**Breaking down the HSC exam: PDHPE**

Information within this document has been developed using the NSW Education Standards Authority documents.

Each year the enrolment in Stage 6 Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) increases. Students have many reasons for choosing PDHPE for the senior years. It is important to understand how you can demonstrate your learning and excel in PDHPE.

### What does it take to excel in the PDHPE HSC exam?

The Stage 6 PDHPE syllabus provides clear guidelines for expected student learning. To perform well in PDHPE, students require depth, breadth and application of knowledge. Adopting a critical view of information by questioning current understandings, examining issues from a range of perspectives and evaluating opinions is important.

#### Breaking down the exam

To do well in the PDHPE exam, you need to understand exactly how the exam is structured. There are 100 marks in the PDHPE HSC exam, broken down as follows.

* 20% of the exam is based on multiple choice questions
* 80% of the exam is based on short and extended answer responses.

Time allowed: 3 hours plus 5 minutes reading time.

The paper will consist of two sections.

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| Section | Weighting | Syllabus focus |
| Section I: Part A  Multiple choice 20 questions | 20% | Core 1 and Core 2 |
| Section I: Part B  Short answer questions   * approximately 7 short answer questions containing parts * approximately 8 items in total * at least one item will be worth from 6 to 8 marks | 40% | Core 1 and Core 2 |
| Section II: Options  Short-answer and an extended response question on each of the option topics.  For each option, the first question will be worth 8 marks and may contain parts.  The second question on each option will be an extended response worth 12 marks with an expected length of response of around three and a half pages of an examination writing booklet (approximately 500 words). | 40% | Options  Two questions per option.  Students are required to answer both the short-answer and extended response questions on the **two options that they have studied**. |

##### Question types

The nature of some questions in an exam may vary from year to year. Don't assume you can prepare for an exam solely on the basis of past papers. The nature, format or emphasis of questions may vary and while HSC examiners will never set out to trick students, they will also avoid creating an overly predictable exam. It is important that students read and respond to the questions in examinations rather than prepare a response to a preconceived idea of what the question will entail.

**Multiple-choice questions**

Multiple-choice questions provide you with a range of possible alternative answers from which you choose. Sometimes an alternative would be correct in a different set of circumstances and is not the best overall answer. Or an alternative might be partially right with some element of incorrect information.

**Allocating time**

The time allowed for the HSC PDHPE exam is 3 hours plus 5 minutes reading time. A guide for time allocation is on the cover page of the examination.

Examination time allocation guide

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Section | Marks | Time guide |
| Section I: Part A  Multiple choice 20 questions | 20 | 40 minutes |
| Section I: Part B  Approximately 6 short answer questions containing parts (approximately 8 items in total) | 40 | 1 hour and 10 minutes |
| Section II: Options  Short-answer and an extended response question on each of the option topics – TWO questions for each option studied | 40 | 1 hour and 10 minutes |

It is recommended that students record on their examination the start and finish times for each section using the time allocation as a guide. This is particularly important where students choose not to complete the exam in the order it is written. Students should factor in reviewing their answers as a part of the allocated time for each section.

##### Examination rubric

Some sections of the exam papers contain examination rubrics that show the general criteria used for assessing responses. The rubrics indicate to you the basis on which your performance in that section will be assessed. In the HSC PDHPE exam, the rubric applies to Section II, the options questions.

For example,

In your answers you will be assessed on how well you:

* demonstrate knowledge and understanding of health and physical activity concepts relevant to the question
* apply the skills of critical thinking and analysis
* communicate ideas and information using relevant examples
* present a logical and cohesive response

#### How much should you write in your responses to short-answer questions?

Short-answer questions often have an answer space in which to write a response. The mark value of the question gives you an indication of the amount of time to spend answering the question, and the size of the space provides guidance for the expected length of the response. There is also advice regarding the length of time to allow for completing each section on the cover of the HSC exam papers.

The PDHPE HSC examination specifications give guidance on the expected length of extended responses. This length is presented as the approximate number of exam writing booklet pages based on average-sized handwriting, and/or an approximate number of words. The expected length for extended exam responses does not appear on the HSC exam paper.

Students may write less than or more than what is expected and they will not be penalised. Responses will be marked on the structure and organisation of responses, the quality of the arguments and explanations, and the relevance of the content to the question asked. Responses should be carefully planned rather than contain everything you know about a topic.

#### Weighting and glossary terms (directive verbs)

A range of key terms can be used within HSC questions. The weighting of the question would guide the depth of the response. Do not always rely on the complexity of the verb to guide you.

Marks are allocated to each question. The higher the marks, the longer the response required, the greater the time allocated to developing a response and the higher level of understanding expected within the answer. Questions with higher mark value expect students to be able to appreciate the significance of the content required in relation to the whole.

#### Examination and marking processes

Following is some important information for students about the setting and marking of exams.

* The HSC exam is finalised each year by October.
* Issues and changes which are relevant to PDHPE but occur after the examination has been set are not expected to be answered on by students.
* Exams are marked using marking guidelines and criteria, as per other assessments. These guidelines, sample answers and marking criteria are all developed by October in line with the examination.
* Markers go through a rigorous process before they mark exams. Practice marking is used for several days to develop consistency for all markers.
* HSC exams are marked positively, ie. Markers are looking for marks not looking to take off marks. Anything on the exam paper or booklets will be marked as a method of allocating marks where they are due. Students will not lose marks for incorrect information in short or extended answer responses.
* Exams are marked in a central location. Markers do not know the school or students for which they are marking, they are merely provided a set of scripts with student numbers.
* Markers will mark the same question for the period of marking. Extended response questions are marked by two markers on different teams for consistency.
* Marking guidelines are also developed when the exam is written.