

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

PSYCHOLOGY

H567

For first teaching in 2015

H567/01 Autumn 2020 series

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.



Reports for the Autumn 2020 series will provide a broad commentary about candidate performance, with the aim for them to be useful future teaching tools. As an exception for this series they will not contain any questions from the question paper nor examples of candidate answers.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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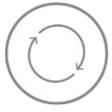
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Paper 1 series overview

Overall, this year, the standard of responses were reasonable. There was a wide range of responses, suggesting the paper differentiated appropriately. Higher achieving candidates wrote more extended and detailed responses that were clearly focused on the question. These candidates had very good knowledge of terminology and research methods and techniques. Many candidates did contextualise their responses to the research proposal outlined in Sections B and C. Some candidates found it difficult to use terminology appropriately and some were unable to give definitions of terminology from the specification. Some lacked the mathematical skills necessary to answer questions that required mathematical calculations.

	AfL	<p>In order to be fully prepared for this examination it is important that all aspects of the specification are covered. In addition, candidates should have practice in the design and implementation of their own practical activities (including an analysis of the data collected and the conclusions reached from this). This should 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 help them to comment on how conducting their own research has helped in the planning of novel research presented in this examination.</p> <p>Research methods can be reinforced through the core studies so that the candidates are prepared for identifying the research methods used in the core studies that they have learned. It would also be a good idea to produce a glossary, commencing early in the course to facilitate understanding of the many terms and concepts (many of which candidates will not have encountered before studying psychology). In general, the use of examples to illustrate points, convey understanding better and enable elaboration should be encouraged.</p> <p>Finally, it is important to realise that a comprehensive understanding of descriptive and inferential statistics and how they are interpreted is required and a realisation that there may be the need to perform some calculations in response to some questions. Candidates should practise the mathematical skills during the course so that they can respond to these type of questions.</p>
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Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:

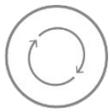
- displayed a thorough understanding of the experimental and correlational research methods
- wrote extended answers that contextualised their response to the study described at the start of each section in Sections B and C
- displayed very good mathematical skills and could perform calculations
- had good knowledge of terminology, in particular validity and the different types of validity such as external validity.

Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:

- did not justify their choices for the required features in the extended writing Question 22
- sometimes did not contextualise their response to the study described at the start of each section in Sections B and C
- showed some mathematical skills but this was not consistent across the paper
- had some understanding of terminology but at times this was confused (e.g. confusing internal and external validity)
- lacked a thorough knowledge of the key terminology.

Section A overview

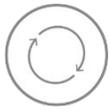
There was some good knowledge and understanding shown of the core studies, data recording, analysis and presentation and the methods used by psychologists. In this section, candidates should cover the whole of the specification for research methods but there were some gaps in knowledge particularly about choice of inferential statistical test.

	AfL	Candidates who had learned the table of inferential statistical tests (and many drew in the table next to the multiple choice question) did better on these questions. It would be helpful for the candidates to learn a mnemonic for this table and to regularly practice completing it to help the candidates recall it in the exam.
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OCR support	Page 4 of the OCR Guide is particularly helpful for the learning which statistical test to use.
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Section B overview

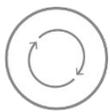
There was some good knowledge shown of the experimental method with many candidates writing a good one-tailed hypothesis. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the sampling technique, ethical issues and the independent and dependent variable for the extended writing Question 22. Many of the responses were contextualised. Good understanding of qualitative data was shown and most were able to give a strength and weakness of the repeated measures design, although this was not always contextualised. There were some excellent responses to the question on external validity although a significant number of candidates got this confused with internal validity.

	AfL	Candidates should carefully plan their extended writing response with an equal focus on all four required features. In addition, a glossary of terminology such as the types of validity and repeated measure design would be helpful.
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OCR support	This classroom activity is useful to help students with key terms on validity and reliability.
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Section C overview

Some good mathematical skills and knowledge were shown by candidates in this section. Many were able to explain why data was ranked and could correctly carry out the Spearman's rho calculation. Very clear scatter diagrams were drawn and labelled, although not always with a title. A significant number of candidates incorrectly drew a scatter diagram showing the rankings of the data rather than the results for annual salary and extroversion rating. Many gave good, extended responses to the question on validity and most contextualised their responses.

	AfL	Candidates would benefit from having more practice at carrying out mathematical calculations and using critical value tables.
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Themes in candidate responses

Candidates were often careful to explain their responses well and to make sure their responses were in the context of the studies outlined in Sections B and C. Many showed their workings out for the multiple choice questions and this often was reflected in these candidates getting the answer correct.

Comments on responses by question type

Multiple choice questions

Some good knowledge of the core studies and research methods were shown by candidates. All candidates displayed basic mathematical skills. Many lacked understanding of inferential statistics and selected incorrect responses.

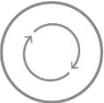
Level of response questions

All candidates attempted all four required features and identified a correct sampling method and ethical issue. Most candidates outlined a correct independent and dependent variable. Some candidates did explain the required feature in enough depth and most attempted to justify their decision. Most responses were contextualised and did refer to the practical work they had done. A significant number of candidates identified several ethical issues for the fourth required feature which meant the response achieved at the lower level.

Common misconceptions

Some candidates for the extended writing response did justify their choice of required feature but then explained weaknesses of this choice. The candidates does not need to do this and should just focus on justifying their choice in the context of the study.

Key teaching and learning points – comments on improving performance

	AfL	<p>Practise research methods questions and questions which require mathematical skills regularly. A weekly or fortnightly short quiz at the start of a lesson would be useful to maintain these skills throughout the course.</p> <p>Continue to carry out their own practical research and then practise responding to Paper 1 style questions on their own research.</p> <p>Identify the relevant methodological features of the core studies as these are covered during the course (e.g. the design, sampling method, etc.). As candidates become more confident with research methods terminology they can identify these features without their teachers help as the course progresses.</p> <p>Peer marking where the candidates highlight where the response is in context to remind candidates to always put their responses into context.</p> <p>Learn a suitable mnemonic of the inferential statistical table and practise this regularly.</p>
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	OCR support	There are past papers, mark schemes and candidate exemplars available that can be used for practice purposes available.
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Guidance on using this paper as a mock

This paper could be used as a full mock exam for students or could be split into sections to practise with the candidates after they have completed a section of the course. For example, Section B of this paper could be used after teaching the experimental method.

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