

External assessment criteria—SL

Paper 1

Section A

Paper 1 section A consists of three short-answer questions using AO1 and AO2 command terms. All three questions are compulsory. Each question is marked out of 9 marks using the rubric below, for a total of 27 marks.

| Markband | Level descriptor |
|----------|---|
| 0 | The answer does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1–3 | The response is of limited relevance to or only rephrases the question. Knowledge and understanding is mostly inaccurate or not relevant to the question. The research supporting the response is mostly not relevant to the question and if relevant only listed. |
| 4–6 | The response is relevant to the question, but does not meet the command term requirements. Knowledge and understanding is accurate but limited. The response is supported by appropriate research which is described. |
| 7–9 | The response is fully focused on the question and meets the command term requirements. Knowledge and understanding is accurate and addresses the main topics/problems identified in the question. The response is supported by appropriate research which is described and explicitly linked to the question. |

Section B

Paper 1 section B consists of a single essay from a choice of three. The essay is marked out of 22 marks. AO3 command terms will be used in the essay questions. The essays will be assessed using the rubric below.

Essay marking rubric (total 22 marks)

Criterion A: Focus on the question (2 marks)

To understand the requirements of the question students must identify the problem or issue being raised by the question. Students may simply identify the problem by restating the question or breaking down the question. Students who go beyond this by **explaining** the problem are showing that they understand the issues or problems.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
|------|---|
| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1 | Identifies the problem/issue raised in the question. |
| 2 | Explains the problem/issue raised in the question. |

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding (6 marks)

This criterion rewards students for demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of specific areas of psychology. It is important to credit **relevant** knowledge and understanding that is **targeted** at addressing the question and explained in sufficient detail.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
|------|---|
| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1–2 | The response demonstrates limited relevant knowledge and understanding. Psychological terminology is used but with errors that hamper understanding. |
| 3–4 | The response demonstrates relevant knowledge and understanding but lacks detail. Psychological terminology is used but with errors that do not hamper understanding. |
| 5–6 | The response demonstrates relevant, detailed knowledge and understanding. Psychological terminology is used appropriately. |

Criterion C: Use of research to support answer (6 marks)

Psychology is evidence based so it is expected that students will use their knowledge of research to support their argument. There is no prescription as to which or how many pieces of research are appropriate for their response. As such it becomes important that the research selected is **relevant** and useful in **supporting** the response. One piece of research that makes the points relevant to the answer is better than several pieces that repeat the same point over and over.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
|------|---|
| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1–2 | Limited relevant psychological research is used in the response. Research selected serves to repeat points already made. |
| 3–4 | Relevant psychological research is used in support of the response and is partly explained. Research selected partially develops the argument. |
| 5–6 | Relevant psychological research is used in support of the response and is thoroughly explained. Research selected is effectively used to develop the argument. |

Criterion D: Critical thinking (6 marks)

This criterion credits students who demonstrate an inquiring and reflective attitude to their understanding of psychology. There are a number of areas where students may demonstrate critical thinking on the knowledge and understanding used in their responses and the research used to support that knowledge and understanding. The areas of critical thinking are:

- research design and methodologies
- triangulation
- assumptions and biases
- contradictory evidence or alternative theories or explanations
- areas of uncertainty.

These areas are not hierarchical and not all areas will be relevant in a response. In addition, students could demonstrate a very limited critique of methodologies, for example, and a well-developed evaluation of areas of uncertainty in the same response. As a result a holistic judgment of their achievement in this criterion should be made when awarding marks.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
|------|---|
| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1–2 | There is limited critical thinking and the response is mainly descriptive. Evaluation or discussion, if present, is superficial. |
| 3–4 | The response contains critical thinking, but lacks development. Evaluation or discussion of most relevant areas is attempted but is not developed. |
| 5–6 | The response consistently demonstrates well-developed critical thinking. Evaluation or discussion of relevant areas is consistently well developed. |

Criterion E: Clarity and organization (2 marks)

This criterion credits students for presenting their response in a clear and organized manner. A good response would require no re-reading to understand the points made or the train of thought underpinning the argument.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
|------|---|
| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1 | The answer demonstrates some organization and clarity, but this is not sustained throughout the response. |
| 2 | The answer demonstrates organization and clarity throughout the response. |

Paper 2

Paper 2 consists of one essay question for the option studied. Each option will have a choice of three essays. All essays will use an AO3 command term. The essay is marked out of 22 marks. The essay will be assessed using the rubric shown below.

Essay marking rubric (total 22 marks)

Criterion A: Focus on the question (2 marks)

To understand the requirements of the question students must identify the problem or issue being raised by the question. Students may simply identify the problem by restating the question or breaking down the question. Students who go beyond this by **explaining** the problem are showing that they understand the issues or problems.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
|------|---|
| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1 | Identifies the problem/issue raised in the question. |
| 2 | Explains the problem/issue raised in the question. |

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding (6 marks)

This criterion rewards students for demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of specific areas of psychology. It is important to credit **relevant** knowledge and understanding that is **targeted** at addressing the question and explained in sufficient detail.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
|------|---|
| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1–2 | The response demonstrates limited relevant knowledge and understanding. Psychological terminology is used but with errors that hamper understanding. |
| 3–4 | The response demonstrates relevant knowledge and understanding but lacks detail. Psychological terminology is used but with errors that do not hamper understanding. |
| 5–6 | The response demonstrates relevant, detailed knowledge and understanding. Psychological terminology is used appropriately. |

Criterion C: Use of research to support answer (6 marks)

Psychology is evidence-based, so it is expected that students will use their knowledge of research to support their argument. There is no prescription as to which or how many pieces of research are appropriate for their response. As such it becomes important that the research selected is **relevant** and useful in **supporting** the response. One piece of research that makes the points relevant to the answer is better than several pieces that repeat the same point over and over.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
|------|---|
| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1–2 | Limited relevant psychological research is used in the response. Research selected serves to repeat points already made. |
| 3–4 | Relevant psychological research is used in support of the response and is partly explained. Research selected partially develops the argument. |
| 5–6 | Relevant psychological research is used in support of the response and is thoroughly explained. Research selected is effectively used to develop the argument. |

Criterion D: Critical thinking (6 marks)

This criterion credits students who demonstrate an inquiring and reflective attitude to their understanding of psychology. There are a number of areas where students may demonstrate critical thinking on the knowledge and understanding used in their responses and the research used to support that knowledge and understanding. The areas of critical thinking are:

- research design and methodologies
- triangulation
- assumptions and biases
- contradictory evidence or alternative theories or explanations
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These areas are not hierarchical and not all areas will be relevant in a response. In addition, students could demonstrate a very limited critique of methodologies, for example, and a well-developed evaluation of areas of uncertainty in the same response. As a result a holistic judgment of their achievement in this criterion should be made when awarding marks.

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| 5–6 | The response consistently demonstrates well-developed critical thinking. Evaluation or discussion of relevant areas is consistently well developed. |

Criterion E: Clarity and organization (2 marks)

This criterion credits students for presenting their response in a clear and organized manner. A good response would require no re-reading to understand the points made or the train of thought underpinning the argument.

| Mark | Level descriptor |
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| 0 | Does not reach the standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1 | The answer demonstrates some organization and clarity, but this is not sustained throughout the response. |
| 2 | The answer demonstrates organization and clarity throughout the response. |