

National Qualifications 2010
C263 12 Higher Psychology: Research Investigation - Marker Checklist

The candidate **must** choose their investigation from the Research Investigation briefs for the current year.

		Marks available
ABSTRACT	150-200 words marked holistically to include most of: Aim of the study; brief theoretical or research background; hypothesis and variables being investigated; method and design; sample (who and how many); outline of procedure; summary of statistical results; brief conclusion. <i>Can the abstract be understood without referring to the full report? Yes – award 4/5 marks, No – award 3 or less</i>	5 marks
INTRODUCTION	(i) Introduction to area of the research question, including most of: domain of psychology within which it is ‘located’; relevant theory(ies) and concept(s); related previous research, classic and contemporary. <i>Is the area introduced adequately? Yes – award 4/5 marks, No – award 3 or less</i>	5 marks
	(ii) Aim of current study (1); Link to current study (1)	2 marks
	(iii) Experimental/alternative and null hypotheses accurately stated (1 mark each) including clear expression of variables and conditions of IV (where applicable); 1 further mark can be awarded for further detail such as indicating if the hypothesis is one or two tailed or mentioning chance factors.	3 marks
METHOD	<i>To be awarded holistically, taking into account complexity of procedure and materials of specific study.</i>	
i) Design	Should state whether experimental or non-experimental, and specify actual method and design (independent measures, repeated measures, matched pairs, correlational). Variables under investigation (IV and DV, or variables to be correlated) should be precisely described/operationally defined, including conditions of the IV (where study is experimental), and the meaning of DV scores. Control of extraneous and/or confounding variables should be described.	4 marks
ii) Sample/ participants	Number, ages, sex; who they were; sampling method.	4 marks
iii) Materials	This section should describe all materials used, eg: brief/consent request; standardised instructions; debrief; questionnaires; tasks; response sheets; observation schedule; diagrams, etc. All paper materials referred to here, in the Method section, should be included in appendices. Where unusual laboratory apparatus has been used, an illustration or photograph may be included.	
iv) Procedure	Detailed step-by-step account of how research procedure was conducted with each participant. Where procedure has varied according to conditions of the IV, this should be clearly described. Location/environment should be described. It should be indicated whether tasks were carried out by participants individually, or in a group. Ethical procedure should be described. <i>Method section – is sufficient information provided to permit replication? Yes – award 6-8 marks, No – award 5 or less (in total).</i>	

RESULTS	a) Choice of statistical procedures is appropriate (1); b) Elements of results are appropriately located in either this section (or appendices) (1); c) Explanation of the statistical analysis procedures that have been applied to data (inferential stats not required), including any qualitative analysis (1); d) Raw data charts and calculations (1); e) Summary table(s) of measures of central tendency and dispersion; or table of raw scores if design is correlational. (1); f) Graphs are adequately drawn (by hand or spreadsheet) (1); g) All tables/charts/graphs have a title and are referred to in the text. Axes, rows and columns are labelled. (1); h) Results are explained in terms of the hypothesis. (1)	8 marks
DISCUSSION	(i) Should state statistical results and indicate whether research hypothesis is supported/null hypothesis rejected. The findings should be explained and interpreted in terms of the variables studied. (2) Relevance of findings to existing theory/concept(s) and research evidence should be considered. (2)	4 marks
	(ii) Methodology, design and ethics of the investigation should be evaluated, and remedies suggested for any problems encountered, eg extraneous variables that should have been controlled, poor ecological validity, participant bias, etc; identification of problems specific to the current study will gain more credit. (5)	5 marks
	(iii) Implications of the findings should be discussed: suggestions may be made for further research, arising from the findings of the current study. This should be “further” research, ie a different study that is not simply a replication of the current one with improved methodology. Alternatively (or in addition), possible ‘real world’ applications of the findings may be considered. (2) This section should conclude with a brief summary of the main statistical conclusion(s), expressed in relation to hypotheses. (1)	3 marks
REFERENCES	References should be presented correctly (1); at least two relevant research studies should be given (1); they should correspond to those cited in the body of the report (1).	3 marks
PRESENTATION and STYLE	<i>Presentation and style is marked holistically to include most of:</i> Quality of presentation (can be written or typed); contents page, pages numbered; all above sections in conventional format; appropriate use of terminology; formal style of expression, appropriate to the discipline: past tense throughout, passive (impersonal) voice; anonymity/confidentiality observed, ie, no names or other identifying features of participants; coherence of whole report, as evidence of candidates’ understanding of her/his research. <i>Would someone without knowledge of the study or in the area of psychology in which the study took place be able to logically follow the investigation? Yes – award 3/4 marks, No – award 2 or less.</i>	4 marks
Total		50 marks