

## PSYCHOLOGY

### Overall grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	E	D	C	B	A
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-28	29-36

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of candidates recognise the demands of the task and expressed their EEs in admirable ways that usually met most or many of the requirements of the assessment criteria. Regrettably however, there were other candidates who from the early conceptualization of their research question appeared to lack appropriate guidance in formulating relevant words and phrasing. Their research questions were sometimes too short, say five or six words, and were too general in order to enable the candidate to focus on specific issues that were related to the question. By contrast there were other research questions that were far too long and complicated. These same questions also tended to ask for several elements of the topic to be addressed. At the level of most pre-university students, such questions would be too demanding within the time and word limit constraints of the EE. In the case of the psychology extended essay, success is measured in terms of the cumulative knowledge, understanding and evaluation skills demonstrated by the sustained efforts of the individual candidate, as well as the grade outcome. Confidence in a specific topic of psychology is acquired and it is this that enables the candidate to discuss with increasing wisdom and authority on relevant subject matters related to the research question.

### Candidate performance against certain criteria

#### Criterion A: research question

Candidates can best maximise their chances of success by ensuring that the wording of their research question is precise. This helps to retain focus throughout the essay, thus able to impact (positively or negatively) performance assessed by other criteria.

Devising the research question requires more prolonged thought and effort than many candidates appear to give to it, including how and where to access relevant academic research studies.

### Criterion C: investigation

While Psychology text books were often a most useful source from which to gather information, it was not good practise to rely on a single text for this purpose. EEs depend upon much wider reading where a Psychology student can increase the depth of arguments to be developed by the differing explanations for the many and varied behaviours exhibited by humans or animals. Some candidates demonstrated a deep and considerable knowledge and understanding of requisite psychological phenomena, but others composed their essays in a distinctly superficial way. This superficiality was often associated with essays that were far too brief – well under half the length of the 4000 word limit required. Internet evidence is commendable but it too needs to be checked to establish that it does come from genuine academic sources. Guidance from the supervisor can be particularly important at this stage.

### Criterion E: reasoned argument and Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

These criteria rightly carry a high tariff of marks, yet these skills are often difficult for candidates to develop in their essays. This may have happened as the result of inadequate opportunities for candidates to discuss such potentially exciting elements in class. If the lessons afforded by active engagement in these three activities are practised vocally in class, their transfer to a written format in their essays will reap rich rewards. A similar benefit is also likely to occur in the use of subject language. Reasoned argument and evaluation can hardly progress without increasing the use of subject language.

### Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject:

A similar benefit as outlined above in the preceding criterion is also likely to occur in the use of subject language. Reasoned argument and evaluation can hardly progress without increasing the use of subject language.

### Criterion K: holistic judgement

There was evidence in EEs that some candidates did not appreciate that the knowledge and understanding required for a high score in criterion K, was partially dependent upon the qualities that they demonstrated in their reasoned argument, evaluation and use of subject language.