



# **MARKSCHEME**

**November 2009**

**PSYCHOLOGY**

**Higher Level**

**Paper 3**

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### **Paper 3 Markbands**

*In applying the markbands the concept of “best fit” should be used.*

*A response that meets most of the statements in a particular band, but not necessarily all, can still be awarded marks in the band.*

*The band that best fits the response should be determined first. Then, by reference to the band above and the band below, the mark should be determined*

### **Markband**

- 9 to 10** The response shows accurate knowledge of qualitative methods. There is evidence of clear explanation and identification of conditions appropriate for the application of each method, and evaluation of the strengths and limitations of each method. There are no significant errors or omissions. The demands of the question are addressed effectively in a focused and logical manner.
- 7 to 8** The response shows an accurate knowledge of qualitative methods. There is a good attempt at explaining and identifying conditions appropriate for the application of each method, and at evaluating the strengths and limitations of each method. Omissions or errors are relatively minor. The demands of the question are addressed effectively within a structured framework.
- 5 to 6** The question is addressed and contains some accurate knowledge of qualitative research methods. There is a reasonable attempt at explanation, at identifying conditions appropriate for the application of each method, and at evaluating strengths and limitations of each method, but there are some omissions or errors. There is a limited but reasonable attempt to organize the answer.
- 3 to 4** Although there is an attempt to answer the question, knowledge of qualitative research methods is limited, often inaccurate and of marginal relevance to the question. There is a minimal attempt at explaining or identifying conditions appropriate for the application of each method, or at evaluating the strengths and limitations of each method. There is minimal evidence of organizational structure.
- 1 to 2** There is very little understanding of the question, nor is there evidence of knowledge of qualitative research methods. The answer is no more than a collection of generalizations, or is a paragraph of few relevant facts. There is almost no organizational structure.
- 0** If the answer does not achieve the standard described in markband 1 to 2, a mark of 0 should be recorded.

**1. One individual can be the focus of a qualitative case study.**

**Discuss the extent to which findings from a qualitative case study of one individual may be applied to others.**

**[10 marks]**

*Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.*

Candidates are likely to argue that many case studies are conducted for their intrinsic value (intrinsic case studies) where there is no intention to generalize the findings. However, extrinsic case studies may be chosen for their representativeness and therefore some of the findings may be generalized to others in similar situations. An individual may be chosen as a participant for a case study, and selected from a relatively small population who have similar characteristics. It is likely that some of the findings that emerge from the case study could be applied to the target population.

Another approach to this question, and one that is fully justified, would be to indicate that before any large scale research is conducted, there needs to be a pilot which identifies questions that need to be addressed. Often the pilot study will be a form of case study conducted over a period of days, weeks or months. Much can be learned from such studies not least because they are not simply snapshots done on a single day.

Also it is self-evident that “the particular is always in the general”. What psychologists do eventually generalize will have been identified in a single case on a previous occasion. This is particularly true for medically-oriented psychology but it also applies to many other facets of the discipline.

Award **[7 to 10 marks]** for a comprehensive response that offers a well-reasoned discussion of the extent to which findings from a single case study can be generalized. These responses should contain reference to psychological case studies and generalization, and be explicit on how these relate to the question.

Award **[4 to 6 marks]** for responses that focus on case studies and generalization but are limited in the points made and contain little explicit justification for the extent stated. Responses in this range may make vague reference to psychological studies.

Award **[1 to 3 marks]** for responses of a rudimentary nature that have some identifiable relevance to the question.

Candidates who claim that no generalization is possible from a single case study of one individual should be awarded **[0 marks]**.

**2. Discuss potential ethical problems associated with using participant observation in psychological research.** **[10 marks]**

*Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.*

Responses may include either overt (disclosed) or covert (undisclosed) participant observation, or both.

Overt participant observation usually entails the researcher becoming part of a group activity over an appropriate period of time sufficient for relevant observations to be made. Importantly, others in the group are made aware of the researcher's presence. Some candidates may argue that the presence of a newcomer to the group for research purposes only, could be unethical since not all group members would necessarily have given their approval for this arrangement. The presence of the researcher may inhibit the normal actions of group members or in some cases alter behaviour in other ways that are akin to a Hawthorne effect. If group members are unaware that the presence of an observer may affect their behaviour, it could be argued that this aspect of the research is unethical.

Covert observation, where the researcher's true identity is not revealed, presents more ethical problems, although the use of this method may be justified in terms of the end results presented in valuable findings. Deceit is involved, group members are not consulted, researchers may manipulate the situation in order to provoke certain actions, or recordings may be made without anonymity or confidentiality clauses being agreed. Candidates may well include evidence from relevant studies and this should be given credit.

Award **[7 to 10 marks]** for responses that present a well developed discussion of ethical issues related to participant observation.

Award **[4 to 6 marks]** for responses that offer limited discussion of relevant ethical issues related to participant observation.

Award **[1 to 3 marks]** for responses that only describe ethical issues in general or only describe participant observation without reference to ethical issues.

3. **Discuss how triangulation can be used in order to increase the effectiveness of research investigating behaviour.** **[10 marks]**

*Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.*

The question focuses on how effectiveness is improved by using more than one method, researcher, time, *etc.* in the research process. Responses may point to the fact that experiments can demonstrate that differences exist between two selected samples, but that such differences cannot necessarily be explained by the research findings. Interviews, case studies or an ethnographic approach may well reveal reasons for such differences. The claim for triangulation is that it increases the trustworthiness of the investigation but some critics question the efficacy of triangulation for this purpose.

Candidates should demonstrate understanding of the word “effectiveness”. Better answers may refer to aspects of effectiveness that deal with building rapport, trust and openness between interviewer and interviewee, or ensure that questions are drawn from relevant literature and have been piloted. The choice of a sample as being fit for the purpose of the research could also be used in responses. Several past psychological studies in attitudes, for example, were based on the responses of paid, male undergraduates.

Award **[7 to 10 marks]** for responses that provide a well developed discussion on how triangulation can increase the effectiveness of psychological research.

Award **[4 to 6 marks]** for responses that describe advantages and/or disadvantages of triangulation with limited discussion of how these influence the effectiveness of psychological research.

Award **[1 to 3 marks]** for responses that merely describe triangulation techniques without discussing how these can influence the effectiveness of psychological research.

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