



# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2020

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Subsidiary In Psychology (WPS04)  
Paper 1: Clinical Psychology and  
Psychological Skills

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## **Comments on Individual Questions Sections A and B: Clinical Psychology**

### **Question 1 (a)**

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of symptoms of schizophrenia. Most candidates were able to achieve two marks here, however some candidates gave features of schizophrenia or symptoms that were not for schizophrenia.

### **Question 1 (b)**

This question required candidates to explain two strengths of one biological theory/ explanation for schizophrenia other than neurotransmitters. Some candidates achieved well here, but many did not justify or exemplify their points to demonstrate the AO3 requirements in their answer. Often the answer was a description of a study with limited justification to show how or why this was linked to biological explanations of schizophrenia.

### **Question 1 (c)**

Candidates were required to describe the function of neurotransmitters as an explanation for schizophrenia. Few candidates achieved the available marks here, with many responses being limited to simplistic statements that dopamine was involved but very little else to show how this neurotransmitter was actually involved in schizophrenia.

### **Question 2 (a)**

This question required candidates to explain whether the diagnosis of mental health disorders can be considered valid. Some candidates were able to explain the validity of diagnosis with supporting evidence and clear justifications, however some candidates were unable to respond well to this question, showing misconceptions of validity overall.

### **Question 2 (b)**

This question required candidates to justify the statement that the DSM V has greater cultural sensitivity than the DSM IVR. Few candidates were able to demonstrate strong understanding of the DSM here, and the link to culture was often underdeveloped. There were misconceptions about the DSM seen in the candidate responses, such as the DSM V being published before the DSM IVR.

**Question 3 (a)**

Candidates were required to describe how Kane could carry out a non-participant naturalistic observation to gather his qualitative and quantitative data about the experiences of inpatients. Candidates were able to access some marks on this question, although often they only addressed on data type or gave responses that were related to a different method such as an interview, rather than an observation.

**Question 3 (b)**

Candidates were required to suggest one question Kane could use in his questionnaire to gather quantitative data. Most candidates were able to give a closed-ended question here that was relevant. Some candidates gave an open-ended question that would not have gathered quantitative data.

**Question 3 (c)**

Candidates were required to explain one weakness of Kane using medical records in terms of ethics. Some candidates achieved the first mark here, but did not always justify or exemplify their weakness to achieve the AO3 mark available.

**Question 3 (d)**

Candidates were required to explain one weakness of Kane using medical records in terms of objectivity. Some candidates achieved the first mark here, but did not always justify or exemplify their weakness to achieve the AO3 mark available.

**Question 4 (a)**

Candidates were required to explain one way that drug therapy will help Noah with his symptoms of schizophrenia. Some candidates achieved well on this question, however a number of candidates were unable to give accurate points about drug therapy for schizophrenia.

**Question 4 (b)**

Candidates were required to describe why family therapy may be helpful for Noah and his family. Most candidates achieved well on this question and demonstrated good understanding of family therapy. Where candidates struggled it was often due to a lack of application to the scenario.

## Question 5

This question was an extended open response question for 16-marks assessed using the levels-based marking criteria. The question required candidates to evaluate their clinical psychology practical investigation.

Some of the responses did not engage with the taxonomy of 'evaluate' and in these cases candidates often presented a description of their practical investigation.

A significant number of unethical practical investigations were seen, and these do not meet the requirements of the specification. Candidates should undertake a content analysis of secondary data and should not gather any primary data, for example interviews or observations of patients or individuals with mental health issues.

Practical investigations that do not meet specification requirements cannot access marks.

### Examiner Tip

The specification states;

8.4.1 One practical research exercise to gather data relevant to topics covered in clinical psychology - a content analysis that explores attitudes to mental health. This practical research exercise must adhere to ethical principles in both content and intention.

In conducting the practical research exercise, students must:

- perform a content analysis
- analyse at least two sources such as radio interviews, newspapers, magazines, to compare attitudes towards mental health.
- make design decisions when planning and gathering sources for a content analysis, including credibility of secondary data, ethical considerations, controls and reliability.
- collect, present and comment on sources gathered.
- consider strengths and weaknesses of a content analysis and possible design improvements.
- complete the procedure, results and discussion section of a report.

Sections C, D and E: Psychological Skills

## Question 6 (a)

Candidates were required to calculate what percentage of the total available passers-by Zoe sampled. Some candidates were able to accurately calculate the answer. Candidates should be reminded to express their answer as instructed, in this case to two significant figures.

### **Question 6 (b)**

Candidates were required to explain one way Zoe could have increased the accuracy of the quantitative data she collected. Some candidates gave generic responses here and could not access the marks available as they did not apply their answer to the scenario. When candidates did give an appropriately applied response they seldom justified or exemplified this answer to access AO3 marks.

#### **Examiner Tip**

Candidates should practice application skills. Where the question clearly directs candidates to the scenario, the response a candidate gives should be in relation to the scenario in order to answer the question.

### **Question 6 (c)**

This question required candidates to identify the type of correlation shown in Figure 1, and most candidates were able to achieve the mark available here.

### **Question 6 (d)**

This question required candidates to explain, using the data shown in Figure 1, one conclusion Zoe can make from her investigation. The use of data for the AO2 mark was often achieved by candidates, but the ability to make a conclusion from this was not always seen in candidate answers.

### **Question 7 (a)**

This question required candidates to describe why Orla used a longitudinal research method for her investigation. Some candidates were able to access marks here, but application was often poor and the understanding of this methodology was limited in a number of responses.

### **Question 7 (b)**

Candidates were required to compare the use of longitudinal research with cross-sectional research. Very few candidates were able to respond accurately to this question. Many did not understand the cross-sectional method, instead giving answers relating to cross-cultural research.

#### **Examiner Tip**

Candidates must give both similarities and differences in 'compare' questions.

### **Question 8 (a)**

Candidates were required to calculate the standard deviation for the data gathered by Matheus. Most candidates were able to achieve some marks for this question. The main difficulty appeared to be the final step in the calculation where many did not find the square root of 2.3 to give the  $SD=1.52$ .

### **Question 8 (b)**

Candidates were required to give two reasons why the standard deviation may be a better measure of dispersion than the range. Most candidates were able to achieve one mark here, but there was limited understanding of the measures of dispersion evident in a number of answers.

### **Question 9**

This was a discuss AO1 knowledge and understanding and AO2 application question that required candidates to discuss the key question of whether we can reduce aggression between opposing sports team players during sporting events. They should give an equal emphasis between their underpinning knowledge/understanding and an application to the context of the given key question in their answer.

Some candidates were able to approach this question using any relevant and accurate aspect of their psychology course content, some used learning theories and some made reference to biological explanations of behaviour.

Overall, a few candidates were able to select appropriate theory/concepts/research relevant to the key question, although some gave limited understanding in the points they made from their chosen content. Some candidates were able to apply some of their understanding to the scenario given that underpins the key question.

It remained that a few candidates copied large chunks from the scenario rather than engaging with this and developing their answer to show how their understanding from their course can be connected to the stimulus material.

### **Examiner Tip**

The key question used in this section of the examination will require candidates to select appropriate content and apply these areas of their understanding of psychology to explicitly discuss the key question presented. They should draw on the stimulus material given and any relevant knowledge and understanding from across their studies and not simply 'copy' from the material presented to them.

## Question 10

This was an extended open response essay worth 20 marks that addresses a key issue and debate in psychology. The topic of content was the implications of socially sensitive research in psychology. The question required candidates to demonstrate AO1 knowledge and understanding and AO3 assessment points. A few candidates responded well to this question, although for the most part many candidates were unable to give assessment in their responses and gave a response that was more knowledge of some research studies, as opposed to an assessment, for example failing to engage with the impact of these studies in terms of social sensitivity.

There was a limited development in many responses to exemplify where considerations of social sensitivity may be evident in psychology and where it may not be, for the most part the candidates described a piece of research but did not make it clear how this related to the issue.

### Examiner Tip

Extended open response questions of 20-marks in this section require candidates to draw on a range of content from across their studies of psychology. They should select the appropriate content in order to address the question being asked and it may be worth candidates practicing question techniques in order to ensure they are confident with strategies to respond to the specifics of a 20-mark question. Candidates do not need to describe every element of content they have studied, but rather they should actively select what is an appropriate range of points and accurately utilise these for the specific direction of the question taxonomy. The LBMS weighting in 20-mark questions is heavier to AO3 content, therefore the focus of candidates should be the taxonomy used, for example Evaluate, Assess or To what extent? As opposed to the AO1 underpinning knowledge and understanding.