



General Certificate of Education

**Health and Social Care
8621/8623/8626/8627/8629**

HC10 Psychological Perspectives

Report on the Examination

June 2010

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX

HC10 Psychological Perspectives

There remains a continuing upward trend in the quality of the work submitted. Candidates are choosing better-suited problem behaviours as their focus of study. Examples included depression, addictions and aggression. Studying towards and submitting this unit provides a sound basis for HC17 and it is recommended that centres intending to teach towards the double award and opting for HC17 consider HC10 as one of their AS options.

An improvement on last year is that more candidates closely adhered to the specification in using the requisite sections and subsections to structure their written work. This unit is now being presented in a more formalised report format; it should not be presented as an extended essay.

Candidates chose a range of suitable psychological perspectives to provide a framework in which to explain the cause or root of a specified behavioural problem. The cognitive/behavioural model is often the most difficult to describe and apply but this year's cohort produced some sophisticated and intelligent commentaries. The reports benefited from the inclusion of less generic information, which attracts little credit and often takes the form of paragraphs copied verbatim from psychology textbooks or material downloaded from the Internet. Better-tailored support evidence was generated with candidates offering more relevant and realistic examples, such as how drinking and socialising become an association, replacing the Little Albert study which has little application apart from in explaining phobias.

The level of expression and the use of technical language were mostly competent and indeed often impressive. The reports were written and presented in a format that made them easy to read whilst providing formal structuring.

This production of supporting research was better evidenced this year. Candidates used more reliable and credible source materials and a full account of research studies or experiments. The research evidence was then applied effectively to discuss its usefulness in explaining and/or helping to change or avoid the problem behaviour. The stronger candidates justified fully their rationale for including specific perspectives and provided elaborate and technically sound arguments. The weaker candidates neglected to discuss their research information in context. If the problem behaviour is binge drinking then the candidate must justify why, for example, a social perspective might provide an explanation, why their cited research is relevant and any strengths or weaknesses it illustrates.

The more successful centres displayed a notable improvement in that the implications of the results were discussed more fully than in previous years. However, the discussion section remains the most problematic with candidates not paying due attention to the drawing of conclusions and providing a considered and informed judgement on the validity and reliability of the research proffered. The report should ideally finish with a judgement statement as to which of the discussed psychological perspective provides the most useful and realistic explanation of the problem behaviour and briefly why. A cost benefit analysis could even be applied. Furthermore, a point reiterated from last year is that although approximately half of the marks available are for Sections C and D of the report, some candidates devoted considerably less time to these sections than to Section B. Teachers should take note and do their best to rectify this imbalance.

Section E of the report showed an improvement with more candidates including a list of full references in the conventional form.

This year yielded some high quality work. There was a greater diversity of topics and better application of the research evidence collected to the problem behaviour.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the AQA website at www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html