

A Level Physical Education FAQs



What is physical education?

Studying A Level Physical Education will give you a fantastic insight into the amazing world of sports performance. Not only will you have the chance to perform or coach a sport through the non-exam assessment component at your club outside of school, you will also develop a wide ranging knowledge into the how and why of Physical activity and sport. The combination of physical performance and academic challenge provides an exciting opportunity for students. Physical Education is studied through a range of different contexts and the impact it has on both ours and other's everyday lives. You will learn the reasons why we do things, why some people out perform others, mentally and physically. You will also delve into the ethical considerations behind the use of drugs and also the influence that modern technology is having in and on physical activity and sport.

What topics do you study?

A range of topics are taught in A level physical education giving a real breadth of study.

Year 1

Topic area	Areas explored
Applied anatomy and physiology	Cardiovascular system, Respiratory system, Neuromuscular system, Energy systems
Skill acquisition	Skill, skill continuums and transfer of skills, Theories of learning, Guidance and feedback, Memory models, Information processing
Sport and society	Emergence of globalisation of sport in the 21st century, Sociological theory applied to equal opportunities, Industrial and post-industrial sport

Year 2

Topic area	Areas explored
Exercise physiology and biomechanics	Diet and nutrition, Preparation and training methods, Injury prevention and rehabilitation, Biomechanical movement
Sport psychology	Aspects of personality, attitudes, arousal, anxiety, aggression, motivation, group dynamics, Self-efficacy and confidence
Sport and society and technology in sport	Development of elite performers in sport, Ethics-violence-drugs in sport, Sport and the law, sport and the media, The role of technology in physical activity and sport

What is the exam board?

The exam board is AQA.

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/physical-education/as-and-a-level/physical-education-7582>

How many exams are there?

There are two exams at the end of year 13. Both exams are 2 hours long and out of a total of 105 marks. Each exam is worth 35% of the overall grade.

What type of questions are in the exam?

There is a mixture of short answer questions and extended essay questions. There are a range of mark questions included in the exam, the largest number of marks for any one question is 15 marks for an essay question.

Is there any coursework?

Yes, 30% of your final grade will be assessed as a NEA (Non Examination Assessment)

Written component (15%) – A detailed analysis of a performer's weakness, causes and how to correct them.

Practical component (15%) – Students assessed as a performer or coach in the full sided version of one sport, which they video in their club setting outside of school.

What standard do I need to be performing at outside of school?

As the standard of performance required for a good practical score increases at A level, it is crucial that students are performing at club level outside of school as a minimum. Not only will this ensure that they are training and performing on a weekly basis but it will provide the environment to be able to video the required footage. If students are not performing at this level but are still interested in pursuing a sports related course then they should consider the Cambridge Technical in Sport and Physical activity course as an alternative.

What do those who study physical education go on to do?

A Level Physical Education is an excellent base for a university degree in sports science, sports management, healthcare, or exercise and health. Physical Education can also complement further study in biology, human biology, physics, psychology, nutrition, sociology and many more.

A Level Physical Education can open up a range of career opportunities including: sports development, sports coaching, personal training or becoming one of the next generation of PE teachers. The transferable skills you learn through your study of Physical Education, such as decision making and independent thinking are also useful in any career path you choose to take. It is wise to call the admissions office at a university if you are considering a specific course in the future, they will be able to tell you whether or not they accept certain subject combinations if you apply.

Is physical education easy?

No, I would suggest that there are no easy A levels. The course covers an extensive range of topics which can be examined over the 2 exam papers. Your ability to create comprehensive self testing revision resources, and use them effectively, will be essential in your success on this course.

Are there practical lessons on the course?

Although from time to time we will programme in some practical sessions to help develop your understanding of specific topics, this is not a practical course. You should choose this course because you have an interest in studying everything involved in sport rather than just because you enjoy playing it.

Do I need to have studied physical education before?

Although it will certainly be a benefit if you have studied physical education at GCSE or Cambridge National level it is not essential. Subjects are discreet and can be learned from scratch with extra time and effort.

Are there other subjects that would be suitable to study alongside physical education?

The students that take A level Physical Education generally fall into two categories. The first are students interested in the types of careers listed above (sports development, sports coaching, personal training or PE teaching) and the second are students who recognise that the subject is an area of interest. For these students they may be pursuing a non sport related career path but they recognise that this subject carries exactly the same number of UCAS points as any other A level, they therefore decide to pick a subject that they think they will find interesting and therefore be more engaged with.

Can I get in touch if I have any other questions?

Of course, my email address is acampbell@plymstockschool.org.uk