



GCE

Psychology

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS **H167**

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

About this Examiner Report to Centres

This report on the 2017 Summer assessments aims to highlight:

- areas where students were more successful
- main areas where students may need additional support and some reflection
- points of advice for future examinations

It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

The report also includes:

- An invitation to get involved in Cambridge Assessment's research into **how current reforms are affecting schools and colleges**
- Links to important documents such as **grade boundaries**
- A reminder of our **post-results services** including Enquiries About Results
- **Further support that you can expect from OCR**, such as our Active Results service and CPD programme

Understanding how current reforms are affecting schools and colleges

Researchers at Cambridge Assessment¹ are undertaking a research study to better understand how the current reforms to AS and A levels are affecting schools and colleges.

If you are a Head of Department (including deputy and acting Heads), then we would be very grateful if you would take part in this research by completing their survey. If you have already completed the survey this spring/summer then you do not need to complete it again.

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes and all responses will be anonymous.

To take part, please click on this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KP96LWB>

Grade boundaries

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Enquiry About Results

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our Enquiry About Results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#). If university places are reliant on the results you are making an enquiry about you may wish to consider the priority 2 service which has an earlier deadline to ensure your enquires are processed in time for university applications.

Further support from OCR

activeresults

Active Results offers a unique perspective on results data and greater opportunities to understand students' performance.

It allows you to:

- Review reports on the **performance of individual candidates**, cohorts of students and whole centres
- **Analyse results** at question and/or topic level
- **Compare your centre** with OCR national averages or similar OCR centres.
- Identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle and help **pinpoint strengths and weaknesses** of students and teaching departments.

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/getting-started-with-active-results>



Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear exam feedback directly from a senior assessors or drop in to an online Q&A session.

<https://www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk>

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H167/01 Research methods

General Comments:

Overall candidates performed well and were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of research methods in response to the questions. Higher achieving candidates were distinguished by their more extended, detailed responses that focused more specifically on the question rubric and, where appropriate contextualised their answer to the research proposal outlined. It was evident that some candidates struggled with some terms and concepts from the specification content and worthy of noting that in order for candidates to be fully and best prepared for the examination that all aspects of the specification should be covered. It is also important to ensure that candidates have had practice in the design and implementation of their own practical activities. This should hopefully reinforce their knowledge and understanding of research methods in general, as well as some of the specific terms and concepts they could be assessed on and enable them to comment on how conducting their own research has helped in the planning of novel research presented on the day of the examination. It is also important to be aware of the need (and the opportunity afforded) to reinforce the learning of research methods through the core studies. Finally, the use of examples to illustrate points made and convey understanding in response to questions requiring definitions (e.g. question 16) should be encouraged.

Comments on Individual Questions:

H167.01 Research methods May 2017	
Principal Examiner's Report to Centres	
Question	Comments
Section A	
1	Many candidates misunderstood what this question was asking. The information provided as part of the question indicating how one billion is written (1000, 000, 000) was intended to clarify how this large number is written. The question then went on to ask candidates how <i>one hundred</i> billion would be written in standard form. However, many candidates incorrectly selected option 'B' (which is how one billion would be written)
2a	Mostly correct responses
2b	Mostly correct responses
3	There was some confusion here about how to interpret the symbols
4	This question revealed that some candidates were not familiar with the concept of internal reliability and how it can be checked
5	Mostly correct responses
6a	Mostly correct responses
6b	Mostly correct responses
6c	Mostly correct responses
7	This question revealed the need (and the opportunity afforded) to reinforce the learning of research methods through the core studies
8	Same as question 7
9	Some candidates response to this question suggested that they were not aware of the different types of rating scales that can be used beyond a simple numerical (e.g. 1-to-10) format
10	Responses to this question indicated some candidates were not familiar with the term 'descriptive statistic'
11	This question demonstrated the need to be able to identify and interpret graphical

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	displays
12	Responses to this question indicated some candidates were not familiar with the term 'measure of dispersion'
Section B	
13	Most candidates performed well on this question. However, some responses were not always as clear as they could be and some tried to phrase their response as a hypothesis used for experimental research, showing a lack of understanding of the process of conducting research using the different methodologies
14a	There were many good responses to this question, with the highest scoring candidates providing a clear answer in context
14b	There were many good responses to this question, with the highest scoring candidates providing a clear answer in context
15a	Responses from some candidates suggested they did not know the distinction between time and event sampling. Higher scoring candidates provided a clear response in context
15b	Responses from some candidates suggested they did not know the distinction between time and event sampling. Higher scoring candidates provided a clear response in context
16	Some candidates struggled to be able to convey understanding of the difference between a naturalistic and controlled observation. Higher achieving candidates often provided examples that clarified what they said. A more basic response did little more than simply use the words from the actual terms provided in the question itself (e.g. stating that 'a controlled observation was one that was controlled')
17	<p>This question needed candidates to refer to three required features (RFs) as part of explaining how a piece of research could be conducted in the specified area (this is a consistent rubric for the 12 mark, extended writing question on this paper). To achieve high band marks each required feature needed to be addressed (an explanation provided about how it would be used / implemented), justified (a rationale for why it was being used in the prescribed way) and linked to the candidates own practical work in some way. The highest achieving candidates addressed each required feature in turn in a detailed and clear way and justified the decisions made in relation to each required feature in context of the research to be conducted. They then went on to make explicit reference to their own practical work they had conducted to explain how this had informed them of the way to plan the proposed research. 'Explicit reference' requires some details relating to what the research was about (the research question / hypothesis that was investigated).</p> <p>Candidates were required to address each feature or failing to justify their decisions and not making explicit reference to their own practical work. Some candidates only referred to one or two of the required features (not all three), and/or did not justify why the decisions being discussed had been made. More candidates made reference to their own practical activities this year than in previous.</p> <p>Also some candidates who made no reference at all to any of their own practical work as a way to inform their responses. RF3 ('protection of participants') was not addressed, with many candidates simply referring to ethical issues in general, and sometimes ones that were not really relevant because of the location (a public bar) of this study (e.g. informed consent).</p> <p>Only the three required features stated in the question needed addressing. It may be worth highlighting this when practicing such questions in class and drawing attention to the need to address the specific required features stipulated.</p>
18	Many candidates struggled to explain the concept of inter-rater reliability, with many simply stating that it involved repeating the study and getting the same findings.

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	Higher scoring candidates on this question used examples to elaborate on their answer and responded in context.
19a	Most candidates were able to provide an appropriate open question, in context and clearly phrased.
19b	Some candidates provided responses that were not creditworthy here by not writing the fixed response options that must accompany a closed question. It should not (e.g. 'Do you ever find yourself copying what your partner is doing?'. Although this could, of course be responded to with a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer it is not restricted to this and therefore not a true closed question)
Section C	
20	Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of ratios, but occasionally some did not provide any workings.
21	Many candidates struggled to be able to correctly identify the appropriate inferential statistical test to use (with some seemingly just guessing). Those that did sometimes did not justify their decision correctly, or did not justify their decision in context. It is worth practising this in class exercises (works well as a starter, plenary or 'spot check' question in the middle of a lesson. Can even be done in the context of the research in the core studies)
22a	Some 'bar charts' were (incorrectly) drawn as a histogram. Candidates also dropped marks sometimes for not providing appropriate and clear labels on axes (which could have been helped with the inclusion of a title).
22b	Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of how to calculate percentages, but did not always show workings, or did not present their final answer to two significant figures
23a	Some candidates did not seem to understand the term 'levels of data' (one confusion was with 'types of data' – e.g. quantitative)
23b	A lack of understanding of the term 'levels of data' led some candidates to evaluate the wrong thing here (e.g. quantitative data). The highest achieving candidates provided a clear response supported by contextualised with an example(s) to illustrate the point(s) made.
24	Many candidates simply presenting two 'findings' in response to this question and not two <i>conclusions</i> . A conclusion is 'an interpretation of a finding' that goes beyond just stating a result, it speculates on what it may mean).
25	There was some confusion and overlap in response to this question in terms of how social desirability is different to demand characteristics in general (with some candidates just responding in terms of demand characteristics rather than social desirability). The highest achieving candidates demonstrated a knowledge of understand and were able to provide a sophisticated example in context (e.g. saying that 'females may not have wanted to say they laugh with their mouth open as it may have caused them to be regarded as less lady like and appealing to other people').

H167/02 Psychological themes through core studies

General Comments:

Candidates, overall, seemed to be well prepared for this examination. There were certainly improvements in the overall quality and confidence of candidates answers compared to last year. Many candidates could go beyond recall, and apply what they had learned in the classroom by making connections between different parts of the specification and by applying it to novel sources. Candidates showed the best performance on Section A of the paper, demonstrating a sound knowledge of the core studies. Where candidates struggled to gain marks on Section A, it was either due to a lack of contextualisation or by not providing appropriate knowledge in reference to the question posed. There were very few instances of candidates not attempting all questions even if they did not always score highly. Section B showed that candidates understood areas and themes well but that they need to be able to show more depth of understanding by explaining concepts and applications further. Some candidates showed a good understanding of the individual differences area however some candidates seemed to confuse the individual differences area with other areas, such as biological or social. Overall, candidates scored lower on questions when it required them to *apply* their knowledge of an area; particularly to explain how it has helped to understanding human behaviour. Although candidates had a sound knowledge of debates, many candidates did not effectively link the area to the debate. Due to the demand of the specification for Section C and the fact that a new skill is required that was not needed on the previous specification, some candidates found Section C challenging. However reasonable psychological knowledge was shown by many candidates, particularly with regards to behaviourist principles, although candidates needed to show their ability to apply the theory to the novel source more clearly. The variation of marks awarded in Section C is mainly due to the quality of psychological knowledge that candidates demonstrated in their responses.

Centres should remind candidates to use the extra space provided rather than the margins or space around the question.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1a. Many candidates were unable to appreciate the difference between a finding and a conclusion. Many candidates gave findings, including figures, from the data table such as “100% of participants shocked up to 300v”, without making a conclusive statement which impacted on marks as the question demanded conclusive statements to be given using the data provided. Also, many candidates gave conclusions that could not be drawn from the data table provided for example, it could not be known from the data table provided that people were more obedient than expected or that they entered an agentic state.

1b. Most candidates were able to provide an accurate way that Bocchiaro’s study was ethical, however many candidates did not contextualise their responses so could not gain the 2nd mark. Some candidates attempted to contextualise their responses but referred to context that could have equally applied to the Milgram study, if it was not clear in their response that the Bocchiaro study was being referred to, then again they could not gain the 2nd mark.

1c. Most candidates were able to provide an accurate way that Bocchiaro’s study was not ethical and although some candidates did not contextualise their responses, contextualisation here was better than it was on question 1b.

2a. Candidates answered this question well, with the majority of candidates gaining the mark.

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2b. The majority of candidates were able to provide an appropriate strength of quantitative data, however many candidates did not contextualise their responses. Many would state a generic strength, e.g. “It is easier to make comparisons between the conditions” and not go on to explain how this was a strength for Grant et al’s study so could not gain the 2nd mark.

3. Overall, most candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the Chaney et al study with most achieving full marks. Some common issues came where candidates failed to highlight what the reinforcer was or they did highlight what the reinforcer was but did not explain why it made the Funhaler more appealing. Some candidates described features which were not accurate e.g. a ball and some candidates reworded the question to answer it e.g. “the Funhaler was more attractive/fun to children so they used it more”.

4a. This question was answered poorly overall, most candidates could not differentiate the sample of experiment 1 from other samples used within the longitudinal study. Although specific figures and details were not needed for every feature of the sample to gain full marks, a good overview of the sample was often lacking, with some candidates only being able to state the sample size but no other features. Most candidates only partially described the sample and were therefore only able to gain 1 mark.

4b. The question requires candidates to give a specific strength of a longitudinal study e.g. “shows developments in behaviour over time” and then explain how this was a strength in Casey et al’s study e.g. “This means that Casey et al was able to see of those who were high or low delayers at the start of the study remained high or low delayers when they were in their 40’s”. Most candidates understood what a strength of a longitudinal study was, however again, many candidates did not contextualise their response in reference to Casey et al’s study. Some candidates gave incorrect strengths that were not specific to longitudinal studies, such as “it increases validity” or “easier to analyse”.

5a. This question required candidates to show an understanding of both the individual differences area and the Freud study; drawing a link between the two. Most candidates got a least 1 mark for this for showing knowledge of the individual differences area e.g. “that everyone is unique” but did not give enough specific context to explain how Little Hans was unique and why this links to the individual differences area. It was apparent candidates struggled to articulate the specific elements of the “Little Hans” study that illustrated a link to individual differences area, with many candidates focusing too much on the psychodynamic perspective. Candidates who focused on the individual differences area being able to explain abnormality / disorders were credited for basic knowledge of the individual differences area, but candidates who gave this response often gave study specific responses and found it difficult to explain the link between Freud’s study of abnormality and the individual differences area.

5b. There was variability in the quality of responses provided for this question. Some candidates did not make it clear which group of participants they were referring to and could therefore not receive marks. Candidates who focused upon the “normal” group often incorrectly stated that the sample was drawn randomly from the university staff / candidates. Candidates mainly chose to describe how the “Autistic/Aspergers” sample was selected and many were able to correctly identify it was a self-selected/volunteer sample (which gained them 1 mark). Better responses also referred to the “Autistic/Aspergers” being drawn from an article in an Autistic society magazine and a variety of clinical sources but some candidates stated that this sample was only drawn from doctors telling their patients about the study which did not gain them the 2nd mark. Some candidates described the sample rather than detailing how they were selected.

5c. Very few candidates achieved full marks on this question. Candidates had an awareness of what bias could be apparent within the sample selection, such as there not being an equal amount of males and females in the Tourettes or Autistic/Aspergers group or that volunteer sampling may only recruit candidates who have a particular interest in taking part. Better answers were able to discuss their suggested bias, pointing out that although there was gender

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imbalance in the Autistic/Aspergers group, the gender bias represented the gender distribution of the disorder. However many candidates did not explain the implications of this bias, in other words, how it would impact the study/results e.g. it would make the results less generalisable due to the limited representativeness of the sample. Some candidates did not make it clear which group they were referring to so were unable to gain more than 1 mark. Some candidates said that, because only high functioning autistic individuals were selected the results could not be generalised to all autistic sufferers, however Baron Cohen was only interested in studying those with high functioning autism and purposefully aimed to only recruit HFA sufferers so this was not an accurate description of bias.

6a. Most candidates gained full marks here. Candidates who did not achieve full marks often did not take their response beyond “everyone is unique”. Some candidates focused only on core studies rather than the area itself so were not able to achieve any marks.

6b. Candidates found this question challenging, many only achieving 1, 2 or 3 marks. The question requires candidates to explain how the individual differences has been applied to explaining human behaviour and then support their response with appropriate evidence from a relevant core study; application of knowledge was therefore needed to achieve top marks and candidates clearly struggled to meet the demand of this question. Overall candidates focused solely describing on a core study, and although their study knowledge was good, they were not addressing the question asked. There was a balance across the paper for candidates who chose Baron Cohen or Freud to support their answer. Overall candidates did not show an understanding of the individual differences area in enough detail. Most candidates did not focus on how the area had been applied and what it is able to help us understand. Candidates who chose to focus on Freud’s study also gave responses specific to the psychodynamic perspective rather than the individual differences area which meant they were not answering the question.

6c. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the social area and situational explanations but few were able to draw a link between the two so were often only awarded 1/2 marks as they only partially addressed the question. The question required candidates to show an understanding of both the social area and the situational debate and to then explain how the two are linked (see MS guidance) but many candidates were unable to take their response beyond the reasonable band. Some candidates also focused on the influence of the environment but were unable to explain what features of the environment were influencers according to the social area so did not achieve beyond 1 mark. Although it was not necessary for full marks, some candidates gave evidence from Milgram or Bocchiaro to support their answers; however many struggled to use the study evidence to address the question.

6d. Candidates found this question challenging, more so than 6c. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the biological area but less so individual explanations, with some candidates failing to address the individual explanation part of the question in their responses, meaning many candidates were not addressing the question. Candidates who referenced situational explanations to explain individual explanations were awarded partial credit. Many candidates referred to Sperry’s study in their responses but did not do so in a way that answered the question.

6e. In response to this question many candidates were able to identify a number of accurate comparison points, the most common being a comparison of the assumptions of the areas / debates linked to the areas, however some candidates also compared methodological issues such as the preferred methodology used by each area (e.g. lab experiments vs. observations). A popular comparison point was nature vs. nurture with candidates arguing that the biological area was nature and the social area was nurture, however many candidates struggled to give appropriate evidence to show how the social area is nurture and often confused this with the behaviourist perspective. Similarly, many candidates referred to the social area as holistic and the biological area as reductionist but again struggled to give appropriate evidence for how the social area was more holistic. Most candidates followed the expected technique of making a

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direct comparison point between the two areas before developing their answer further, however some candidates did not draw a direct comparison between the areas as required and instead presented the two areas separately. An answer which just identified comparison points that were not developed further and were not supported by evidence were placed in the bottom band. An area of difficulty for many candidates when answering this question was expanding on the comparison points that they stated, which was a requirement for accessing the higher mark bands. The answers requires candidates to identify a comparison point that is accurate and then elaborate on that comparison point, mainly by referring to the implications of the point they raise, going beyond mere identification, however many candidates did not develop their comparisons points in this way so their analysis was limited and could not achieve top band marks. Many candidates were able to give appropriate evidence to support the comparisons points they were making however the evidence was often vague and at times not directly relevant to the comparison point they were making.

7a. This question attracted a wide range of responses, both in terms of quality and of the issues raised. The most common psychological issue raised was that of operant conditioning / positive reinforcement; candidates who gave this answer were good at elaborating their knowledge and supporting their issue with evidence from the source and often scored top band marks as a result. Some candidates went for some of the least obvious issues raised but if they were able to expand on their issue showing good psychological knowledge and linking to the article then they were awarded marks accordingly. However if they chose a less obvious issue, it was at times difficult for the candidate to find the appropriate supporting evidence. Some candidates were very broad in their thinking and raised some interesting points while a minority missed the points in the article. The question requires candidates to refer to a psychological issue so where a candidate raised a common sense issue that was not psychological e.g. “it is not fair for people in a wheelchair as they cannot use the stairs” answers could not be credited. Better responses tended to focus on a broad issue, and then quoted from the source to support their point about the issue, finally returning to where they started with a summative statement or implication. Weaker responses tended to repeatedly quote from the article while raising their issue at the same time – often limiting the mark to one.

7b. Many candidates showed very good knowledge and understanding of the Chaney et al study when answering this question and many were able to draw a direct link between the psychological content of the study and the psychological content of the article. The most common response referred to operant conditioning / positive reinforcement (which was the most obvious link) however some candidates did not make specific reference to the music playing when using the stairs as the positive reinforcer/reward. Some candidates incorrectly referred to classical conditioning rather than operant conditioning. Candidates who described the process of operant conditioning but did not overtly label it as such but went on to accurately support their answer with evidence from Chaney et al and the article, were commonly awarded 3 marks.

7c. Overall this question was answered well. This question required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of psychological theory and link it to the article to support their knowledge. Some candidates had referred to the appropriate psychology in question 7a and 7b but did not refer to the theory again in 7c. Some candidates referred to the fun element making people want to take the stairs without explicitly linking and explaining the psychological process of why this occurs. Some candidates also confused classical and operant conditioning. Some candidates gave study specific responses where the psychological theory was implicitly stated. Very few answers referred to anything other than operant conditioning / positive reinforcement and those that did referred to chemical reactions that occur when we engage in tasks we enjoy, which was equally as creditworthy.

7d. Most candidates gave an appropriate strategy and many attempted to go beyond identification and implement their suggestions, in other words, explain how they could be carried out. Many candidates did not link to the psychological theories and content they have learnt throughout their study of psychology and instead gave common sense answers; well described

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and implemented suggestion/s that were not explicitly linked to psychological knowledge could not achieve top band marks. Most candidates provided more than one suggestion. There was some confusion over classical & operant conditioning apparent within responses and many candidates incorrectly labelled their use of punishments as positive reinforcement (it was negative punishment). The missing lessons and recycling responses were most popular and answered better than the anti-bullying option; unfortunately candidates who chose to tackle the issue of bullying said they would reward kind behaviour and did not appropriately explain how this would reduce the prevalence of bullying.

7e. This question attracted a wide range of responses, both in terms of quality and of the evaluation points raised. Generally evaluation points were generic or common sense rather than psychological w however most candidates did refer to both strengths and weaknesses of their suggestions. Many candidates did not develop their evaluation points beyond basic identification therefore the implications of strengths/weaknesses were not fully considered and occasionally the points were not made in context of the source/ 7d. Many candidates said “it is a good suggestion because it will work” but did not develop why this may be the case which was a missed opportunity to gain marks. The better answers reflected on ethics, reductionism, appropriateness or effectiveness, but only the minority of answers framed the evaluation in terms of psychological concepts and many candidates did not have a clear and structured approach to their evaluation. Many candidates who achieved top band marks achieved this through breadth rather than depth of analysis.

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