

GCSE Subject Criteria for Psychology



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The criteria

Introduction

GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and learning outcomes

1. GCSE specifications in Psychology must encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study and to gain an insight into related sectors, such as science. They should encourage learners to develop a personal interest and enthusiasm for psychology and prepare them to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.
2. GCSE specifications in Psychology must enable learners to:
 - engage in the process of psychological enquiry to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds;
 - develop an awareness of why psychology matters;
 - acquire knowledge and understanding of how psychology works and its essential role in society;
 - develop an understanding of the relationship between psychology and social, cultural, scientific and contemporary issues and its impact on everyday life;
 - develop an understanding of ethical issues in psychology;
 - develop an understanding of the contribution of psychology to individual, social and cultural diversity;
 - develop a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods.

Subject content

3. The content of GCSE specifications in Psychology must reflect the learning outcomes.

4. All specifications should include a rationale that clearly reflects the approach taken within the specification. This approach should include an emphasis on one or more of the following:
 - the implications of psychology for society;
 - explaining, theorising and modelling in psychology;
 - procedural knowledge of ethical practice in psychology.
5. GCSE specifications in Psychology must require learners to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in the following contexts:
 - core areas of psychology: biological, social, cognitive, developmental and individual differences;
 - applications of psychology: the use of psychology to explain and influence everyday behaviour and experience within appropriate, relevant, contemporary contexts.
6. Specifications must require learners to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:

Data, theories and explanations:

- collection of data from secondary sources including considering validity and reliability of evidence;
- analysis and evaluation of qualitative and quantitative data;
- interpretation of data to provide evidence for testing ideas and developing theories;
- explanation of behaviour by developing and using scientific theories and models.

Investigation and enquiry:

- planning to conduct a psychological investigation and structuring a hypothesis;
- evaluation of design and ethical implications of psychological enquiry.

Evaluative and interpretative skills:

- recalling, analysing, interpreting, applying and questioning information or ideas;
- presenting information, developing arguments and drawing conclusions using psychological concepts, terminology and conventions.

Applications and implications of psychology:

- the use of contemporary psychological developments and their benefits and drawbacks;
- how psychological knowledge and ideas change over time;
- appreciation of the implications of culture in psychological enquiry;
- relationship of psychological study to other areas of scientific enquiry and to society as a whole.

Assessment objectives

7. All specifications in psychology must require learners to demonstrate their ability to:

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of psychology and how psychology works.	25–35%
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding of psychology and how psychology works.	30–40%
AO3	Interpret, evaluate and analyse psychological data and practice.	30–40%

Scheme of assessment

8. GCSE specifications in Psychology must allocate 100 per cent of the weighting to external assessment in the overall scheme of assessment.
9. Question papers must be targeted at the full range of GCSE grades.

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