

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

PSYCHOLOGY

H567

For first teaching in 2015

H567/03 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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Paper 3 series overview

This is the Applied Psychology paper, the third of three after the Research Methods paper and the Core Studies paper. The paper performed reliably. There seemed to be adequate amount of time for the paper as most candidates attempted the whole paper and did not miss any questions. There were no obvious rubric errors commonly occurring.

There were very few candidates who relied on basic knowledge or anecdote. A good range of marks was accessed. Less marks than usual at the top end were achieved but it is not possible to draw any conclusions in this extraordinary year. All candidates addressed the Crime section, with Child, Environment and Sport being attempted fairly evenly alongside it.

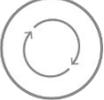
The general quality of candidate responses was very varied, the best showing *understanding* alongside knowledge; *development* of evaluative lines of argument; convincing and realistic *application* of their knowledge

Marking is mindful of the expectations of a typical 17/18 year old considering the wide specification coverage and demand of the exam. Significant in differentiating award of marks is the extent to which candidates responded to the precise demand of the question. Issue by issue, point by point, allows evaluation to be developed with supporting research as part of that evaluation. There was good student engagement with the material. Option questions (Questions 5/6/7/8) were very varied in candidates' level of response more than across the different options.

<i>Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:</i>	<i>Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had good knowledge of the content, and applied it with good understanding • demonstrated clarity and appreciation of material, such as what Szasz meant by a 'myth' or how individual/situational arguments applied to mental health • responded to the injunction, particularly in Section B part (b). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had less detailed knowledge and at best a 'superficial' understanding • showed lack of understanding or misunderstanding, such as what Szasz meant by a 'myth' or how individual/situational arguments applied to mental health • 'described' when wider skills were required, such as explaining or discussing.

Section overview – Section A

Better candidates were familiar with this section and gained good marks. They read the questions carefully and responded precisely, so did not throw away marks and also kept their answers to the point and so they did not waste time. For example, Question 4(a) simply requested a specific disorder and to name a non-biological treatment – two simple marks. Some candidates provided a biological treatment, others wrote a whole paragraph. 'Depression and CBT' or 'Phobias and flooding' was enough for both marks, and typified the confident candidate.

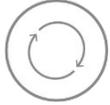
	AfL	<p>Practise decoding questions: Read and respond to the precise question: For example, Question 2 refers to 'this finding' i.e. that stated on the question paper.</p> <p>Question 5's command word is 'Discuss'.</p> <p>There was sometimes confusion of what constitutes 'individual' and what 'situational'.</p>
	Misconception	<p>There was some misunderstanding of key terms such as ethnocentric and reliability.</p> <p>In Question 2, some candidates thought it was good to be ethnocentric as this meant no ethnic/cultural bias, whereas the opposite is true.</p> <p>In Question 2, reliability was well referred to as consistency, such as between raters in the example given. Some candidates however drifted into validity, talking about accuracy, for example.</p>
	Misconception	<p>There were some misunderstandings surrounding the myth of mental illness and what it means. Mental illness is a myth because it doesn't exist; what is wrongly labelled mental illness is in fact physical illness (physiological, medical). Candidates suggest that Szasz says it DOES exist as physical, which is conceptually different, and so leads to difficulties with part (b) too. Similarly with it being a social/medical construct, candidates struggle to comprehend Szasz's argument here is that it therefore <u>doesn't</u> exist.</p>
	OCR support	<p>We have a few resources on our website that can support the delivery of the research study Szasz:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson element • Research guide

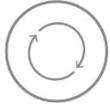
Section B

Comments on responses by question type

Part (a)

This part sought to combine good knowledge of detail with good understanding, used to achieve an explicit response to the question. Better candidates achieved this; most candidates could give an account of the key study but many struggled to relate it convincingly to the specific demand of the question.

	AfL	<p>Make sure you teach the study within the context of the topic, so it can be used to address the question. It can be useful to 'top and tail' a response, to recommend a way to structure the response and this will help students scaffold their answers.. So, introduce an answer <i>in response to the question</i> (top). Then use the study to specify and exemplify this. Finally, end the paragraph or point with the statement a 'This shows that.....' type of close, which will demonstrate understanding (tail).</p> <p>For example, Question 6(a) was about perceptual development, not just a recounting of Gibson and Walk's study. Key to understanding the demands of the question were the command terms 'outline' and then 'explain'.</p>
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	AfL	<p>It is also important that students have a good knowledge of the study to support their responses.</p> <p>For example, in Question 9(a) candidates rarely referred to CET (Coach Effectiveness Training) or the CBAS and its contents, which were central to the coaching which was more generally referred to in the responses.</p> <p>In the lowest scoring examples, a few candidates referred to the wrong study (especially Raine) or no study.</p>
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Part (b)

This part tests analysis and evaluation. Most candidates have a go at this but it is here that we find the greatest differentiation between candidates. Relating responses to research is a key demand; some candidates are more convincing than others. Making several clear evaluative points sends responses into the second (8-11) band. Few candidates manage to consistently develop these by relating to the injunction (command words). The centres who develop the skills of 'discuss', 'assess', 'To what extent....' are the centres whose students excel the most.

More notable this year than previously was the distinction between candidates who referenced evidence to support their evaluative points and those who did not use evidence or did so minimally, an increasing number not seeming to realise that an argument requires example or evidence.

	AfL	<p>Try to encourage candidates to go beyond identifying and describing evaluation issues. Candidates who score better marks understand there is a contention to be debated. Raine's research is not 'valid or not valid'. There are some validity issues worthy of debate. In Black and Black, is it useful to identify a single stressor, and where might this fall short? Candidates who identify and draw these out, leading to a discussion, receive higher marks.</p>
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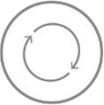
	AfL	This year was marked by a real difference in candidates' ability to use evidence. Better responses supported evaluative arguments with a range of evidence. Still good responses had limited evidence. Many responses had little or no evidence. Research, particularly studies, are best used as evidence to support the points being made.
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	Misconception	Candidates struggle when they think that part (b) questions is ask them to evaluate the key study. This leads to very limited responses. Again, reading the question precisely will show that the topic is what requires evaluation or discussion - the research is the evidence to back up assertions being made and debated.
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	OCR support	<p>There will not be candidate exemplars produced this year for the October paper, but show students candidate exemplars for part (b) questions and look at the commentary on how to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2018 examiners' report • Summer 2017 examiners' report
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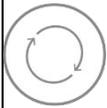
Part (c)

This question part requires practical suggestions founded on psychological rationale. Theory from the classroom or textbooks alone does not provide an adequate response, merely one possible way of providing a rationale for the suggestion made. This is very different from anecdote. A broad suggestion, detail of how to apply it, making it clear that this is borne out of psychological knowledge, are the three features sought in an applied response, demonstrated by the candidates who achieved the better marks.

	AfL	<p>It is useful to guide students to the following components to provide a competent response:</p> <p>Firstly, make and briefly explain a broad suggestion or suggestions. Then provide the detail of what to do to fulfil that suggestion i.e. what will you do specifically. Thirdly, it should be clear that the suggestion is borne out of psychology knowledge, not good sense alone. This can be achieved through use of terminology, a sound theoretical base or a known model from psychology. This provides the rationale for your response.</p>
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	Misconception	<p>Read what the question is asking for, it is usually related to, but not limited to, the rest of the question:</p> <p>Question 6 (c): The point of the question was to relate to perceptual development, which most of the responses did, but weaker responses merely proposed types of play.</p> <p>Question 7 (c): Most candidates correctly suggested biological strategies, however sometimes non-biological strategies were suggested.</p> <p>Question 8 (c): The most striking of the four part (c)s in terms of lack of research/rationale to support suggestions.</p> <p>Question 9 (c): The stem of this question said Sharmin is the captain of the cricket team; she is not the owner or the manager of the team. She cannot take over the team. This is ideally about leadership and understanding teams. Better responses keyed into this.</p>
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Key teaching and learning points – comments on improving performance

	AfL	<p>In Section A, where a comparison or a debate is required it is important for candidates should draw out the comparison or debate, not merely explain the two sides in juxtaposition.</p> <p>In Section B, part (a), candidates should address the question as well as describing the study and link the two.</p> <p>In Section B, part (b), candidates should develop the evaluation points/line of arguments, not merely identify the evaluation issue within the context.</p> <p>In Section B, part (c), candidates should make a broad suggestion; be precise about how to fulfil that suggestion; and give a rationale, from psychology, for that suggestion.</p>
	OCR support	<p>There are past papers, mark schemes and candidate exemplars available that can be used for practice purposes available here.</p>

Guidance on using this paper as a mock

There is an excellent opportunity to use this paper as a mock for students. The paper is accessible and can be completed in the time of the exam. Make sure that students develop evaluation points not merely list them. The terms that students may have misunderstood include ethnocentric or validity.

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