AQA A-Level Physical Education

The course aims to develop confident, analytical, and scientifically minded learners who can understand and apply the principles that underpin elite performance. Through a blend of physiology, psychology, biomechanics, and socio-cultural study, students gain a deep appreciation of how the body and mind work together in sport — and how performance can be improved, measured, and evaluated.

Learners will develop transferable skills valued in Higher Education and the world of sport, including data interpretation, problem solving, evaluation, and independent research.

Course Structure & Content

Applied Anatomy & Physiology
Skill Acquisition
Sports Psychology
Biomechanical Principles
Sport and Society
Contemporary Issues in Sport
Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)

Assessment

Paper 1: Factors Affecting Participation in Physical Activity and Sport
Written exam (2 hours) – 35%
Paper 2: Factors Affecting Optimal Performance in Physical Activity and Sport
Written exam (2 hours) – 35%
Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)
Practical performance + written analysis – 30% Students are assessed in one sport plus a written performance analysis.

Entry Requirements

Learners beginning the course will typically have followed a Key Stage 4 programme of study. Students must have a GCSE grade 5 or higher in Physical Education and a GCSE grade 5 or higher in English. The AQA specification builds directly on GCSE PE knowledge, understanding, and skills, providing a strong foundation for progression to Higher Education in sport-related degrees or other fields due to the analytical and scientific skills developed.

Career Prospects

A-Level PE opens doors to a wide range of careers. Employers value the scientific understanding, communication skills, and analytical thinking that PE students develop. Popular pathways include:

· Sports science
· Physiotherapy
· Teaching and coaching
· Strength and conditioning
· Sports psychology
· Performance analysis
· Fitness industry roles
· Armed forces and emergency services

Students leave the course equipped with problem-solving skills, data literacy, and the ability to evaluate complex performance scenarios — all highly valued in today's dynamic world.