



Awarding organisation rationale for the proposed GCSE, AS and A level physical education activity list.

Proposed list of activities

Awarding organisations have proposed that all activities must have a competitive or formal condition in which students can be assessed. They have stated that students cannot be assessed in a recreational form of the activity. For that reason, awarding organisations have proposed the list based upon the suitability of activities as a means of assessing students' skills as part of a physical education qualification.

Activity	Comments
Amateur boxing	
Association football	Cannot be five-a-side or futsal
Athletics	
Badminton	
Basketball	
Camogie	Cannot be assessed with hurling
Canoeing	Cannot be assessed with kayaking, rowing or sculling
Cricket	
Cycling	Track or road cycling only
Contemporary dance	
Diving	Platform diving
Gaelic football	
Golf	
Gymnastics	Floor routines and apparatus only
Handball	
Hockey	Must be field hockey, not ice hockey or roller hockey
Equestrian	
Hurling	Cannot be assessed with camogie
Kayaking	Cannot be assessed with canoeing, rowing or sculling
Lacrosse	
Netball	

Rock climbing	Must be outdoor rock climbing
Rowing	Cannot be assessed with sculling canoeing or kayaking
Rugby league	Cannot be assessed with rugby union – cannot be tag rugby
Rugby union	Cannot be assessed with rugby league – cannot be rugby sevens or tag rugby
Sculling	Cannot be assessed with rowing, canoeing or kayaking
Skiing	Outdoor on snow; cannot be assessed with snowboarding
Snowboarding	Outdoor on snow; cannot be assessed with skiing
Squash	
Swimming	Not synchronised swimming
Table tennis	
Tennis	
Trampolining	
Volleyball	
Specialist activity	
Blind cricket	
Boccia	
Goal ball	
Powerchair football	
Polybat	
Table cricket	
Wheelchair basketball	
Wheelchair rugby	

The inclusion or non-inclusion of an activity on the proposed list does not represent a view on the legitimacy or value of the activity.

The list has been revised to reflect Ofqual’s principles that non-exam assessment (NEA) should ensure sound assessment practice, be manageable, and ensure a qualification is not easily distorted. To meet these principles, awarding organisations developed a set of key considerations which were applied to each activity in order to ensure parity and rigour. These requirements were considered collectively, rather than in isolation, for each activity.

The considerations are:

The range and demand of skills and techniques in the activity:

This considers whether the activity meets Ofqual’s NEA rationale and if the skills needed to perform each included activity have comparable levels of difficulty. This aims to ensure that

activities are comparably rigorous and there is parity of assessment across practical activities.

When developing the list, some more traditional and popular activities were omitted because it was felt that the performance skills were not comparable to other activities in terms of difficulty. For example, fitness and health activities in the current specifications failed to meet this key recommendation (e.g. circuit training, pilates and yoga). Also other activities such as rounders failed to meet these recommendations.

The application of tactics/strategies/composition in the activity

This considers whether the activity enables students to understand and implement tactics, strategies, and/or composition. An example of tactics and strategy might be a team counter attacking in football where the student has to show discipline in how they play in order for the team to be successful in this area. An example of composition would be the linking up of movement and gymnastic skills when performing a routine in gymnastics.

The ability to develop skills over a significant period of time

This considers whether successful performance in the activity requires the development of skills over time. There are some activities (e.g. some outdoor and adventurous activities) in current specifications where proficiency can be gained in a short time span, for example by attending a two day residential or workshop experience, despite having no prior exposure to that activity. These types of activities are not comparable to other ones on the list, for example proficiency in rugby union could not be gained in two days, having had no prior exposure to the sport.

Suitable conditions in which to perform

Awarding organisations considered whether the activity has some type of competitive or formal condition in which students can be assessed. An example of a competitive condition in this context would be an 11-a-side football game, whereas a formal condition could refer to a gymnastic event.

Activities in current specifications that would not meet this requirement would be the health and fitness activities, such as circuit training or yoga, where the conditions are informal with no structured context.

The level of performance can be realistically assessed by PE practitioners (teachers and moderators)

This considers whether activities can be accurately and robustly assessed by practitioners. Currently the range of activities places an unrealistic expectation on the breadth of knowledge needed from teachers and moderators. The proposed list has been reduced considerably from the current offers with the view that a PE practitioner should be able to recognise the key skills, fluency of movement, etc., in the activities proposed.

The awarding organisations have removed activities that are so specialist or niche that specific expertise in that activity is required in order to assess them, for example martial arts. In a number of activities used in the current specifications, experience suggests that

teachers and moderators are often unfamiliar and at times uncomfortable with the assessment of them, relying too heavily on outside expertise to inform assessment decisions which in turn challenges standardisation and moderation processes.

Activities that can be moderated live are preferable but it was recognised that some activities do not lend themselves to this. In order to prevent students who wish to be assessed in activities that cannot be assessed or moderated in school (e.g. skiing) from being disadvantaged, awarding organisations will, as a minimum, allow filmed evidence of suitable quality to be produced to ensure reliable internal assessment and external moderation.

The need for the inclusion of activities meeting local needs has been considered alongside the potentially conflicting need to ensure rigour and parity of assessment. The reliability of assessments has also been considered. Some activities not included on the proposed list may be comparable with other activities on the list, but have been omitted because they cannot be moderated live or because suitable quality DVD evidence cannot be produced. For example, although sailing may be comparable to other activities in terms of the skills involved, it is by its very nature an activity that is difficult to gather filmed evidence of a suitable quality to enable reliable assessment and moderation.

Disability activities

Accessibility and inclusion for students has been addressed in a number of ways.

Specialist activities

A number of specialist activities are included on the proposed activity list to be used by all awarding organisations. The specialist activities included are based on those which have been included in current specifications following requests from specialist centres over the last 6 years. It has been agreed with DfE and Ofqual that the awarding organisations can jointly consider additions to the permitted activities for reasons of accessibility and inclusion on a periodic basis once specifications are available for live assessment. The use of these activities for assessment is dependent upon the student(s) in question meeting the classification requirements for the activities, as stipulated by the relevant governing body.

Adaptations and reasonable adjustments to activities

Any of the listed NEA activities may be adapted to suit different needs, but the way in which they are adapted depends on the individual need or disability. It is important that any adaptation or adjustment does not compromise the demand of the assessment; often it is the context of the performance which changes, such as the use of adapted equipment or rules and regulations. In some cases a particular move or technique required in an activity can be substituted for a suitable alternative if this is appropriate.