

A LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY FAQs

Q: What is the exam board for the Psychology course?

The Psychology specification is Eduqas, a branch of the Welsh Board www.eduqas.co.uk

Q: Is there a Psychology textbook?

Yes, there are 2 Psychology textbooks, you will be issued with your copy of book one in September and then you will be issued book two at the start of Year 13.

Psychology A Level and AS Book 1 *'The Complete Companion Student Book for WJEC Eduqas'* Cara Flanagan, Lucy Hartnoll and Rhiannon Murray by Oxford University Press

Q: What are the entry requirements for A Level Psychology?

To study A Level Psychology, we require you to achieve at least a grade 5 in English Language and another grade 5 in either Maths or Science with the other being at least a grade 4.

Q: How many exams are there?

Students sit 3 exams at the end of 2 years. All exams are 2 hours and 15 minutes long and are equally weighted across the 3 components.

Q: Is there any coursework?

No, there is no coursework element in A Level Psychology. However students are required to carry out 2 personal investigations of their own and keep a personal investigation log. This personal investigation log will inform the questions asked in the Component 2 exam paper.

Q: Is there any Maths in the course?

There is a little Maths required for component 2 of the course. Students will be required to analyse and comment on their own data in their personal investigations. This means being familiar with and able to calculate the mean, median, mode, standard deviation and the range. Students are also required to employ an inferential statistical test to analyse their data. Students will need to consider types of data, including nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio data as well as probability levels. Students are given very clear guidance for this element of the course.

Q: Do you have to be good at English to study Psychology?

We have requested students have achieve at least a grade 5 in English Language as we believe that the writing elements of this A Level course warrant this. Students are required to be able to write at length. This includes writing responses to 10, 15, 24- and 25-mark essay questions. There are, however, some short-response questions of 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 marks.

Q: What are the exam questions

Typical Component 1 exam questions:

Evaluate the methodology and procedures of Bowlby's (1944) research 'Forty-four juvenile thieves: Their characters and home-life'. [8]

'Eyewitnesses are incapable of remembering and recalling accurate information of an event; therefore eyewitness accounts are always unreliable and should never be used in criminal convictions.' Discuss to what extent you agree with this statement. You should demonstrate your understanding of psychological knowledge and research in your response. [24]

Typical Component 2 exam questions:

Describe how brain scans have been used in psychology. [6]

Explain how you managed two ethical issues that arose in your research. [3+3]

Explain one disadvantage of using a self-report method to rate the anxiety of the participants in this research. [2]

Typical Component 3 exam questions:

'Criminality is the clear outcome of biological processes.' Evaluate biological explanations of criminal behaviour with reference to this statement. [15]

Evaluate social psychological explanations of schizophrenia. [10]

Q: What subject support is available?

Psychology subject support is available most lunchtimes, either 1:1 or small groups. This is not just for those who need extra help but those striving for the very best grades. We also offer a weekly research methods club where you will look at a piece of Psychological research and examine it for reliability, validity and ethical considerations.

Q: How big are the Psychology groups?

We are a very popular A Level course- our groups sizes are normally between 21-24 students. We currently have 11 groups in Year 1 of the course.

Q: Do I need to have studied Psychology before?

No, you do not need any prior knowledge, just enthusiasm. Most students who study Psychology A Level have not studied it at GCSE Level. You will not be at a disadvantage if you have not studied it. The assessment of the A Level course is very different from a GCSE course.

Q: Are there other subjects that would be suitable to study alongside Psychology?

We do not tend to have a 'typical' A Level Psychology student. Our students study a range of other subjects. It may be good to have another essay writing subject alongside Psychology as this will serve to develop your writing skills. There are some overlaps with Sociology in the research methods element of the course, that some students may find helpful.

Q: How is Psychology different from Sociology?

Psychology is very much the study of the individual and their behaviour, that is, their brain structure, their genes, their biochemistry, their early childhood experiences, their upbringing, their environment, whereas, Sociology explore the institutions that make up society, that is, the education system, religion, family, crime and deviance, the media.

Q: What do those who study Psychology go on to do?

Psychology can be useful in any career where you are required to work with others as it develops your understanding of other people's thought processes and reasoning behind their actions.

Many of our students go on to study psychology at degree level, studying a wide variety of course, including clinical psychology, forensic psychology, childhood psychology. Others have progressed onto degrees as varied as Accountancy, Criminology, Engineering and Medicine, and also additionally, apprenticeships in Law, Art and Computer Science.

We explore the topics of Schizophrenia, Autism and Criminal behaviours in depth in the second year of the course, and those who are considering careers social work, prison and probation services, the education system, mental health services, others area of the criminal justice system, would all benefit.