



HM Government

T-LEVELS

Chief Examiner Report

**T Level Technical Qualification
in Education and Early Years
QN: 603/5829/4**

**Autumn 2025 – Core Paper A and Core
Paper B**

Introduction

Autumn 2025 – Core Paper A and Core Paper B

Assessment dates: Core Paper A 03 December 2025
Core Paper B 10 December 2025

Paper numbers: Core Paper A P003053 (paper-based) and P003054 (onscreen)
Core Paper B P003055 (paper-based) and P003056 (onscreen)

This report contains information in relation to the externally assessed component provided by the chief examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of student work within this assessment.

The report is written for providers, with the aim of highlighting how students have performed generally, as well as any areas where further development or guidance may be required to support preparation for future opportunities.

Key points:

- grade boundaries
- standard of student work
- responses to the external assessment questions
- administering the external assessment.

It is important to note that students should not sit the core examinations until they have received the relevant teaching of the qualification in relation to this component, and that both papers must be taken in any given series that a student sits the core examinations.

Grade boundaries

Raw mark grade boundaries for the series are:

	Overall	Notional boundaries	
		Paper A	Paper B
Max	204	102	102
A*	181	90	90
A	161	81	80
B	141	71	70
C	122	61	60
D	103	51	51
E	84	42	42

Grade boundaries are the lowest mark with which a grade is achieved.

Students receive a grade for the core exam component as a whole, and although there are no official grades for the individual assessments in the core exam, it can be useful for students and tutors to see how the core exam grade was achieved. The grade boundaries given for each assessment are known as 'notional grade boundaries', as they are for illustrative purposes only. For further information on

notional grade boundaries, please see our guide T Levels: Notional boundaries for the Core Exam assessments (Paper 1 and Paper 2) available on the qualification page on the NCFE website.

For further detail on how raw marks are converted to uniform mark scale (UMS), and the aggregation of the core component, please refer to the Qualification Specification.

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment](#) document.

Students must be given the resources to complete the assessment, and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery](#) (QSID) document.

Standard of student work

Overall, this was a positive examination window. As this was a December resit series, many students made good use of the opportunity and showed clear improvement. There was evidence of increased confidence and stronger performance compared to previous series.

Achievement across the cohort varied, while a number of students attempted all questions and demonstrated progress, others gave more limited responses. In some cases, sections of papers were left blank, which reflects a pattern seen in previous years. This was especially noticeable in higher-mark questions and those involving mathematical responses, where some students appeared less confident or chose not to attempt the question fully.

One of the most encouraging developments this series was the improvement in how students approached higher-mark questions. Responses were generally more structured, clearer, and more closely aligned with the assessment criteria. Extended responses showed better organisation and focus, suggesting that providers are supporting students more effectively with exam technique and question interpretation.

A continuing issue noted by examiners was handwriting legibility. In a small number of cases, handwriting was very difficult to read, which may have affected the marks awarded. Providers may wish to encourage students to complete practice assessments under timed conditions to help improve both writing speed and legibility, as well as overall time management.

Overall, this series showed a positive trend in student performance, with better engagement across the paper and stronger responses to higher-mark questions. Continued focus on written communication, confidence with mathematical elements, and clear handwriting will help build on this progress in future series.

Responses to the external assessment questions

Core Paper A

Students approached Core Paper A with increased confidence and demonstrated a secure understanding of the subject content across their responses. Compared to previous assessment series, there was a clear improvement in completion rates, with most students attempting all questions. The number of non-responses was noticeably lower, suggesting better preparation and more consistent engagement with the paper.

There was also continued evidence that exam technique is improving. Many students showed greater ability to organise their responses and manage their time effectively, ensuring they could access marks across the paper. This improvement has contributed to an overall uplift in student performance.

That said, in some extended-response questions, a small number of students moved away from the main focus of the question. For example, where discussion of practitioner-led strategies was required, some responses relied too heavily on unrelated concepts such as counselling approaches, which limited the marks available.

To build on the progress seen this series, providers may find it helpful to revisit and reinforce key terminology that frequently appears in exam questions, including terms such as impact, barriers, strategy, purpose, participation, empower, breach, and other core concepts. Greater familiarity with this vocabulary will support students in interpreting questions more accurately and responding more effectively.

Students should also be reminded to avoid rewriting the question and instead focus on addressing its key requirements. Continued emphasis on command words (such as give, identify, and explain) and aligning responses to the available marks will help improve clarity and conciseness. For extended responses, students are encouraged to use a range of relevant examples to demonstrate understanding, ensuring responses are well structured, focused, and clearly applied to the context provided.

Section A – Element 1: Wider context and Element 2: Supporting education

Question 3: students demonstrated strong knowledge and understanding of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework. Responses clearly reflected key knowledge, with many students showing confidence in identifying and applying relevant aspects of the framework.

Question 4: this question caused some confusion for students, particularly around how to structure their response. While students generally recognised the importance of the professional attributes referenced, some found it challenging to explain how empathy and patience should be applied in the context of the transition described in the scenario.

Question 6: many students struggled to distinguish between the different humanistic approaches. Although prompts were available to support responses referencing Maslow or Rogers, some students found it difficult to explain the concepts clearly or link them effectively to the case scenario, particularly in relation to supporting a less motivated student during a lesson. Students who did respond to this question generally performed well, showing developing knowledge, clear understanding of the approaches, and good quality of written communication (QWC).

Section B – Element 3: Safeguarding, health and safety, and wellbeing

Question 7: this multiple-choice question caused some confusion for students, particularly around the purpose of Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A number of responses appeared to be based on guesswork rather than a clear understanding of the aim of introducing new provision to support welfare.

Question 8: many students struggled to demonstrate an accurate understanding of the safeguarding requirements outlined in Section 3 of the EYFS framework. Responses often focused on areas such as child development, assessment within the EYFS, or health and safety, rather than linking to safeguarding requirements such as DBS checks, suitable persons, appropriate training, and up-to-date policies and procedures.

Question 9: this question was sometimes confused with question 8, highlighting a gap in student understanding. Instead of identifying requirements linked to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974,

some students focused on safeguarding elements. This suggests that students would benefit from clearer differentiation between health and safety responsibilities and safeguarding requirements.

Section C – Element 4: Behaviour

Question 15: overall, students responded well to this question. Students were asked to explain an approach a teaching assistant could use to motivate a child during sessions, and many responses showed clear knowledge or a well-developed personal understanding of appropriate strategies. Most students were able to relate their ideas effectively to the scenario provided.

Question 17: while most students attempted this question, many struggled with the command verb assess. Responses often included several different strategies rather than assessing the effectiveness of a single approach. This suggests that students would benefit from further support in understanding how to respond to assessment-style command verbs, as this continues to be a barrier for some students.

Section D – Element 5: Parents, families and carers, and Element 6: Working with others

Question 21: performance on this maths-based question showed a noticeable improvement compared to previous series. Most students attempted the question, and the majority were able to reach the correct answer. In some cases, however, working out was presented in a disorganised way, making the final answer difficult to identify. While examiners awarded marks where understanding was clear, providers are encouraged to remind students to present calculations clearly and clearly indicate their final answer.

Question 24: students generally responded well to this question. Although some responses lacked a clear progression towards the higher marks, the content itself demonstrated good understanding. Students showed a clear awareness of how partnership working and collaboration can support learning and development, and many provided relevant examples. In some cases, the quality of written communication (QWC) was limited due to a lack of clear structure, which affected the overall clarity of responses.

Core Paper B

Students approached Core Paper B with confidence, showing a solid understanding of the subject across their answers. Compared to previous assessments, more students attempted all the questions and there were far fewer left blank, which shows better preparation and engagement.

Core Paper B also encouraged students to think more personally about their responses. Many students reflected on their own experiences and linked their answers to practical examples, including references to Ofsted and support strategies. This made their answers feel more thoughtful and allowed them to show understanding in a way that connected with the marking criteria.

Exam technique is improving too. Students are getting better at structuring their answers and managing their time, which has helped raise overall grades.

To keep making progress, students would benefit from revisiting key terms like impact, barriers, strategy, key concepts, purpose, breach, align, participation, and empower. Being clearer on these will help them answer questions more accurately.

It is also important that students answer the question directly rather than just repeating it. Paying attention to command words (such as give, identify, and explain) and looking at the marks available, can help them structure answers and manage time better.

For longer responses, students should aim to take a broader view, bringing in a range of relevant points and examples. This makes answers stronger, more reflective, and shows they can apply their knowledge rather than just summarising the scenario.

Section A – Element 7: Child development

Question 1: this initial multiple-choice question confused some students. When asked to identify the term used to describe babies turning their head towards a sound, many responses suggested guesswork rather than a secure understanding of the correct term: sensory perception.

Question 2: students showed confidence in identifying a range of appropriate gross motor skills for children aged 3 to 4 years. However, some responses were limited to single-word answers such as walking or running. As this was an identify question, examiners were able to apply benefit of the doubt (BOD) where appropriate. That said, providers may wish to support students in communicating their responses more clearly, as marks were occasionally lost where responses lacked sufficient clarity or detail.

Question 6: a common issue identified in this question was a gap in student understanding of Skinner's theory of language acquisition and how it supports learning and development. Although many students attempted the question, responses often lacked coherence and depth, which limited access to higher marks. While some improvement was seen this series, marks were still lost in some cases due to weaknesses in quality of written communication (QWC).

Section B – Element 8: Observation and assessment, and Element 9: Reflective practice

Question 10: students showed mixed responses to this question, which focused on Kolb's experiential learning cycle. The question required students to explain how the learning cycle would support the tutor's practice in the given scenario. In many cases, responses moved off track, either by discussing a different learning cycle or by failing to link their explanation back to the context of the question.

Question 12: students responded positively to this higher-mark question and often shared strong views and opinions. When discussing the effects Ofsted inspections may have on staff and pupils, many students combined academic understanding with personal perspectives. Responses generally showed clear awareness of the impact on both staff and pupils, although there was a tendency for some answers to focus more heavily on the pupil perspective.

Section C – Element 10: Equality and diversity

Question 14: across the marking window, a gap in student knowledge was evident for this question. Students were asked to identify the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989), and responses were often limited, with many students unable to accurately recall or identify the key principles.

Question 15: responses to this question were mixed. Some students showed a clear understanding of the principles outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0 to 25 years, 2015) and were able to explain how these principles support practitioners. However, other responses were off track and did not fully address the requirements of the question.

Question 19 (b): student understanding varied in relation to this question. While some students recognised that preventing a child from participating is an example of direct discrimination, a recurring pattern across responses showed uncertainty around the distinction between direct and indirect discrimination.

Section D – Element 11: Special educational needs and disability (SEND), and Element 12: English as an additional language

Question 21: students demonstrated strong knowledge in this question, successfully identifying an area of development that could affect a young person with a primary disability. Across the exam window for this question, responses showed confidence and a clear understanding of the topic.

Question 26 (a) (b) (c): student responses showed some limitations in understanding how language acquisition can be affected when English as an Additional Language (EAL) is a potential factor. The question used a case scenario involving a child who had recently moved to the UK and struggled to make new friendships, requiring students to consider the impact on English language acquisition as well as social and emotional development. In some instances, students lost focus and did not consistently refer to the case scenario when addressing parts B and C, which affected the depth and relevance of their responses.

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