



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2022**

**IAL Psychology WPS03 01**

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## Introduction

Many of the candidates attempted to answer all of the questions and very few blank pages were evident. The knowledge and understanding demonstrated by many of the candidates indicated that there was a good understanding of psychological concepts and studies.

In developmental psychology, candidates demonstrated a good understanding of Piaget's stages of cognitive and language development. Knowledge and understanding of the strange situation procedure was equally developed, however, candidates did not, on the whole, demonstrate an awareness of how to apply this to the context of a scenario. The responses in respect of Erikson's theory of psychosocial stages of development appeared to challenge many candidates.

From the two option choices, Option 1 continues to be the preferred choice of the majority of candidates. Many aspects of criminological psychology were covered in detail and therefore knowledge and understanding was evident.

There was an increase in the number of candidates choosing Option 2 which was pleasing to see, and the quality of the work demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding in many areas. The essay questions in respect to Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) and biological treatments and therapies were particularly detailed and enabled candidates to achieve the higher mark bands. Questions in response to stress and its application to scenarios were also equally well applied.

Candidates would benefit from an improved understanding of how to apply their psychological knowledge to questions that address the AO2 element of the specification and include a scenario. It was evident that candidates, on the whole, had an understanding of an appropriate concept, theory or study. However, this understanding was not applied to elements of the scenario and therefore the responses are deemed generic and not creditworthy.

The longer response questions requiring AO3 appeared to challenge candidates at the lower end of the grade boundaries. When a question has a particular requirement to be addressed, for example assessing whether a study is considered scientific, candidates need to understand that the question is not asking for an evaluation of the study in all aspects, simply whether it is or is not considered scientific.

## Question 1 (a)

This question required candidates to describe object permanence.

The majority of candidates were able to achieve one mark for describing object permanence. Many candidates achieved the second mark by adding a further description.

The most common choice was stating the stage of development in which object permanence occurs. Some candidates gave an example.

1 In developmental psychology, you will have learned about Piaget's stages of cognitive and language development.

(a) Describe what is meant by object permanence.

(2)

The child understands that if an object is out of sight it still exists, child may try to look for the hidden object  
Object permanence is a part of the sensorimotor stage which occurs between birth and 2 years of age



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Examiner Comments

This response achieves 2 marks.

One mark for the description of object permanence and one mark for describing the sensorimotor stage which is the correct stage of development where this occurs.

## Question 1 (b)

The question required candidates to explain one weakness of Piaget's stages of cognitive development.

Many candidates were able to achieve one mark for identifying the weakness, for example that it does not account for individual differences in development. Citing appropriate evidence such as research from Vygotsky or Keating and applying the findings to justify the point, gained the second mark.

(b) Explain **one** weakness of Piaget's stages of cognitive development.

(2)

Evidence by Keating suggests that 40% - 60% of college students cannot solve ~~formal~~ formal operations tasks, which counteracts the statement that all children pass through those four stages of cognitive development.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response achieved 2 marks.

The candidate identifies a weakness that the theory suggests that children pass through all the stages and that this may not be true.

The candidate has justified this statement by using supporting evidence from Keating and applied the findings accurately.

## **Question 2 (a)**

A one mark question that required candidates to calculate the mean from a data table.

Most candidates could calculate the mean to two decimal places. Where candidates achieved zero marks, they did not round up to two decimal places.

## **Question 2 (b)**

A one mark question that required the candidates to calculate the range from a data table. The majority of candidates achieved one mark.

## **Question 2 (c)**

A four mark question that required the candidates to calculate the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test from the data table.

Some candidates achieved four marks for a correct calculation, usually showing their workings.

Most candidates achieved one mark only for the correct completion of the difference column as the calculations were not accurate.

## Question 2 (d)

The question required candidates to identify an improvement in relation to the scenario for two marks.

Some candidates were able to achieve one mark for identifying a feasible improvement.

Many candidates achieved zero marks as they suggested that an improvement was to increase the sample size. This is not deemed an improvement and is not creditworthy.

(d) Explain **one** improvement Reuben could have made to his investigation.

Use children older and younger than six years (2)  
Use a larger sample rather than just 8 students,  
use children from several schools, this will  
make sample more representative and findings about  
language development will be more generalisable  
to children



This response achieves 2 marks.

Whilst the candidate does suggest using a larger sample, this was not credited.

The one mark credit for the identification point was for suggesting the study uses children older and younger than six years, which is in context.

The identification point is then justified by suggesting that it makes the sample more representative in respect of language development thus making it more generalisable.



For all questions that require candidates to explain an improvement to a study or piece of research, suggesting increasing the sample size to improve generalisability is not creditworthy.

If candidates choose to focus on improving the sample to improve generalisability, they should focus on any element of the sample other than size. Once this point has been identified, the justification should include some reference to being more representative in respect of the target population. The better answers will also include an element of the scenario in the justification point.



### Question 3

The question required candidates to explain a strength and a weakness of the strange situation procedure in relation to a scenario.

Some candidates were able to successfully identify an appropriate strength and weakness and applied this to the context achieving two marks.

Many candidates provided generic responses, as whilst they demonstrated a sound understanding of the strange situation procedure, they did not apply this understanding to the scenario.

- 3** Judith is a nursery worker who specialises in the care of infants aged between 9 months and 18 months. She wants to research attachment between fathers and their infants. The parents and the nursery have given Judith permission to use the strange situation procedure.

Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of Judith using the strange situation procedure in her investigation.

Strength

Standardized procedure, this means Judith can easily and strictly replicate the SSP with the infants and fathers at the nursery to achieve reliable results, as Judith can have the infant play with their father and then have a stranger replace him, like the SSP.

Weakness

It may lack ecological validity, as the SSP is not an entirely natural situation, so the infants at the nursery may not behave naturally when their father leaves and returns, so the results may not be accurate of the actual attachment relationship between the infants and father.



This response achieves 3 marks.

Strength: One mark for the justification where the candidate states that results are reliable and therefore replicable and it is in context as they have referenced the fathers and the nursery. Zero marks for the identification point, as this is generic and they stated that it is a standardised procedure, but this not in context as they have not referenced the study.

Weakness: One mark for the identification point that infants may not be behaving naturally – this is in context. One mark for the justification that it is not ecologically valid, again in context as they reference the nursery.



Many candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of the strange situation procedure. However, candidates did not achieve the marks as when explaining the process, no reference was made to the context.

In order to be creditworthy, the candidates need to include one element or more of the scenario in their response to demonstrate application. Just using the name given in the scenario would not be considered in context, so focus should be on other elements of the scenario.

## Question 4

This was an eight-mark essay question that required the candidates to discuss Zac and Grace's development using Erikson's stages of psychosocial development.

Many candidates were unsure of the psychosocial stages of development appropriate to Zac and Grace and found it difficult to describe the crisis that needed to be resolved. Some candidates demonstrated an understanding of the crisis to be resolved and the virtue that would be achieved.

A number of candidates often repeated the stem as opposed to using elements of the scenario and relating these to the appropriate stages of development.

There appeared to be overall, a limited understanding of Erikson's theory of psychosocial stages of development.

- 4 Zac is two years old and very confident and secure in his own abilities. He refuses to wear sandals even though the weather is very hot. Zac always chooses to wear his winter boots and his mother allows him to wear whichever he prefers.

Zac's sister Grace is seven years old and is not very confident. She tries hard at school but finds learning quite difficult. Grace feels nervous when she is in lessons at school and believes she is not as good as her friends. Her mother always supports her and encourages Grace to do her best.

Discuss Zac and Grace's development using Erikson's stages of psychosocial development.

You must make reference to the context in your answer.

(8)

Erikson developed a theory of <sup>psychosocial</sup> development ~~of~~ which spans over an entire lifetime: from birth to death. He devised the idea that individuals develop in eight stages, each individual will come across a psychosocial crisis eight times in their life and they must overcome/complete this crisis <sup>and all the ones to come</sup> to develop a healthy personality. The completion of each stage could lead to a positive or negative effect on their personality.

According to Erikson's theory, Zac ~~is~~ is currently in his second stage of development known as "Autonomy versus shame". Thanks to Zac's mother's allowings of Zac to choose his own shoes to wear, Zac has developed a feeling of Autonomy, he feels he can complete tasks alone <sup>and make his own decisions</sup> without the guidance and help of his mother. In the future, Zac will have the ability to make decisions by himself and not be as dependant on ~~the~~ others.

On the other hand, Grace is currently in the Fourth stage of Erikson's ~~per~~ stages of psychosocial development known as "Industry versus Inferiority". During this stage individuals strive to feel competent in school environment and depend a lot on their teachers approval and praise to gain this sense of competence. Grace feels inferior.

or not as competent as those in her year (her peers) this causes her to feel the anxiousness she does in class as she feels she is not as good in the subject as her classmates. Despite her mother's appraisal, during this stage the child is more dependent on her peers and teachers appraisal and so will continue to feel a sense of incompetence despite her mother's encouragement.

In conclusion, Erikson stages of development emphasize the importance of social interactions <sup>psychosocial</sup> play on an individual's personality development and can be applicable to real life situations. It has good face-validity as many individuals can relate to his theory.



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Examiner Comments

This response achieved level 3 – 6 marks. The candidate has identified the correct psychosocial stage of development for both Zac and Grace and has demonstrated accurate knowledge of the theory. Elements of the scenario, such as Zac making decisions and Grace struggling with school have been discussed in relation to the theory.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

In a question that requires a discussion, elements of the scenario need to be used to achieve the AO2 mark. Candidates would be recommended to choose a number of elements and apply these to the theory/concept or study.

## Question 5

The question required candidates to assess whether the 44 Juvenile Thieves study by Bowlby (1944) could be considered scientific.

Many candidates demonstrated an accurate or accurate and thorough understanding of the study, citing details, which was pleasing to see. However, equally, many candidates did not assess the study in terms of being scientific. Many candidates evaluated the study in terms of generalisability, validity and reliability and did not link this to the possible scientific nature of the study. Some candidates were able to assess whether the study could be considered scientific, by providing an assessment that considered both sides of the argument. Whilst the knowledge and understanding was strong, because the assessment was limited or inappropriate, candidates were not able to achieve the higher levels.

5 Assess whether the 44 Juvenile Thieves study by Bowlby (1944) could be considered scientific.

(8)

Bowlby used a sample of 44 juvenile thieves and compared them to a control group of 44 who weren't thieves. He found that 17 of these thieves experienced separation from their mothers/maternal deprivation at a young age, 12 of whom were diagnosed with affectionless psychopathy. He concluded that maternal deprivation causes emotional and mental health problems and increases likelihood of child turning to crime, ~~maternal deprivation negatively impacts~~

A scientific study is a study which is standardised so it can be replicated by other researchers to add credibility to the original study if they find similar results. It's a study which can be tested empirically using objective measures, it can be falsified and was carried out by the researchers in an unbiased manner even if the results were different to what they expected.

Bowlby's study can be considered scientific because he employed a social worker to conduct interviews of the juvenile thieves and their mothers. This is because the social worker wasn't involved in his theories and so she did have any researcher bias that could impact the findings. Therefore, the methodology was unbiased which makes the study more scientific.

~~However it may not be scientific because~~ ~~It~~ It can be considered scientific because <sup>the conclusion can be</sup> ~~it can be~~ falsified, it can be argued that those children didn't commit crime as a result of maternal deprivation, rather as a result of (anti-social) personality disorders or ~~financial~~ <sup>poor</sup> financial situations. This ~~means~~ would mean that Bowlby's conclusion would be incomplete/inaccurate thus it would be falsified which ~~makes~~ makes it more scientific.

However, this study may not be scientific because there is no way of empirically and objectively testing it's theory. This is because we cannot test using scientific methods whether the children were stealing as a direct result of maternal deprivation. Additionally, Bowlby himself conducted some interviews ~~It may also be difficult to accurately replicate this study~~ and gathered data, we may have been influenced by researcher bias which makes his findings biased, less reliable and less scientific (more subjective, less objective).

In conclusion, it is evident that Bowlby's <sup>Study</sup> ~~theory~~ does fit <sup>most</sup> ~~the~~ of the criteria that makes something scientific, it is replicable and conducted objectively for ~~the~~ most part. However it's not very scientific in terms of being tested scientifically to actually demonstrate the findings empirically.





This response was judged to be a Level 3 response for both the AO1 and AO3 and achieved 6 marks.

The knowledge and understanding in respect of the study was accurate, but a little brief, so was not considered thorough.

The AO3, had two arguments that were developed in respect of the assessment and application, firstly as to why it could be falsified. Secondly, as to why it was not scientific, as it could not be tested empirically.

The use of the social worker, whilst a general assessment point, was not applicable in respect of supporting or negating the claim that it was scientific.



In an essay that requires an assessment to be made, candidates need to focus on the taxonomy of the question. If a question focuses on a certain element of a study or theory such as being scientific or reliable, for example, then the assessment needs to address these elements.

Candidates need to understand that evidence or judgements both supporting or negating the element are equally acceptable.

## Question 6

The candidates were required to describe how stress may influence the reliability of eyewitness memory.

The majority of candidates achieved one mark for describing stress, successfully using the role of cortisol or Yerkes Dodson law. Many candidates did not achieve the second mark as they did not link the understanding of stress to the reliability of eyewitness memory.

- 6** In your studies of criminological psychology, you will have learned about factors influencing the reliability of eyewitness memory.

Describe how stress may influence the reliability of eyewitness memory.

Stress can lead to inaccuracies in the process of recalling as the person is less focused on the things that are happening around her, so this causes the witness to recall less accurately the crime or situation and also makes it harder for her to identify and describe the criminal.



This response achieved 2 marks.

One mark for describing the fact that stress leads to inaccuracies as the person is not focused on the things happening around them.

The second mark for linking this to witness recall and how this makes it harder to identify or describe the criminal.

## **Question 7 (a)**

The question required candidates to explain two strengths of Vashti using a mock jury research method to investigate jury decision-making.

The majority of candidates did not provide responses that made reference to the scenario and were therefore generic and not creditworthy.

Some candidates, did reference some element from the scenario, other than the name of the researcher and were able to identify an accurate strength and achieved one mark.

7 Vashti is using a mock jury research method to investigate jury decision-making. She used a volunteer sample of 12 students from her local university.

The students were split into two groups. They both watched the same video recording of a witness giving evidence in court. Both groups had to decide whether the defendant was guilty based on the witness evidence.

- Group 1 were told that the witness was 100% confident in their testimony.
- Group 2 were told that the witness was 70% confident in their testimony.

Vashti found that the higher the level of confidence, the more likely the participants were to reach a guilty verdict.

(a) Explain **two** strengths of Vashti using a mock jury research method to investigate jury decision-making.

(4)

1 Reliable, the mock jury of 6 students for each jury watching the same eyewitness video means that the method can be replicated easily

2 Some ecological validity, the mock jury mimics how a real jury would watch an eyewitness testimony and come to a conclusion, so the results of from the 12 students holds validity to jury decision-making as the circumstances and process was similar to real life.



This response achieved 3 marks overall.

Strength 1: this achieved one mark for the AO3 point suggesting it was replicable and therefore reliable in terms of jury decision making. The identification point is not clear and rather muddled, so this was not creditworthy.

Strength 2: One mark for a detailed identification point, watching the same eyewitness testimony and coming to a conclusion, mimicking a real-life jury.

One further mark for the justification as this gives it ecological validity that can be applied to real-life jury decision-making.



It is clear from the very detailed responses that candidates have a clear understanding of the reliability and validity of many research methods, which are the most common strengths chosen. However, candidates fail to apply this detailed knowledge to the scenario and so provide generic responses.

If candidates could choose at least one element from the scenario and link this with the identification mark, this would provide a contextualised marking point.

## Question 7 (b)

The question required candidates to explain one way that Vashti could improve the generalisability of her investigation.

Many candidates achieved one mark for suggesting one way that was in context and used elements from the scenario.

Some of the common responses were to use an older age group or students from alternative universities in different areas, which were all in context. Some candidates achieved the second mark for justifying the improvement and suggesting that this made the sample more representative of the target population.

(b) Explain **one** way that Vashti could improve the generalisability of her investigation.

(2)

One way Vashti could improve the generalisability of her investigation is by expanding her sample size to not just students from her local university but people from older age groups, such as the middle aged and the elderly. This would make the sample size more representative of the overall population and allow for more generalisability.



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Examiner Comments

This response achieves 2 marks.

One mark for identification of the improvement, that it would improve generalisability by not using students from the local university, but include an older age group.

One mark for the justification, in that it would make it more representative of the overall population.



In a question that requires an improvement, if candidates suggest improving generalisability, it needs to reference an element from the scenario to be in context. Suggesting a larger sample size is not a creditworthy improvement.

## Question 8

The question required candidates to explain two reasons why Seth would use a cognitive interview with the eyewitness.

Many candidates were not able to achieve a mark for this question. Some candidates had a poor knowledge of cognitive interview techniques. Other candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the cognitive technique, but did not apply this to the scenario.

Some candidates did achieve a mark by identifying techniques used in the cognitive interview and choosing an element from the scenario, such as vandalism to put it in context. However, the justification mark was not achieved as this did not relate to the feature and explain why this would be beneficial.



8 Seth is a police officer who is investigating a number of vandalism cases. Several properties in the local area have been sprayed with graffiti and the garden fences have been broken. The police have been unable to catch the criminal.

The police have appealed for witnesses to the crimes and an eyewitness has come forward who says they have observed suspicious behaviour over the last week.

Explain **two** reasons why Seth would use a cognitive interview with the eyewitness.

- 1 Seth will ask the eyewitness to repeat everything they remember about the suspicious behavior they observed over the last week without interruption. This will allow the eyewitness to freely narrate all the details they remember without being influenced by leading questions, thus preventing suggested answers.
  - 2 Seth will ask the eyewitness to reinstate the context of the event by looking at specific factors such as the time of day and weather that was observed during the time of the suspicious behavior. Seth may take the eyewitness to the area where the suspicious behavior unfolded, such as to where the garden fences have been broken. (Total for Question 8 = 4 marks)
- so that environmental cues can act as triggers for memory, improving the eyewitnesses' recall



This response achieved 3 marks.

Reason One: one mark for identifying that Seth could ask the eyewitness to repeat everything about the suspicious behaviour. This uses elements from the scenario and is an accurate technique from the cognitive interview. The justification point was not creditworthy as this did not explain why this would be useful.

Reason two: this achieved two marks, one mark for identifying reinstating the context and using an element from the scenario, such as time of day. One mark for the justification as it suggests that the triggers will improve the eyewitness recall.

## Question 9 (a)

The question required candidates to explain one reason why Esther may have decided to gather self-report data for her investigation.

Many candidates achieved one mark for accurately identifying a reason, using elements from the context to support this, however the candidates did not go on to justify the reason and so did not achieve the second mark.

Some candidates gave detailed reasons for using self-reporting data, but they were generic as they did not use information from the scenario and therefore achieved zero marks.

- 9 Esther is a psychologist working with young offenders who have been convicted of burglary. She wants to investigate whether environmental factors such as family and lifestyle may have influenced their behaviour.

She is going to gather self-report data by interviewing the offenders using open questions.

- (a) Explain **one** reason why Esther may have decided to gather self-report data for her investigation.

(2)

Esther may have decided to gather self-report data for her investigation as this would allow the offenders to fully explain in ~~detail~~ detail the environmental factors and other factors to have influenced their criminal behaviour. This abundance in rich qualitative and quantitative data would allow for better ~~content/the analysis~~ and increased validity in results and findings.



This response received 2 marks.

The reason is very detailed, referring to specific elements of the scenario. The justification is also detailed and accurately applied to the question.

- 9 Esther is a psychologist working with young offenders who have been convicted of burglary. She wants to investigate whether environmental factors such as family and lifestyle may have influenced their behaviour.

She is going to gather self-report data by interviewing the offenders using open questions.

- (a) Explain **one** reason why Esther may have decided to gather self-report data for her investigation.

(2)

Offenders will know themselves best, they can give the most information about their family and lifestyle

This makes her findings valid as they will be rich in detail and depth



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Examiner Comments

This response also achieves 2 marks.

It is succinctly described, but the reason uses elements from the scenario, accurately. The justification, whilst brief, is also accurate and applicable to the question.

## Question 9 (b)

This question required the candidates to explain one way that researcher effects may have an impact on Esther's investigation.

Many candidates achieved zero marks for this response as they had confused researcher bias with researcher effects. The candidates gave detailed descriptions for researcher bias, but this did not address the question and were therefore not creditworthy.

Some candidates gave a detailed description of researcher effects in relation to the scenario with an accurate justification and were able to achieve the full two marks.

(b) Explain **one** way that researcher effects may have an impact on Esther's investigation.

accurate.

(2)

The offenders might answer in a way they think is wanted by the psychologist and may answer according to the aims. Due to this Esther's investigation might be affected by the presence of the researcher; the researcher effect and demand characteristics.



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Examiner Comments

This response achieved 2 marks.

One mark for identifying one way the response is accurate and in context with reference to the offender from the scenario.

The justification is accurate in applying demand characteristics in respect of the research effect.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Candidates may need to revisit the difference between researcher bias and researcher effects to confirm their understanding of the difference between the two different contexts.

## Question 10

This was an eight mark essay question that required candidates to assess whether Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can help reduce reoffending.

In response to this question, the marks were wide spread.

At the higher end of the mark range, candidates demonstrated a good understanding of CBT in relation to offending as opposed to CBT as a general therapy. The candidates went on to apply this as to how it may reduce reoffending, stating suggestions or appropriate research to support the AO1 content.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates discussed CBT as a therapy without reference to offenders or reoffending. The candidates were therefore unable to justify the use of CBT by using supporting research or explanations.

## 10 Assess whether Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can help reduce reoffending.

(8)

CBT is a form of anger management therapy, ~~designed for~~ <sup>offenders</sup> ~~designed for~~ that aims to aid ~~those~~ <sup>offenders</sup> who have anger issues and tend to act aggressively.

The first stage on CBT is cognitive performance. Here the therapist and the offender identify situations where the offender previously ~~was~~ got very angry and aggressive; and how they could've acted differently. These are known as flashpoints.

// The second stage is skill acquisition, here the offender is taught a range of behavioural techniques to help them cope with ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> anger. This can be counting from 1-10 to calm the mind and promote calmness. The aim ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> to control the offender's emotions and not be controlled by them.

The third and final stage is performance and application. The therapist devises scenarios where the offender previously lost control and re-enact the situation. This is to see if the techniques have internalised and are effective; if the offender no longer acts aggressively then it is a success, however if they do then another behavioural technique is used and applied.

One strength of CBT is that it is effective proven to be effective. Holbrook conducted a vengeance scale (how much ~~more~~ badly they wanted revenge) on 26 inmates in a prison. All the prisoners underwent ~~or~~ CBT (anger management). He found that participants scored ~~of~~ significantly lower ~~post-treatment~~ <sup>post-treatment</sup> than pre-treatment. This shows how effective CBT is in reducing aggression and consequently chance of reoffending.

On the other hand, a <sup>weakness</sup> ~~strength~~ of CBT is that it can be counterproductive. Damien Hanson murdered John Mucktown, (a politician) after undergoing 4 24 sessions of CBT. In addition he convinced the parole board to re-evaluate his case. This is a weakness as it shows the techniques taught may help offenders in manipulating and committing even more heinous crimes, & showing it can be counterproductive.

Despite this, a strength of CBT as a treatment is that it takes an eclectic approach. It acknowledges that offending is many types, behavioural, cognitive and <sup>social</sup> ~~psychological~~. Therefore it takes an inter-disciplinary approach in order to tackle all aspects of offending, in order to prevent re-offending; thus making it a strength.

However one weakness of CBT is that ~~it~~ it is <sup>dependent</sup> ~~subjected~~ to the therapist's point of view of the world and values <sup>that</sup> they think are right and acceptable. As a result they may allow or encourage certain behaviours that they think are good but are not in reality, thus encouraging bad behaviour and potentially cause the offender to re-offend.

In conclusion, CBT is effective treatment method, however it is not for everyone.





This response achieved Level 4 – 7 marks.

The knowledge and understanding in respect of CBT and its relationship to reoffending was accurate and thorough in all aspects.

The assessment was well-developed and used appropriate supporting evidence for both a strength and a weakness in respect of CBT being an appropriate therapy to prevent reoffending.

## Question 11

An essay question that required candidates to evaluate whether case formulation can provide a useful understanding of the behaviour of an offender.

This question also demonstrated a broad range of marks. Many candidates were able to provide an insightful description of case formulation and evaluate whether it was useful, often citing appropriate supporting research or giving examples of the roles of the professionals as to how it developed a greater understanding of the offender's behaviour. At the lower end of the mark range, candidates gave brief descriptions of case formulation or descriptions, demonstrating a weak understanding of the processes and professionals involved. AO3 was limited and did not add to the description.

11 Evaluate whether case formulation can provide a useful understanding of the behaviour of an offender.

(8)

In order to reduce criminal behaviour a case formulation is created. It gathers lots of detailed information and then reduces it into a brief document. It looks at present and past relationships of the offender, significant events of the offender's life and ~~the~~ the offender's perspective of them. It includes the presence of a ~~parole officer~~ forensic psychologist, offender and someone "close" to him such as the parole officer. The first part of the treatment consists of the forensic psychologist ~~understand~~ understanding what were the offender's motivations to commit such a crime, he might give examples of answers of other criminals that committed similar crimes but it's important that the psychologist has an ideographic view. The second part is understanding why he committed such a crime for power, addiction, sexual desire, etc. The last part is application to treatment and it's important that the psychologist takes into account how committed the offender is and how likely he is to reoffend. The treatment is constantly assessed and changed to be more successful. The input of the offender of how successful the case formulation is going is very important to increase its efficiency.

A strength of psychological case ~~formal~~ formulation is that it takes an holistic view of the offender reasons to commit such a crime which allows a better understanding improving its effectiveness. Another strength is that ~~whitehead~~ Whitehead made a study where he observed that goals are very valued by offenders and that their input in the psychological case formulation helps the psychologist understand the offender better and improve the effectiveness of the treatment.

A limitation is that offenders can be very manipulative so it ~~can~~ is necessary for it to be led by a specialist ~~for~~ that is highly trained and not easily manipulated by the offender.

Another limitation is that it's hard to measure how successful psychological case formulation ~~is~~ is so a long time has to pass for the forensic psychologist to make sure the treatment was successful or not.

Concluding even though psychological case formulation tries to take an holistic view of the offenders behaviour this sometimes can be very hard to measure and observe as offenders can be extremely manipulative so we can only be sure it worked and understood the behaviour of the offender after a long time (Total for Question 11 = 8 marks)



This was a highly detailed response.

The candidate demonstrated accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding of the specific processes used within case formulation.

They also had a thorough knowledge of the role of both the professionals and the offender within the process.

A well-developed evaluation was evident in the successful application of supporting evidence.

## Question 12

The question required candidates to describe the role of cortisol in stress.

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. There was a detailed understanding of the production of cortisol in the body. This was followed by many candidates with a further description of specific features that related to stress.

**12** In your studies of health psychology, you will have learned about the physiology of stress.

Describe the role of cortisol in response to stress.

Cortisol is released from the adrenal cortex  
via the action of the HPA axis, cortisol increases  
our heart rate, constricts blood vessels and it  
increases the metabolism of glucose in order to  
allow us to face the stressor.



The candidate has given a thorough description of the production of cortisol and its process in relation to stress.

One mark was awarded for the link with the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) Axis.

The second mark was awarded for the description of the link with the stressor.

### **Question 13 (a)**

The question required candidates to explain two strengths of using a focus group research method to investigate anxiety disorders.

Many candidates demonstrated a detailed understanding of focus groups and were able to successfully apply this using elements of the question. The justification points were also detailed and in context. Where candidates failed to achieve marks, they provided a generic description and so did not answer the question.

13 Vashti is using a focus group research method to investigate anxiety disorders. She used a volunteer sample of 12 patients from her local clinic. UNK

The patients had recently been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. Vashti invited the patients to her focus group to share their experiences. She asked them to respond to a set of questions she had created about life events. Vashti recorded the discussion and transcribed the data.

Vashti found that negative life events increased the chance of developing an anxiety disorder.

(a) Explain **two** strengths of Vashti using a focus group research method to investigate anxiety disorders.

(4)

- 1 One strength of Vashti using focus groups is that she will gain greater insight and detail about anxiety disorders. For example, <sup>patients could encourage</sup> other patients to speak up about their views and opinions, such as the negative life events that occurred to them. This suggests that Vashti will be able to get a better and more accurate representation of how anxiety disorders develop.
- 2 Another strength of Vashti using a focus group design method is that it is easier and <sup>less time consuming</sup> cheaper. ~~Vashti used a volunteer group of~~ Focus groups tend to be smaller in size, such as 9-10 participants, and this can be seen by Vashti's sample size of 12 volunteer participants from her clinic. This also makes it easier to interpret the data, as there are <sup>fewer</sup> fewer data, \*as Vashti had to transcribe the data after recording it to interpret it.  
\*which is useful





This response achieved four marks.

Strength one identifies the strength as collecting in-depth data and uses elements of the scenario, so is in context. The justification is detailed and again applies elements of the context.

Strength two identifies the strength as being less time consuming, which on its own would not have been creditworthy, however, it is in context and the justification supports the point.

## Question 13 (b)

The question required candidates to explain one improvement that could be made to Vashti's research.

The better answers used elements from the scenario such as patients from other clinics or other parts of the world. Some candidates continue to suggest that increasing sample size alone will increase generalisability and this is not creditworthy.

(b) Explain **one** way that Vashti could improve the generalisability of her investigation.

(2)

Vashti could improve the generalisability of her investigation by using a larger number of participants and take the experiment as well in other different places or countries. As the experiment is taken in her local clinic which this reduces the chances of increasing generalisability. Different cultural differences could make gather different results.



This response achieved one mark for identifying an improvement of using the investigation in different places and other countries to improve generalisability.

The second mark was not achieved as there was no justification as to how this would have made it generalisable. It did not receive the mark for suggesting it needed a larger number of participants as this is not creditworthy.



Candidates often find explaining an improvement to a piece of research challenging, often citing increasing sample size when it is linked to generalisability. This is not creditworthy as it will not make an improvement.

Candidates need to focus on other elements from the scenario other than sample size.

## Question 14

The question required candidates to explain two positive techniques that Seth could recommend his patients use to reduce stress.

Again, there were some really good responses for this question. Candidates provided a range of recommendations, ranging from tested techniques such as cognitive behavioural therapy to taking exercise. The identification points were supported by detailed justification.

**14** Seth is a psychologist and is working with a patient who is displaying high levels of stress. The patient has developed chest pains and is finding it difficult to sleep. She constantly feels overwhelmed and is very irritable.

The patient has tried to manage her stress levels herself but is unhappy because she has started to gain weight and has also started smoking.

Explain **two** positive techniques that Seth could recommend his patient uses to reduce stress.

1 Mindfulness meditation - Encouraging Seth could recommend mindfulness meditation to relieve stress and control the symptoms. Mindfulness helps in better emotional control reactions and relieve stress which can help in better sleep. This can also reduce the chest pain.

2 Social support - Seth could suggest the patient to talk to friend or family about their stress levels. Sharing the difficulties with another person can relieve stress levels. And the family or friends can help the patient with weight gain and smoking.



This response achieved three marks.

Two marks for the first technique as it identifies mindfulness in context and explains how this may relieve stress.

One mark for the second technique, using social support was credited in context. The justification repeated the stem in the main rather than using it to recommend how it could help deal with stress.

## Question 15 (a)

Candidates were required to explain one reason Esther would use self-report data in her investigation.

Some candidates were a little confused and suggested methods other than self-report data. Many candidates were able to identify a suitable reason using elements of the scenario, but did not justify the point, so achieved one mark.

**15** Esther is a psychologist working with clients who have been diagnosed with stress. She wants to investigate how life events and daily hassles may have influenced their condition.

She is going to gather self-report data by interviewing the clients using open questions.

(a) Explain **one** reason why Esther may have decided to gather self-report data for her investigation.

(2)

Self report data allow the clients to speak about how life events and daily hassles influenced their condition freely without any restrictions allowing her to gain qualitative data which is full of meaning and is valid allowing Esther to gain a deep and valid understanding of the clients experience.



This response received two marks.

One mark for suggesting that self-report data would gain qualitative data in context.

A second mark for justifying why this is useful for the investigation.

## Question 15 (b)

No comments have been provided for this option.

(b) Explain **one** way that researcher effects may have an impact on Esther's investigation.

(2)

~~Researcher~~ Esther was a self-report data and open questions, this means that in order to please the researcher or make themselves seem in a good light the clients may falsely answer the researcher questions. This is social desirability which makes her Esther's data unrepresentative and false.



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This response achieved two marks.

One mark for identifying social desirability in context and fully explained. This was justified by suggesting that it would make it unrepresentative.

## Question 16

This question required candidates to assess whether Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) model can fully explain stress. Candidates appeared well prepared for this question and many candidates achieved Level three and many candidates achieved Level four.

The level of knowledge and understanding was excellent and candidates appeared to have a good working knowledge of the model. The assessments were strong, using elements of the model to justify the point. Alternative theories were also offered in the assessment.



Dhabhar, Mason,  
~~cognitive~~, brain regions -

16 Assess whether Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) can fully explain stress.

Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome includes <sup>Dhabhar</sup> ~~Mason~~ ~~Werner et al~~ <sup>(8)</sup> three stages.  
The Alarm stage is the first reaction to stress; the fight or flight response. It involves the sympathetic nervous system which stimulates the adrenal glands to release adrenaline, leading to increased heart rate and breathing. The ~~second~~ sympathetic pathway is the acute response and involves nerve impulses which is faster, and the Hypothalamic Pituitary Adrenal system (HPA) is the chronic response and involves hormones; i.e. cortisol. This is longer lasting and slower. The second stage is the resistance stage which is where the body tries to counterattack and aims to return to normal bodily functions. The final stage, exhaustion is reached if the previous stage is not resolved. This is where the body has no mental, physical or emotional resources left to deal with stress.

One strength of Selye's GAS is that there is supportive evidence Dhabhar et al found using rats who had no adrenal glands that injecting them with stress hormones and subjecting them to stressful situations led to the stress response as identified by Selye <sup>and increased immune function</sup>. This suggests that Selye's GAS has credibility as there was a link found between stress hormones and increased immune functionality in response to stress, suggesting GAS does play a role in explaining

stress.

However, Mason found that there may be different <sup>stress</sup> responses based on the situation. Using <sup>investigations of</sup> urinary cortisol levels, <sup>of monkeys</sup> Mason found that when the monkeys were subjected to cold, there were increased cortisol levels, and when subjected to heat, there were decreased cortisol levels. This reduces credibility of Selye's GAS as this shows that circumstance plays a role in explaining stress, and there needs to be more research conducted to increase reliability.

Another factor to consider is <sup>other</sup> role of brain regions in stress. The Amygdala ~~was~~ is responsible for regulating emotional responses to <sup>stimuli, which may be</sup> stress. ~~This suggests~~ As Dripada et al found using neuroimaging with patients diagnosed with PTSD, the amygdala plays a role in stress responses. ~~By~~ By using scientific methods which are objective, this increases confidence <sup>in</sup> findings that <sup>other</sup> brain regions may be used to explain stress, which consequently reduces credibility in Selye's GAS as it only focuses on the role of the Hypothalamus which releases corticotropin releasing hormone which starts the chronic response to ~~the~~ stress. This suggests that more research needs to be conducted into the role of <sup>other</sup> brain regions and how they can be used to explain stress.

(Total for Question 16 = 8 marks)



This response received Level 4 – 8 marks.

The knowledge of GAS was detailed and thorough and spoke of all the stages within the model. The assessment used the medium of strengths and weaknesses of the model, which were then assessed making a judgment as to whether it could or could not explain stress.

## Question 17

This question required candidates to evaluate whether biological treatments and therapies are effective in reducing anxiety.

It was pleasing to see the quality of the responses in answer to this question. Many candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of SSRI's (Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) and other treatments. Some candidates were able to justify these points, often citing alternative therapies as being more useful. A large number of candidates were able to access the higher mark bands.

17 Evaluate whether biological treatments and therapies are effective in reducing anxiety.

(8)

Biological Treatments and therapies include the use of SSRIs which block the reuptake of serotonin at the synapse. This means that there is a high amount of serotonin present according to Kazdin et al who found that in comparison to placebo SSRIs were effective in treating Generalised Anxiety Disorder, providing supporting evidence for the use of biological treatments and proving their effectiveness.

SSRIs and SNRIs are generally administered at the lowest possible dose due to their side effects. The side effects include nausea, vomiting, dizziness etc which may be too much to cope for someone that is already suffering from anxiety causing patients to drop out before they can complete the whole course of SSRIs and SNRIs so they may not be very effective in reducing anxiety in patients.

Cognitive Psychologists describe Anxiety as a result of Maladaptive and faulty thinking patterns, Beck and Weishaar used cognitive techniques and found them effective in reducing symptoms of Anxiety in Patients, this suggests that Biological Treatments are not the only Treatments effective in reducing Anxiety because ~~Biological~~ Anxiety can be caused by faulty thinking and not neurotransmitters.

Biological Treatments such as SSRIs and SNRIs only treat the symptoms of Anxiety and not the cause it is very plausible for patients to become anxious again because the cause of stress has not subsided.

Biological treatments are most effective when paired with psychotherapy, Wolky et al found Biological Treatments alone in an RCT of 600 patients to be only around 10% effective however when paired with Psychotherapy effectiveness increased to 86% suggesting that although Biological Treatments are effective there are other factors that are ~~more~~ involved.

In Conclusions Biological Treatments have been found to be very effective in treating Anxiety → next page  
(Total for Question 17 = 8 marks)



This response achieved Level 4 – 8 marks.

The description of some of the biological treatments is detailed, in terms of SSRIs.

The evaluation justifies the points made using an alternative suggestion in the form of cognitive behavioural therapy.

A succinct response, but one that addresses all requirements of the question.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Candidates would benefit from revisiting Erikson's psychosocial stages of development to develop an understanding of the eight stages and the crisis and tasks that need to be addressed in each of the stages.
- Candidates need to review the calculation techniques for the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test.
- Candidates need to understand that a response is not contextualised by the use of only the name of the researcher. Specific elements from the scenario need to be used in their response to help explain a reason or support an evaluation point.
- In questions that ask for an improvement to be suggested, if the sample is chosen as a recommended improvement, simply stating increasing sample size to improve generalisability is not creditworthy. An element of the sample used in the scenario needs to be used, for example change of age range, location, type of participant.



## **Grade boundaries**

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