



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

PSYCHOLOGY (NEW)

SUMMER 2016

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Unit	Page
Unit 1 – Past to Present	1
Unit 2 – Investigating Behaviour	5

PSYCHOLOGY
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2016
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
PAST TO PRESENT

General Comments

It was pleasing to see an impressive range and depth of knowledge and understanding displayed by a number of candidates. The best candidates attempted all questions and were able to use the mark allocation effectively to help them plan their time in the exam. Unfortunately a number of candidates left questions out. This may have been due to timing issues but also candidates need to be prepared to answer questions across a range of areas rather than focusing revision or exam practice on specific approaches and classic evidence. The range of answers across the paper also highlighted the importance of developing literacy and exam skills in candidates as well as delivering the content of the specification.

1. The majority of candidates were able to identify and outline two relevant assumptions of the cognitive approach. Almost all candidates used two of the three named on the specification although given the nature of the question there was no requirement to do so. Repetition was an issue for some students as they merged two assumptions together. Although there is clearly overlap between some of the assumptions it is vital that students practice explaining them concisely as separate points. This would be true for all of the approaches. There was an issue in accessing full marks for this question for many candidates, largely due to their failure to elaborate with appropriate examples from psychology as stated in the question. It would be appropriate to use examples from other parts of the course to illustrate the assumptions such as Loftus and Palmer or CBT/REBT. Many candidates also did not fully explain how the example they chose linked to the assumption e.g. the Multi Store Model was often used but it was not fully explained how it was an example of the computer analogy.

2. (a) This was the better answered of the two relationships questions on the paper. When candidates did well, they used appropriate terminology from the approach (e.g. positive and negative reinforcement) and explained the concepts with a clear link to the formation of a particular kind of relationship. The most commonly used were romantic relationships and pet-owner relationships. Many candidates wasted some time describing conditioning in general such as long descriptions of Pavlov's Dogs without making it clear how these could explain relationships. There were a number of candidates that failed to reach the top band when answering the question using a pet-owner relationship as they gave a full description of how conditioning can be used to alter the behaviour of a pet but did not actually describe how this would lead to a relationship between the pet and owner.

- (b) The best answers used appropriate terminology related to the positive approach (e.g. flow and signature strengths) and linked this clearly to the formation of relationships (usually friendships). Weaker answers simply said that relationships made us happy and although this was creditworthy it lacked the detail to access the higher marks.

Candidates that referred to the 'acknowledgment of free-will' assumption did not tend to gain high credit as their explanation failed to go beyond 'we can choose to be in a relationship'. Better answers used either of the other two assumptions.

3. Overall, this question was well answered and candidates were able to access the full range of marks. The best answers used relevant research to support arguments. They dealt well with conflicting findings from research evidence, going beyond simply reporting the findings of the studies and explaining what this meant in terms of the overall effectiveness of CBT/REBT. Candidates also made good points about ethical issues such as the potential power imbalance between the therapist and the client. Many good answers made use of comparing the therapy to other options either throughout or in a conclusion but this was not necessary for top marks. There was no difference in the quality of answers between the two therapies. Weaker answers presented as a list of points and lacked the elaboration and conclusions drawn to access the higher mark bands. Conclusions can either be at the end or drawn throughout but some kind of analysis is needed in order to gain higher marks. Some answers muddled CBT with mindfulness. Although some of the comments might be relevant, their generic nature meant it was unlikely to access the highest bands.

4. (a) There were some excellent answers to this question and many candidates were able to access the highest marks. Many used sub headings to categorise the results, which was acceptable as a strategy and helped to add structure and clarity to the responses. Candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of a range of findings (age, gender etc.) and were able to add in details such as names of researchers or specific figures quoted as part of the original article. Some answers muddled percentages or failed to add specific details, which restricted their answer to the middle mark bands.

- (b) In contrast, this question was poorly answered. Many candidates wrote vague answers or simply restated the findings from the first part of the question. It is vital that candidates are prepared to answer questions on all elements of classic evidence as named on the specification and the original journal article should be used as the key source of information when determining what could be credited in a question such as this.

5. There were some excellent answers to this question, displaying detailed knowledge and understanding of these therapies. Links between the therapy and the approach were not necessary but could be useful in explaining how a particular therapy worked (e.g. explaining that neurotransmitter imbalance was being addressed by a particular drug). When describing the components of drug therapy, candidates were able to fully explain the mode of action of a range of drugs although some muddled up terms like dopamine and serotonin or were unable to fully explain how a drug worked. For example many said that SSRI's raised serotonin levels but did not fully explain how they affected the process of neurotransmission in order to achieve this. In psychosurgery answers, candidates gave some graphic descriptions of the different types that could be used but in some cases lacked detail by not referring to specific parts of the brain or disorders that they were being used for. Some candidates wasted some time by writing a conclusion or evaluating the therapy (which was not required). Conclusions are only needed on the longer answer evaluation and application questions as outlined in the conclusions guidance document available from the WJEC website.

6. The majority of candidates were able to identify two relevant weaknesses of the behaviourist approach. However there was lots of variation in the quality of the explanation. Examples were often superficial with no specific reference made to studies or concepts from the approach and as a result there were some answers that were very generic that could have applied to any approach. Therefore, it is important that candidates are given the opportunity to practice using examples from the approach to illustrate the argument being made. Explanation of why something was a weakness was often missing and a key area for improvement for the majority of candidates. Many candidates evaluated either the classic evidence or the therapy from the approach, which failed to attract credit given that the focus should have been on the approach as a whole. There was also a lot of confusion between key terms such as determinism and reductionism with many candidates using the same explanation for both.

7. Overall, this question was well answered with many candidates able to give a range of relevant evaluative points that were clearly expressed and fully explained. Generally candidates engaged well with the details of the study and as a result there were few generic answers. However, candidates must be careful when applying research methods evaluation points as some used common concepts that were inappropriate for the study or not fully explained, e.g. simply saying that because it was done in London it lacked cultural validity. It would be useful for candidates to look at both sides of an argument for example many stated that the sample was small but did not develop this by highlighting the level of detail obtained or the advantages and disadvantages of using a matched pairs design based entirely of children who were also attending the clinic (an issue that Bowlby himself recognises). Bowlby makes a number of comments about the weaknesses of his methodology that could have been used to good effect. Some candidates wasted some time describing the study, which was not necessary. As with the other long answer AO3 question, some candidates did not elaborate their points or draw conclusions which meant their answers appeared more like a shopping list of criticisms and marks were limited. Some candidates focused too much on ethics and were repeating similar points about consent and the use of children. Although ethical issues is named on the specification as an area for evaluation, in a question such as this candidates should be using a greater range of points.

8. This question required the candidates to be able to apply their knowledge of the approaches to the quotation used as well as write a detailed, logical comparison that came to a relevant conclusion. Sadly very few candidates were able to incorporate all three of these aspects and so failed to reach the top band. Many candidates made no reference to the quote, which is the main assessment objective that is being examined (AO2). Formulaic compare and contrast answers using acronyms gained some credit but given the need to tailor this to the exact question, candidates answering on 'auto-pilot' failed to access the highest marks. Comparing approaches on points such as having different assumptions and theories of relationships attracts minimal credit and better answers looked at wider issues such as nature/nurture and the use of the scientific method. Ideally the answer should be evaluative and discursive in nature, exploring why one approach is better or worse than the other. The best answers followed a neat structure; linking immediately to comparing scientific nature, then looking at potential advantages of the psychodynamic approach, then looking at further similarities and differences and concluding succinctly with reference to the quote.

PSYCHOLOGY
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2016
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
INVESTIGATING BEHAVIOUR

General Comments

Overall, many candidates were able to answer the range of questions related to the specification which, for the first year of a new specification, was very encouraging. The contemporary debates question was particularly well attempted (Question 1), but questions relating to location of research, levels of data and measures of central tendency (Questions 4a and 6e/f) were less well answered, highlighting areas for focus on learning/revision in subsequent years. In addition, refinement of research (Question 7f) was poorly answered by most candidates (see comments below).

Section A

1. A significant number of candidates provided well focused and complex answers to this question. The best answers related directly to the quote (through either supporting or conflicting arguments) and included specific conclusions relating to the reliability of eye-witness testimony in children **and** adults. These conclusions were included in a combination of styles, either throughout the answer or as a final statement. Both approaches were equally creditworthy. A minority of candidates provided generic answers which limited the marks available, as they did not thoroughly address the question stem. Caution should be taken by centres who have suggested rote learning of 'ideal' answers in contemporary debates, as they generally tend to limit marks for higher ability candidates.

Section B

2. The majority of candidates achieved at least 2 marks when describing features of a case study. However, some answers included irrelevant examples that were not case studies (e.g. Loftus) and tended to be too vague for full marks.
3. Candidates who identified all three moral levels by name gained full marks. The majority of candidates did this successfully.

4. (a) This question was less well answered. Too many candidates merely described Milgram's procedures, which only gained credit if they had inadvertently described a feature of research conducted in a laboratory. The best answers were those that described a feature of the laboratory environment and then related it to Milgram's study. Many candidates, for example, gained marks for stating that laboratory environments include controlled conditions and then went on to describe how Milgram did this. An unexpected stated feature of the laboratory environment was the fact that large equipment (such as Milgram's shock generator) can be used in this setting/location, but would be difficult to use in the field. This point, along with many others, was creditworthy.
- (b) Many candidates were able to demonstrate how range is calculated, by taking the lowest number from the highest. This gained 1 mark. However, a number of candidates failed to select the correct data from the table. The highest voltage in the table was 450 and the lowest was 255. This means the range was 195 (+1). Some candidates erroneously selected 300 as the lowest voltage (where the first set of participants stopped giving shocks to the learner), others selected numbers from the 'number of participants who stopped at this voltage' column; both of these choices lead to incorrect range totals.
5. Candidates generally either knew a definition for co-variables or didn't. Many candidates incorrectly defined co-variables as confounding variables.
6. (a) This question was well answered by most candidates. For future examinations, candidates should be made aware that they should ensure they carefully select the full IV and DV, as some candidates included 'grades' as the DV rather than 'predicted grades'. On this occasion they were not penalised for this minor error and were still awarded full marks if the remainder of the null hypothesis was correct.
- (b) Time sampling proved to be a problematic question for most candidates. The average mark was two out of the three available. Candidates received one mark for explaining the notion that time sampling takes part across a number of different intervals, e.g. across the 3 lessons, or in intervals of time such as every 10 minutes. A further mark was gained for relating time sampling to smile behaviour ratings. The final mark came from explaining how the smiles (across the intervals) would have been merged to create one score, e.g. taking the mean. The majority of candidates failed to include this last step.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give a correct advantage and disadvantage of conducting research in the field. However, some candidates failed to link those advantages and disadvantages to the novel scenario (the classroom environment). This oversight meant that the maximum score was two, as higher marks required candidates to apply their points to the context. Just using wording from the question, for example 'one advantage of the teaching assistant conducting research in the field was....', is not considered contextualisation. Details about smiling behaviour, predicted grades or the classroom environment were most appropriate.

- (d) Most candidates gained full marks in this question, where one mark was given for the confounding variable and the other was for relating that variable to the student's smile behaviour.
 - (e) Unfortunately the majority of candidates were unable to select an appropriate 'level of data' for the smile behaviour rating. Centres should consider spending more time on this element for future sessions as the most common response given was 'a scale of 1-5'. This suggests that students did not understand key research methods terminology.
 - (f)
 - (i) Some candidates failed to attempt this question. A significant proportion of those who responded selected the mean and described how it related to the smile behaviour rating rather than grades. This received no credit. This then also meant that they incorrectly calculated the level of central tendency in part (ii). Most of those candidates who selected an appropriate measure, e.g. mode or median, failed to explain why that measure was appropriate in enough depth for three marks.
 - (ii) Where part (i) was correct the measure of central tendency was usually correctly displayed for one mark. A few candidates, however, failed to show their workings for the second available mark.
 - (g) Most candidates were able to correctly identify and deal with two ethical issues from the context. Caution should be taken in the dealing with element that their method of dealing with the issue matches the issue they describe. For example, a debrief only deals with valid consent if permission to use the data is requested as part of this process. In addition, clear links to the scenario in each aspect (issue and how it is dealt with) needed to be present for full marks.
- 7.
- (a) This question was the most consistently well answered. Most candidates were able to gain three or four marks out of the four available to them. Minor errors occurred in plotting of data, e.g. not leaving gaps between the Y axis and the columns. In addition, mislabelling of the axes also occurred in some candidate answers.
 - (b) Almost all candidates were able to identify the IV as the clothing of the confederate, which was encouraging.
 - (c) Experimental design showed the historical problems associated with this question, where a number of candidates described methodologies like a field experiment. Most correctly identified independent groups, but some were confused by the use of the 'same' confederate in the two conditions and selected repeated measures. Repeated measures only received credit when the candidates stated that the same participants could have been passing by the confederate on the second Monday, meaning he asked them to sign up to the charity more than once. Correct selection of design without contextualisation gained only one mark.

- (d) Most candidates were able to state an issue of validity and relate it to the context for two marks. Unfortunately a number of those same candidates did not explain how to deal with the issue in context, missing out on the remaining two marks. Special note should be taken that the 'dealing with' element relates specifically to the context rather than just the validity issue they have created/identified. E.g. a number of candidates selected population validity as an issue, due to opportunity sampling (link), and dealt with it through altering the sampling technique. Whilst this is perfectly acceptable this means that no mention of the context was made in the 'dealing with' element, limiting marks to three out of four.
- (e) This question did not require relation to the novel scenario/context for full marks, however many candidates did use this technique to expand their points. This is good practice and could avoid students missing out on marks if application is required in future sessions. Candidates who selected quick and easy as an advantage were only credited if this was justified. The problem here is that we cannot assume that opportunity sampling is always quick and easy without comparison to other techniques. For example, it might be easier than advertising or having to select a sampling frame in advance, but this point is not clear unless that is specifically explained. This is an expectation that continues from the legacy specification.
- (f) This question was the least well answered on the paper. Alternative techniques were suggested, but very few responses related to the context and as such were limited to one mark. Description of the technique and explanation of how it could be used in context gained higher marks. Only very able candidates gave explanations of why the chosen technique was an improvement on opportunity sampling (showing refinement), which was a shame.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk