Qualification Awaiting Accreditation

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

This specification is for first teaching from September 2025.
First assessment will be from summer 2027.

Specification

OCR LEVEL 3 ADVANCED GCE IN

PSYCHOLOGY

H569

For first assessment in 2027

Version 0.2 (May 2024)

ocr.org.uk/alevelpsychology

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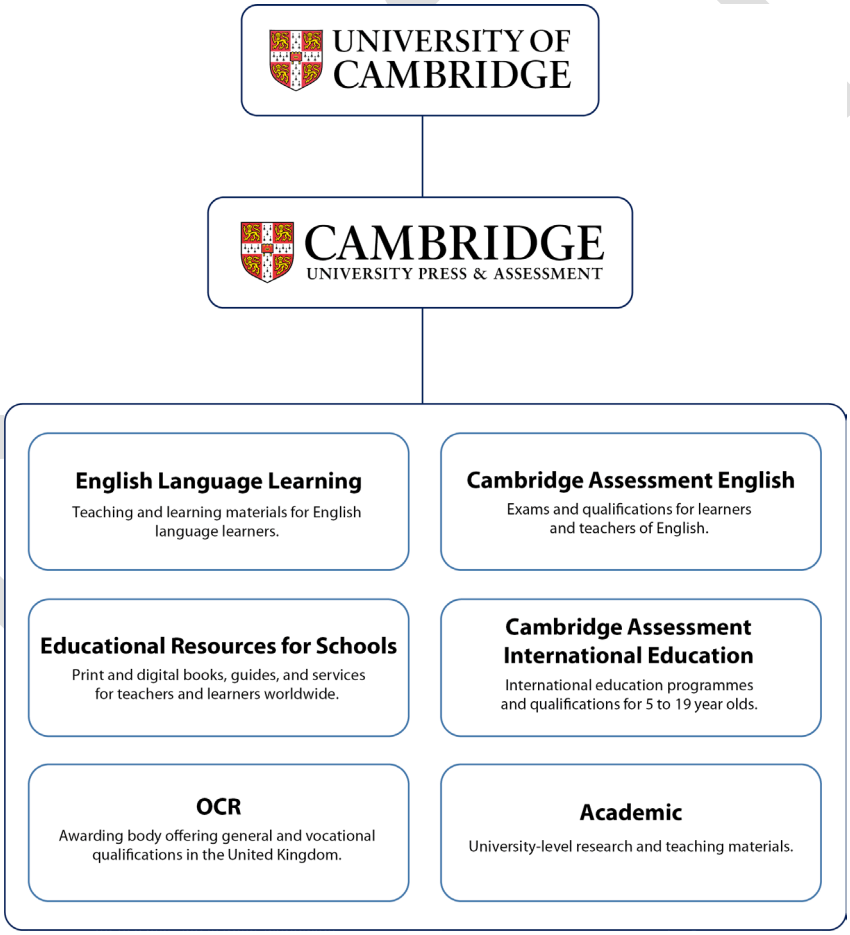

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are respectful and considerate

celebrate differences and promote positive attitudes to belonging

include perspectives that reflect the diverse cultural and lifestyle backgrounds of our society

challenge prejudicial views and unconscious biases

promote a safe and supportive approach to learning

are accessible and fair, creating positive experiences for all

provide opportunities for everyone to perform at their best

are contemporary, relevant and equip everyone to live and thrive in a global, diverse world

create a shared sense of identity in a modern mixed society with one humanity.

To learn more, including our work on accessibility in our assessment materials, visit our People and Planet page.

If you prefer to use a printed copy of the specification, consider printing a selection of pages instead of the full specification. The following are the pages which you might find useful to print:

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2. Specification at a glance

2.1 Assessment overview

Students must complete all components (01, 02 and 03) to be awarded the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology.

Content	Assessment
Planning, conducting, analysing and reporting psychological research across a range of experimental and non-experimental methodologies and techniques.	Research methods (01) 80 marks 2 hours written paper **33.3% of total A Level**
Introduces some of the central areas, perspectives, issues and debates through research in psychology.	Core studies in psychology (02)* 80 marks 2 hours written paper **33.3% of total A Level**
Compulsory sections on: ○ mental health ○ criminal psychology. Students will also study **one** out of the following applied options: ○ child psychology ○ environmental psychology ○ sport and exercise psychology.	Applied psychology (03)* 80 marks 2 hours written paper **33.3% of total A Level**

* Indicates inclusion of synoptic assessment.

2.2 Content overview

Psychology is the study of the human mind and behaviour. There are lots of possible reasons why people behave the way they do. Does a person's genes turn them to crime? Do people blindly obey authority without question? Would you make a good eyewitness? These are the sort of questions this course will cover.

Research methods (H569/01)

Research methods underpin any course of psychology and students will need to be familiar with:

- ☐ research methods and techniques
- ☐ planning and conducting research
- ☐ data recording, analysis and presentation
- ☐ report writing
- ☐ practical investigations
- ☐ science in psychology.

Core studies in psychology (H569/02)

Understanding of core studies develops critical thinking and independent learning, essential to the study of psychology. Students will need to be familiar with:

- ☐ core studies covering social, cognitive, development, biological and individual differences in psychology
- ☐ areas, perspectives, issues and debates
- ☐ practical applications.

Applied psychology (H569/03)

In this component students will be able apply their knowledge and understanding of psychology in a range of topic areas.

Students will need to be familiar with two compulsory sections:

- ☐ mental health:
  - what is mental health?
  - the medical model
  - alternatives to the medical model
  - modern approaches to mental health.
- ☐ criminal psychology:
  - turning to crime
  - building a case
  - in the courtroom
  - managing offenders.

And one from:

- ☐ child psychology
- ☐ environmental psychology
- ☐ sport and exercise psychology.

3. Subject content

3.1 Research methods (H569/01)

This component introduces and develops knowledge and understanding of the process of planning, conducting, analysing and reporting psychological research using a range of experimental and non-experimental methodologies and techniques.

It promotes an understanding of the methods of scientific enquiry used in empirical research and the relevant knowledge and skills required to conduct such research. It also encourages the acquisition of a range of evaluative concepts for reviewing and discussing the design and outcomes of research.

There is a strong focus on the requirement for students to plan, conduct and analyse their own practical investigations using the four core research methods and techniques (experiment, observation, self-report and correlation).

Where possible and appropriate, links should be made with the content of the other components (e.g., in the application of evaluative issues).

Learners are expected to use appropriate methodology, including information and communication technology.

The multiple-choice section of the examination may require candidates to utilise their knowledge of the core studies from Component 02.

It should also be noted that the content of Component 01, apart from the mathematical content, can also be assessed in Components 02 and 03.

3.1.1 Research methods and techniques

Students should have knowledge and understanding of the following research methods and techniques and their associated strengths and weaknesses.

Area of study	Content – what we will assess
Experiment	☐ laboratory experiment ☐ field experiment ☐ quasi experiment.
Observation	☐ structured ☐ unstructured ☐ naturalistic ☐ controlled ☐ participant ☐ non-participant ☐ overt ☐ covert.
Self-report	☐ questionnaire ☐ interviews o structured, semi-structured, unstructured.

Area of study	Content – what we will assess
Correlation	☐ obtaining data for correlational analysis ☐ positive correlation ☐ negative correlation ☐ no correlation.
Case study*	☐ when and why a case study method would be used.

*Students are required to know about the features of a case study but are not required to conduct one as part of their own practical investigations.

3.1.2 Planning and conducting research

Students should be familiar with the following features of planning and conducting research and their associated strengths and weaknesses.

Area of study	Content – what we will assess
Aims and hypotheses and how to formulate	☐ research aim ☐ research question ☐ alternative hypotheses ☐ null hypotheses ☐ one-tailed (directional) hypotheses ☐ two-tailed (non-directional) hypotheses.
Populations, samples and sampling techniques	☐ target population and sample ☐ random sampling ☐ snowball sampling ☐ opportunity sampling ☐ self-selected sampling.
Experimental designs	☐ repeated measures design ☐ independent measures design ☐ matched participants design.
Variables and how they are operationalised	☐ independent variable (IV) ☐ dependent variable (DV) ☐ control of extraneous variables (researcher, situational and participant).
Designing observations	☐ behavioural categories ☐ time sampling ☐ event sampling.
Designing self-reports	☐ open questions ☐ closed questions ☐ rating scales

Area of study	Content – what we will assess
	○ numerical rating scale, Likert rating scale, semantic differential rating scale.

3.1.3 Data recording, analysis and presentation

Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the process and procedures involved in the collection, analysis and presentation of data. This will necessitate the ability to perform some calculations (please see Section 3.4 for examples of mathematical requirements).

Area of study	Content – what we will assess
Raw data	☐ design of raw data recording tables ☐ use of raw data recording tables ☐ standard and decimal form ☐ significant figures ☐ make estimations from data collected.
Levels of data	☐ nominal level data ☐ ordinal level data ☐ interval level data.
Types of data	☐ quantitative data ☐ qualitative data ☐ primary data ☐ secondary data.
Descriptive statistics	☐ measures of central tendency ○ mean, median, mode ☐ measures of dispersion ○ range, variance, standard deviation ☐ ratio ☐ percentages ☐ fractions ☐ frequency tables (tally chart).
Graphs*	☐ line graphs ☐ pie charts ☐ bar charts ☐ histograms ☐ scatter diagrams.
Inferential statistics	☐ normal distribution curves ☐ skewed distribution curves ☐ probability ☐ significance levels ☐ criteria for using a parametric test

Area of study	Content – what we will assess
	☐ criteria for using a specific non-parametric inferential test (Mann-Whitney U test, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test, Chi-square, Binomial Sign test and Spearman's Rho) ☐ using statistical tables of critical values for all five named non-parametric inferential tests ☐ write a significance statement including the calculated value, the critical value and significance level, accept or reject the null hypothesis ☐ calculate Chi-square ☐ type 1 errors ☐ type 2 errors ☐ symbols: =, <, <<, >>, >, ∝, ~, ≥, ≤
Methodological issues	☐ representativeness ☐ generalisability ☐ reliability o internal, external, inter-rater, test-retest, split-half ☐ validity o internal, face, construct, concurrent, predictive, external, population, ecological ☐ demand characteristics ☐ social desirability ☐ researcher/observer bias ☐ researcher/observer effect(s) ☐ ethical issues in the treatment of humans, other organisms and the environment, including: ☐ the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct o Respect – informed consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality o Competence o Responsibility – protection of participant, debrief o Integrity – deception ☐ Animal ethics and the three R's: o Replacement o Reduction o Refinement

*Students will not be asked to draw graphs/charts with a high degree of precision. For example, when sketching a pie chart, segments would only need to be roughly proportionate to calculated percentages.

3.1.4 Report writing

Students should have knowledge of the conventions of reporting research in a practical report and demonstrate understanding of the role, content and purpose of each of the main sections and sub-sections.

Area of study	Content – what we will assess
Sections and sub-sections of a practical report	☐ abstract ☐ introduction ☐ method (design, sample, materials/apparatus, procedure) ☐ results ☐ discussion ☐ references ☐ appendices.
Citing academic references	☐ a familiarity with citing academic research using the Harvard system of referencing, e.g., Milgram, S. (1963) Behavioral study of obedience. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 67, (4), 371–378.
Peer review	☐ appreciate the role of the psychological community in validating new knowledge and ensuring integrity through the process of peer review

3.1.5 Science in psychology

Students should understand how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how psychology contributes to the success of the economy and society. Students should be aware of the nature and principles of scientific enquiry through knowledge and understanding of the following concepts.

Content – what we will assess
☐ the study of cause-and-effect ☐ falsification ☐ replicability ☐ objectivity ☐ hypothesis testing ☐ manipulation of variables ☐ control and standardisation ☐ quantifiable measurements.

3.1.6 Practical investigations

Students are expected to conduct and analyse their own ethical practical investigations, including appropriate risk assessment and management, (please see Section 3.5) across a range of contexts, and use information and communication technology (ICT).

Content – what we will assess
Students should have undertaken the following practical investigations and be prepared to be assessed on them individually: ☐ experiment ☐ observation ☐ self-report ☐ correlation.

3.2 Core studies in psychology (H569/02)

Core studies in psychology (Component 02) aims to develop the critical thinking and independent learning skills essential to the scientific study of psychology. The selected core studies reflect the contribution of psychology to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity.

This component develops students' ability to make evaluative points about the studies and their ability to see the studies in the context of psychological areas, perspectives, issues and debates.

3.2.1 Section A: Core studies

This section will assess the students' knowledge and understanding of the core studies, as well as their ability to evaluate the studies. The core studies are placed within a broad area of investigation. Within each area, the students are required to examine three core studies. Holistically, the studies have been selected to represent a variety of research methodologies, designs, samples, sampling methods, issues and debates. Students will need to refer to topics from Component 01 when analysing and evaluating core studies. Students should also be able to comment on the contribution of core studies to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity. For full references please see Section 3.6.

Area	Study	Topic
Social	Milgram (1963)	Obedience to authority
	Piliavin et al. (1969)	Helping behaviour
	Levine (2001)	Cross-cultural altruism
Cognitive	Loftus and Palmer (1974)	Eyewitness testimony
	Grant et al. (1998)	Context-dependent memory
	Simons and Chabris (1999)	Visual inattention
Developmental	Bandura et al. (1961)	Transmission of aggression
	Chaney et al. (2004)	Adherence to medical regimes
	Lee et al. (1997)	Lying and truth telling
Biological	Sperry (1968)	Lateralisation of function in the brain
	Casey et al. (2011)	Delayed gratification
	Maguire et al. (2000)	Brain plasticity
Individual differences	Freud (1909)	Phobias
	Baron-Cohen et al. (1997)	Autism and theory of mind
	Van Leeuwen et al. (2008)	Intelligence

Core studies	Content – what we will assess

Individual studies	'Tell the story' of each core study in terms of:
	☐ aim
	☐ method
	  o design
	  o sample
	  o materials/apparatus
	  o procedure
	☐ findings/results
	☐ conclusions
	☐ how the study relates to the topic
	☐ how the study could be improved.

Core studies in their area	☐ similarities between studies
	☐ differences between studies
	☐ to what extent do studies contribute to our understanding of:
	  o individual diversity?
	  o social diversity?
	  o cultural diversity?
	☐ usefulness of studies.

Methodological issues	☐ the strengths and weaknesses of the different research methods and techniques ☐ the strengths and weaknesses of different types of data ☐ ethical issues ☐ validity ☐ reliability ☐ sampling bias ☐ ethnocentrism.

3.2.2 Section B: Areas, perspectives, issues and debates

In this section, students will be asked questions that invite them to generate an extended discussion, recognising the inter-relationship between different areas, perspectives, issues and debates in psychology.

The specification places core studies within particular areas, but students may refer to other appropriate studies from Component 03 where a question indicates this is permissible. They may also argue that a core study placed within one area can be seen as falling within another area.

Core studies that come from a behaviourist perspective include Bandura and Chaney. Psychodynamic ideas are referred to in the research by Freud. However, similar to the above, students may refer to other appropriate studies from Component 03 where a question indicates this is permissible.

Areas, perspectives, issues and debates	Content – what we will assess
Areas ☐ Social ☐ Cognitive ☐ Developmental ☐ Biological ☐ Individual Differences	☐ the defining principles and concepts of each area ☐ research to illustrate each area ☐ strengths and weaknesses of each area ☐ applications of each area ☐ how each area is different from and similar to other areas/perspectives
Perspectives ☐ Behaviourist ☐ Psychodynamic	☐ the defining principles and concepts of each perspective ☐ research to illustrate each perspective ☐ strengths and weaknesses of each perspective ☐ applications of each perspective ☐ how each perspective is different from and similar to the other perspective/areas.
Issues ☐ Ethical issues ☐ Conducting socially sensitive research ☐ Usefulness of research	☐ the defining principles and concepts of each issue ☐ research to illustrate the different issues ☐ strengths and weaknesses related to the different issues.
Debates ☐ Nature/nurture ☐ Freewill/determinism ☐ Reductionism/holism ☐ Individual/situational explanations ☐ Psychology as a science	☐ the defining principles and concepts of each debate ☐ different positions within each debate ☐ research to illustrate different positions within each debate ☐ strengths and weaknesses of the different positions within each debate

3.2.3 Section C: Practical applications

To encourage awareness of practical applications of psychology, this section will require students to apply their knowledge and understanding of psychology to a novel source. The source could be a newspaper or magazine article, a blog, a diary entry, email exchange or equivalent written source. It is advised that teachers prepare students for this section by giving them a variety of sources to consider.

Content – what we will assess
☐ identify and apply the psychological content in the source
☐ make evidence-based suggestions in relation to the source
☐ consider the strengths and weaknesses of the suggestion(s) made.

3.3 Applied psychology (H569/03)

This component consists of **two** compulsory sections:

- Mental health
- Criminal psychology.

Students will also choose to study **one** out of the following applied psychology options:

- Child psychology
- Environmental psychology
- Sport and exercise psychology.

Each topic contains the following:

Background

With reference to psychology, students should be able to explain and exemplify the background and consider relevant issues and debates in relation to the topic area.

Key studies

Students should understand each key study and how it relates to the topic.

Application

Students will be presented with a novel situation. They should be able to apply their psychological knowledge to explain strategies to change behaviour or explain how they would conduct an appropriate investigation into the topic area.

Students must be able to:
☐ describe concepts, theories and studies as specified below
☐ discuss and apply methodological issues and debates in psychology to the background and key studies
☐ explain and exemplify the background in each topic
☐ apply the background and key studies to novel situations
☐ evaluate the contribution the key studies have made to the topic
☐ suggest possible improvements to key studies
☐ explain how psychology contributes to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity
☐ explain how research into mental health and criminal psychology contribute to the success of the economy and society.

Students must be able to apply each of the following issues and debates to each topic and relevant research.

Issues	Debates
☐ Ethical issues	☐ Nature/nurture
☐ Conducting socially sensitive research	☐ Freewill/determinism
☐ Usefulness of research	☐ Reductionism/holism
☐ Validity	☐ Individual/situational explanations

Issues	Debates
☐ Reliability ☐ Sampling bias	☐ Psychology as a science

3.3.1 Section A: Mental health

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
What is mental health?	☐ Three historical views of mental illness: humoural, supernatural and hospital movement. ☐ Four definitions of abnormality: deviation from social norms, failure to function adequately, statistical infrequency, and deviation from ideal mental health. ☐ Categorising mental disorders using the ICD and DSM, including cultural biases in diagnosis.	Neighbors et al. (2003) Racial differences in DSM diagnosis using a semi-structured instrument: the importance of clinical judgment in the diagnosis of African Americans.	Using definitions of abnormality to assess mental illness. Using the ICD and DSM to diagnose depression, phobias and schizophrenia.
The medical model	Medical explanations of general mental illness: ☐ Biochemical explanation. ☐ Genetic explanation. ☐ Brain abnormality.	Gottesman et al. (2010) Mental disorders in offspring with two psychiatrically ill parents.	The use of drug treatment for one specific disorder (depression, phobias or schizophrenia).
Alternatives to the medical model	Non-medical explanations of general mental illness: ☐ Behaviourist explanation. ☐ Cognitive explanation. ☐ Psychodynamic explanation.	Watson and Raynor (1920) Conditioned emotional reactions.	The use of CBT as a treatment for depression or schizophrenia. The use of systematic desensitisation as a treatment for phobias.
Modern approaches to mental health	☐ The roles of psychologists and psychiatrists in diagnosing and treating mental illness.	Fulmer et al. (2018) Using psychological artificial intelligence (Tess) to relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety:	The use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology to support mental wellbeing.

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
	☐ The role of technology in supporting mental health. ☐ The promotion of mental wellbeing.	randomized controlled trial.	

3.3.2 Section B: Criminal psychology

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
Turning to crime	☐ One biological explanation of criminal behaviour. ☐ One social explanation of criminal behaviour. ☐ One cognitive explanation of criminal behaviour.	Raine et al. (1997) Brain abnormalities in murderers indicated by positron emission tomography.	The use of zero-tolerance policing to prevent crime. The use of anger management to prevent violent crime.
Building a case	☐ Emotional context in the processing of forensic evidence. ☐ Cognitive biases in the processing of forensic evidence. ☐ Biases involved when working for the prosecution or defence in the processing of forensic evidence.	Hall and Player (2008) Will the introduction of an emotional context affect fingerprint analysis and decision-making?	How ACE-V can be used to reduce bias in the processing of forensic evidence.
In the courtroom	How juries can be persuaded by: ☐ Characteristics of witnesses and defendants (attractiveness, confidence and ethnicity) ☐ Inadmissible evidence ☐ Pre-trial publicity.	Dixon et al. (2002) Effects of regional accent, race, and crime type on attributions of guilt.	The use of expert witnesses to reduce external influences on jury decision-making. How the order of testimony in the courtroom can influence jury decision-making.
Managing offenders	☐ Imprisonment as a response to criminal behaviour. ☐ Non-custodial punishment as a	Haney, Banks and Zimbardo (1973) A study of prisoners and guards in a simulated prison.	The use of restorative justice to reduce reoffending.

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
	response to criminal behaviour. ☐ Rehabilitation as a response to criminal behaviour.		

3.3.3 Section C: Options

3.3.3.1 Option 1: Child Psychology

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
Pre-adult brain development	How brain development impacts risk-taking behaviour.	Barkley-Levenson and Galván (2014) Neural representation of expected value in the adolescent brain.	Two strategies to reduce risk-taking behaviours. Understanding how research in this topic can be undertaken.
Perceptual development	Perceptual development in children and animals.	Gibson and Walk (1960) The 'Visual Cliff'.	Two strategies to develop perception in young children. Understanding how research in this topic can be undertaken.
The development of attachment	The development of attachment in babies.	Ainsworth and Bell (1970) Attachment, exploration and separation: Illustrated by the behaviour of one-year-olds in a strange situation.	Two strategies to develop an attachment friendly environment. Understanding of how research in this topic can be undertaken.

3.3.3.2 Option 2: Environmental psychology

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
Biological rhythms	How disruption to biological rhythms affects behaviour.	Czeisler et al. (1982) Rotating shift work schedules that disrupt sleep are improved by applying circadian principles.	Two strategies for reducing the effects of shift work.

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
			Understanding of how research in this topic can be undertaken.
Recycling and other conservation behaviours	The factors which influence the tendency to conserve or recycle.	Lord (1994) Motivating recycling behaviour: A quasi-experimental investigation of message and source strategies.	Two strategies to increase recycling. Understanding of how research in this topic can be undertaken.
Psychological effects of the built environment	The impact of the built environment and urban renewal on our wellbeing.	Ulrich (1984) View through a window may influence recovery from surgery.	Two examples of environmental design used to improve health and wellbeing. Understanding of how research in this topic can be undertaken.

3.3.3.3 Option 3: Sport and exercise psychology

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
Exercise and mental health	Benefits of exercise to mental health.	Lewis et al. (2014) Mood changes following social dance sessions in people with Parkinson's Disease.	Two exercise strategies to improve mental health. Understanding of how research in this topic can be undertaken.
Motivation	How self-efficacy and sports confidence (including imagery and sports orientation) affects motivation.	Munroe-Chandler et al. (2008) Playing with confidence: The relationship between imagery use and self-confidence and self-efficacy in youth soccer players.	Two strategies for motivating athletes. Understanding of how research in this topic can be undertaken.
Audience effects	How an audience can facilitate or inhibit sports performance.	Wunderlich et al. (2021) How does spectator presence affect football?	Two strategies for increasing performance in spectator sports.

Topic	Background	Key Study	Application
			Understanding of how research in this topic can be undertaken.

For full references, please see Section 3.7.

3.4 Mathematical requirements (Component 01)

Within the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology, 10% of the marks available within written examinations will be for assessment of mathematics (in the context of psychology) at a Level 2 standard, or higher. Lower-level mathematical skills may still be assessed within examination papers but will not count within the 10% weighting for psychology. All assessment of these skills will be in the Component 01 examination.

The tables below provide examples of the mathematical requirements which will be assessed in Component 01.

D.0 Arithmetic and numerical computation

Mathematical skills		Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of A Level psychology (assessment is not limited to the examples given below)
D.0.1	Recognise and use expressions in decimal and standard form	For example, converting data in standard form from a results table into decimal form in order to construct a pie chart.
D.0.2	Use ratios, fractions and percentages	For example, calculating the percentages of cases that fall into different categories in an observation study.
D.0.3	Estimate results	For example, commenting on the spread of scores for a set of data, which would require estimating the range.

D.1 Handling data

Mathematical skills		Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of A Level psychology (assessment is not limited to the examples given below)
D.1.1	Use an appropriate number of significant figures	For example, expressing a correlation coefficient to two or three significant figures.
D.1.2	Find arithmetic means	For example, calculating the means for two conditions using raw data from a class experiment.
D.1.3	Construct and interpret frequency tables and diagrams, bar charts and histograms	For example, selecting and sketching an appropriate form of data display for a given set of data.
D.1.4	Understand simple probability	For example, explaining the difference between the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance.
D.1.5	Understand the principles of sampling as applied to scientific data	For example, explaining how a random or stratified sample could be obtained from a target population.
D.1.6	Understand the terms mean, median and mode	For example, explaining the differences between the mean, median and mode and selecting which measure

Mathematical skills		Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of A Level psychology (assessment is not limited to the examples given below)
		of central tendency is most appropriate for a given set of data. Calculate standard deviation.
D.1.7	Use a scatter diagram to identify a correlation between two variables	For example, plotting two variables from an investigation on a scatter diagram and identifying the pattern as a positive correlation, a negative correlation or no correlation.
D.1.8	Use a statistical test	For example, calculating a non-parametric test of differences using data from a given experiment.
D.1.9	Make order of magnitude calculations	For example, estimating the mean test score for a large number of participants on the basis of the total overall score.
D.1.10	Distinguish between levels of measurement	For example, stating the level of measurement (nominal, ordinal or interval) that has been used in a study.
D.1.11	Know the characteristics of normal and skewed distributions	For example, being presented with a set of scores from an experiment and being asked to indicate the position of the mean (or median, or mode).
D.1.12	Select an appropriate statistical test	For example, selecting a suitable inferential test for a given practical investigation and explaining why the chosen test is appropriate.
D.1.13	Use statistical tables to determine significance	For example, using an extract from statistical tables to say whether or not a given observed value is significant at the 0.05 level of significance for a one-tailed test.
D.1.14	Understand measures of dispersion, including standard deviation and range	For example, explaining why the standard deviation might be a more useful measure of dispersion for a given set of scores e.g., where there is an outlying score.
D.1.15	Understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative data	For example, explaining how a given qualitative measure (for example, an interview transcript) might be converted into quantitative data.
D.1.16	Understand the difference between primary and secondary data	For example, stating whether data collected by a researcher dealing directly with participants is primary or secondary data.

D.2 Algebra

Mathematical skills		Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of A Level psychology (assessment is not limited to the examples given below)
D.2.1	Understand and use the symbols: =, <, <<, >>, >, ∝, ~.	For example, expressing the outcome of an inferential test in the conventional form by stating the level of significance at the 0.05 level or 0.01 level by using symbols appropriately.
D.2.2	Substitute numerical values into algebraic equations using appropriate units for physical quantities	For example, inserting the appropriate values from a given set of data into the formula for a statistical test e.g. inserting the N value (for the number of scores) into the Chi-square formula.
D.2.3	Solve simple algebraic equations ~~For example, calculating the degrees of freedom for a Chi Square test.~~	~~Solve simple algebraic equations~~ For example, calculating the degrees of freedom for a Chi-square test.

D.3 Graphs

Mathematical skills		Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of A Level psychology (assessment is not limited to the examples given below)
D.3.1	Translate information between graphical, numerical and algebraic forms	For example, using a set of numerical data (a set of scores) from a record sheet to construct a bar graph.
D.3.2	Plot two variables from experimental or other data	For example, sketching a scatter diagram using two sets of data from a correlational investigation.

3.5 Risk Assessment and Management

In UK law, health and safety is primarily the responsibility of the employer. In a school or college the employer could be a local education authority, the governing body or board of trustees. Employees, (teachers/lecturers, technicians etc), have a legal duty to cooperate with their employer on health and safety matters. Useful advice for education establishments on the requirements for risk assessment can be found on the HSE website.

There is no specific legal requirement that detailed risk assessment forms should be completed for each practical activity, although a minority of employers may require this.

3.6 Core study references (Component 02)

Social

Milgram, S. (1963) Behavioral study of obedience. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67, (4), 371–378.

Piliavin, I. M., Rodin, J., & Piliavin, J. A. (1969), Good Samaritanism: An underground phenomenon? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 13, (4) 289–299.

Levine, R. V, Norenzayan, A. & Philbrick, K. (2001) Cross-cultural differences in helping strangers. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 32, (5), 543–560.

Cognitive

Loftus, E. F. & Palmer, J. C. (1974) Reconstruction of automobile destruction: An example of the interaction between language and memory. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 13, (5) 585–589.

Grant, H. M., Lane, C. Bredahl, J. C., Clay. J., Ferrie, J., Groves, J. E., McDorman, T. A. & Dark, V. J. (1998) Context-dependent memory for meaningful material: Information for students. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 12, (6), 617–623.

Simons, D.J. & Chabris, C.F. (1999) Gorillas in our midst: sustained inattentional blindness for dynamic events. *Perception*, 28, 1059–1074.

Developmental

Bandura, A., Ross, D. & Ross, S. A. (1961) Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63, (3), 575–582.

Chaney, G., Clements, B., Landau, L., Bulsara, M. & Watt, P. (2004) A new asthma spacer device to improve compliance in children: a pilot study. *Respirology*, 9, (4), 499–506.

Lee, K., Cameron, C. A., Xu, F., Fu, G., & Board, J. (1997). Chinese and Canadian children's evaluations of lying and truth-telling. *Child Development*, 68, (5), 924–934.

Biological

Sperry, R. W. (1968) Hemisphere deconnection and unity in conscious awareness. *American Psychologist*, 23, 723–733.

Casey, B. J., Somerville, L. H., Gotlib, I. H., Ayduk, O., Franklin, N. T., Askren, M. K., Jonides, J., Berman, M., Wilson, N., Teslovich, T., Glover, G., Zayas, V., Mischel, W. & Shoda, Y. (2011) Behavioral and neural correlates of delay of gratification 40 years later. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 108, (36), 14998–15003.

Maguire, E. A., Gadian, D. G., Johnsrude, I. S., Good, C. D., Ashburner, J., Frackowiak, R. S. & Frith, C. D. (2000) Navigation-related structural change in the hippocampi of taxi-drivers. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 97, (8), 4398–4403.

Individual differences

Freud, S. (1909) Analysis of a phobia of a five-year-old boy. *The Pelican Freud Library*, (1997) Vol. 8, Case Histories, ~~p.~~ 169–306.

Baron-Cohen, S., Jolliffe, T., Mortimore, C. & Robertson, M. (1997) Another advanced test of theory of mind: evidence from very high functioning adults with autism or Asperger Syndrome. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38, 813–822.

Van Leeuwen, M., Van den Berg, S. M. & Boomsma, D. (2008) A twin-family study of general IQ. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 18, 76–88.

3.7 Applied psychology references (Component 03)

Section A: Mental health

Neighbors et al. (mental health) - Neighbors HW, Trierweiler SJ, Ford BC, Muroff JR. (2003) Racial differences in DSM diagnosis using a semi-structured instrument: the importance of clinical judgment in the diagnosis of African Americans. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior 44* (3), 237–56.

Gottesman, I. I., Laursen, T. M., Bertelsen, A. & Mortensen, P. B. (2010) Severe mental disorders in offspring with 2 psychiatrically ill parents. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 67, (3), 252–257.

Watson & Raynor (mental health) - Watson, J. B., & Rayner, R. (1920). Conditioned emotional reactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 3*(1), 1–14.

Fulmer et al. (mental health) Fulmer R, Joerin A, Gentile B, Lakerink L, Rauws M (2018). Using Psychological Artificial Intelligence (Tess) to Relieve Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety: Randomized Controlled Trial. *JMIR Ment Health* 5(4), e64.

Section B: ~~Option 2~~ Criminal psychology

Raine, A., Buchsbaum, M., & LaCasse, L. (1997) Brain abnormalities in murderers indicated by positron emission tomography. *Biological Psychiatry*, 42, (6), 495–508.

Hall, L. J. & Player, E. (2008) Will the introduction of an emotional context affect fingerprint analysis and decision-making? *Forensic Science International*, 181, (1), 36–39.

Dixon, J.A., Mahoney, B., Cocks, R. (2002). Accents of Guilt Effects of Regional Accent, race, and Crime Type on Attributions of Guilt. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 21(2), 162–168.

Haney, C., Banks, W. C. & Zimbardo, P. G. (1973) Study of prisoners and guards in a simulated prison. *Naval Research Reviews*, 9, 1–17.

Section C: Option 1 Child psychology

Barkley-Levenson, E. & Galván, A. (2014) Neural representation of expected value in the adolescent brain. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 111, 1646–1651.

Gibson, E. J. & Walk, P. D. (1960) The visual cliff. *Scientific American*, 202, (4), 64–71.

Ainsworth, M. D. S. & Bell, S. (1970) Attachment, Exploration and Separation: Illustrated by the Behavior of One-year-olds in a Strange Situation. *Child Development*, 41, (1), 49–67.

Section C: Option 2 Environmental psychology

Czeisler, C. A., Moore-Ede, M. C. & Coleman, R. H. (1982) Rotating shift work schedules that disrupt sleep are improved by applying circadian principles. *Science*, 217, (4558), 460–463.

Lord, K. R. (1994) Motivating recycling behaviour: A quasi-experimental investigation of message and source strategies. *Psychology & Marketing*, 11, (4), 341–358.

Ulrich, R. S. (1984) View through a window may influence recovery from surgery. *Science, New Series*, 224, (4647), 420–421.

Section C: Option 3 Sport and exercise psychology

Lewis, C., Annett, L., Davenport, S., Hall, A. & Lovatt, P. (2014) Mood changes following social dance sessions in people with Parkinson's Disease. *Journal of Health Psychology*. 19, (4).

Monroe-Chandler, K., Hall, C. & Fishburne, G. (2008) Playing with confidence: the relationship between imagery use and self-confidence and self-efficacy in youth soccer players. *Journal of Sports Science*. 26, (14), 1539–1546.

Wunderlich et al. (sport and exercise) - Wunderlich F, Weigelt M, Rein R, Memmert D (2021) How does spectator presence affect football? Home advantage remains in European top-class football matches played without spectators during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PLOS ONE 16* (3), e0248590.

3.8 Aims and Learning outcomes

We believe in developing specifications that help you bring the subject to life and inspire your students to achieve more.

We've created teacher-friendly specifications based on extensive research and engagement with teachers. They're designed to be straightforward and accessible so that you can tailor the delivery of the course to suit your needs. We aim to encourage students to become responsible for their own learning, confident in discussing ideas, innovative and engaged.

The OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology encourages students to be inspired, motivated and challenged by following a broad, coherent, practical, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. The specification provides insight into, and experience of, how psychology works, stimulating students' curiosity and encouraging them to engage with psychology in their everyday lives, enabling them to make informed choices about further study and about career choices. It enables students to:

- develop essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of the subject and how they relate to each other
- develop and demonstrate a deep appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific methods
- develop competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem solving skills
- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for the subject, including developing an interest in further study and careers associated with the subject
- understand how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society

The main purpose of this qualification is to prepare students by providing a suitable foundation for the study of psychology or related courses in Higher Education. A further purpose of this qualification is to prepare students intending to pursue careers or further study in social sciences, or as part of a general education. In addition, the qualification aims to develop students' interest in and enthusiasm for the subject and inspire them to take an interest in further study and careers within psychology.

4. Assessment

4.1 Forms of assessment

For this qualification students must take all components as detailed in the table below.

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology	
(01) Research methods	
2 hours Written paper Externally assessed 3 sections Students answer all questions 80 marks* **33.3% of the total A Level**	**Section A: Multiple choice** 15 questions from across the component content. Questions could also relate to the research methods used in the core studies. **Section B: Research design and response** Assessment will focus on a novel source. The themes for questions will be: • the planning and design of research • the evaluation of research • improvements to research. **Section C: Data analysis and interpretation** This section will require students to analyse and interpret novel data or a piece of hypothetical research using descriptive and/or inferential statistics. * At least 24 of the marks available for this component will be for assessment of mathematics in the context of psychology.
(02) Core studies in psychology	
2 hours Written paper Externally assessed 3 sections Students answer all questions 80 marks **33.3% of the total A Level**	**Section A: Core studies** Questions based on the core studies individually, in their pairs or in terms of their key theme. **Section B: Areas, perspectives, issues and debates** Questions will focus on areas, perspectives and debates. **Section C: Practical applications** Questions will require students to apply their knowledge and understanding of psychology to a novel source.

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology	
(03) Applied psychology	
2 hours Written paper Externally assessed 3 sections Students answer **all** questions from Sections A and B and **all** questions from **one** option in Section C. 80 marks	**Section A: Mental health** Compulsory questions. These will range from short answer to extended response questions. **Section B: Criminal psychology** Compulsory questions. These will range from short answer to extended response questions. **Section C: Options** Section C has **three** options: • child psychology • environmental psychology • sport and exercise psychology. Students answer **one** option they have studied. Each option has **two** question parts.
33.3% of the total A Level	

4.2 Assessment of extended response

The assessment materials for this qualification provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained and coherent line of reasoning, that is relevant, substantiated and logically structured and marks for extended responses are integrated into the marking criteria.

4.3 Assessment objectives (AOs)

There are three assessment objectives in the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology and these are detailed in the table below.

Students are expected to:

Assessment Objectives	
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures: • in a theoretical context. • in a practical context. • when handling qualitative data. • when handling quantitative data.
AO3	Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to: • make judgements and reach conclusions. • develop and refine practical design and procedures.

The relationship between the assessment objectives and the components are shown in the following table:

Component	% of overall A Level in Psychology		
	AO1	AO2	AO3
Research methods (H569/01)	4%–6%	16%–18%	11%–13%
Core studies in psychology (H569/02)	13%–15%	8%–10%	11%–13%
Applied psychology (H569/03)	11%–14%	6%–8%	13%–14%
Total	**30%–35%**	**30%–35%**	**35%–40%**

4.4 Command words*

The table below highlights the command words used in this qualification's assessments.

Key command word	Definition
Calculate	Work out the numerical value. Show your working when asked to.
Describe	Give an account using relevant concepts, processes, characteristics and, if necessary, examples.
Discuss	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments or factors. Opinions, evaluation points or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
Evaluate	Judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount, or value of something, exploring the strengths and limitations of both sides of an argument against selected criteria.
Explain	Use relevant knowledge and/or evidence and/or ideas to demonstrate understanding of (and in some subjects set out mechanisms as to) why something is the case or how something happens.
Identify	Recognise/find/select the required answer.
Justify	Use evidence and clear reasoning to support a case.
Outline	Give a short account, summary or description.
Sketch	Produce a simple, freehand drawing to illustrate the general point(s) being conveyed, using annotations as required.
State	Express clearly and briefly.
Suggest	Give possible alternatives, produce an idea, put forward (for example) an idea or a plan for consideration.
Write	Write a response as requested in the question. Neither working or justification is required.

*Command words should not be seen in isolation, it is the wording of the whole question, along with the command word that should guide student responses.

4.5 Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment is the students' understanding of the connections between different elements of the subject. It involves the explicit drawing together of knowledge, skills and understanding from across different parts of the A Level course.

Synoptic assessment is included in Components 02 and 03. Students are encouraged to think holistically and develop their skills of thinking as a psychologist. Question which include the stem 'Use [evidence/research/studies, etc] from appropriate research from across your course of study to support your answer' will be used to indicate to students this is a synoptic question.

4.6 Calculating qualification results

A student's overall qualification grade for the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology will be calculated by adding together their marks from the three question papers taken to give their total weighted mark.

This mark will then be compared to the qualification level grade boundaries for the relevant exam series to determine the student's overall qualification grade.

Further help and support

To find out more, you can also read our:

Assessment Story where we explain our assessment approach

Annotated sample assessment material (SAMs) where we explain the key points for each exam.

Request trial access to Teach Cambridge to explore the full range of teacher support or ask your exams officer to set up your account.

5. Admin

5.1 Before you start

5.1.1 Prior knowledge, learning and progression

No prior knowledge of the subject is required. The specification builds on, but does not depend on, the knowledge, understanding and skills specified for GCSE Psychology, but will build on the skills, knowledge and understanding set out in the GCSE criteria/content for science. In order to be able to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in science, students need to have been taught, and to have acquired competence in, the appropriate areas of mathematics relevant to the subject as detailed in the subject criteria.

Throughout the course of study students are encouraged to develop an awareness of the role of psychology in society and its applications to many situations.

The qualification is therefore suitable for students intending to pursue any career in which an understanding of human behaviour is needed. The qualification is also suitable for any further studying social sciences, or as part of a course of general education.

There is an emphasis on research skills and enquiry in order to enable the student to progress into higher levels of education. The specification therefore provides a suitable foundation for the study of psychology and/or related courses in Higher Education.

5.1.2 Total qualification time

Total qualification time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a student to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours and hours spent in preparation, study and assessment.

The total qualification time for A Level Psychology is 360 hours. The total guided learning time is 360 hours.

5.1.3 Overlap with other qualifications

There is a small degree of overlap between the content of this specification and that for the current OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Physical Education.

5.1.4 Qualification availability outside of England

This qualification is available in England. It is also available in Northern Ireland. (Please note that for delivery in Northern Ireland, the qualification must have approval from the Department for Education. Schools and colleges must seek this before commencing the qualification. For further information please see the DfE website.) It is not available in Wales.

5.1.5 Language

This qualification is available in English only. All assessment materials are available in English only and all candidate work must be in English.

5.1.6 Assessment availability

There will be one examination series available each year in May/June to **all** students.

This specification will be certificated from the June 2027 examination series onwards.

All examined question papers must be taken in the same examination series at the end of the course.

5.1.7 Special consideration

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to marks or grades to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time the assessment was taken. Detailed information about eligibility for special consideration can be found in the JCQ A guide to the special consideration process.

5.1.8 Malpractice

Any breach of the regulations for the conduct of examinations may constitute malpractice (which includes maladministration) and must be reported to OCR as soon as it is detected. Detailed information on malpractice can be found in the JCQ Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures.

5.1.9 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements allow students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment. Applications for these should be made before the examination series. Detailed information about eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

5.1.10 External assessment arrangements

Regulations governing examination arrangements are contained in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations.

Students are permitted to use a scientific or graphical calculator for Component 01. Calculators are subject to the rules in the document Instructions for Conducting Examinations published annually by JCQ.

5.1.10.1 Private candidates

Private candidates may enter for OCR assessments.

A private candidate is someone who pursues a course of study independently but takes an examination or assessment at an approved examination centre. A private candidate may be a part-time student, someone taking a distance learning course, or someone being tutored privately. They must be based in the UK.

Private candidates need to contact OCR approved centres to establish whether they are prepared to host them as a private candidate. The centre may charge for this facility and OCR recommends that the arrangement is made early in the course.

Further guidance for private candidates may be found on the OCR website.

5.2 Making entries

5.2.1 Pre-assessment

5.2.1.1 Estimated entries

Estimated entries are your best projection of the number of students who will be entered for a qualification in a particular series. Estimated entries should be submitted to OCR by the specified deadline. They are free and do not commit your centre in any way.

5.2.1.2 Final entries

Final entries provide OCR with detailed data for each student, showing each assessment to be taken. It is essential that you use the correct entry code, considering the relevant entry rules.

Final entries must be submitted to OCR by the published deadlines or late entry fees will apply.

All students taking the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology must be entered for H569.

Entry code	Title	Component code	Component title	Assessment type
H569	Psychology	01	Research methods	External Assessment
		02	Core studies in psychology	External Assessment
		03	Applied psychology	External Assessment

5.2.1.3 Collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system

Ofqual has published guidance on collecting evidence of student performance as part of long-term contingency arrangements to improve the resilience of the qualifications system. You should review and consider this guidance when delivering this qualification to students at your centre.

For more detailed information on collecting of evidence of student performance please visit our website at www.ocr.org.uk/administration/general-qualifications/assessment.

5.2.2 Retaking the qualification

Students can retake the qualification as many times as they wish. They retake all components of the qualification.

5.3 After the exams

5.3.1 Results and certificates

5.3.1.1 Grade Scale

A Level qualifications are graded on the scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, where A* is the highest. Students who do not to reach the minimum standard of E will be Unclassified (U). Only subjects in which grades A* to E are attained will be recorded on certificates.

5.3.1.2 Results

Results are released to centres and students for information and to allow any queries to be resolved **before** certificates are issued.

Centres will have access to the following results information for each student:

The grade for the qualification.
The raw mark for each component.
The total weighted mark for the qualification.

The following supporting information will be available:

Raw mark grade boundaries for each component.
Weighted mark grade boundaries for the qualification.

Until certificates are issued, results are deemed to be provisional and may be subject to amendment.

A student's final results will be recorded on an OCR certificate. The qualification title will be shown on the certificate as 'OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology'.

5.3.2 Post-results services

A number of post-results services are available:

Review of results – If you are not happy with the outcome of a student's results, centres may request a review of marking.
Missing and incomplete results – This service should be used if an individual subject result for a student is missing, or the student has been omitted entirely from the results supplied.
Access to scripts – Centres can request access to marked scripts.

Examine *with* us

- Build confidence supporting your students with assessment
- Enhance subject knowledge
- Great for professional development

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To stay up to date with all the relevant news about our qualifications, register for email updates at **ocr.org.uk/updates**

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