

GCSE Edexcel GCSE Physics

Spec code: 1PH0 · Command Word Guide & Grade Boundary Tracker

Grade Boundaries

Session	Max	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
Jun 2025 Higher	200	161	145	130	110	90	71	61
Jun 2024 Higher	200	161	146	131	109	87	66	55
Jun 2023 Higher	200	163	147	131	111	92	73	63
Jun 2025 Found (F)200		—	—	—	—	131	114	86
Jun 2024 Found (F)200		—	—	—	—	128	111	81

Edexcel GCSE Physics (separate/triple science). Two written papers: Paper 1 (topics 1–4) and Paper 2 (topics 5–8), each 100 marks; total 200. Paper 1 is non-calculator for 5 marks (Section A), with calculators allowed for the remainder. Higher tier: grades 9–3 with safety net. Foundation tier: grades 5–1. Source: Pearson Edexcel published grade boundaries, official PDFs. Always verify at qualifications.pearson.com.

Command Word Mastery

Mark schemes attach specific meaning to each command word below. Misreading one of these costs marks that working had already earned.

Command Word	What It Demands	Common Student Error	Workshop Fix
Calculate	Find the numerical answer using the given data. Show the formula first, substitute, then calculate — units must appear on the final answer.	Bare answers without working. If the answer is wrong and no method is shown, zero marks are available.	Formula → substitution → answer: three lines minimum. Students write the formula by name before every calculation, not just the algebraic form.
Explain	Give the cause and mechanism — not just the observation. Edexcel mark schemes require a chain of reasoning from cause to effect.	Restating what happens instead of why. A description of the observation earns no "explain" marks.	Causal chain drill: students write "because... which means that..." for every explain answer. Peer reviewer checks the chain has at least two steps.
Describe the trend	State the direction and, where possible, the rate of change visible in the graph or data — using the specific variables on the axes.	Not referencing the axis labels: "it goes up" rather than "as voltage increases, current increases proportionally."	Anatomy phase: students annotate graphs before describing — marking the trend direction, any turning points, and any constants.
State	Give a concise, precise answer — no working required. Often tests recall of a definition or principle.	Writing a lengthy explanation when a single accurate phrase is all that is needed. Longer answers risk introducing errors.	Students practise 15-second "state" answers with a timer. Any answer taking longer is re-read for unnecessary elements.

How EMI uses this: Edexcel 1PH0 Physics has a notably stable grade 9 boundary — June 2023, 2024 and 2025 all sat between 161 and 163 out of 200. Students aiming for a 9 need to understand that the top end of this specification is very tight and controlled. EMI workshops focus on command word precision and on the 6-mark extended response questions where most top-grade students fail to distinguish themselves.

Data sourced from official board grade boundary documents. Always verify current boundaries at qualifications.pearson.com · This guide is produced by Exam Mastery International (exammasteryinternational.com) for student and school use. Not affiliated with or endorsed by the examining board.