



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**PSYCHOLOGY
AS**

SUMMER 2017

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.

Component	Page
Component 1	1
Component 2	4

**EDUQAS
GCE AS PSYCHOLOGY**

Summer 2017

COMPONENT 1 – PAST TO PRESENT

General Comments

It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates attempted all questions and appeared to manage time appropriately. Although for some centres there was little independence in the answers, with model answers being used? Unfortunately these model answers led to centre effects and low marks particularly in relation to Question 5 an AO2 question. There was a definite over reliance on the textbook. Many answers were taken directly from one textbook in particular. Centres need to show more independence in answers to gain more marks.

Question 1

This was answered really well. Most candidates gained full marks and were correctly able to identify stimuli used in the original study. A small number of candidates used examples from the results section of the study where Albert had transferred his fears to other objects, and this could not receive credit as it wasn't a stimulus used in the conditioning and testing of fear acquisition. Some candidates' answers were vague such as fluffy animals and again no credit was given for these.

Question 2a

This was very well answered with most candidates managing to obtain the full marks available. Weaker answers gave a definition of blank slate but offered no, or a very vague explanation. In this case minimal marks were awarded.

Question 2b

This question was generally well answered. Better responses exemplified their points with examples from the behaviourist approach whilst weaker answers were more generic in nature and not directly related to the approach. It is worth noting that 10 mark questions require a conclusion to reach the top mark band and that given that this was an analysis question if this was missing it did limit the effectiveness of candidates answers.

Question 3

This acted as a discriminator question and there were few top band answers. Most candidates did successfully identify the findings of experiment 1 of Loftus and Palmer and received marks accordingly, however the conclusion part of the question was generally poorly addressed. There were some centre effects with some candidates appearing to have been taught the verbs and corresponding speeds in the wrong order. It is worth reiterating that candidates should be referring to the original studies or the summary material provided by Eduqas from which to base their learning. Findings from experiment 2 were not credited although as Loftus and Palmer did not split the conclusions section of their research any conclusion identified in the original study was given credit. A small minority of candidates did include experiment 2 findings or relied on re-wording the study title in order to draw a conclusion.

Question 4

Here in the therapy question the vast majority of candidates selected the Mindfulness option rather than the Quality of Life choice. Most candidates opted to follow the information predominantly available in one textbook. A number of candidates did not receive credit for the answer or sections of the answer as it appeared to be referring directly to components of cognitive behaviour therapy rather than Mindfulness. Whilst the exam board is well aware of, and recognises that there is variation in how mindfulness is practiced, if it is being used to answer a positive psychology therapy question the candidates must make the connection to the approach explicit. They should therefore be explicit in referring to components of Mindfulness Cognitive Behaviour Therapy or MCBT to attract credit. The responses to Quality of Life therapy components tended to refer to generic aspects of a good life or just referred to the assumptions of the positive approach and therefore gained little credit.

Question 5

This question acted as a discriminator. Although most attempted this question there were very few top band answers. There are 10 marks available for AO2 on each paper and in this series this was question 5. This question needed candidates to apply their knowledge of psychology to the question being asked in this case what was better: the biological or psychodynamic approach? To answer this they were asked to prepare a teachers response by comparing and contrasting the approaches, as long as the student had answered the what was best aspect of the question this allowed them to access the AO2 marks. There was no need in this instance to refer to the teacher in the answer as application was seen through the drawing of the conclusions. Too many candidates just produced a generic compare and contrast response (AO3) and did not take it further and come to a conclusion about which was best, therefore no credit could be given for this as the candidates had not answered the question. This was a shame as many had provided answers that in a direct compare and contrast question would have scored quite highly. Teachers should remind candidates that in order to access the top band on 10 mark questions a conclusion is needed and candidates may need to adapt generic responses that they have learnt in order to obtain the marks available. If candidates did produce mini conclusions about one approach being better than the other some credit could be applied. Other candidates successfully answered the which was better aspect but then failed to compare and contrast, in this case the credit that could be given was limited.

Question 6

There was a variety of approaches to this question with most covering 2 approaches' explanations of why a relationship was formed whilst others covered 3 approaches, and this was an equally valid approach to take, as long as 1 of these approaches was the cognitive approach. The most popular choice besides the cognitive approach was the biological approach. Schema theory and the halo effect were often used and better answers directly linked these to why a relationship is formed, whilst weaker responses for example described schemas but did not take it further and explain why this led to a relationship being pursued. This was also true of the biological approach and evolution where characteristics we look for in a partner were identified but not linked to the need to pass on our genes. These responses limited the marks that were available to them. Like the previous series some candidates referred to why a relationship would not be formed and therefore this was not creditworthy as the question asked was not being answered.

Question 7

This question produced responses that tended to be generic and therefore minimised the marks available. The better answers were clearly linked to Bowlby's original study. This question also highlighted the need for reference to the original article or summary provided by Eduqas. Several candidates made inferences and noted that not all the participants had IQ tests whereas the original study just comments on the fact that 'the data was collected quite unsystematically'. As a 10 mark question here again a conclusion was needed in order to access the top mark band.

Question 8

There was a wide range of ability demonstrated in this question. Most candidates used evidence available from one particular textbook and used this with a range of success. The debate questions require a mixture of both description and evaluation and this should be brought together with a conclusion reviewing what has previously been discussed rather than just a list of points made. It is worth noting that mini conclusions throughout do also attract credit. There was often range but not a lot of depth. Although this particular question did not require candidates to refer to the quote this may happen in future exam series and therefore it is essential that teachers prepare their candidates to be able to use material related to this topic in a variety of different ways. In order to fully address this question candidates were required to include the social implication of the debate. Whilst this topic as a whole has clear links to social implications, and in this case implicit links received some credit, better answers were explicit in this aspect. In future series candidates should be prepared to directly answer this part of the question rather than leave the examiner to make the connections for them. These questions can vary in how they are asked and therefore centres providing model answers to their candidates or an over reliance of content taken directly from the textbook are likely to hamper the effectiveness of their candidates' responses. There were a small but significant number of responses that were written but did not display any psychological based knowledge, these were therefore only able to attract minimal credit.

**EDUQAS
GCE AS PSYCHOLOGY**

Summer 2017

COMPONENT 2 – INVESTIGATING BEHAVIOUR

General Comments

The examining team was pleased with the standard achieved by many candidates. Most candidates had a good appreciation of most of the research methods concepts covered in this examination, although there seem to continue to be some concepts which many candidates seemed to have difficulty with. Although there was a great improvement in application demonstrated by many candidates, for some the skill of application (AO2) was only infrequently attempted. It was this, rather than a lack of methodological knowledge, which stopped them attaining the highest marks.

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to gain credit on this question. Many achieved just one of the two marks available because they either just defined what the two types of observation were or because they just identified a difference.

Question 2

Candidates generally achieved either a very good mark on this or no marks. This was one area of the specification that some candidates seemed to have no awareness of. Some candidates tried to gain marks by describing the process for peer review, this gained no marks. Some candidates were able to get some superficial marks as they described some of the features. There were however some excellent answers, where candidates described the format really well and in an appropriate level of detail for a six mark question.

Question 3

Candidates generally achieved well on this question. Most were able to spot snowball sampling, nominal level of measurement and even the Wilcoxon test. Part (c) (for which we would have accepted, histogram, line graph or frequency polygon) was however the one part that cause difficulty for some.

Question 4

Candidates answered this question well. Most candidates knew some details of both the methodology and sample used by Kohlberg. Some candidates went into too much detail and included Kohlberg's procedure as well, this achieved no credit. Another frequent problem was that even though they had previously identified the research as being longitudinal, the candidates seemed to indicate that there were two groups of participants in the sample, one between the ages of 10 and 16 and another between the ages of 22 and 28; this obviously had an impact on the 'accuracy' element of the AO1 assessment.

Question 5

There were some excellent answers to this question. Some candidates were able to offer incisive and thorough evaluation of Kohlberg's research, and achieved full marks as a result. As with other pieces of extended AO3 writing, there is an expectation of a conclusion in the response and some candidates included a conclusion. Other candidates who did not may not have received the highest possible mark in the grade band that best described the quality of their answer. Nearly all candidates who attempted this question were able to offer some level of criticism and gained some marks.

Section B

Question 6

- (a) Most candidates were able to spot the use of deception and were able to describe it well. A few candidates noted the professor was behaving unethically by inviting candidates to his birthday party, this received credit as the question does not state the ethical issue had to be one specifically associated with psychological research. Another issue noted by some was that the male participants' may have had self-esteem issues if they weren't rated as being very attractive by the females, this again received credit as ultimately as the primary researcher it would be expected that the professor is responsible for the well-being of all of those involved in the research, confederates as well as participants.
- (b) Most candidates were able to gain some credit here. Some lost marks because of unoperationalised variables.
- (c) Most candidates were able to report appropriate strengths and weaknesses; some lost marks because they did not apply this knowledge to this novel situation.
- (d) Few candidates were able to offer a strength; most were able to offer the presence of an outlier as a weakness.
- (e) Most candidates were able to explain some of the three elements for selecting the Mann-Whitney U test. Candidates were good in terms of 'test of difference' and 'data is at least ordinal' or 'data is ratio', however few candidates were able to explain the element of 'independent data' well.
- (f) Most candidates were able to select the appropriate critical value.
- (g) Most were able to apply the rule (which in this case was stated under the critical value table) and explain why the professor should reject the null hypothesis.

Question 7

- (a) Some candidates were able to identify and explain an issue of internal reliability. Some candidates however attempted to gain credit by writing about internal validity, this strategy did not gain credit.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify question 9 as producing qualitative data.
- (c) Answered correctly by most candidates.

- (d) (i) Many were able to correctly identify Spearman's Rho. A few candidates identified the Pearson's Product Moment test, this received credit as it is an appropriate analysis for correlation, even though it is not listed on the specification.
- (d) (ii) Most candidates achieved some credit for this question. Most noted it is a test of correlation; some made reference to appropriate levels of measurement; few had discussion of related data.
- (e) (i) Some candidates chose to discuss a different ethical issue to the one set in the question, therefore did not receive credit. Candidates were not expected to refer to every part of this ethical issue and most chose to focus on privacy regarding income details or happiness levels. Some suggested that any findings may challenge the research participant's beliefs or values about happiness and income, and again this received credit.
- (e) (ii) Again some candidates offered generic ethical advice and this received minimal credit. When the candidate focused their answer on the specified issue, there were some really good responses, especially regarding maintaining privacy and debriefing/discussion re beliefs and values.

Question 8

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify a strength and a weakness of semi-structured interviews, however again some candidates missed out on marks as they had not applied the strength/weakness to the novel situation.
- (b) Most candidates were able to compose a question that was linked to the novel situation. What did differentiate between one and two marks was whether the question they posed could only really produce qualitative data or whether it could possibly produce qualitative AND quantitative data.
- (c) Most candidates were able to answer this question well.
- (d) Most candidates were able to get credit for this question, with many identifying the problems with an anomalous result as a weakness with the mean.
- (e) Most candidates correctly identified snowball sampling.
- (f) Few candidates were able to offer a reasonable explanation of how to complete a case study. Some clearly borrowed ideas from other examples of where they have come across case studies such as Bowlby, and this received credit as long as it was linked to the novel situation in the question.

Advice to centres and candidates:

It is clear that some topics in the specification are particularly well-liked and/or thoroughly revised, however candidates need to appreciate that *all* parts of the specification can be used as the basis for examination questions. Areas such as ‘format for reporting psychological investigations’ and ‘internal reliability’ are clearly on the specification and yet many candidates either chose not to answer questions related to these topics or answered them with responses that garnered them zero marks.

Candidates capacity to show AO2 (apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures) has improved since the last exam. There is still however some room for improvement, and as noted in the Principal Examiner’s Report for the last exam “Marks will never be taken off for linking the answer to the novel situation, but marks are very frequently lost if the answer does not link well”.



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