# Examiners' Report
# Principal Examiner Feedback

# January 2021

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Psychology (WPS04/01)
Paper 1: Clinical Psychology and Psychological
Skills

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## General Comments

Across the paper, candidates showed good understanding of key terms and some theoretical concepts, along with some good mathematical skills, especially in descriptions of constructing a bar chart.

Difficulties tended to be in the long answer questions candidate responses were often limited to lower level mark bands as a result of limited understanding of specific content coupled with a lack of developed AO3 material, few justified their arguments and evaluations, and very little supporting material was seen in the 20-mark essay.

Application for AO2 responses was improved for some candidates, however it remains an area that posed problems with some candidates giving generic responses or simply using the name of a person in the stimulus rather than applying their knowledge to the stimulus material they are presented with.

## Paper Summary

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

- Generic points should be avoided, candidates should be able to give specific responses that are clearly linked to the question content and taxonomy, especially in scenario based questions.
- Where candidates are expanding their points, the use of evidence and supporting/contesting concepts could aid them in exemplifying their knowledge and understanding as appropriate.
- Candidates would benefit from revisiting the skills of operationalisation of variables to be able to clearly identify a variable in a scenario.
- A review of brain scanning techniques may benefit some candidates as they were often unclear of the brain scanning techniques, giving generic and vague responses that were not specific to this particular question.
- In the unseen 'key question' essay, candidates should apply their understanding of psychology from the course to the context in the given scenario, they should not just copy the information they are presented with as this is insufficient to show application of their knowledge and understanding.
- Within their extended open responses, candidates should give balanced arguments and exemplified points which lead to making informed conclusions or judgements (where appropriate to the taxonomy used) in relation to the question content.
- Candidates should write in full sentences in responses that require detailed information in the answers. Bullet pointed lists of key terms or brief phrases are not appropriate, particularly in the extended open response questions.
- Candidates should review the taxonomy expectations within the specification to aid them in understanding the key requirements of the questions and the distinctions between these.

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

## Sections A and B: Clinical Psychology

### Q01a

**Question Introduction**

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of one symptom of schizophrenia. Most candidates were able to identify an appropriate symptom, with many candidates able to describe this symptom well.

### Q01b

**Question Introduction**

This question required candidates to describe one feature of schizophrenia. Where candidates achieve the marks here, they often demonstrated that they understood the differences in the gender pathway of the disorder such as age of onset or differences in symptom presentations in genders. Some gave demographic data, for some of those candidates this was not always developed well. Some candidates describe a symptom of schizophrenia rather than a feature.

**Examiner Tip**

Features of a disorder may include demographic data in relation to cases, such as how many individuals within demographic groups may be diagnosed with the disorder; features associated with onset, such as the most common age or gender of onset; or data around the incidence of the disorder in society, for example changes over time, or percentages of individuals diagnosed in a given population.

### Q01c

**Question Introduction**

Candidates were required to explain two strengths of the function of neurotransmitters as an explanation for schizophrenia. Few candidates achieved well here, with those doing well usually gaining the AO1 marks for identification of strengths and some gaining the AO3 for exemplification and justification of the strength. Where candidates did not achieve well, they often gave basic points about the role of neurotransmitters rather than giving strengths of this explanation of schizophrenia.

**Examiner tip**

Candidates should be careful not to confuse methodological concepts of reliability and validity as evaluation points for theoretical explanations.

### Q02a

**Question Introduction**

This question required candidates to calculate a percentage. This was well answered with many candidates gaining the mark here.

### Q02b

**Question Introduction**

Candidates were required to explain one strength of Katie using three independent clinicians in her study. Some candidates achieved the AO2 here for identifying a strength applied to the scenario if Katie's research, although the AO3 justification of how or why this was a strength was not always evident in candidates' answers.

## Q02c

### Question Introduction
Candidates were required to explain two reasons why the DSM could be considered reliable in diagnosing mental health disorders. Some candidates were able to achieve the AO1 marks for identifying a reason, but there was little in the way of AO3 justification or exemplification of their points. Candidates overall showed a limited understanding of the nature of reliability in diagnosis, there was little mention of PPV or Cohens Kappa ratings with most responses focused just on inter-rater or test-retest reliability. Many candidates gave answers or evidence that were about the validity of diagnosis instead of reliability.

## Q02d

### Question Introduction
Candidates were required to explain one reason why the DSM could be considered valid in diagnosing mental health disorders. Some candidates were able to achieve the AO1 marks for identifying a reason, but there was little in the way of AO3 justification or exemplification of their points. Candidates overall showed a limited understanding of the nature of validity in diagnosis, for example few were able to draw on criterion, aetiological, concurrent or predictive validity.

## Q03

### Question Introduction

Candidates were required to n one strength and one weakness of CBT as a treatment for their chosen disorder. Some candidates were able to achieve the AO1 mark for a relevant strength or weakness. However, many candidates simply stated facts about how CBT works and did not identify what was good or bad about the treatment, resulting in being unable to access the marks available. Candidates should remember that in questions such as these they should be giving a strength or weakness rather than demonstrating understanding of the process of CBT.

## Q04a

### Question Introduction
Candidates were required to state one feature of a CAT scan. Few candidates achieved the marks on this question, with several candidates confusing this method of neuroimaging with PET scans or fMRI scans.

## Q04b

### Question Introduction
Candidates were required to explain one strength of Michael using a CAT neuroimaging scan in his investigation. Many of the responses to this question were generic answers that did not relate to the scenario context given. A few candidates were able to gain the AO2 mark for identification of a strength, but this was rarely justified or exemplified for AO3.

## Q04c

### Question Introduction

Candidates were required to explain one weakness of Michael using a CAT neuroimaging scan in his investigation. Many of the responses to this question were generic answers that did not relate to the scenario context given, and several responses indicated candidates were unsure of what a CAT neuroimaging scan was. A few candidates were able to gain the AO2 mark for identification of a weakness, but this was rarely justified or exemplified for AO3.

## Q05

### Question Introduction

This question required candidates to analyse whether Suzuki et al. (2014) can be considered a reliable and valid study. Some candidates achieved well here, where candidates did not achieve the available marks it was often from a lack of AO3 justification or exemplification of their points. A few candidates gave answers that talked about generalisability or ethics, and some candidates gave inaccurate understanding of the study itself in the AO1. There was some confusion evident in understanding the differences between reliability and validity, and what would constitute a reliable or valid piece of research.

## Q06

### Question Introduction

This question was an extended open response question for 16-marks assessed using the levels-based marking criteria. The question required candidates to evaluate how far culture can impact on mental health diagnosis.

There were some good responses seen which was pleasing. Where the responses achieved lower marks it was often due to multiple inaccuracies in the AO1 understanding of cultural factors and making non-specific points about how to diagnose individuals, for example stating what the DSM is and what the ICD is without any relevant link made to culture. It was evident in some responses that the candidates did not know the debate around whether culture does or does not impact on diagnosis.

A few of the responses gave some points about culture bound syndromes, but often without the exemplification to link these to the question of whether culture does or does not impact on diagnosis that would be expected in a 16-mark extended open response.

Some of the responses did not engage with the taxonomy of 'evaluate' and in these cases candidates often presented AO1 understanding with very limited AO3 content.

### Examiner Tip

Extended open response questions for 16 marks require candidates to engage in depth with the content being assessed. Their responses should link to the question presented and they should avoid generic, simplistic content presented in list like or bullet pointed form.

## Sections C, D and E: Psychological Skills

### Q07a

**Question Introduction**

Candidates were required to describe how Ross could gather a random sample for his investigation. The application skills for AO2 were not always evident in the candidate responses, with some giving generic responses about random sampling. Very few were able to demonstrate application to the nature of the sample he would need to gather beyond 'boys and girls', with age rarely being noted. A small number of candidates described the wrong sampling technique.

### Q07b

**Question Introduction**

Candidates were required to explain one reason why Ross used a cross-sectional method. Some candidates were able to demonstrate understanding of the methodology and applied this to the investigation into children's moral development. Where candidates were able to give a suitable pint for AO2 here, some were also able to justify this point for their AO3 marks. Where the AO3 mark was not awarded, candidates had often given a different second reason instead or an underdeveloped AO3 point. Some candidates confused a cross-sectional methodology with cross-cultural research.

### Q07c

**Question Introduction**

Candidates were required to explain one strength of Ross using a structured interview in his investigation. Several the responses to this question were generic and did not apply the strength to the use of this method for the investigation that Ross was conducting. Where candidates did achieve the AO2 mark here, the AO3 was not often present, or candidates had made simplistic statements such as 'making it reliable' which did not demonstrate the exemplification or justification required.

### Q08a

**Question Introduction**

This question required candidates to identify the independent variable in the scenario. Some candidates were able to accurately state the business suit and casual clothing. A few candidates did not give the accurate operationalised variable here. Several candidates gave inaccurate responses, including the dependent variable or number of participants.

### Q08b

**Question Introduction**

This question required candidates to state the experimental/research design. Most candidates were able to accurately state that this was an independent measures design. Where inaccuracies were seen it was often where candidates gave the research method or sampling technique rather than the design.

### Q08c

#### Question Introduction

This question required candidates to calculate the ratio of males to females obeying the man in the business suit. Most candidates achieved the mark for this question. Where candidates made errors these were often in giving the ration for males to females as 2:3 instead of 3:2. Candidates should be advised to read the questions carefully to ensure accurate mathematical expressions and calculations.

### Q08d

#### Question Introduction

This question required candidates to describe how the data from the table could be displayed in an appropriate graph. Most candidates achieved well here. They were able to appropriately describe appropriate presentation of this data.

### Q08e

#### Question Introduction

This question required candidates to calculate the chi=squared test for the data provided. Most candidates achieved well here, demonstrating accurate skills in their calculations. Where candidates did not achieve all the marks, they had often not fully read the question and gave answers that were not to two decimal places as required in the question.

#### Examiner Tip

Mathematical skills of computation, expression and presentation of data assess a range of skills, and candidates should ensure that they follow the direction given in the question.

### Q08f

#### Question Introduction

This question required candidates to justify whether the data was significant. Candidates mostly achieved well here, demonstrating an ability to find the appropriate critical value from the tables and determine significance using their calculated value from 8e.

### Q08f

#### Question Introduction

This question required candidates to explain one improvement that Sigmund could make in terms of validity. There were many generic responses seen which did not apply answers to the scenario given. Some candidates were able to give an accurate improvement to the validity of the experiment, few justified or exemplified how or why this would be an improvement for the AO3 marks. Where errors were seen they tended to be improvements that were not related to validity, for example ethical changes; or not related to an experiment, for example changing the methodology.

**Q09**

### Question Introduction

This was a discuss AO1 knowledge and understanding and AO2 application question that required candidates to discuss the key question of whether negative attitudes towards employees in the workplace can be reduced. They should give an equal emphasis between their underpinning knowledge/understanding and an application to the context of the given key question in their answer.

Some candidates were able to approach this question using relevant and accurate aspects of their psychology course content, for example from social psychology and learning theory, although some candidates only made basic reference to these ideas and did not always show how they could help reduce negative attitudes. Some candidates discussed causes of mental health disorders, ways to diagnose employees at work, or therapies that are available rather than using their understanding to address the question posed.

Overall, a few candidates were able to select appropriate theory/concepts/research relevant to the key question, although some gave limited understanding in the points they made from their chosen content. Some candidates were able to apply some of their understanding to the scenario given that underpins the key question.

### Examiner Tip
The key question used in this section of the examination will require candidates to select appropriate content and apply these areas of their understanding of psychology to explicitly discuss the actual key question presented. They should draw on the stimulus material given and any relevant knowledge and understanding from across their studies and not simply 'copy' from the material presented to them.

**Q10**

### Question Introduction

This was an extended open response essay worth 20 marks that addresses a key issue and debate in psychology. The topic of content was centred on the issue and debate of ways of explaining behaviour using different approaches, models, or theories. The question centred on learning theory and biological psychology to explain addiction. The question required candidates to demonstrate AO1 knowledge and understanding. AO2 application to the stimulus material and context of addiction, and AO3 assessment points.

A few candidates responded well to this question with coherent and broad responses that presented arguments about the different ways in which the two theoretical standpoints could be drawn upon to explain addiction, in doing so there was some good AO2 application seen in answers. A few candidates utilised alternative explanations to critique these theories, particularly majority influence, and it was pleasing to see some evidence drawn from the role of neurotransmitters such as glutamate and dopamine where candidates were able to utilise research around the use of PCP and amphetamines in an appropriate way within the answer. However some candidates were unable to give assessment points in their responses and gave a response that was more knowledge of the topic areas and theories, as opposed to an assessment of the extent to which these can explain addiction.

### Examiner Tip
Extended open response questions of 20-marks in this section require candidates to draw on a range of content from across their studies of psychology. Candidates do not need to describe every element of content they have studied, but rather they should actively select what is an appropriate range of points from across the course and accurately utilise these for the specific direction of the question taxonomy.