2022 Psychology Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2022 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

Across the Assessment Types for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is the equivalent of 1000 words. Students should not speed-up the recording of their videos excessively in an attempt to condense more content into the maximum time limit.

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From 2023, if a video is flagged by moderators as impacted by speed, schools will be requested to provide a transcript and moderators will be advised to moderate based on the evidence in the transcript, only considering evidence up to the maximum word limit.

If the speed of the recording makes the speech incomprehensible, it affects the accuracy of transcriptions and it also impacts the ability of moderators to find evidence of student achievement against the performance standards.

School Assessment

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* thoroughly checking that all grades entered in schools online are correct
* ensuring the uploaded tasks are legible, all facing up (and all the same way), and remove blank pages, student notes, exemplars, and formula pages; to ensure moderators can clearly understand what work is student evidence, and what materials are teacher scaffolds, formulas and examples not for moderation
* ensuring the uploaded responses have pages the same size (i.e. not a mixture of A4 and A3 pages) and in colour so teacher marking and comments are clear
* encouraging students to avoid pale and/or hard to read text colours, as well as similar background and text colours that become even more difficult to differentiate when scanned in online
* clearly labelling page numbers (A3 and A4 sizing of pages are sometimes indistinguishable when a document is scanned in online).

Assessment Type 1: Investigations Folio (30%)

This assessment type requires students to complete:

* at least one psychological investigation. Where only one investigation is undertaken, it must include deconstruction of a problem and design of a psychological investigation
* one investigation with a focus on science as a human endeavour.

Evidence of deconstruction (where applicable) should outline the deconstruction process, the method designed as most appropriate, and a justification of the plan of action, to a maximum of four sides of an A4 page. This evidence must be attached to the practical report. The practical report should be a maximum of 1500 words if written, or a maximum of 9 minutes for an oral presentation, or the equivalent in multimodal form. Teachers are encouraged to support students research interest when selecting a research focus so long as it is upholding ethical psychological research practices.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* reading the ‘General comments’ section below for clarification and advice for 2023
* ensuring students adhere to maximum word count (page count for deconstruction)
* ensuring that the four pages of Deconstruction and Design are clearly numbered and submitted to moderation along with the 1500 word report
* assessing KA3 for the science as a human endeavour task, which is the only performance standard that specifically mentions the interaction between science and society.
* emphasise the importance of justification of choices made in the Design and Deconstruct.

Deconstruct and design

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided evidence to demonstrate initiative in applying constructive and focused approaches
* critically deconstructed their problem and considered a range of possible psychological investigation designs and methods in their deconstruction; explaining how each will influence the success of their design
* ensured that the discussion included a detailed analysis of data and evaluation of the design, method and procedures that followed
* deconstruct/design was more successful when consideration was given to how the research topic would be investigated using each of the different research designs, and then justifying choices made throughout

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not evaluate and justify their choices throughout
* were confused by explicit features of different design types and applied these incorrectly
* little evidence that deconstruction specific to an area of focus had occurred (deconstruction was not submitted with the report)
* having a generic mind map as a part of the deconstruct that was not specific to the student’s research area. These responses were generic and could be copied and pasted to other reports
* lacked justification and thought regarding factors that affected the experiment in the Design and Deconstruct

Investigation report

The more successful responses commonly:

* included discussion on the target population and limitations in the actual sample used, as well as suggested improvements
* appropriately displayed data, including graphing and/or table conventions
* discussed a range of strengths and weaknesses including but not limited to; the sample, data type, design type used and extraneous variables
* discussed a range of realistic improvements that were appropriate and provided clear explanations about how each improvement would improve the quality of the findings
* interpreted results accurately and provided a systematic and in-depth discussion of the evidence leading to the formulation of logical and highly relevant conclusions
* discussed research ethics specific to each investigation
* used psychological terms effectively and communicated ideas concisely and clearly
* evaluated reliability and validity thoroughly, including strengths and weaknesses of replicability of the study and valid means of measurement
* included conclusions which were connected to relevant theory or psychological knowledge
* reflected on the researched information and used this information to justify and evaluate the effectiveness their research.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided a recount of what they did
* used personal language instead of formal scientific language
* gave a generic interpretation of results without or with little justification of what the results meant for the conclusion of the study
* repetition of the same design, without real or adequate changes (when using previous research program)
* lack of explicit and relevant psychological terminology
* struggled to provide evidence of IAE3, when assessed
* did not include a method that could be easily followed
* consideration of controlled and extraneous variables was superficial
* mixed up independent and dependent variables.

Science as a Human Endeavour

In general, students did better on the science as a human endeavour task when IAE3 was not assessed. Overall, students who were successful in this task also integrated their psychological knowledge throughout the task, not just in the background psychology section.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used psychological terms effectively and communicated ideas concisely and clearly
* selected topics which were particularly relevant to current society and as a result, were able to effectively convey how science interacts with society
* focused specifically on only one or two of the SHE concepts in Psychology to allow for more in depth discussion, as opposed to trying to briefly cover all SHE concepts
* authentically linked their chosen topic to these SHE concepts with specific examples (e.g. quotes from articles)
* used multiple articles to prompt the SHE discussion rather than just one source.
* Had a task that provided the ability to apply psychological concepts to the real world and highlighted the link between science and society- both ways

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated poor application of psychological concepts to specific context
* provided answers that reflected historical research, and recounts of theories that did not enable students to critically explore and show understanding of the contemporary interaction between science and society
* included a word count where the majority was spent on psychological background information
* provided very little reference to the society-society interaction
* did not show an understanding of the interaction between science and society as a 'feedback loop' — the students were only able to discuss one direction e.g. science interacting with society
* discussed ideas related to SHE but did not link the ideas well, making it hard to determine what SHE concepts were being discussed
* were severely under the 1500 word limit
* referred to language of SHE concepts in other sciences, which are different to those in Psychology.

Assessment Type 2: Skills and Applications Tasks (40%)

This assessment type requires students to complete at least three skills and applications tasks, and must include at least one task from each of the non-examined topics. At least one skills and applications task should be under the direct supervision of the teacher.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* clearly identifying whether a task has been done under the direct supervision of the teacher or not
* ensuring each of the three non-examined topics are assessed
* encouraging students to adhere closely to the maximum word count
* ensuring time provided for ‘timed assessment pieces’ fits within the SACE guidelines as stipulated in the Subject Outline (for example, SASTA trial exams and longer, mid-year or trial examinations may be longer than stipulated in the Subject outline for a maximum time limit and should therefore not be used for this Assessment type)
* including tasks that provided a mix of routine and more complex problems that effectively differentiate student psychological knowledge and understanding of concepts across the grade bands
* finding a good balance of ‘traditional’ standalone test style assessments focussed on the technical aspects of the subject mixed with innovative approaches that allow students to develop their other skills including video presentations and assessments that build on one another throughout the subject.

The more successful responses commonly:

* were able to identify and explain psychological terminology well and link them to relevant scenarios
* applied psychological concepts and terms effectively to diverse contexts
* showed depth in their understanding because the task design allowed the students to elaborate and to go into depth in the way they were permitted to present their knowledge
* were benefited by strong task design from the teacher (e.g. were given choice, but still given clear and explicit direction and instruction from the teacher)
* showed a variety of types of assessments, e.g. an assignment, a supervised task, a test
* allowed students some choice in what they focussed on for the assessment
* analysed the researched information instead of just recounting it
* included timed tasks that were of a similar style, structure, and standard to the end of the year examination
* included application questions allowing the students to demonstrate their knowledge in new and unfamiliar contexts
* provided evidence from a range of assessment design criteria and included a range of different tasks
* provided detailed responses with appropriate use of psychological terminology
* appropriately acknowledged information from a wide range of sources

The less successful responses commonly:

* only provided evidence in the form of timed tests and students seemed to not be able to provide enough evidence of the depth of analysis and evaluation and critical thinking required in the higher grade bands
* revealed that students were unable to completely grasp the nature of the question(s) posed in a task and demonstrated a weak understanding of the course content
* gave definitions of the psychological concepts but could not effectively elaborate or apply to scenarios’
* included marking rubric only for in-class presentations that were not recorded, and delivered to other cohorts in the school, meaning there was insufficient evidence to support the grade given without a variations form
* included multiple questions on the same concept in a SAT, (double penalising some students)
* were significantly over/under the word limit/time limit
* speeding up videos and audios to fit within time limit (meaning it as hard to understand the content being presented)
* came from tasks that didn’t align with the knowledge and skills covered in the Current SACE Stage 2 subject outline
* came from tests that relied too heavily on previous examination questions which were based on the old curriculum and marked according to old standards. Diverse questions are preferable, and students should be rewarded for responses that align with the current curriculum
* responded to sets of tasks that were only made up of tests, limiting student choice and reducing the opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of selecting sources
* relied too heavily on research tasks, not allowing the students to demonstrate their knowledge of psychology in new and unfamiliar contexts
* provided very brief responses, especially in tests
* used only a few sources of information or cited unreliable sources of information in research assignments.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Students undertook a 130-minute online examination, using their understanding of psychology to answer questions that assess their: Stage 2 Psychology science inquiry skills, science understanding of Topic 4: Social Influence, and science understanding of Topic 5: The Psychology of Learning.

The overall mean for the 2022 Psychology exam was approximately 74%.

Question 1 has the highest mean in the exam. Question 8 had the lowest mean in the exam.

Section A

Question 1

(a) The more successful responses:

• included explanations of positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment (or other aspects of operant conditioning such as schedules of reinforcement) to explain how students could be encouraged to use bins more and/or stop littering.

The less successful responses commonly:

• did not link to the scenario

• confused terms (e.g. described positive reinforcement but referred to it as negative reinforcement).

(b) (i) The more successful responses:

• explained factors such as source, message, audience, central or peripheral route of persuasion and linked this to the scenario effectively

The less successful responses commonly:

• linked to the scenario without using terminology

• did not explain the factor (e.g. identified source but did not explain the features of source which would make them effective in changing attitudes).

(ii) The more successful responses:

• discussed advantages/benefits of self-report inventory as well as possible disadvantages of using a behavioural count and related well to the scenario.

The less successful responses commonly:

• explained only self-report inventory or behavioural count

• did not link to the scenario

• identified features without explaining why they would be beneficial.

Questions 2

(a) The more successful responses:

• were able to identify and explain elements of communication and collaboration in the provided source

• were also able to explain how society could benefit from this study.

The less successful responses commonly:

• repeated information from the question stem without adding any further information/analysis

• did not cover both parts of the question – how this is an example of Collaboration and Communication AND how society could benefit from the study

(b) The more successful responses:

• clearly described the elements of the BPS model and linked this comprehensively with social media use and anxiety about COVID

• did not necessarily address all three elements equally, but explained all aspects of the model in their response

The less successful responses commonly:

• did not link to the scenario

• confused aspects of the BPS (e.g. described elements incorrectly as being attributable to biological when they were social).

Question 3

(a) The more successful responses:

• explained that a conditioned stimulus (TV) is a stimulus that originally did not elicit the conditioned response (neutral stimulus) before conditioning, however after the conditioning phase, the two stimuli (UCS relaxing and NS) become paired/associated, and the NS becomes the newly learned conditioned stimulus (CS). In this example, before conditioning, the TV did not cause Naya to feel tired, however after conditioning, it becomes the trigger/stimulus for her feeling tired.

The less successful responses commonly:

• provided theory without any link to the scenario

• disputed that the television show was the CS

• did not use explicit correct psychological terminology.

(b) The more successful responses:

• correctly explained stimulus generalisation (conditioned response is now elicited by stimuli similar to the original conditioned stimulus) and linked to the scenario.

The less successful responses commonly:

• did not identify this as stimulus generalisation

• did not refer to the scenario.

(c) The more successful responses:

• explained counter conditioning, and/or principles of classical conditioning including contiguity, contingency and extinction.

The less successful responses commonly:

• provided a plan for Naya without providing any classical conditioning terminology

• explained classical conditioning without referring to Naya

• incorrectly used operant conditioning principles.

Question 4

(a) The more successful responses:

• described how the graphs show that the activation of the mirror neurons exist in both the observational group and the performance group but are not activated in the control group.

The less successful responses commonly:

• did not refer to the graphs clearly

• did not refer to the graphs at all.

(b) The more successful responses:

• proposed a future hypothesis that was clearly and succinctly worded.

The less successful responses commonly:

• wrote a conclusion rather than a hypothesis

• re-stated the hypothesis given, rather than suggested one for future research as the question instructed.

Question 5

(a) The more successful responses:

• correctly defined conformity and obedience using proper psychological terms, and successfully related the video example to conformity.

The less successful responses commonly:

• just defined conformity and obedience, without explaining why the video provided an example of conformity

• stated that obedience is just the presence of an authority figure, not the authority figure giving an order

• defined obedience using the word ‘obey’ and conformity with the word ‘conform’.

(b) The more successful responses:

• fully defined the chosen type of social influence

* related the chosen type of social influence specifically to the participant’s behaviour in the video.

The less successful responses commonly:

• didn’t write enough detail for four marks

• just wrote a transcript of the video, including a summary of what happened and quoted the expert interviewed

• discussed both types of social influence, but neither in enough detail for four marks.

(c) The more successful responses:

• made a clear and concise conclusion, that was specific and supported by data shown in the graph. (Most students did this by concluding that the highest level of conformity is displayed with a group of four).

The less successful responses commonly:

• presented incorrect interpretations of the graph – students didn’t understand what a plateau is/means

• summarised a data point on the graph, rather than drawing a conclusion

• talked about factors influencing conformity or why they conform, neither of which addressed the question

• recited rote-learned definitions about conformity and group size, without reading/referencing the graph.

(d) The more successful responses:

• made links to racial prejudice and discrimination. Bullying, body image, peer pressure, smoking and drug use were other examples that were commonly really well-explained.

The less successful responses commonly:

• failed to explain why the example is harmful

• discussed why people would conform in the scenario, rather than how it is harmful

• did not provide a specific example

• confused conformity, compliance and obedience, specifically when trying to apply to examples of Trump and Hitler.

Question 6

(a) The more successful responses:

• gave specific examples related to why Jordan wouldn’t want work colleagues to access their social media (e.g. photos/poor language etc may make him appear unprofessional).

The less successful responses commonly:

• discussed self-presentation being different face-to-face compared to online, but not why Jordan might be concerned about this

• said that Jordan has no control over their online profile/impression

• some students tried to talk about primacy effect here, because it is mentioned in Q7, but didn’t do so successfully.

(b) The more successful responses:

• gave excellent examples of how high self-monitors use social media compared to low self-monitors

• successfully compared high and low self-monitors.

The less successful responses commonly:

• discussed self-monitoring behaviours in general, not on social media specifically

• linked self-monitoring to self-esteem, rather than social media

• many students misunderstood what self-monitoring is, especially low self-monitoring. Students talked about low self-monitors not being aware of what others think of them instead of being aware of what others think and just not being concerned about their opinions and wanting to be more authentic

• only discussed high self-monitoring and didn’t compare to low self-monitoring.

Question 7

(a) The more successful responses:

• most students were able to give specific and relevant predictions about students who read each list.

The less successful responses commonly:

• made predictions for recency effect instead of primacy.

(b) The more successful responses:

• identified a relevant limitation of the sample, based on information given in the scenario and then explained how it would lower validity.

The less successful responses commonly:

• describing an extraneous variable that lowered validity instead of a limitation of the sample

• identified a relevant limitation of the sample but didn’t link it to validity.

(c) (i) The more successful responses:

• linked their prediction about their impression of the teacher in a) to how this will affect their relationship with the teacher, and the emotional impact this will have on students and/or the new teacher. (For example: students who have an overly negative attitude, may not even give the new teacher a chance to develop any sort of rapport/relationship, causing tension and frustration in their relationship).

The less successful responses commonly:

• very few students achieved full marks for this question. Many described student behaviours or impressions of the teacher, rather than the emotional impact on the relationship

• many provided a surface level answer about how the students’ impression of the teacher would lead to a positive or negative relationship without further elaboration.

(c) (ii) The more successful responses:

• successfully described relevant ethical issues such as voluntary participation, deception and debriefing and applied them to the context of the scenario, rather than giving generic definitions of ethical principles.

The less successful responses commonly:

• discussed harm and content relevant for (c)(i) here and thus received no marks

• confused confidentiality and anonymity

• talked about consent being given to participants, rather than the participants being the ones giving consent

• rather than discussing the ethical concern in the context of the scenario, drew simple conclusions such as “students didn’t have the right to withdraw because it isn’t mentioned in the scenario” – which did not show adequate understanding of the term.

(d) The more successful responses commonly:

• explained why the given feature was an advantage.

The less successful responses commonly:

• stated or described a feature of the experimental design without explaining why it was an advantage

• discussed qualitative design.

(e) The more successful responses commonly:

• focus group was the most commonly described method that received marks. Some students also included descriptions of content analysis

• discussed interviews or the Delphi technique.

The less successful responses commonly:

• received little to no marks for 7e) – qualitative designs were very poorly understood

• described quantitative methods like behaviour counts or were too vague and referred to self-reports.

Section B

General comments

This year students were given two extended questions to respond to with choice options throughout. Each response was weighted equally at 15 marks each. Students were required to answer all aspects of their chosen option in their response, however; each aspect did not need to be addressed equally.

With this two-question breakdown, a maximum of 12 marks were awarded for content knowledge and application, and a maximum of three marks were awarded for the KA4 performance standard; for each extended response answer.

Student responses varied in length. As in previous years, students are advised that lengthy answers do not necessarily gain additional marks. It was possible to earn high marks with word counts of about 500. Students should be encouraged to use the word count that is available to them on their screens as a guide.

Students did not lose marks for lengthy responses, provided that the additional material was relevant, correct, and understandable. However, students did lose marks when they provided additional information that was irrelevant and/or incorrect. Clear and concise answers seemed to receive the highest marks.

KA4 was assessed by students’ ability to use clear paragraphs, having an organised and logical flow of ideas and correct use of psychological terminology. Introduction or conclusion was not required.

Subheadings are acceptable, but not necessary. An introduction and conclusion was not required.

Grammar and punctuation mistakes, along with long sentences, reduced marks. Many students did not use capital letters at the beginning of sentences. They used run-on sentences which made the meaning more difficult for markers to decipher. Spelling errors were very prevalent, and the articulation of ideas was frequently of low quality.

In the subject outline, the expectation that students demonstrate the ability to use appropriate psychological terms in their writing is explicit. It has been reported previously that the use of everyday language (rather than psychological terminology) does not demonstrate knowledge of the correct terms, leading to a consequential loss of marks. For full marks, appropriate psychological terms need to be used accurately.

Question 8

Explaining the link between attitudes and behaviour.

The more successful responses commonly:

* clearly explained the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is bidirectional — and applied their knowledge both ways (attitudes influencing behaviour and behaviour influencing attitude)
* accurately discussed factors that influence attitude formation such as strength, specificity, and accessibility
* accurately discussed self-perception theory and/or cognitive dissonance

The less successful responses commonly:

* only showed knowledge of the attitude and behaviour relationship in one direction

Refer to the attitude behaviour link seen in the Stanford prison experiment.

The more successful responses commonly:

* showed a clear understanding of the Stanford prison experiment and could provide clear examples of the attitude behaviour link
* for example: as the guards experienced changes in attitude and behaviour so quickly, they may not have had strong, accessible, or specific attitudes towards the treatment of prisoners before the experiment
* for example: the guards’ behaviour may have affected their attitude. If their attitudes prior to the experiment were not consistent with the way they were behaving towards the prisoners in the experiment, the guards would have needed to change their attitude to avoid cognitive dissonance.

The less successful responses commonly:

* incorrectly discussed other experiments such as the Milgram Obedience study
* recounted the Stanford prison study but could not apply the attitude behaviour link examples.

Refer to at least one other relevant example where the attitude behaviour link is evident.

The more successful responses commonly:

* discussed examples of bullying, lesson avoidance, exercise, diets, or other earlier experiments such as the Milgram Obedience study

The less successful responses commonly:

* only discussed the relationship between attitude and behaviour one way.

KA4 Performance Standard

* used paragraphs (Subheadings acceptable, but not necessary. Introduction and conclusion not required)
* organised and logical flow and organisation of ideas (evidence of planning)
* correct psychological terminology

Question 9

Option 1

Explain how Adriel might have learned to exhibit this new behaviour via observational learning.

The more successful responses commonly:

* discussed how attention, retention, reproduction and motivation influence observational learning
* correctly linked to the source material provided
* correctly discussed characteristics of the model (for example age similarity, likeability, status etc.).

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not apply to source material provided
* stated correct psychological terms but did not explain or apply to show understanding.

Describe how one psychological intervention could be used to help Adriel reduce the time he spends on social media.

The more successful responses commonly:

* identified behaviour modification as the correct answer. Some students also discussed CBT effectively
* broke the process into steps and applied to the source material provided.

The less successful responses commonly:

* discussed general changes Adriel could make but not a specific intervention as the question required.

KA4 Performance Standard

* used paragraphs (subheadings acceptable, but not necessary. Introduction and conclusion not required)
* organised and logical flow and organisation of ideas (evidence of planning)
* correct psychological terminology.

Option 2

Using the principles of observational learning, explain how Odina’s fear of the ocean could have been learned.

* discussed how attention, retention, reproduction and motivation influence observational learning
* correctly linked to the source material provided.

Describe how one psychological intervention could be used to help Odina manage her fear.

The more successful responses commonly:

* Systematic Desensitization was the most popular correct answer. Some students also discussed CBT effectively
* broke the process into steps and applied to the source material provided.

The less successful responses commonly:

* discussed general changes Odina could make, but not a specific intervention as the question required
* did not apply to source material provided
* stated correct psychological terms but did not explain or apply to show understanding.

KA4 Performance Standard

* used paragraphs (Subheadings acceptable, but not necessary. Introduction and conclusion not required)
* organised and logical flow and organisation of ideas (evidence of planning)
* correct psychological terminology

General

It was evident at moderation that there was much variation and confusion about what aspects of the Design and Deconstruct Investigation Report were required in different sections, and what was included in the word count.

To ensure consistency in the way in which the word count is applied for the *Assessment Type 1: Psychological Design and Deconstruct Investigation*, the following clarification is advised for 2023:

* Evidence of deconstruction (where applicable) should outline the deconstruction process, the method designed as most appropriate, and a justification of the plan of action, to a maximum of 4 sides of an A4 page. This evidence must be attached to the practical report.
* Suggested formats for this evidence include flow charts, concept maps, tables, or notes.
* The Investigation report should include:
* introduction with relevant psychological concepts, and either a hypothesis and variables, or an investigable question
* materials/apparatus
* the method that was implemented
* identification and management of safety and/or ethical risks
* results, including table(s) and/or graph(s)
* analysis of results, including identifying trends and linking results to psychological concepts
* evaluation of sample, procedures and their effect on data, identifying strengths, limitations, and sources of uncertainty, validity, reliability, improvements and ethics
* conclusion, with justification.
* The report should be a maximum of 1500 words if written, or a maximum of 10 minutes for an oral presentation, or the equivalent in multimodal form.
* Only the following sections of the report are included in the word count:
* introduction
* analysis of results
* evaluation of procedures
* conclusion and justification.
* Suggested formats for presentation of a practical investigation report include:
* a written report
* an oral presentation
* a multimodal product.