

PSYCHOLOGY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 10	11 - 21	22 - 30	31 - 41	42 - 56	57 - 67	68 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 22	23 - 33	34 - 46	47 - 58	59 - 72	73 - 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

Overall the range and suitability of the work submitted was of a good standard. The research topics were mostly related to cognitive psychology and these were suitable for this level of education. There were few examples of experiments that could be problematic, for example the Halo effect and research on association of perception and taste involving ingestion of jelly beans. Ingestion is not recommended in the current programme and it is not allowed in the new programme and the IA for the exam session 2011. All students were aware of ethical issues and most included a copy of informed consent in the appendices. There is an increasing use of revision guides as only reference for research and this should be a reason for concern.

In general, the weaker reports shared the following characteristics:

- Weak and imprecise explanation of background research in the introduction and this affected the discussion section as well.
- Results were not always clearly related to the aim of the study and inferential tests were not justified or absent.
- Discussions were superficial and did not discuss own results in the light of the background research.
- Referencing was poor.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Overall, the candidates seemed to be familiar with the assessment criteria although there were differences in achievement levels. The introduction sections were in some cases well written but often lacked focus on the relationship between a particular research study and the candidate's own research hypothesis. It is important that the introduction is clear and focused on relevant background research so that it logically leads towards the candidates own research hypotheses and that the background research is explained and analyzed in sufficient depth (for example, aim, procedure, findings) to allow for formulation of a clear research hypothesis in the introduction and to stimulate discussion of own results in the light of the background research in the discussion section. The introduction and the discussion sections are often the most difficult to write as they require a good understanding of how research studies are used for formulation of hypotheses and how they are analyzed and evaluated. The discussion should make a clear comparison of the candidates own results and those of the background studies and this was not always done. Referencing was not always of a standard format and there are particularly problems with resources found on the Internet.

Criterion a (introduction)

This section was in many cases well written and included references to relevant key studies. However, the explanations of the theoretical framework and the studies in the introduction often lacked depth and the research question was not always clearly formulated in the introduction or it was simply absent. It was not always clear from the background readings in the introduction why a particular experimental hypothesis was chosen. There were at times problems in terms of stating a clear and justified experimental hypothesis. The often superficial treatment of the background literature in the introduction, which was sometimes only based on a revision guide or a summary of research from a website, affected the discussion section negatively. Quite a few introductions included redundant explanations of research which was not particularly relevant to the candidate's own study.

It is important that the introduction is clear and focused on relevant background research so that it logically leads towards the candidates own research hypotheses and that the background research is explained and analyzed in sufficient depth (for example, aim, procedure, findings) to allow for formulation of a clear research hypothesis in the introduction and to stimulate discussion of own results in the light of the background research in the discussion section.

Criterion b (method: design)

Most candidates seemed aware of what is meant by an experimental design but choice of design was not always properly justified. The ethical guidelines were mostly addressed in the design section but sometimes in procedures instead. Most candidates included an informed consent from participants. A number of schools had allowed participants under the age of 16 to participate without parental consent and this is violating the ethical guidelines of the IBO. There were only a few cases where the informed consent was not included and this was always in weak reports where other things were missing as well.

Criterion c: (method: participants)

As in previous years there were students who used many experimental conditions and many participants. There were often problems in relevant characteristics of the target population and it can be difficult to define what relevant characteristics are in a specific study but candidates could describe characteristics such as age, sex, number of participants and nationality. The target population was mostly identified as high school students of both sexes between 16 and 19 years old but there were not many *relevant* characteristics such as referring to normal vision in a replication of the Stroop effect. All samples were based on a student population in the candidates own school. Sampling technique was mostly clearly identified as opportunity sample or self-selected sample and in one case as snowball sampling. Some candidates claimed to have used a random sample but it was not. There seems to be confusion about the meaning of the word. In a number of reports the candidates identified sampling method but did not justify it.

Criterion d: (method: procedure)

There were quite often problems with the description of procedure in sufficient detail so it would be difficult to replicate. This was particularly true in terms reference to the appendices to see material used in the experiment. Many candidates used bullet points in the procedure section.

Criterion e: results

Most students described the results in a narrative form in the result section. Not all included standard deviation as descriptive statistics even if their data allowed it. The result sections often included a whole range of measures of central tendency. While this is not affecting the marks it is an indication that candidates have not considered which measure would be most appropriate for their data.

In some reports there were no graphs but only a table of results. The graphs were often poorly labelled. Not all reports included tables. A few students had individual scores in the result section but most students had correctly placed it in the appendices. Some students placed their raw scores in the result section.

Most students used and justified the inferential statistical test correctly but a few did not.

Criterion F: Discussion

Generally candidates did not integrate background research properly in the discussion. As in previous years, many papers had a very short and superficial discussion of own results in the light of previous research but a long description of strengths/limitations of own design which were not always relevant in terms of their own study but rather a more general list. The suggestions for modifications were therefore also related to general factors and not so much the candidate's own study. For example, there were a lot of candidates who mentioned the opportunity sample as a problem and suggested a random sample and more participants in future research.

Criterion G: Presentation

The most common problem concerned referencing. Candidates did often not include all the references they referred to in the introduction in the reference section, probably because they came from a book, a website or a revision guide. There are still problems with references from the www where students tend to think that the site name is enough and sometimes the background study could not be found in the reference section. Referencing did not often follow a standard way of referencing such as APA.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- It is important to help candidates find appropriate background research and theoretical framework because such resources will enable them to analyse the background research in some depth. It is recommended to use specialist sources, for example psychological journals or text books instead of revision guides.
- Students should be encouraged to make relatively simple experiments based on real scientific experiments. It is much easier for candidates to replicate an experiment if they have access to readings about experiments or summaries of them so that they can read about hypotheses and other important details.
- Some attention should be made on the quality of the abstracts since this part of the IA is going to be assessed more specifically in the new programme.
- There should be more focus on the relationship between the candidate's **research question** and the background research so that these can be integrated in the introduction and the discussion of the results. The background research should be analysed in sufficient depth in the introduction so that the aim of the candidates' own research is clearly justified and the experimental hypothesis should be clearly linked to background research.
- The design question must have a clear description of the experimental conditions and teachers should assure that there are only two conditions (either two treatment conditions or one treatment condition and one control) so that there is a possibility to compare the outcome of the manipulation of the IV on the DV in the two conditions. This is in line with the IBO recommendations of making simple experimental studies with psychology students.
- **Sampling** should be done according to IB rules, i.e. identification of target population including relevant characteristics and description of sampling method as well as justification of it (even though most students use a convenience sample). It should be emphasized that the sample size need not be bigger than 20 participants in an IB experiment. It seems that not all schools are aware of this.
- In the **results section**, the graphs and tables should have a proper title. It should be emphasized that graphing the results is mandatory. This section includes *summarized* data not raw data or individual scores. It is recommended that candidates don't include several measures of central tendency but only the one which is relevant for their data and that a measure of dispersion is present. Students should be careful in choosing an appropriate statistical test and justify their choice.

- The explanation of the empirical studies and theoretical framework from the introduction must be referred to in the discussion section. New studies or theories should not be introduced here. Students should be trained in making proper **discussion** section (perhaps by reading a couple of research articles to become familiar with the idea and style) and they should consult the checklist to be sure that all the IB requirements are attended to (e.g. identification of strengths etc.). Understanding of own limitations of own research and suggestions for modification should be tied together and it is not enough to say that a particular study should use random sampling and more participants to be better.
- It is generally recommended that students are familiar with the scientific research method which includes references to previous studies and integration of these in their own research. Likewise, the use of **proper background readings of a specialist nature** must be encouraged and that the key study or studies are described and analyzed in depth in order to justify the candidate's own research. It is recommended that candidates are trained in critical use of www resources (that are often very useful but not always and some candidates don't seem to know the difference). Many candidates only used WWW sources of a non-specialist nature as background literature. Furthermore, the candidates' could gain more marks in criterion G if they learned to use a standard way of referencing.

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

Overall performance of candidates tended to be satisfactory. Most reports tended to be written according to criteria and in accordance with the main suggestions set. Candidates tended to select simple, cognitive research studies that can be easily replicated. Some studies that were not at the appropriate level tended to indicate that candidates had a problem with deciding how and what should be manipulated in the study. Most of these studies were vaguely written and presented an overly complex research design which involved several independent or dependent variables.

In general, lower quality reports tended to share the following characteristics:

- Lack of precision when writing the design section
- Lack of understanding of the terms „experimental design“ and „sampling procedure“
- Results were reported in a general and vague manner. Often the results section provided a description of the findings which was not related to the aim presented in the Introduction.
- Discussion sections were written in a basic and overly simplistic manner

Many schools displayed IA reports of very good quality. These reports were clearly written and nicely organized. Most schools and teachers clearly address the ethical guidelines proposed by IBO and require candidates should be aware of all ethical considerations. Therefore the problem of ethically problematic studies was encountered rarely.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Most candidates provided a well written Introduction section. Some candidates lacked focus in their report and provided a general introduction to their chosen topic. These Introductions provided a general outline of the main concepts, theories and research studies. However they lacked a clear explanation of the original study being replicated. Some students had problems in clearly stating the aim of the research. A clearly and carefully written Introduction is a relevant prerequisite for writing a successful Discussion in which candidates should present a carefully written analysis and comparison of the original study and the study conducted by the candidate.

The Results section and Discussion section are usually the most difficult to write. A careful and thorough consideration of relevant features of the study is necessary for a well written Discussion. This should be accompanied with practical and obtainable suggestions for modifications which can be accomplished in an everyday school environment. Some candidates still have problems summarizing the information within the required word count. Candidates should be reminded that exceeding the maximum word count is not acceptable and therefore full marks for criterion G cannot be obtained.

Criterion A: Introduction

A large number of candidates managed to state a clear and simple aim. Although this is an improvement in comparison to previous session there are still some candidates who simply state the general topic of their interest.

The study being replicated was usually identified and outlined but often some relevant characteristics of the research design (e.g. type of experimental research, variables that were controlled during the research) were missing.

Criterion B: Methods: Design

Some weaker candidates had problems when applying knowledge and understanding of research methodology to their own study. In addition to this some reports reflected that candidates lack precision when using psychological research terminology. In this section candidates are required to identify the design of their research study and not the general research method chosen. In addition to this a justification of the choice is required. Justification of design requires the candidate to explain specific aspects of a type of design (repeated measures, independent samples or matched pairs design) that are considered to be advantageous for the aim and conditions in which the study will be performed.

In the majority of cases, most candidates correctly stated the independent variable and dependent variable for their research studies but these definitions sometimes lacked precision.

Criterion C: Methods: Participants

Many candidates appropriately identified the main characteristics of the target population. However, some weaker students failed to provide a clear description of the main features of the population chosen. This information is relevant not only for gaining marks for criterion C but also as a reference point when comparing the original study and the study conducted by the student. Candidates should identify the following relevant characteristics: number of participants, age range, gender, educational background and other shared characteristics of the population (e.g. first language, understanding of English or other universal characteristics or experiences of the chosen population).

Criterion D: Methods: Procedure

The majority of candidates had no problems when writing the procedure section of their study. In general, this section was clearly written with all relevant information present and well presented. Occasionally candidates presented an Informed consent or Debriefing letter in the Appendix without referring to it in the Procedure section. Candidates should be advised to present evidence about following ethical guidelines in both the Method section and the Procedure section. This way they are clearly describing all relevant steps which have occurred during the research. Reading an informed consent and asking participants if they would like to sign it is an appropriate starting point of any experimental study.

Some weaker reports clearly identified all relevant steps of the Procedure section but failed to provide all necessary material in the Appendix. Another common problem encountered in some reports was a lack of precision in writing –e.g. candidates identified all steps of conducting a study but failed to clearly refer to the time necessary for conducting certain steps within the study. e.g. candidates sometimes report that a questionnaire was handed to participants and „after a couple of minutes“ the responses were collected. Some approximation of the allocated time for responding to the questions is required.

Criterion E: Results

The results section varied considerably in quality of presentation, detail and information that was provided. Some candidates provided a presentation of results which was impressive. High quality work tended to present a clearly titled and labelled table of appropriately chosen measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. This was accompanied with a clearly titled and appropriately labelled graphical presentation of measures of central tendency and a brief but succinct description of the findings related to the claimed aim of the study.

Unfortunately, some lower quality reports failed to include graphs or included graphs which were inappropriate (e.g. displaying raw data), or unclear (e.g. did not identify the axes appropriately).

Criterion F: Discussion

In most reports candidates provided some discussion of their results. However this was done with varied success. Although many candidates successfully presented descriptive statistics in the Results section they did not make sufficient use of their data in the discussion section. Most candidates separately presented their own findings and then mentioned another study and identified the findings of that study. No link or comparison was made between the two.

Candidates should be advised to provide a more thorough comparison of both the findings and all other aspects of the two studies by clearly indicating the similarities and differences between the two studies. Another major criticism is that too often candidates overlook quite obvious confounding variables that may have affected their results. Candidates should be advised to carefully examine all relevant features of both the original study and their own study before presenting a comparison. Candidates should also be encouraged to clearly identify both advantages and disadvantages of their study with a brief proposition of how a future improved investigation could be conducted.

Criterion G: Presentation

In the majority of cases format of the reports was appropriate and clearly followed prescribed guidelines. Main problems identified in relation to this criterion are the following:

- Some candidates had problems with restricting their report to the required word count.
- Some candidates had problems with in-text referencing.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates need to write with care and precision especially when identifying their aim, independent and dependent variable and stating a brief conclusion closely linked to the aim of the study.
- In the Introduction candidates should clearly identify and explain the original study which was replicated. This explanation needs to provide an informative review of the main aspects of the study.
- In the results section descriptive statistics should be clearly presented in table form, graph form and through a short textual description of findings.
- Reports shouldn't be written in a hurry or in a routine-like manner. Students should be advised to carefully choose and clearly present measures of central value and dispersion. Allocation of marks for the Results section and Discussion section is bigger than for other aspects of the report. Thus candidates should invest more effort and critically apply their knowledge of research methodology when presenting these sections.
- In some reports candidates failed to consider all of the variables that might have affected their results. Providing a simplistic list of a series of possible shortcomings is not sufficient. Candidates should try to explain the exact way in which a specified problem could potentially affect the interpretation of results
- Some candidates need more practice in writing a succinct but relevant abstract which contains all relevant information.

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 - 14	15 - 20	21 - 25	26 - 31	32 - 44

General comments

Most candidates were well prepared to manage their time between questions and were able to complete the examination. However some candidates gave very long answers for Section A questions leaving less time to adequately answer Part B question that should be more developed. Others wrote long introductions that were not always relevant to the questions, resulting in responses that were not as developed as they should have been.

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

No specific area of the programme was particularly difficult for the majority though having candidates answer the exact question asked was more difficult. Understanding the demands of the question continues to be an issue with some candidates. They do not answer the questions accurately and provide marginally relevant information instead.

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

Candidates were generally familiar with syllabus requirements, particularly content areas. Overall, candidates showed a good range of understanding with a wide breadth of research to support claims. There were several examples of outstanding levels of organization and structure. However, some candidates did not go beyond descriptive answers and had difficulty to provide critical and evaluative analysis.

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

Section A

Biological Perspective

Question 1

Most candidates offered an accurate description of a relevant study such as Raine's study on brain abnormalities in murderers, Le Vay's study about brain structure and sexual orientation, Gazzaniga and Sperry's study on split-brain patients, Delgado's research on aggression or Broca's works with his patient "Tan". They identified an appropriate strength such as control of variables, establishment of a causal relation, application of findings. However too often the focus of the answer was on the description of the study. Many candidates described a study and identified a strength rather than explaining the strength, eluding the explicative dimension of the question.

Cognitive Perspective

Question 2

The identification of one application seemed difficult for many candidates. Most candidates described a theory such as schema theory, Piaget's developmental theory or reconstructive memory theory or described a study such as Loftus' studies on eyewitness testimony, Berkowitz and LePage's study on weapons effect or Anderson and Dill's study on aggression but had difficulty to address the second part of the question. Most candidates did not describe **how the theory or study has been applied** to one psychological or social question. The link to the application was only implicit. Candidates who addressed Loftus' studies and its application in justice court or Piaget theory and its application in schools tended to write better responses.

Learning Perspective

Question 3

There were some good explanations of historical or cultural contributions such as developments in sciences, rejection of introspection, opposition to Freud's psychoanalysis. However, many candidates seemed to focus on the description of the historical or cultural condition without explaining its effect on the development of the perspective. Some candidates did not identify any historical or cultural condition and simply gave a summary of the perspective.

Humanistic Perspective (HL Only)

Question 4

Most students were able to identify an appropriate assumption and concept from the humanistic perspective. At best, candidates clearly showed how the concept reflected the assumption, but in some cases the link was very weak. The ease of linking depended to a large extent on the assumption chosen.

For example, the link between the assumption that the humanistic focus should be on the subjective perceptions of the individual and Rogers' concept of self was universally well made, while responses citing the assumption of goodness rarely showed an understanding of that principle, and were not able to show how it relates to a humanistic concept.

Section B

Biological Perspective

Question 5

Few candidates chose this question. Responses were either excellent or very weak; there was nothing in between.

Some responses highlighted that although behaviours are partially explained by biological factors such as genetic, biochemical or brain structural causes, they are also affected by social and/or cultural aspects. Other excellent answers explained how the philosophical roots (such as Aristotle and Hippocrates), the rise of the scientific method and the rise of biologically based research (such as Mendel's and Darwin's) are historical considerations that have influenced the rise of the perspective and thus affected the interpretation of behaviour from the biological perspective.

Unfortunately, some candidates merely described historical or cultural influences for the development of the perspective without any link with the interpretation of behaviour within this perspective.

Cognitive Perspective

Question 6

Many candidates chose this question and the research methods selected were mainly experiment and case study. Most candidates provided accurate empirical examples for those research methods such as Loftus' experiments and Gardner & Gardner's or Milner's case studies. They were able to explain those research methods with varying degrees of accuracy and to provide an appropriate discussion of their strengths and limitations.

However, some candidates discussed laboratory and field experiment or overt and covert observation as two different methods rather than two different types of the same method. Moreover, there was confusion between ecological validity and sampling bias in many answers.

Learning Perspective

Question 7

This question seemed to be difficult for many candidates who opted for it. A number of candidates focused on determinism without making a relevant link to free will. However, in some cases, responses adequately discussed how the learning perspective shows some degree of free will in reference to theories such as latent learning, cognitive maps and vicarious learning.

Humanistic Perspective (HL Only)**Question 8**

Many HL candidates chose this question and generally described a relevant application knowledgeably. Most responses focus on the application of Rogers' theory of self to client-centred therapy, with education and the workplace being the other applications considered. In general, the way in which the chosen concept or theory has been applied was well explained. Evaluation, however, was rarely substantial; for example, there was little discussion or evidence of the effectiveness of the applications.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Writing skills should be reviewed. Too many candidates write very long paragraphs that drift from idea to idea, losing focus. Long lead-in paragraphs of a general nature that do not add to the specific nature of questions should also be avoided. Candidates should be aware that more is not necessarily better: writing everything you know about a perspective does not guarantee a good answer.

Candidates should also define terms and be sure that theories and studies are clearly explained, not assuming too much knowledge on the behalf of the reader.

Candidates should be advised that critical analysis and evaluation, especially in part B questions, are necessary for the highest marks. Students need to go beyond descriptions of studies and focus more on how they answer a question through the analysis, application and evaluation of the findings from them.

Higher and standard level paper two**Component grade boundaries – higher level**

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 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 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 20

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

Most popular questions in paper 2 were selected from the following options: Psychology of Dysfunctional Behaviour, Social Psychology and Psychodynamic Psychology. In comparison to previous sessions there seemed to be a slight drop in the popularity of questions coming from Psychodynamic Psychology and Lifespan Psychology.

In general the quality of responses was good but tended to indicate that the majority of candidates lacked specific discussion and evaluation skills, and hence regardless of the content area, they had difficulty providing a clear and well structured response required for this paper. Many candidates tend to provide long general accounts of material partially relevant for the focus of the question. Some candidates lacked specific knowledge and had significant problems writing appropriate and detailed research support. The main problem noticed in poorer scoring responses was their inability to understand and address the specific command term stated.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

Some well written responses showed clear and accurate knowledge, good understanding, and the ability to critically discuss theories and research studies in a well organized manner. Many responses, however, tended to be overly descriptive in nature, reflecting poor analysis skills, or failing to address precisely what the question was asking.

When answering the Psychodynamic Psychology questions, candidates seemed to have good knowledge and understanding of Freud's theory but were less confident when describing and evaluating neo-Freudian theories and research studies.

Too many times the evaluation or discussion was presented in an overly general manner rather than evaluating/discussing what was specifically asked for in the stated question. For example, if a question asks how methodological considerations may affect the interpretation of behaviour and the response only provides a detailed description of several examples of research studies within an option without discussing relevant methodological issues of these studies then the response is clearly not focused on the set question.

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

The first six questions were rarely addressed by candidates. Just a few candidates fell into the trap of using vague and general knowledge of perspectives rather than knowledge of options when answering these questions.

The psychology of dysfunctional behaviour

Question 7

Question 7 was a very popular choice within the option and the majority of responses addressing this question offered description and evaluation of one model/theory of dysfunctional behaviour in general. Most often candidates chose to write about the medical model or the learning model of dysfunctional behaviour.

Less often candidates chose to provide more specific theories such as the dopamine hypothesis for schizophrenia or learned helplessness model of depression. These responses tended to provide detailed, descriptive knowledge of a disorder accompanied with thorough description of a specific model and some evaluation that often needed further development.

In general responses to these questions were clear, nicely organized and supported with good descriptive knowledge. The evaluative comments that have been provided were relevant but needed further development.

When evaluating the model, most candidates tended to identify and describe strengths and limitations of a model or provide a discussion of the effectiveness of the model for treating patients with dysfunctional behaviour. Some candidates evaluated the model by providing a comparison to alternative models of dysfunctional behaviour.

In most cases there was some evaluation present even in responses of lower quality. However, the general trend in most responses still tends to be that there is more focus and knowledge presented in the description of the model than when evaluating it. For example, when comparing one model to an alternative approach the comparison was only implicit - candidates wrote responses that tended to have the following structure: after describing one model of dysfunctional behaviour candidates chose to describe an alternative model but failed to clearly express arguments about how this alternative model was different from the first one.

Weakest responses to this question tended to offer long descriptions of symptoms of a specific dysfunctional behaviour accompanied with only an outline of an appropriate model or focused more on a particular therapy rather than the model of which it is representative.

Question 8

- a) A range of different therapies have been offered by candidates. The most popular choices were treatments related to the medical model for schizophrenia or depression, and cognitive behavioural treatment for depression. Most candidates wrote good descriptions. Some candidates provided a long and detailed description of one therapy or treatment but could only outline the second treatment. Some weaker responses included in their response a detailed description of symptoms of one specific dysfunctional behaviour although this was not required.
- b) In most cases candidates chose to explain ethical considerations of one of the therapies/treatments described in part (a). The biological approaches to treatment were often chosen. Some thorough and detailed responses offered a thoughtful appraisal of relative advantages and disadvantages of treatments related to the biological approach and related these to relevant ethical concerns regarding physical or psychological distress and potentially damaging outcomes or side-effects of treatments/therapies.

Some weaker responses provided a good but general description of ethical considerations but failed to focus the information on the specific therapy and/or specific dysfunctional behaviour. Some responses did not clearly distinguish between the efficacy and the ethical considerations of a treatment. Weakest responses provided a very general and vague outline of ethical considerations related to diagnosis and treatment of abnormal psychology.

Question 9

This question was less popular and tended to draw the attention of candidates who lacked specific and thorough knowledge of the option. Popular concepts of normality and abnormality were described in detailed. Mental health criterion, statistical infrequency criterion, medical model and personal distress were most often described. However, it was disappointing to notice that many candidates ignored the command term “discuss” which asks candidates to make an appraisal of the concepts of normality and abnormality.

In the majority of cases, discussion was limited and lacked empirical support or thorough discussion. When candidates did refer to empirical evidence Rosenhan's study was the most popular choice, but it was not always used well in the answer. Social class, ethnic and gender issues related to the medical view of abnormality tended to be discussed in a superficial and overly simplistic manner.

Health psychology

Question 10

Not many candidates made an attempt to answer this question. The most frequently occurring problem was that candidates neglected the command term of the question (discuss) and provided superficial and overly descriptive accounts of every day examples reflecting an inter-relationship between physical and mental health.

Question 11

Only a few candidates made an attempt to answer this question. This question tended to attract the attention of candidates who lacked specific knowledge of the option.

Most responses to this question tended to provide superficial and vague information about the general topic (substance use and misuse) with minimal reference to specific research studies.

Question 12

This was the most popular question within the option.

In most cases a detailed description was offered and accompanied with some attempt to examine ways in which individuals are able to cope with stress. Some responses focused their response on drug treatment and its side effects or negative impact in the long run.

Some weaker responses tended to provide a description of some coping strategies such as exercise or relaxation techniques. Usually the presentation of these coping strategies was overly descriptive and vague. At times, candidates ignored the plural of the word „ways“ and provided a description and discussion of only one way in which individuals coped with stress.

Sometimes candidates didn't address the presented question but rather wrote a prepared response to a general question on stress (without addressing how individuals cope with stress). These responses provided a lot of information that weren't focused on the question – description of the general adaptation syndrome or description of the fight or flight response.

Lifespan psychology

Question 13

Most responses to this question provided overly descriptive accounts of two research studies. When accurate description was provided the discussion tended to focus on several methodological, cultural or ethical considerations that lacked further development.

Weaker responses provided descriptions of empirical studies in lifespan psychology ignoring one of the key words in the question „separation“. Some candidates wrote a considerable amount on styles of attachment (e.g. Ainsworth) without much explicit attention to the topic of separation. Long term effects of separation were rarely addressed.

Question 14

This question was rarely addressed and in most cases it tended to attract the attention of less prepared candidates. Most responses tended to provide a clear and detailed description of research methods used in lifespan psychology with a superficial explanation of the impact of methodological considerations on interpretation of human behaviour.

Question 15

Most responses to this question provided a descriptive account of Erikson's identity crisis and provided some account on the controversial nature of this stage of human development by providing information about Marcia's research study. In most cases an appropriate description of this period of human development was provided and accompanied with a limited examination of some controversies.

Some high quality responses provided detailed descriptions of several concepts of adolescence accompanied with clear reference to empirical support and a thorough account of its controversial nature. Well developed responses tended to examine the following issues: lack of cross-cultural universality, gender bias or methodological issues of research studies supporting a concept of adolescence.

Weakest responses offered general and simplistic accounts of concepts of adolescence with no reference to its controversial nature.

Psychodynamic psychology (HL Only)**Question 16**

Most responses to this question offered a good description and some analysis of the main historical and cultural conditions that favoured the rise of psychoanalysis. However only a few responses addressed and analysed factors responsible for the later development of the psychodynamic perspective.

Weaker responses provided a limited outline of several historical or cultural factors influencing the rise of Freud's psychodynamic theory accompanied with a detailed account of Freud's psychodynamic theory. Descriptions of psychodynamic theory or several concepts within the theory were often not related to historical or cultural influences and in these cases responses seemed to drift away from the original question.

Question 17

Some stronger responses accurately described and evaluated two research methods used in psychodynamic psychology, offering a thorough commentary and addressing strengths and limitations. Most candidates chose to write about the case study method (little Hans and Anna O. were popular examples of studies) and psychohistory method (Hitler's childhood) or Erikson's participant observation (participant observation of Sioux and Yurok Indians).

Weaker responses provided detailed descriptions of two research studies. These descriptions tended to be too general and lacked a clear focus on the underlying research method. Also, some candidates provided detailed accounts of Freud's therapeutic procedures - dream analysis and free association were described as a method of helping the patient but not as a method of acquiring data for developing a theory.

Question 18

Most responses to this question provided overly descriptive accounts of two neo-Freudian theories and reflected poor ability to address the „compare and contrast“ aspect of the question. The main weaknesses of these responses tended to be a lack of focus on how childhood experience influences behaviour and a lack of explicit reference to similarities and differences between the two chosen theories. In some cases it was rather clear that although candidates have in-depth knowledge of one neo-Freudian theory, knowledge of an additional neo-Freudian theory was very basic.

Social psychology**Question 19**

- a) This question was one of the most popular choices within the whole Paper. Most responses referred to Milgram's study on obedience. There were several attempts to describe Zimbardo's study – in most cases candidates provided a response which reflected how this study is related to obedience to social roles.

Most responses provided a detailed description of one study. Weaker responses tended to give long and detailed descriptions which were characterized by an overemphasis on several procedural aspects of the study while omitting relevant information such as a clear account of the design or the findings.

- b) Well prepared responses thoroughly discussed several methodological considerations such as sampling method, demand characteristics, artificiality of the obedience task and lack of ecological validity. Cultural considerations affecting the findings were also discussed and included reference to cultural norms, differences in gender roles, differences between individualistic and collectivistic societies and/or historical differences. Most responses reflected more accurate knowledge and deeper understanding of methodological considerations than of cultural considerations. Weaker responses provided vague accounts of methodological considerations accompanied by a detailed account of replications of the original Milgram study but no explanation why they have been conducted or what was considered problematic in the original study.

Question 20

This question was the least popular within the option. Unfortunately some responses to this question reflected that candidates wrongly interpreted the concept „collective behaviour“ as any type of behaviour within a group or society. The term „collective behaviour“ asks for an approach that clearly focuses on relevant aspects of the group (e.g. Le Bon's contagion theory) and not on the behaviour of an individual within the group.

When the question was appropriately addressed responses reflected detailed knowledge and thorough evaluation of one theory of collective behaviour.

Question 21

- a) Question 21 was also a popular choice and in most cases attracted the attention of well prepared candidates. Responses to part (a) tended to provide clear definitions of prejudice and discrimination. In some cases the distinction between prejudice and discrimination was not presented clearly.

- b) The majority of responses included descriptions of Elliot's (Brown Eyes/Blue Eyes) study and Sherif's Robber's Cave study. Some well prepared responses provided a description of two studies investigating prejudice and provided thorough explanations and discussions of origins of prejudice. Discussions tended to focus on strengths and limitations of the studies, their applicability, how findings may be used to reduce prejudice, or cultural and methodological issues.

Weaker responses tended to provide overly descriptive responses which tended to focus only on two studies of prejudice but with a superficial discussion of how these studies contributed to an understanding of the origins of prejudice.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should carefully read all questions within the option ensuring that they precisely understand exactly what the questions ask them to do. This will help them choose a question which they can successfully address.
- Candidates should be advised not to provide vague, general responses but rather to clearly address the specific question stated. Candidates should understand and apply to their response specific requirements of the command term in the question.
- Candidates should be advised to underline relevant phrases within the question to make sure that they do not miss the important links within the question.
- Brainstorming possible relevant points for the question is a useful practice.
- Candidates should practice writing a brief but well structured outline to their response. This could remind them to keep on track and avoid unnecessary detours when writing their response.
- Candidates should practice how to clearly state similarities and differences so that they can more successfully address "compare and contrast" questions.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 30

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

Although the use of emails used for private communication was well known by candidates, their use for more official communication in the context of the question was not always so well understood. Advantages of email use were generally comprehensive but the downside of email correspondence was not so greatly appreciated, especially in the context of parent-school contact.

Conversational interviews were not well understood by a number of candidates, especially in comparison to the far better known semi-structured interview. Discussion of the latter did however include descriptive passages that assumed that all subsequent interview transcripts must be subject to inductive analysis and then these results would be amenable to statistical treatment that would make the findings more scientific and acceptable. More understanding of qualitative methods should prevent errors about the claims that can be made about the data and the methods that are used to justify their findings.

This criticism could have been made relevant as an answer to the last question on this paper three, since there still appear to be several researchers who insist that the scientific method is the only one that should be used in psychological research. The failure to recognise that scientific investigation is always totally objective and that no bias can occur in its methods has long been rejected by most of the scientific community. Society needs quantitative research but as with its qualitative counterpart there is a requirement to recognise the limitations of its methods and their interpretation.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

It was encouraging to read the way in which the quality of candidates' knowledge and understanding of research methods has improved over the life time of this particular programme. Although the quality is variable across the present cohort the impression is quite marked in the generally upward level of skills that are presented. There are areas of the Paper Three programme that appear not to have been studied by some candidates, or not covered in sufficient depth. This deficiency is clearly seen in essays that fail to provide evidence of depth of knowledge or understanding when entering into discursive or evaluative aspects of their work.

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

Question 1

Despite the clear injunction to make the answer relevant ".....to this specific survey," several candidates were carried away by their knowledge of the technical aspects of the email. They forgot the context of the question in their unbridled enthusiasm to demonstrate their understanding of email, and they did so with an impressive skill.

But context is all for research methods.

Without context, questions would be likely to ask for just the regurgitation of specific methods and their evaluation. Candidates are expected to be able to apply their understanding of research methods to reasonable examples of a research study. Many were outstandingly good at doing this for question 1. They knew about the advantages and disadvantages of emails in this formal situation. They were aware of the sensitivities of people who communicated by email about lessons on birth control and sexually transmitted disease. They showed a detailed understanding of how electronic mail can be intercepted either en route or when it reaches its destination. They knew that cultural and economic differences existed that would prevent access to computers for all.

Their understanding of the difficulties type of research could be a source of valuable information for schools that might be tempted to adopt too soon to making email their prime method of communicating with parents.

Question 2

Perhaps because of the school setting for much of the previous question, some candidates make the assumption that interviews about musical preferences would also be held in the same setting. This was not intended nor was it mentioned in the question. The nature of a conversational interview as its name suggests, is more likely to be fairly intimate and private in nature and its participants would be unlikely to prefer public places like schools. The potential restriction of the semi-structured interview is slightly more inhibiting and the questions used in this method will constrain the interviewees' responses. Much preparation needs to go into the preparation of the semi-structured interview in order to obtain the richness of data that might be gained from a conversational interview. Candidates often pointed out this aspect in their contrast between the two methods but it was clear that they thought that an interview about musical preferences for young people demanded a certain level of knowledge on the part of the interviewer before conducting such research.

Question 3

Part (a) of this question could well include the last point made in the previous question which indicates that potential researcher bias for certain types of music needs to be guarded against if the research and findings are to have validity. All researchers will have biases in whatever field their research is situated. One strategy is to be up front with their known biases and to explain these in a reflexive statement somewhere near the start of their writing.

Few candidates seemed to be aware of this technique that is coming to be widely practised in qualitative research. In appropriate interview methods the interviewer may well explain his or her own predilections to certain views that are held. This explanation may well contribute to an interesting discussion on the part of the interviewee. If the problem of bias is strongly predicted to interfere adversely with the interview it may well be useful to engage a more neutral interviewer. Heavily biased views held by the interviewer can seriously interfere with the validity of the interview and such situations should be avoided.