or similar, but often lacked the application of knowledge to take this any further.
- (ii) Many weaker candidates could suggest at least one answer. Stronger candidates could answer in more breadth to achieve more credit.

Section C

Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates gained partial credit for this question. However, only the stronger candidates showed the depth of knowledge required to access full credit.
- (ii) The strongest candidates knew both concepts well and often gained full credit. Weaker candidates tended to make overstatements.
- (b) (i) Many candidates did well on this question. Most candidates gained some credit with many of the strongest candidates gaining full credit with answers that suggested varying reasons for investing in elite sport.
- (ii) Most candidates found this question accessible and many scored full credit. The strongest candidates showed an excellent breadth of knowledge about how funding is acquired.
- (iii) Many candidates clearly focused their answers on provision at the elite level. It was sometimes the case that the weaker candidates wrote about motivation or training commitments rather than focusing on the provision required.
- (c) Most candidates gained at least partial credit for this question. Some responses showed good specific knowledge about how religion can affect participation and a breadth of differing responses were seen.
- (d) Candidate explanations for this question were generally of a good standard and many were able to explore the variety of explanatory points about the relationships between the three stakeholders. It was common for stronger candidates to gain full credit for this question.
- (e) There were very some strong responses to this question. Candidates were generally able to suggest how drug use could be reduced. Weaker candidates tended to focus solely on drug testing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Paper 9396/12
Written Paper

Key messages

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Candidates should be prepared to offer suitable examples.

Candidates need to use technical language and syllabus terms carefully.

General comments

Many candidates read each question carefully and some seemed to plan their answers in a structured way. These answers generally covered a range of correct responses and used the correct technical language. Stronger candidates tended to ensure that an appropriate number of points were made to give answers of sufficient depth.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Stronger candidates correctly analysed the movements at both joints. Weaker candidates usually performed better on the movement of the elbow joint. Some weak candidates did not use the precision of language expected at this level.
- (b) Many responses showed excellent knowledge and understanding of the structures and features of the elbow joint that limit its range of movement. Weaker responses showed limited ability to apply knowledge.
- (c) (i) Stronger candidates usually gave clear descriptions of the functions of antagonists and fixators.
(ii) Stronger candidates named an antagonist and a fixator. Some weaker candidates identified an agonist instead.
- (d) The strongest responses included detailed explanations and usually produced separate paragraphs for each different area of the graph. The specific roles of receptors and the changes that these receptors detect were a key element of stronger answers. Weaker candidates tended to describe the changes in heart rate instead.
- (e) The strongest candidates identified the changes in blood velocity and explained the reasons for these changes. Some candidates knew some blood velocity changes as blood moves through the systemic system but did not explain.
- (f) The strongest responses identified structures of the bronchi and described their roles correctly. Weaker responses tended to describe features of alveoli.

- (g) Stronger candidates produced excellent explanations of gaseous exchange at the muscle. Some candidates thought that it is the difference between the partial pressure of oxygen and carbon dioxide that causes a diffusion gradient.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to state a characteristic of ability. A few weaker answers confused this with other syllabus areas.
- (ii) The stronger candidates gave correct examples of a gross motor ability and a psychomotor ability. Weaker candidates sometimes gave vague answers relating to whole activities.
- (b) Stronger candidates explained the progression from motor abilities to sport-specific skills clearly using a practical example. Weaker candidates were sometimes not able to differentiate between fundamental motor skills and sport-specific skills well.
- (c) (i) Stronger candidates understood and explained the cognitive theory of learning. Some weak candidates mistakenly described the cognitive stage of learning.
- (ii) The stronger answers outlined different benefits of using cognitive theory. Some candidates who could not explain cognitive theory were still able to outline one of its benefits.
- (d) (i) Stronger candidates knew all four elements of Bandura's model of observational learning. Some weaker candidates did not seem to know of this model as they did not attempt this question.
- (ii) There are many ways to make a demonstration of a skill more effective and stronger candidates described several of these ways. Most answers gained at least some credit.
- (e) The stronger responses explained what is meant by a motor programme using a sporting example and many listed the subroutines of that skill. Weaker candidates often gave limited answers that tended to focus on where motor programmes are stored.
- (f) Stronger candidates showed excellent understanding of the parts of the basic model of the memory process. Some weak candidates did not attempt this question.
- (g) The strongest candidates tended to give a good description of each type of feedback, followed by a clear practical example. Weaker responses sometimes described the types of feedback without an example or gave an example without describing what each type of feedback meant.
- (h) The strongest candidates understood the importance of the dominant response to drive theory. Some candidates supported their responses with a labelled graph.

Section C

Question 3

- (a) (i) This was a well-answered question. Most candidates split their answers to address the importance of active leisure for individuals and for society separately.
- (ii) Stronger candidates made many valid suggestions to suggest how physical education in schools can prepare students to use active leisure effectively. Weaker candidates gave very limited suggestions.
- (b) (i) This was generally answered well. Some weaker candidates left their responses underdeveloped.
- (ii) Candidates often described a range of benefits of play for children. Some weaker candidates left some benefits underdeveloped and so did not sufficiently describe.
- (c) The strongest candidates recognised that a range of responses were required to gain full credit. These candidates often produced excellent answers. Weaker candidates gave some valid answers but did not offer the required broad range of responses for maximum credit.

- (d) The strongest responses gave detailed suggestions that National Governing Bodies could use to encourage mass participation. Some weaker candidates confused this with other syllabus areas.
- (e) Stronger candidates identified many reasons why some people with disabilities do not take part in physical activity. A range of suggestions were usually offered by most candidates.
- (f) This was generally answered well. Most candidates described drug testing and punishments that are used. The stronger answers also covered other strategies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Paper 9396/13
Written Paper

Key messages

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Candidates should consider the mark allocation for each question and so write in sufficient detail.

Candidates need to be prepared to apply their knowledge to demonstrate their understanding.

General comments

Presentation of work was generally clear with many strong answers seen in each of the three sections of the paper by stronger candidates. Weaker candidates generally tended to not fully meet the demands of the questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Weaker candidates sometimes confused their descriptions of the stated movements with other movement types. Other weaker candidates tended to confuse key anatomical terms in their responses leading to incorrect statements. Stronger candidates typically gave suitably precise and descriptive responses.
- (b) Some weaker candidates found this question challenging, with some confusing the biceps femoris with other muscles. Stronger candidates usually gave valid descriptive answers for the action of each muscle.
- (c) Weaker responses tended to lack the detail required for credit. Some candidates knew of the different types of muscle contraction, but fewer had sufficient knowledge to explain or apply this to the action of a sit-up.
- (d) It was common for candidates to know the types of movement, but less so the appropriate agonists. Generally, strong candidates gained credit for all aspects of this question. The agonist at the hip seemed most challenging.
- (e) (i) Many candidates answered this question successfully. Weaker candidates often did not usually have a sufficient depth of knowledge to explain hormonal control. Some candidates included irrelevant factors.
 - (ii) Most candidates showed some good knowledge in this question. Some very weak candidates found this challenging, with some tending to use incorrect units.
 - (iii) Most candidates showed a good knowledge. However, only the strongest candidates could provide a full explanation of how this was achieved.

- (f) Stronger candidates answered well, with excellent descriptions of the pulmonary circulatory system. Some weaker candidates confused the pulmonary circulatory system with the systemic system.
- (g) (i) Weaker candidates generally did not have the breadth of knowledge to attain more than partial credit in this question. Some of these candidates referred to a general effect on breathing, but many could not explain other short-term effects.
- (ii) Candidates generally knew the role of the external intercostal and the sternocleidomastoid muscles better than the internal intercostal and abdominal muscles. Stronger candidates typically gave a strong description for all muscles identified in the question.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) (i) Weaker candidates found this question challenging and some very weak candidates simply stated synonyms of the term used in the question. Some other candidates showed knowledge of one further characteristic of ability, rather than two.
- (ii) Some candidates responded too generally, providing a description of each term without a practical example. The strongest candidates were able to apply their knowledge to suitable practical examples as required by the question.
- (b) The strongest candidates commonly showed their depth of knowledge in describing a sporting example of each of the terms. However, generally, only the stronger candidates could provide a credit-worthy example for negative reinforcement.
- (c) (i) Stronger candidates could usually explain this using a sporting example. Weaker candidates often wrote about motor programmes generically without referencing a sporting example.
- (ii) Stronger candidates could usually explain the theory of open-loop control to attain maximum credit. Weaker candidates sometimes confused this theory with the theory of closed-loop control.
- (d) Only stronger candidates answered this fully correctly. Many candidates were able to successfully describe some features of the short-term memory. Some answers were limited to reference to capacity and duration.
- (e) (i) Many candidates could show some knowledge about why a quick reaction time is needed but answers often lacked the depth required to secure maximal credit. Some weak candidates gave answers that repeated the words in the question only.
- (ii) Many candidates showed a good understanding of the development of reaction time to improve response time. However, it was only the stronger candidates who showed knowledge across the breadth of the mark scheme to gain maximal credit.
- (f) Many candidates correctly described the two types of transfer. Weaker candidates sometimes described positive transfer rather than proactive transfer or seemed to not understand the terms in the question at all.
- (g) (i) In the definitions provided, many candidates could link intrinsic to 'within' or similar, but often lacked the application of knowledge to take this any further.
- (ii) Many weaker candidates could suggest at least one answer. Stronger candidates could answer in more breadth to achieve more credit.

Section C

Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates gained partial credit for this question. However, only the stronger candidates showed the depth of knowledge required to access full credit.
- (ii) The strongest candidates knew both concepts well and often gained full credit. Weaker candidates tended to make overstatements.
- (b) (i) Many candidates did well on this question. Most candidates gained some credit with many of the strongest candidates gaining full credit with answers that suggested varying reasons for investing in elite sport.
- (ii) Most candidates found this question accessible and many scored full credit. The strongest candidates showed an excellent breadth of knowledge about how funding is acquired.
- (iii) Many candidates clearly focused their answers on provision at the elite level. It was sometimes the case that the weaker candidates wrote about motivation or training commitments rather than focusing on the provision required.
- (c) Most candidates gained at least partial credit for this question. Some responses showed good specific knowledge about how religion can affect participation and a breadth of differing responses were seen.
- (d) Candidate explanations for this question were generally of a good standard and many were able to explore the variety of explanatory points about the relationships between the three stakeholders. It was common for stronger candidates to gain full credit for this question.
- (e) There were very some strong responses to this question. Candidates were generally able to suggest how drug use could be reduced. Weaker candidates tended to focus solely on drug testing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Paper 9396/32
Written Paper

Key messages

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Candidates should consider the mark allocation for each question and structure their answers appropriately.

Candidates should make direct links when describing differences between two concepts.

General comments

Candidates were generally well prepared and applied their knowledge and understanding to a wide range of questions. These candidates supported their answers with suitable practical examples and considered how many points they needed to make to gain full credit. Weaker candidates tended to omit some questions and only made one or two valid points to answer higher-tariff questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Stronger candidates produced detailed answers that demonstrated good knowledge of aerobic glycolysis and the electron transport chain.
- (b) The strongest responses described the lactacid debt component of the recovery process well. Some responses described the alactacid debt component. Candidates are reminded to read each question carefully.
- (c) The strongest candidates identified three factors that determine which energy system is used. Most responses included that level of fitness is a factor.
- (d) Many candidates were able to describe some physiological benefits of a warm up. Some weaker candidates left responses too vague for credit to be awarded.
- (e) The strongest candidates highlighted differences between continuous running and fartlek training in a clear manner. Few weak candidates were able to describe four differences.
- (f) Candidates who understood the difference between static flexibility and dynamic flexibility usually gave clear examples of each. Some candidates gave examples of balances without any reference to flexibility. These answers did not show a knowledge of either type of flexibility.
- (g) Many candidates were able to name and describe a test of agility. A few candidates did not attempt to answer this question.
- (h)(i) The stronger candidates were able to describe two positive physiological effects of human growth hormone. Weaker candidates sometimes described muscular hypertrophy. This was stated in the question which meant that these answers could not be credited.

- (ii) Most candidates gave a suitable negative effect of human growth hormone on long-term health.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) Stronger candidates usually gave differences between the characteristics of extroversion and the characteristics of introversion clearly.
- (b) (i) Stronger candidates described several possible influences on a negative attitude to physical activity. Some weaker candidates described a lack of knowledge of the benefits of physical activity. This was not credited because this would lead to no opinion rather than a negative one.
- (ii) Candidates who understood the use of cognitive dissonance answered this question well. Weaker candidates tended to explain persuasive communication.
- (c) Many candidates were able to suggest some benefits of an emergent leader for a team. Some responses explained what the term emergent leader means without further comment.
- (d) Stronger candidates described four other SMARTER principles of goal setting and gave a relevant practical example for each. Weaker candidates sometimes did not give a practical example for each named principle.
- (e) (i) Stronger candidates understood evaluation apprehension and described a range of causes and effects. These candidates understood that while an audience increases arousal, the sort of people who are in the audience is also crucial. Some weaker responses stated that an audience is involved but did not say that this influences performance. Some candidates did not attempt this question.
- (ii) Many answers stated two cognitive anxiety management techniques. Somatic techniques were not credited.
- (f) Most candidates were able to suggest some reasons for aggressive behaviour during a game. Stronger candidates planned their answers so that they gave different reasons as the question demanded.

Section C

Question 3

- (a) (i) Stronger candidates knew the year and host for the 'Big Drug Bust'.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to describe that drug testing and punishing offenders were ways that the IOC leads the fight against doping. Stronger candidates were able to describe other methods used by the IOC.
- (b) Stronger candidates gave detailed descriptions of the political statement made at the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games by Tommie Smith and John Carlos. Some candidates did not attempt this question.
- (c) Only the strongest candidates were able to explain clearly why many African countries boycotted the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games. Weaker candidates showed a lack of understanding of the topic.
- (d) There are many forms of funding available to potential Olympic sports performers. Most candidates were able to provide a list of valid sources. The weakest responses tended to focus on sponsorship only.
- (e) This was a very well-answered question. Candidates described a wide range of benefits and potential problems linked to hosting the Olympic Games.

- (f) Most responses focused on the issue that working class athletes could not afford the costs involved in competing at the early modern Olympic Games. Others focused on not having the time to compete. Stronger candidates were able to identify these issues and suggested other reasons that limited participation in the early twentieth century.
- (g) This was generally answered well. Many candidates suggested valid ways to revise the medal ceremonies at the Olympics to reduce the emphasis on national prestige.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Paper 9396/33
Written Paper

Key messages

This is the last series of examinations for syllabus 9396. After November 2023 it will no longer be available at AS or A level. The new AS-only syllabus 8386 is available from June 2024 in both the June and November series.

Candidates should consider the mark allocation for each question and structure their answers appropriately.

Candidates should support their answers with carefully considered practical examples if this is a requirement of the question.

General comments

Many candidates seemed well prepared for this exam. Answers were generally well structured and stronger candidates used the correct technical language. These candidates were generally able to apply their knowledge to practical examples when asked to do so.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The stronger candidates showed excellent knowledge of the electron transport chain and described it in detail. Most candidates were able to identify the correct stage of the aerobic system and provide at least some relevant detail.
- (b) The strongest responses covered a range of chemical or food fuels and explained how the presence or absence of each of these factors affected energy system use. Weaker candidates tended to simply state the chemical or food fuel used by each energy system.
- (c) Stronger candidates understood that an explanation was required for each principle of training. For this question, each principle needed a practical example from weight training or strength training. The strongest candidates did this well. Weaker candidates often did not include why progression must be applied or did not use practical examples to support their answers.
- (d)(i) The strongest candidates gave accurate definitions of each type of strength and gave a suitable sporting example for each type.
 - (ii) Stronger candidates correctly identified two other factors affecting strength in females. Weaker candidates could be reminded to consider their choices carefully.
- (e) This question was generally answered well. Most candidates described the correct frequency and time for a continuous running training session. Stronger candidates often also described the correct intensity, usually as a percentage of maximum heart rate.
- (f) Many candidates showed good knowledge of carbohydrate loading. The strongest answers linked the correct timescales to training intensity and the amount of carbohydrate intake required.

- (g) This question was generally answered well. Most candidates outlined a range of negative physiological effects of the use of anabolic steroids. Some candidates included psychological effects instead.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) The strongest candidates described three differences between Type A and Type B personalities. Better responses made direct references to differences or used comparative terms well. Weaker candidates tended to state differences between other aspects of personality instead.
- (b) The strongest candidates explained the Ringelmann effect on a group in detail. Some candidates applied their answer to a contextualised example. This was an acceptable way of demonstrating their knowledge.
- (c) The strongest responses suggested three different negative effects of a prescribed leader on a team. Weaker answers were sometimes left too vague for credit to be awarded.
- (d) The stronger candidates were able to fully explain the relationship between sports confidence and competitiveness orientation. Some candidates who seemed not to understand competitiveness orientation securely were usually still able to access partial credit.
- (e) Many candidates were able to show knowledge of the meaning of social facilitation and at least one factor that causes it. Stronger candidates recognised that a range of causes were needed and described these well.
- (f) (i) Candidates who understood the social learning theory usually applied it to aggression well. The strongest responses discussed the fact that there were arguments against this theory and presented these arguments clearly.
- (ii) Most responses suggested some strategies to reduce aggressive tendencies. Stronger candidates described how a coach could teach a range of methods to their players.

Section C

Question 3

- (a) The strongest candidates made several suggestions as to how the IOC may promote international understanding at the Olympic Games. Weaker responses tended to focus only on the culture of the host nation.
- (b) This question was generally answered well. Most candidates used the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games as their choice. Some answers did not state the name of the country, as asked for in the question. These responses usually earned some credit but could not gain full credit.
- (c) Stronger candidates suggested ways that funding can be used. Some candidates applied their knowledge to a specific country. This was not asked for. However, acceptable answers were credited.
- (d) Most candidates could suggest how mass audiences can bring financial benefits for the host country of the Olympic Games. Some weaker candidates did not sufficiently develop their response for credit to be awarded.
- (e) (i) This question was answered very well. Most candidates outlined several financial costs for an athlete.
- (ii) This question was also answered well. Some weaker candidates resorted to repetition, for example, about gaining sponsorship opportunities. This was only credited once. The stronger candidates usually considered a range of other benefits as well.

- (f) (i) The stronger candidates usually described the ‘Big Drugs Bust’ at the Seoul Olympics in good detail. Some candidates who did not know the names of the athletes involved were usually still able to gain credit for other relevant descriptive points.
- (ii) Most candidates gave some examples of dysfunctional behaviour at the Olympic Games. Weaker responses tended to state cheating and gamesmanship without any elaboration or application.