

PSYCHOLOGY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 9	10 - 21	22 - 30	31 - 42	43 - 55	56 - 67	68 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 22	23 - 32	33 - 44	45 - 56	57 - 68	69 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

This session provided a suitable range of topics for investigation. The vast majority fell under cognitive psychology, but other topics were equally well done. There seemed to be a lower than usual number of ethical violations and most studies were true experiments.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Introduction

Candidates generally did well on criterion A. Most provided relevant background research that helped support the prediction in the experimental hypothesis. Some candidates still need more support in learning how to construct an operationalized research hypothesis. There are still many hypotheses that sound correlational in nature, rather than a prediction of differences suitable for a true experiment. Candidates should also ensure that background studies and theories they provide in the introduction are adequately analyzed. This means going beyond basic description of a study or theory.

Criterion B: Method: Design

For this criterion the *design* should be justified and not the *method*. All candidates are required to carry out an experiment; therefore no justification is needed for its use. However, the participant design is a decision that the candidate must make and should be justified. More candidates did include documentation of ethical guidelines being followed. This was a welcome improvement. It should be noted that it is in candidates' best interest to keep their experimental designs simple and limited in scope. Therefore a simple experiment with just two conditions or groups is generally satisfactory. More complex designs with multiple independent variables and dependent variables are unnecessary and usually only add to the word count without allowing for more in-depth analysis.

Criterion C: Method: Participants

Characteristics of the target population were not always fully addressed. It should be noted that the target population should remain anonymous (e.g., 17 year old students at an Australian high school) and this target population can be very narrowly defined. If candidates do not use a random selection procedure then they should do everything possible to allow for random allocation to the conditions or groups. If random allocation to the conditions or groups is not possible, then the study is not likely to be an experiment. Sample size should be limited to 15 to 20 participants and therefore additional statistical manipulation, such as z-scores, are not required.

Criterion D: Method: Procedure

Generally well done. Attention to detail is necessary for replication to be possible.

Criterion E: Results

It is highly recommended that candidates use the statistical tests mentioned on page 40 of the *psychology guide* for their inferential statistical analysis. While other tests may be more robust or powerful, for the purposes of understanding the concept of significance within the framework of the IB psychology internal assessment, the tests and designs do not need to be complex. Keeping them simple usually allows more time and words for the candidates to elaborate, discuss and analyze, which are important for higher marks.

Criterion F: Discussion

The discussion section was adequately handled. There was a range of marks awarded for this criterion. Many of the candidates did not fully develop their ideas with regards to strengths and weaknesses of their own methods. Most candidates found it challenging to go beyond a simple reference to the background research from the introduction section.

Criterion G: Presentation

Most candidates were within the word limits. However, candidates that had complex designs did not have enough room to fully develop their ideas.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Performance was generally strong once again for most November session candidates. Most of the recommendations noted above amount to fine-tuning of generally solid displays of understanding of research methodology. The main recommendation is to keep the designs as simple as possible. The goal of the experimental study is to get experience with experimental research methodology. Complex designs only add to the challenge for candidates and do not necessarily benefit them with respect to the assessment criteria.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a range of candidate performance on the internal assessment component for the November 2007 examination session.

Three major problems characterized lower quality reports were:

- Limited understanding of experimental design;
- Vague and inaccurate procedures. Serious omissions and mistakes in some reports meant that there was no possibility of replication;
- Problems with descriptive analysis and interpretation of results. The lack of summary of results tables and/or graphs or lack of their clarity tended to be a frequently occurring problem. An important part of any research report is a clear description and analysis of descriptive statistics related to the aim of the research. Some candidates failed to include any interpretation of such descriptive measures, implying a lack of understanding of such data analysis.

Work from some centres was of an extremely high standard as reports were presented clearly and written with care. It was encouraging to note that the majority of candidates are now aware of ethical considerations, especially in the way that participants were presented with a written informed consent form prior to their participation in psychology experiments. The right to withdraw at any time and the right to refuse data on themselves to be used in any way were also frequently discussed as important safeguards for participants.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Many candidates did not appear to know how the aim of the research should be formulated or where it should appear in the report. They were also unaware of the reasons why the original

research study should be explained in the introduction and subsequently incorporated in the discussion section.

Overall, candidates had good general understanding of the experimental method. However, there is a particular aspect of the whole report that tends to be given inadequate attention. Although candidates are required to only replicate or adapt an experiment that has already been conducted and published, they still need to thoroughly re-think each step of the experimental process and fully evaluate the methodology used. Discussion should be the most cognitively demanding aspect of the report where consideration is given to all of the relevant characteristics of the student's research and these are clearly compared to the original study. At the end of the report a careful conclusion should be drawn from the considerations that have been made.

The ability to produce clear and concise reports is an important skill to be developed, so this aspect of criterion G must not be ignored, as seem to have happened in some centres this year. Candidates can and will be penalised for exceeding the maximum word limit, as will those individuals failing to meet the minimum requirement.

Criterion A: Introduction

It appeared that more candidates in this session were attempting to provide a clear and explicit aim for their research studies. This was an improvement over previous sessions; however there were still many candidates unable to express the aim in terms of the investigation in language that is clear and reasonably brief.

Criterion B: Method: Design

Overall candidates had good knowledge of research methodology and in many examples this knowledge was clearly applied to the specific aim that had been chosen. Sadly some candidates are still confusing research terminology. This section requires candidates to identify the design of the study rather than its method. The use of an experimental method need not be justified as all candidates are required to do an experiment. Justification of design means explaining in clear terms why a certain type of design (repeated measures, independent samples, *etc.*) is the most appropriate choice for the chosen aim.

Also, there was a tendency for some candidates to muddle independent and dependent variables, or vaguely to identify them.

Criterion C: Method: Participants

Some candidates had problems in clearly identifying the relevant characteristics of the target population from which they selected their sample. Characteristics of the participants should include more than just the number of people involved, for example, gender, age, educational background, culture, common characteristics, *etc.*

Criterion D: Method: Procedure

This section was rather well handled. Some weaker reports presented sections that were not thoroughly reported, thus replication based on the information provided would have been challenging.

Criterion E: Results

Some of the reports that earned the highest marks for criterion E included a summary table indicating results of various descriptive statistical calculations – measures of central tendency and dispersion, and a simple and clear bar graph of the measures of central tendency for each condition. Narrative description of the results was present and relevant for the stated aim. Unfortunately, some weaker reports failed to include any graphical representation at all or included graphs which were inappropriate (e.g., displaying results for individual participants), or unclear (e.g., did not label the graph accurately).

Criterion F: Discussion

The quality of discussion sections has generally increased. Many candidates are attempting to discuss their results in the light of the original research in the introduction section, identifying the main weaknesses and suggesting points for improvement. Most candidates, however, are not discussing some of the differences they may have discovered in their descriptive statistics other than those of central tendency. For example, most candidates present a measure of dispersion of each condition, yet they do not discuss what these actually mean.

Criterion G: Presentation

Presentation marks were generally good. Still some improvements could be suggested:

- The title of the research report should be a concise description of the purpose and main focus of the experiment.
- The abstract should be approximately 200 words long and should be written when all of the other sections of the candidate's report are finished.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should help students with the first step of research. Choosing an appropriate topic that is suitable for the candidate's level of knowledge is vital for conducting a good piece of experimental research and writing a clear and precise report. Teachers should suggest simple replications of already conducted experiments with minimal changes made by candidates. Although candidates may enjoy performing novel and genuine pieces of research the level of difficulty and complexity of seemingly basic studies often gives rise to considerations the candidate may have originally overlooked. The focus of the internal assessment task is on presenting an understanding of research methodology and applying it to a simple experimental study rather than the production of novel research.

- Candidates need to focus their attention on how they express their aim, interpret the results and present a clear and structured discussion.
- Candidates should construct a clear and testable aim in which the independent and dependent variables are stated explicitly.
- Candidates need to choose and compute the appropriate descriptive statistic for their research. The choice of the descriptive statistic depends on a number of different factors: number of participants, type of data obtained (nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio level of measurement), whether or not extreme and/or unexpected values have been recorded, type of distribution expected. Candidates should calculate and present in a table both measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. In addition to this, graphs should present a summary of the scores that are specifically related to the aim stated in the introduction. There is no need to present raw scores or scores of each individual participant in the results section. Additional findings related to controlled variables (*e.g.*, age, gender) need not be mentioned unless they are relevant to the aim and the candidate plans to interpret these findings in the discussion.
- A clear style of writing is a highly relevant skill for candidates to develop. Teachers can encourage the development of these skills through several methods in the classroom: organizing presentations and discussions of experimental studies for internal assessment in small groups, peer editing of summaries of research reports, *etc.* Student presentations will provide candidates with the opportunity to develop their communication skills and receive feedback from fellow students and their teacher. These presentations could include clear identification of the aim of the research, a brief review of literature related to their topic and an outline of the method section (either completed or in progress). Feedback (both on the presentation style, and the quality and psychological knowledge presented in the research project) could be provided by classmates and the teacher who attend the presentations.
- The abstract should be presented as a brief and informative summary that highlights the main points of a candidate's experimental research. It should be a single paragraph, concise description of the main aspects of the research conducted by the candidate: the aim under investigation, the participants, the research method, findings, and conclusions.

Higher and standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries – higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 52

Component grade boundaries – standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 18	19 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 44

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

The section A questions on the biological and humanistic perspectives were generally well answered. Regrettably several candidates had an insufficient understanding and knowledge of cultural considerations related to research from the cognitive perspective. In questions where just **one** explanation was needed there was a tendency for some candidates to offer more than one. In section B most candidates chose questions on the biological and cognitive perspectives and few attempts were made to answer the learning perspective question. For HL paper 1, responses to the humanistic question were relatively rare and often displayed a superficial knowledge of research methods used in this perspective.

Levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

There were scripts from some schools in which it was a pleasure to read answers that showed in-depth knowledge and understanding applied in a logically constructed response focused on the question. In contrast there were also answers that failed to meet the specific requirements of the question, where the writing was vague and offered flimsy evaluation or discussion that had very little to do with the question.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Section A

Biological Perspective

1. Describe **one** theoretical explanation of human behaviour from the biological perspective. **[8 marks]**

A high proportion of candidates used theoretical explanations that drew on their knowledge of brain injuries, drugs, hormones or neurotransmitters. There were several impressive responses that displayed excellent knowledge. There were other answers that dwelt almost exclusively on a description of a research study and failed to mention a theoretical explanation of the human behaviour involved.

Cognitive Perspective

2. Explain *one* cultural consideration related to research from the cognitive perspective. [8 marks]

Descriptive responses were often elicited in answering this question, so that an explanation of the cultural consideration related to research in the cognitive perspective was not provided. It appeared that many candidates were unaware of cross cultural issues that can beset research in the cognitive perspective. Several answers presented a general discussion of a cultural consideration or a detailed description of a study, such as Loftus, with a superficial description of a cultural issue. There were however some first class responses, including those using Barlett's early study, where the depth of understanding of the cultural consideration involved was very high.

Learning perspective

3. Explain *one* contribution of the learning perspective to the scientific study of behaviour. [8 marks]

Although candidates were aware of studies that were firmly within the learning tradition and were able to describe these with varying degrees of accuracy, they frequently omitted to explain how such studies contributed to the scientific study of behaviour. As a result many candidates scored rather low marks for this question. There were other answers where candidates seized upon the opportunity to display their understanding of the scientific approach to the study of behaviour and illustrated their explanation with appropriate studies.

Humanistic perspective

4. Describe *one* application of a theory from the humanistic perspective. [8 marks]

Many candidates chose Roger's client centred therapy as an application of self theory. Better responses offered a detailed description of this appropriate application. Weak answers focused on description of the theory rather than on therapy. A few candidates described Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs but were unable to describe a suitable application or they gave a superficial idea of how it could be applied in areas such as work or education.

SECTION B

5. Assess the effectiveness of the biological perspective in explaining *one* psychological or social question. [20 marks]

A wide range of psychological or social questions were addressed. The better responses were those that discussed specific questions that related to such questions as aggression, gender differences, eating disorders or schizophrenia. When the chosen question was vague and considered the causes for behaviour, the answers tended to be superficial and ignored the 'effectiveness' element of the question. A general evaluation of the biological approach

was sometimes given and this tended to earn few marks. Assessment of effectiveness could have been considered by comparing explanations with those from another perspective but this approach was rarely offered.

6. Explain and evaluate *one* key concept of the cognitive perspective.

[20 marks]

Although some answers were superficial and lacking in detail and empirical evidence, there were other responses that demonstrated very sound knowledge and understanding of the perspective. Topics such as memory, forgetfulness, eye witness testimony or selective attention were offered and many of these answers showed a commendable depth of knowledge that was supported by evaluative comment.

7. Assess the extent to which cognitive and biological factors have added to traditional explanations of behaviour within the learning perspective.

[20 marks]

This question was rarely selected by candidates but when it was chosen the response frequently gained a high mark. Candidates were able to demonstrate that behaviourist explanations of learning have shortcomings since they depend heavily upon learning that is observed and quantified. They rightly pointed to cognitive and biological explanations that focused on cognitive maps, latent learning, vicarious learning or concepts such as biological preparedness and imprinting. Many such answers were a pleasure to read as candidates showed considerable insights into learning processes.

8. Using psychological research, consider the strengths and limitations of research methods (e.g. case studies, observations, interviews) used in the humanistic perspective.

[20 marks]

Few candidates selected this question and when they did, they seemed to be unfamiliar with the research techniques employed by humanistic psychologists. Candidates usually presented a limited description of case studies and interviews that were not related to the humanistic perspective, or gave a general account of the Q-sort technique. Some strengths and limitations were considered but often these were offered in a superficial manner or not specifically applied to research within this perspective.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be able to answer questions directly and precisely by providing relevant theoretical and empirical evidence. They need to practise writing essays by constructing well organised answers that show that they have studied psychology in depth. If they were to present a plan for each essay, it might encourage them to organise their ideas prior to writing the essay itself. Coherence would be improved as a result.

The concept of coherence should be developed so that a logical argument could ensue. If candidates could work together in groups in order to debate psychological topics it would improve their critical and evaluative skills. As part of such skill development it would be useful to include a study of key terms and command words used in all psychological questions for this examination. Candidates need to go well beyond the rote learning of knowledge. They need to be able to discuss and evaluate theories and studies and to be able to apply psychological findings in a real world environment.

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries – higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 18	19 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 40

Component grade boundaries – standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 20

General comments

The quality of responses differed enormously from those explicitly focusing on the questions as set, offering informed, thorough knowledge and understanding of psychological research specific for the option, to those presenting general or anecdotal responses with minimal relevance to the question. Overall, most responses indicated that many candidates have done well at memorizing relevant information, but that they were not confident enough to discuss this information in critical terms. Thus, the resulting responses tended to be descriptive rather than analytical or evaluative.

Examiners noticed that the majority of candidates chose questions from the following options: social psychology, psychology of dysfunctional behaviour and health psychology. Questions from psychodynamic psychology and life span psychology tended to be less frequently addressed than in previous examination sessions. Only a small number of candidates made an attempt to answer questions from cultural and comparative psychology and sadly responses to these questions tended to reflect a tendency for candidates to address questions without specific knowledge of the option.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Weaker responses tend to consist of more or less relevant general knowledge of psychology with a lack of focus on the specific question chosen.

Many weaker responses were overly descriptive, lacked focus on the specific demands of the question and failed to offer the required depth of analysis. There was also very limited consideration of cultural, methodological, gender and ethical issues, areas that evidently continue to pose difficulties for candidates. In addition, this paper showed the importance of studying the whole range of topics relevant for answering questions from the learning outcomes and content for each option in order to enable candidates to answer different questions within the option. This examination session candidates from several centres seemed somewhat restricted in their choice of question.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most responses tended to reflect specific knowledge appropriate for addressing the descriptive aspect of questions, but fewer responses successfully addressed the more demanding analytical and evaluative aspect of the questions. Examiners particularly commented on the high quality of responses presented by some SL and HL candidates from certain centres. It is certainly gratifying to see that some centres have maintained a very high standard for several examination sessions and that others have improved dramatically.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 were not appropriately answered by any of the candidates.

5. Examine how the concept of self impacts on human behaviour.

[20 marks]

Only a few responses were provided. Unfortunately these responses tended to reflect little understanding of the option.

6. Consider how ethical and methodological considerations may affect the interpretation of behaviour in cultural psychology.

[20 marks]

This question was answered by few candidates. The answers provided to this question were generally poor.

The psychology of dysfunctional behaviour

7. Describe and evaluate *one* model or theory of dysfunctional behaviour.

[20 marks]

This was the most frequently answered question in psychology of dysfunctional behaviour. The models most frequently offered by candidates were the medical and behavioural model. Some excellent descriptions of the medical model were provided by some candidates. These responses tended to be very thorough in providing different possible explanations for one

specific dysfunctional behaviour and accompanied by a detailed and accurate knowledge of specific brain regions and neurotransmitters.

In evaluation of the model, candidates tended to focus on strengths and limitations and a discussion of the effectiveness of the model in treating dysfunctional behaviour or evaluated the model through a comparison to alternative models of dysfunctional behaviour. Examiners were pleased to see that in the majority of cases there was some evaluation present even in responses of less quality. However, the general trend in most cases still tends to be that there is more emphasis and knowledge presented in the description of the model than when evaluating it. For example, when evaluation was presented by comparing the main model to alternative models of dysfunctional behaviour this comparison was implicitly stated through a detailed descriptive account of these two models instead of actually presenting comparative points – ways in which different models are similar or different or by presenting arguments about how a certain alternative model emphasizes factors that are ignored by the original model. Thus, the comparison of the models was often left vaguely stated or implicit.

Weaker responses to this question tended to offer long descriptions of one specific dysfunctional behaviour accompanied with several outlines of appropriate models or focused more specifically on a particular therapy rather than the model of which it is representative. The focus of these answers tended to be on the dysfunctional behaviour or therapies rather than on the models and thus these responses tended to provide a lot of detailed and accurate information that wasn't really made relevant to the question asked.

8. Discuss how methodological considerations may affect the interpretation of findings of two empirical studies related to the psychology of dysfunctional behaviour.

[20 marks]

Not many candidates attempted to answer this question. Possible general methodological problems (sample bias, ecological validity, reactivity) were described with no application to the findings of two specific empirical studies related to the psychology of dysfunctional behaviour. Some candidates demonstrated limited understanding of methodological considerations and lack of understanding of research methodology - for example, instead of offering evaluation in terms of methodology, ethical considerations were addressed. Also the majority of candidates did not discuss methodological considerations; instead they only described them. When discussing methodological considerations, candidates should give more than a basic recounting of general methodology and elaborate on why or how these considerations may be important or could have affected the study. A few essays were well balanced in their discussion providing both strengths and weaknesses in relation to several methodological considerations. Most frequently addressed limitations were cultural and gender bias of the researchers when selecting their sample, and the presence of subjective value judgements.

9. “Normality and abnormality are concepts that are defined the same way in all cultures.”

Discuss this statement using research from the psychology of dysfunctional behaviour.

[20 marks]

This question was attempted less frequently than the other two in this option. There were some excellent responses that focused on issues such as cultural norms, cultural variation and culture-bound disorders and how these related to the concepts of normality and abnormality. There was a tendency for some candidates to centre their discussion on the concept of normality versus abnormality in a general sense (e.g. deviation from social norms, failure to function adequately, mental health, *etc.*) rather than focusing on the impact of culture. Other candidates gave basic descriptions of cultural differences without relating these to the specific demands of the question or providing psychological research.

Health psychology

10. Discuss *one* physiological and *one* psychological aspect of stress.

[20 marks]

This question attracted the attention of most candidates that prepared for this option and tended to be one of the most frequently answered questions on this paper 2. Many responses to this question demonstrated sound understanding of both physiological and psychological aspects of stress, often supported with well-chosen examples of supporting research. Responses that failed to attract marks in the highest bands tended to focus on only one type of aspect, or on description at the expense of discussion. Weaker responses presented a vague definition of stress accompanied with some description of certain causes of stress but failing to provide any distinction between physiological and psychological aspects of stress or discussing this information in clear and relevant terms.

11. Describe and evaluate *two* studies related to disordered patterns of eating.

[20 marks]

This question did not attract many responses. The weakest responses tended to offer vague and general knowledge of eating disorders with little knowledge of health psychology. Most responses tended to provide descriptions of 2 studies with minimal evaluation. Often in these descriptive accounts candidates chose two studies with similar or identical research methodology and thus limited themselves to the same evaluative comments for both studies.

12. To what extent is the use of placebos justified in health psychology studies?

[20 marks]

This was the least frequently answered question within the option. Responses to this question tended to be rather weak and superficial and in most cases the question was only partially addressed. Most responses provided a general explanation of the placebo effect for treatment of illnesses and disorders and offered vague descriptions of studies and findings that tend to confirm the existence of the placebo effect.

Lifespan psychology

13. Describe and evaluate one research method (e.g. case study, longitudinal research) used in lifespan research.

[20 marks]

A wide range of responses was offered to this question. In general there were two different approaches to answering this question in terms of structuring of the responses. The most frequent approach was to discuss particular examples of research studies in life span psychology and then evaluate them. Although this approach was focusing on specific examples of studies from lifespan psychology it sometimes got a bit off-track in discussing the detailed findings of a specific study rather than focusing on the research methodology employed. The other approach tended to start the essay by identifying a specific research method (e.g. case study or longitudinal observational study) and then giving an appropriate example. The latter approach tended to earn higher marks as candidates seemed to remain more focused on the demands of the question rather than getting distracted with irrelevant details of one study.

14. Explain how cultural considerations may affect the interpretation of behaviour in lifespan psychology.

[20 marks]

This question did not attract many responses. Limited and superficial descriptions of general cultural differences were provided with minimal or no relationship to lifespan psychology.

15. Discuss change and continuity during the lifespan.

[20 marks]

Few candidates answered this question providing overwhelmingly descriptive accounts of several theories of stages of development with limited focus on the demands of the question.

Psychodynamic psychology

16. Discuss how historical or cultural context influenced the development of psychodynamic psychology.

[20 marks]

Surprisingly this question tended to provoke vague and general responses accompanied with a limited overview of some relevant factors. Relatively few responses discussed how certain conditions favoured the advent of Freud's psychoanalysis. Also, most responses failed to discuss any psychodynamic theorist beyond Freud.

17. Compare and contrast two psychodynamic theories of the development of personality.

[20 marks]

This question was frequently addressed. Most candidates had little trouble identifying two psychodynamic theories. However, a variety of problems were seen in responses to this question:

- Many candidates did not do well on this question because they did not focus on the demands of the question – namely, the development of personality. These candidates gave overly or wholly descriptive accounts of the whole Freudian theory with limited general reference to one other theory (e.g., Horney, Adler, Erikson, Jung).
- Other responses offered a detailed account of Freud's and Erikson's stages of development with only implicit comparison provided.
- Some responses did not address the specific question stated but a similar one: Describe and evaluate 2 theories of development.

18. (a) Outline *one* psychodynamic theory. [8 marks]

Most responses provided sound knowledge relevant for this part of the question. The majority of responses focused on Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

(b) Explain how gender considerations may affect the interpretation of behaviour offered by *one* psychodynamic theory.

[12 marks]

Candidates had more difficulty clearly addressing the demands of the second part of the question. Most responses offered some limited and general description of gender differences that appear in the phallic stage of development. Usually no explanation was provided about how these differences affect the interpretation of behaviour.

Social Psychology

19. Describe and evaluate empirical studies related to reduction of prejudice or discrimination.

[20 marks]

This question was one of the most frequently answered questions on paper 2. Many responses offered detailed descriptions of studies performed by Jane Elliot and Mustafa Sherif. Although description tended to be very detailed and accurate there was more emphasis put on procedural aspects of the study than on research methodology or findings. In most cases evaluation was present but rather limited and general – general evaluative comments related to ecological validity and sampling bias were presented in a fragmented manner. Some excellent responses offered thorough evaluation of studies in terms of comparison of findings with other studies and/or theoretical explanation, or by addressing cultural, ethical or methodological considerations.

20. Discuss *two* theories of conformity. [20 marks]

This question was one of the most frequently answered questions on paper 2. Many responses presented information only partially relevant to the question. The problems most frequently observed in responses to this question were that:

- Many responses failed to focus on specific theories and instead gave detailed description and evaluation of studies of conformity (e.g., Asch's study). Evaluative comments presented methodological considerations related to the study and comments on cross-cultural and gender differences present in some findings.
- One theory of conformity (usually informational influence or normative influence) was well described and evaluated but only a vague outline of a second theory was provided with no accompanying evaluation.

21. Discuss how ethical or methodological considerations may affect the interpretation of behaviour in social psychology. [20 marks]

This question did not attract many responses. A wide range of problems were evident in responses to this question:

- Sometimes responses offered both ethical and methodological considerations instead of focusing on just one of these.
- Some responses provided detailed description of two relevant studies and a short outline of some methodological or ethical problems.
- A description of some relevant methodological or ethical considerations in research in social psychology was provided without clear discussion of their impact on interpretation of behaviour.
- A limited account of a few methodological considerations was provided with no reference to specific studies from social psychology.

Overall most responses reflected some knowledge of relevant material but provided it in an overly descriptive or vague manner.

Only a small number of high quality responses offered a short outline of few empirical studies with a thorough and specific discussion of how several ethical or methodological considerations affect the interpretation of behaviour.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Frequently examiners can recognize that candidates have solid psychological knowledge, yet the inability to effectively relate this knowledge to the specific question does not allow for awarding of higher marks. There were many candidates that spent time on introductory paragraphs. These introductions did not necessarily help develop their argument. Candidates should practice developing balanced, organized, structured responses that are precisely tailored for the question as it has been set.
- In order to help candidates focus their responses, it might be advisable for them to begin their responses by defining the key terms in the question. Examples of terms that could be defined from this examination session might include prejudice,

discrimination, theory/model and research methods. These are terms in psychology that require precise definition in order to be addressed appropriately.

- Teachers must continue emphasizing the “basic skills” relevant for writing responses at higher level and standard level: outline, description, analysis, evaluation, discussion, comparison, and application of theory to everyday situations.
- Candidates must be reminded to spend some time reading the questions carefully before attempting to answer them. This strategy may help them “focus” their thoughts to different requirements of different questions in the option.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 30

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Many candidates do not appreciate that the concept of a case study can apply to more than one individual. A single case in psychological research may also include a number of individuals such as a sports team, a school, a government, a medical team or group of psychology students. This more radical use of the word ‘case’ may also help in explanations of generalisation where distinct interpretations of the concept of generalisation could help candidates understand that some of the findings from a single case may indeed, with great caution, be generalised in specific circumstances.

In a similar manner the concepts of participant and non participant observation, although known, showed that some candidates showed a limited grasp of the subtleties involved in using these ethically questionable research methods. The ethical problems raised by interviews also occur in many aspects of psychological research, particularly in the preparation and after-care of participants who have been involved as part of the research. While the potential dangers to participants who take part in medical research is relatively well documented and known, the less observable effects on parallel examples within psychology need to be more appreciated and documented.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

Despite the comments made above it was good to note the considerable increase in the knowledge and understanding shown by candidates in responding to Paper Three questions. There was a notable rise in the level of sensitivity involved with ethics related to qualitative research and a growing awareness that such sensitivity could beneficially be applied to other approaches used in psychological research. Candidates also showed considerable skill in

their discussion of both main types of participant and non-participant observation used in psychological research.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

1. “A problem with case studies is that they are usually too few to be of any real value to psychology since their findings cannot be generalised.”

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

[10 marks]

There was a tendency to evaluate case studies per se rather than to focus on the extent to which the findings of case studies can be generalised. Although several case studies in psychology do use a single participant this is certainly not always so. It would be useful for candidates faced with questions on case studies if they were to prepare themselves with knowledge and understanding of individual case studies that used several participants. It was acceptable for candidates to agree or disagree with the statement or, as most did, to consider an intermediate position. Whichever position was taken it was expected that candidates would give reasons for the views that they expressed.

Several candidates did not consider “the extent to which they agreed or disagreed” and such responses were usually weak or superficial and gained few marks. Other candidates realised that even where very few participants or a single individual was the focus of study, there were occasions when the findings could help in understanding others in similar situations or with similar conditions. Most candidates stated that case study findings could act as a catalyst to encourage research involving larger numbers of participants in order to establish the potential extent of generalisation in a given population.

2. Discuss strengths and limitations of using *either* participant *or* non-participant observation in psychological research.

[10 marks]

Although there was occasional confusion between participant and non-participant observation most candidates were aware of important differences. Many also identified covert and overt methods of observation and this was useful in allowing for discussion on the ethical problems that arise when covert observation is employed. A note of realism was introduced by some candidates who expressed their opinion that covert observation was a necessary evil in research in order for the greater good to be served in understanding the basic causes of unsocial or undesirable behaviour. This was realistically related to research in mental institutions, care homes, hospitals, and prisons.

Non-participant observation was also evaluated in perceptive ways where ethical issues were rightly identified and where the relative lack of understanding by observers would be a disadvantage compared to the rapport established by participant observers who became members of the group under study. The dangers for observers in the latter category of research were highlighted by potentially gruesome fates that could be expected by those working under cover but whose cover was subsequently blown.

3. Discuss how ethics should be incorporated into the research process before, during and after conducting a one-to-one interview.

[10 marks]

It was in answers to this question that the ethical problems were clearly identified and, judging from the directness of the language employed, most ethical guidelines were approved by candidates as being both justified and desirable. The amount and depth of knowledge concerning ethics in this context was impressive. Not only did candidates indicate how ethical processes should be incorporated into interview research, they also went further in justifying why such procedures should be formalised in order to give protection to both interviewer and interviewee. There were some candidates who appeared to be unaware that there was any need to consider ethical matters before the investigation or to worry what effects an interview may have had on a participant after the interview had terminated. It was rare to have any discussion on the possible effects on the interviewer when conducting psychological research, although given the harrowing nature of some interviews such effects may occasionally be quite marked. There was also little mention of what action should be taken should the interviewee become emotionally upset during the course of an interview, although occasionally some candidates did discuss strategies to cope with this eventuality.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Qualitative research should engage the researcher in a more reflexive approach than other strategies used in psychology. There is an expectation that the researcher should be aware of the predisposition that he or she brings to the investigative process from its initial planning, through the actions involved in the research itself, and importantly, for the after effects that such research may involve. Consideration needs to be given to the potential effects both on the participants and on the researcher involved. Many candidates are aware of the ethical issues but it would be beneficial if even more candidates were able to discuss ethical points in greater depth and with more compassion and understanding. Not least candidates need to understand that when they act as researchers their participants should be treated at least on the same level as themselves; in qualitative research there exist 'researchers' and 'participants', rather than the more divisive connotation expressed by the terms 'experimenters' and 'subjects'.

Answers to questions set in paper 3 have to be completed in a short time span. There is rarely time, if ever, to use formal introductory paragraphs and conclusions that may be written for longer essays in response to questions in papers 1 and 2. This means that candidates need to start to answer the questions directly. For example, in question 2 the candidate needs to launch into strengths and limitations from the very first sentence, without any preamble. It would be worthwhile for teachers to ensure that candidates are well prepared in the skills and techniques required to answer questions that need a more concise response than traditional essays.