



Department  
for Education

# Physical Education

**GCE AS and A level subject content**

**January 2015**

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# The content for physical education AS and A level

## Introduction

1. The AS and A level subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all AS and A level specifications in physical education to ensure progression from key stage 4 and the possibility of development on to further study. It provides the framework within which awarding organisations create the detail of the subject specification. GCE specifications in physical education must reflect the subject aims and objectives.

## Aims and objectives

2. AS and A level specifications in physical education should equip students with both a depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills relating to scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical education. This will require them to:

- develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity and sport and use this knowledge to improve performance
- understand how physiological and psychological states affect performance
- understand the key socio-cultural factors that influence people's involvement in physical activity and sport
- understand the role of technology in physical activity and sport
- refine their ability to perform effectively in physical activity and sport by developing skills and techniques and selecting and using tactics, strategies and/or compositional ideas
- develop their ability to analyse and evaluate to improve performance
- understand the contribution which physical activity makes to health and fitness
- improve as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with curious and enquiring minds.

## Subject content

### Knowledge and understanding

3. The content sets out the full range of content for AS and A level specifications in physical education. Content in non-bold text must be covered in AS and A level

specifications; in addition, content in bold text and contained within square brackets must be covered in A level specifications. Awarding organisations may increase the depth and breadth within the specified topics.

4. AS and A level specifications in physical education must be of sufficient depth and breadth to allow students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills specified below.

5. AS and A level physical education specifications must build on the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the GCSE content for physical education.

6. Students will be expected to understand the interrelationship between the different areas of study and develop an awareness of the importance they all have collectively on performance.

7. AS and A level specifications in physical education will require students to be assessed in one practical activity as either a player/performer or coach.

8. A level specifications in physical education must cover the minimum content specified in each of the following topics. AS specifications must cover the minimum content specified in each of these topics except for the areas of knowledge and understanding in bold and contained in square brackets [ ] which are only required for the A level. The topics are:

- applied anatomy and exercise physiology
- biomechanical movement
- skill acquisition
- sport psychology
- sport and society
- the role of technology in physical activity and sport.

### **Applied anatomy and physiology**

9. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of the changes within the body systems prior to exercise, during exercise of differing intensities, and during recovery. There is a minimum requirement for specifications to cover the following:

- musculo-skeletal system
- cardio-respiratory system

- neuromuscular system
- **[energy systems]**

10. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of the adaptations to the body systems specified in section 9 through training or lifestyle, and how these changes affect the efficiency of that system.

### **Exercise physiology**

11. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of:

- diet and nutrition and their effect on physical activity and performance
- preparation and training methods in relation to maintaining and improving physical activity and performance
- **[injury prevention and the rehabilitation of injury]**

### **Biomechanical movement**

12. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of motion and forces, and their relevance to performance in physical activity and sport. There is a minimum requirement for specifications to cover the following:

- biomechanical principles (newton's laws, force, centre of mass)
- levers (components, classes and mechanical advantage)
- analysis of movement in physical activities
- **[linear motion]**
- **[angular motion]**
- **[projectile motion]**
- **[fluid mechanics]**

### **Skill acquisition**

13. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of the principles required in order to optimise the learning of new, and the development of existing, skills. There is a minimum requirement for specifications to cover the following:

- skills continuums and transfer of skills
- principles and theories of learning and performance

- how skill classification impacts on how practice is structured for learning
- use of guidance and feedback
- **[memory models]**

### **Sport psychology**

14. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of the role sport psychology has in optimising performance in physical activity and sport. There is a minimum requirement for specifications to cover the following psychological factors in relation to performance:

- factors (personality, attitudes, arousal, anxiety, aggression, motivation and social facilitation) that can influence an individual in physical activities
- dynamics of a group/team and how they can influence the performance of an individual and/or team
- goal setting
- **[attribution theory]**
- **[self-efficacy]**
- **[leadership]**
- **[confidence]**
- **[stress management]**

### **Sport and society**

15. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of the interaction between, and the evolution of, sport and society. There is a minimum requirement for specifications to cover the following:

- the factors leading to the emergence of modern sport through to the globalisation of sport in the 21st century
- the impact of sport on society and of society on sport
- **[the impact of ethics on sport and sporting ethics on society, including deviance in sport]**
- **[development routes from talent identification through to elite performance]**
- **[the impact of commercialisation on physical activity and sport]**
- **[the relationship between sport and the media]**

## **The role of technology in physical activity and sport**

16. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of technological developments in physical activity and sport. There is a minimum requirement for specifications to include the following:

- the use of technology to analyse physical activity and sport
- **[the development of equipment and facilities in physical activity and sport]**
- **[the role of technology in sport, for the performer and the audience]**

## **Skills**

17. Students must demonstrate the skills outlined in this section in relation to the knowledge and understanding specified in the subject content.

18. GCE AS and A level specifications in physical education will require students to demonstrate their ability to:

- apply knowledge and understanding from the different areas outlined in the subject content above to physical activity and sport
- use theories, concepts, principles and models to analyse and evaluate physical activity and performance
- discuss, make judgements, present arguments and draw conclusions about aspects of physical activity and sport
- interpret and analyse a range of data, graphical representations and diagrams in the context of physical activity and performance
- use critically and constructively a range of source material related to physical activity and performance
- perform a range of skills and techniques in physical activity and sport
- make decisions, implement strategies, tactics and/or compositional ideas, and apply knowledge and understanding of rules and regulations while performing physical activity and sport
- apply knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts, principles and methods to physical activity and performance
- evaluate performance in physical activity and sport, applying relevant knowledge and understanding

## Quantitative skills in AS and A level physical education

19. In order to be able to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in physical education, students need to have acquired quantitative skills that are relevant to the subject content, including:

### Applied anatomy and exercise physiology

- interpretation of data and graphs relating to:
  - changes within musculo-skeletal, cardio-respiratory and neuro-muscular systems during different types of physical activity and sport
  - **[use of energy systems during different types of physical activity and sport and the recovery process]**
- quantitative methods for planning, monitoring and evaluating physical training and performance

### Biomechanics

- knowledge and use of definitions, equations, formulae and units of measurement
- ability to plot, label and interpret graphs and diagrams

### Sport psychology and skill acquisition

- understanding and interpretation of graphical representations associated with sport psychology theories

### Sport and society

- interpretation and analysis of data and graphs relating to participation in physical activity and sport

### Sport technology

- understanding of types of and use of data analysis to optimise performance

20. The assessment of these skills will represent a minimum of 5% of the overall A-level and AS level marks.





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Reference: DFE-00696-2014



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