# Examiner's Report
# Principal Examiner Feedback

# October 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level

In Psychology (WPS04) Paper 1

Clinical Psychology and Psychological Skills

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# General Comments

Candidate entry for the October 2018 series has increased marginally on the October 2017 series, although it remains a low entry series and so a wide spread of candidate responses is not always evident.

Difficulties remain with the long answer questions where few had justified their arguments and evaluations, and very little supporting evidence or exemplified argument was seen. Here, candidate responses were often limited to lower level mark bands as a result of limited AO1 understanding of specific content coupled with a lack of AO3 material.

Application for AO2 responses was an area that presented some problems for some candidates. There has been some improvement with application skills, but where generic responses were given candidates tend not to achieve well.

# Paper Summary

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

- Candidates should review the taxonomy expectations within the specification to aid them in understanding the key requirements of the questions and the distinctions between these, for example the differences between describe and explain in shorter questions.
- The application of understanding remains a challenge for some candidates. The answers to these questions must clearly link to the scenario and candidates should avoid using just a 'name' as this is not application of their understanding to the context they have been given in the questions.
- Where candidates are giving strengths (and/or weaknesses) of studies they need to give their strength (weakness) of the study in detail for AO1, making it clear and specific to that study. Then exemplify/justify this strength (weakness) in relation to the study for AO3, a simple statement from 'GRAVE' is not sufficient for an AO3 mark.
- Candidates would benefit from developing their skills to make comparisons (similarities and differences), for example this could be practising similarities and differences between methodology, theories, studies or explanations of mental health disorders.
- When attempting the unseen key question, candidates should clearly apply their understanding of psychology to the context in the given scenario, they should not just replicate the information they are presented with as this is insufficient to show application of their knowledge and understanding.
- Within their extended open responses, candidates should give balanced responses and exemplified points which lead to making informed conclusions or judgements (where appropriate to the taxonomy used) in relation to the question content.

The remainder of this report will focus on specific questions from the examination.

# Comments on Individual Questions

## Sections A and B: Clinical Psychology

### Q01a

**Question Introduction**

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of secondary data. Candidates could achieve up to two marks for their description of what is meant by 'secondary data'. Most candidates achieved well on this question. Some gave an under-developed description and did not access the full two marks available.

### Q01b

**Question Introduction**

This question required candidates to explain two strengths of using secondary data in relation to being used to research the effectiveness of drug treatments for individuals with schizophrenia. This targeted application and exemplification in relation to the stimulus given. Some candidates achieved well, giving considered responses about why secondary data was a strong choice for research into drug treatments and schizophrenia. Most of the stronger answers included the ethical considerations of drug treatments and exemplified how secondary data was therefore suitable. Where candidates did not achieve well they had given generic strengths of secondary data and did not engage with the use of this for research about drug treatments for patients with schizophrenia.

**Examiner Tip**

With application questions, candidates should use their understanding to engage with the stimulus material presented in the content of scenario they are given. In this case, specifically why is secondary data a strength for researching the effectiveness of drug treatments.

### Q01c

**Question Introduction**
Candidates were required to describe one similarity and one difference between RCTs and interviews when used to research drug treatments for schizophrenia. This was an AO1 and AO2 question where the similarity and the difference between RCT and interviews were each awarded AO1 for understanding, with the link to drug treatments as an application to the scenario for AO2 marks. Candidates struggled with the similarities and differences here and were often unable to identify a point of similarity or difference, demonstrating limited knowledge of methodology. Often, responses were worded as strengths or weaknesses and did not fully answer the question.

**Examiner Tip**

Candidates should practice making comparisons between different methods, concepts, studies or theories in the course to be able to engage with questions where similarities

and differences are needed in responses such as Q01c or where the 'compare' command word is used.

**Q02**

**Question Introduction**

This was an AO1 and AO3 question where candidates were required to analyse the implications of the findings from their chosen contemporary study from their optional mental health disorder in terms of how those findings may or may not have implications for the understanding and/or treatment of the chosen mental health disorder. Some responses were general strengths and weaknesses of the study, while other errors seen were when candidates described the study as opposed to responding to the question of analysing how the findings have implications and thus struggled to achieve higher marks. Good answers showed understanding of the findings and gave clear links to the implications of these findings. A few candidates were not aware which study they had learned and muddled their responses.

**Q03a**

**Question Introduction**
This was an AO1 understanding and AO3 exemplification/justification question requiring candidates to explain, using research evidence, one way the DSM has been tested for validity. Many candidates were unable to achieve full marks on this question. A number of responses lacked detail and were often lacking justification to exemplify the AO1 points.

**Q03b**

**Question Introduction**
This was an AO1 understanding and AO3 exemplification/justification question requiring candidates to explain, using research evidence, one way the DSM has been tested for reliability. Many candidates were unable to achieve full marks on this question. A number of responses lacked detail and were often lacking justification to exemplify the AO1 points.

**Q04**

**Question Introduction**

The requirement to make a comparison remains one that a number of candidates struggle to achieve. Candidates were required to compare the function of neurotransmitters with one other biological explanation of schizophrenia, however many candidates simply 'described' neurotransmitters and then 'described' the alternative explanation without making any attempt at comparisons between them. Where comparisons were attempted, they were often focussed on the differences and centres should remind candidates that to 'compare' requires both differences and similarities to achieve the marks available.

**Examiner Tip**

Comparisons should include at least one similarity and one difference. Candidates should use the mark allocation and space as a guidance to structure their responses.


**Q05a**

**Question Introduction**

This was an AO2 maths question requiring candidates to calculate a ratio and give the answer in the lowest form. Where candidates did not gain the mark it was often as a result of incorrect data from the table, or not responding in the lowest form as instructed by the question.

**Examiner Tip**

Candidates should ensure they follow the guidance in the question with mathematical skills, for example using the lowest form in their answers is a skill they should be able to demonstrate.

**Q05b**

**Question Introduction**


This was an AO2 application of data and AO3 justification question where candidates were required to justify whether the conclusion Jagdeep reached is accurate. Few candidates were able to accurately use the data, misinterpreting the data and thus not fully justifying the conclusion as either accurate or inaccurate.


**Q05c**

**Question Introduction**


This was an AO2 application of data and AO3 justification question where candidates were required to determine whether or not combined therapy was more effective than drug treatments. Candidates often struggled to use the data to make their determinations of effectiveness, often taking the raw data as simple values and making no mathematical judgements or interpretations about the data they were given.

**Q06**

**Question Introduction**

This question was an extended open response question for 16-marks assessed using the levels-based marking criteria. The question required candidates to evaluate the classic study by Rosenhan (1973).

A number of responses demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding of the study content for AO1. Several candidates confused the participants and pseudo-patients in the study, not fully being able to distinguish between the participant sample as the hospitals and their staff and the pseudo-patients as Rosenhan's confederates in the investigation. This led to a number of inaccurate evaluation points, particularly in terms of sample representativeness and generalisability where the pseudo-patients rather than hospitals were discussed.

Many of the evaluation point given in responses were generic, for example ecological validity being high due to 'real life context' was a common point, but also one that was rarely made in relation to the real life context of the hospitals, wards or context the pseudo-patients were in. The generic responses limited candidate ability to achieve the higher marks here.

Many candidates presented their response without logical reasoning or understanding of competing arguments when attempting this question presented.

**Examiner Tip**
Candidates should present exemplified arguments and draw from a range of evidence or concepts to justify their points in extended essays.

Logical chains of reasoning should be presented to show competing arguments, and these should draw to conclusions or judgements based on the evidence they have utilised in the response and in answer to the specific features of the question presented.

## Sections C, D and E: Psychological Skills

### Q07a

**Question Introduction**

This was an AO2 maths question where candidates were required to calculate the occurrence of kindness for women as a percentage of all occurrences of kindness. Most candidates were able to calculate 75%.

### Q07b

**Question Introduction**

This was an AO2 maths question where candidates were required to calculate the occurrence of pride for women as a fraction of all occurrences of pride and express this in the lowest form. Most candidates were able to calculate the answer of ¼.

### Q07c

**Question Introduction**

This was an AO2 maths question where candidates were required to draw and label a bar chart to show the data for the themes of strength and kindness for men and women. Most candidates could plot the data, although some candidates plotted all data rather than the data required in the question. Some errors were seen where candidates plotted joined bars rather than separate bars for the discrete data. A few candidates were unable to label the axis correctly and often only gave numerical information on the Y axis with no axis label. Some did not give a complete title, with some candidates copying the question itself as a title.

### Q07d

**Question Introduction**

This question was assessing AO2 application of understanding and AO3 exemplification/ justification where candidates were required to explain two strengths of Ferdinand using a thematic analysis to investigate gender bias in how sportsmen and sportswomen are portrayed in the media. A number of candidates gave generic strengths for the methodology of a thematic analysis and did not apply their answers to the scenario of Ferdinand and his investigation as directed in the question.

**Examiner Tip**
Where a question directs candidates to apply their understanding, such as the link in Q07d to Ferdinand and his investigation of media portrayal, the candidates should apply their responses to the context they are given, for example in Q07d, the strengths of the

thematic analysis methodology for this particular investigation into the media and gender bias.

**Q07e**

**Question Introduction**

This question required candidates to describe two ways Ferdinand could have made his thematic analysis about gender bias reliable and assessed AO2 application of understanding. Some candidates were able to give points that were applied to the scenario and achieved well. Some candidates gave generic responses that did not describe how Ferdinand could make his study more reliable and did not achieve the marks available. In some cases, responses presented ways to improve validity as opposed to reliability.

**Q08a**

**Question Introduction**
This question required candidates to calculate the difference in the total number of homework tasks as an AO2 maths question. Most candidates were able to calculate the correct answer of 18.

**Q08b**

**Question Introduction**
This question was an AO2 maths question that required candidates to determine how many students showed no improvement in homework tasks completed on time. Most candidates were able to give the correct answer of 2.

**Q08c(i)**

**Question Introduction**
This question required candidates to calculate a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test with the data provided in the table. Most candidates could calculate the difference column, however a number of students did not sign the positive or negative values in this column achieving no marks and demonstrating they were not clear on the purpose of the signed ranks test.

Some candidates were able to rank the differences, but there was evidently some confusion in the completion of this step of the calculation with minus numbers being ranked lowest and uncertainty about how to rank scores that were the same. A few candidates were able to calculate the sum of the ranks, however this was not done well due to the incorrect ranking. As a result, the T value was not always correct.

**Q08c(ii)**

**Question Introduction**

Candidates were required to determine whether this result is significant for a one-tailed directional test at P0.05 where N=7. Where this was answered, most candidates were able to determine if their calculated T value was lower or higher than the critical value

and make a statement of significance. Where candidates struggled it was often due to not knowing not having calculated a T value.

**Examiner Tip**

Candidates would benefit from understanding the process of a statistical test to increase access to the mathematical marks. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test instructions are at the front of the exam paper and candidates could use these to help with their responses.

**Q09**

**Question Introduction**

This was a discuss AO1 knowledge and understanding and AO2 application question that required candidates to give an equal emphasis between their underpinning knowledge and understanding with an application to the context of the key question of whether aggressive behaviour in football crowds can be reduced. Candidates are able to approach this question using any relevant and accurate aspect of their psychology course content.

Overall, some 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. Most candidates were able to apply some of their understanding to the scenario given that underpins the key question.

Most candidates discussed biological content, but were limited in demonstrating their understanding of the role of testosterone and this reduced their ability to apply their understanding to the novel context of the key question, instead their focus became generic aggression rather than application to reducing this behaviour in football crowds.

There was very little connection to social psychology, despite the scenario indication that this could be used. Attempts were made to draw from social learning theory on occasion, although this was not always done well as it was often not used in a way that was relevant to the question of football crowd behaviour. Overall, few candidates engaged with content from across the course and therefore did not fully address the question.

Fewer candidates copied large chunks from the scenario in comparison to previous examination series, this was pleasing as they attempted to engage with this scenario and develop 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.

**Q10**

**Question Introduction**

This was an extended open response essay worth 20 marks that addresses a key issue and debate in psychology. The topic of content was an assessment of the use of psychological knowledge in social control. The question required candidates to demonstrate AO1 knowledge and understanding and AO3 assessment points about the use of psychological in aspects of social control.

A number of candidates did not respond to this question. Some candidates responded well, although for the most part many were unable to make assessments in their responses and gave a response that was more a 'list' of aspects in psychology that can or cannot be used for social control. A number of candidates 'evaluated' in terms of strengths and weaknesses and did not fully respond to the taxonomy of 'Assess'.

Few addressed the assessment of social control, such as whether it is beneficial, helpful, supportive or manipulative, devaluing or dangerous. Most candidates found this question challenging, and their responses were often limited to social, biological and clinical psychology.

There was limited use of research from across the course to exemplify the assessments made, and a few candidates responded with how psychology can help us understand others but did not engage in the assessment of social control. If candidates used research, for the most part they described a piece of research but failed to address the link to the question.

**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? Candidates would benefit from addressing the differences between Assess and Evaluate.