



Psychology

GCSE 2012

Psychology

Specification

J611

Version 1

April 2012



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1.1 Overview of GCSE Psychology

Unit B541 <i>Studies and Applications in Psychology 1</i>	Written Paper 1 hour 15 mins – 80 marks 40% of the qualification Question Paper: 5 sections, candidates answer all questions.
+	
Unit B542 <i>Studies and Applications in Psychology 2</i>	Written Paper 1 hour 15 mins – 80 marks 40% of the qualification Question Paper: 5 sections, candidates answer all questions.
+	
Unit B543 <i>Research in Psychology</i>	Written Paper 1 hour – 40 marks 20% of the qualification Question Paper: 2 sections, candidates answer all questions.

1.2 Guided learning hours

Psychology requires 120–140 guided learning hours in total.

1.3 Aims and learning outcomes

GCSE specifications in Psychology must encourage candidates to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study and to gain an insight into related sectors, such as science. They should encourage candidates to develop a personal interest in and enthusiasm for psychology and prepare them to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.

The aims of this specification are to enable candidates to:

- engage in the process of psychological enquiry in order to develop as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- develop an awareness of why psychology matters
- acquire knowledge and understanding of how psychology works and its essential role in society
- develop an understanding of the relationship between psychology and social, cultural, scientific and contemporary issues and the impact of psychology on everyday life
- develop an understanding of ethical issues in psychology
- develop an understanding of the contribution of psychology to individual, social and cultural diversity
- develop a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods.

1.4 Prior learning

Candidates entering this course should have achieved a general educational level equivalent to National Curriculum Level 3, or an Entry 3 at Entry Level within the National Qualifications Framework.

2.1 Unit B541: *Studies and Applications in Psychology 1*

2.1.1 Biological Psychology

Sex and Gender

Key concepts	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinguish between sex and gender outline the concepts of masculinity, femininity and androgyny.
Core theory: biological theory	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outline the role of chromosomes in typical gender development outline the role of gonads and hormone production in typical gender development describe basic evolutionary sex differences in human behaviour explain the criticisms of the biological theory of gender development consider psychoanalytic theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to the role of the Oedipus/Electra complex in gender development.
Core study: Diamond and Sigmundson (1997)	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe Diamond and Sigmundson's case study of the castrated twin boy raised as a girl outline limitations of Diamond and Sigmundson's study.
Application of research into sex and gender: equal opportunities for the sexes	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how psychological research relates to equal opportunities for the sexes, e.g. sex typing in education, gender roles at work, natural differences in choice of leisure activities.

2.1.2 Cognitive Psychology

Memory

Key concepts

Candidates should be able to:

- describe information processing: input, encoding, storage, retrieval, output
- distinguish between accessibility and availability problems in memory.

Core theory: multi-store model of memory

Candidates should be able to:

- distinguish between sensory store, short-term memory, long-term memory with reference to duration and capacity
- describe the processes of attention and rehearsal
- explain how forgetting occurs through decay and displacement
- explain the criticisms of the multi-store model of memory
- consider levels of processing theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to the importance of deep processing in memory.

Core study: Terry (2005)

Candidates should be able to:

- describe Terry's experiment on the serial position effect in recall of TV commercials
- outline limitations of Terry's study.

Applications of research into memory: memory aids

Candidates should be able to:

- explain how psychological research relates to memory aids, e.g. use of cues and retrieval failure, use of imagery and meaning, mind mapping and organisation.

2.1.3 Developmental Psychology

Attachment

Key concepts

Candidates should be able to:

- describe separation protest and stranger anxiety as measures of attachment
- distinguish between different types of attachment: secure, insecure-avoidant, insecure-ambivalent.

Core theory: Bowlby's theory

Candidates should be able to:

- explain the concept of monotropy
- explain the concept of a critical period in attachment
- describe the effects of attachment, deprivation and privation
- explain the criticisms of Bowlby's theory of attachment
- consider behaviourist theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to reinforcement in attachment as opposed to instinct.

Core study: Hazen and Shaver (1987)

Candidates should be able to:

- describe Hazen and Shaver's survey of the relationship between attachment types and adult relationships
- outline limitations of Hazen and Shaver's study.

Application of research into attachment: care of children

Candidates should be able to:

- explain how psychological research relates to care of children, e.g. dealing with separation in nurseries, encouraging secure attachments through parenting classes, dealing with stranger anxiety in hospitalised children.

2.1.4 Social Psychology

Obedience

Key concepts	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinguish between obedience and defiance explain what is meant by the term 'denial of responsibility'.
Core theory: theory of situational factors	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the effect of environment on obedience, i.e. setting, culture explain the effect of authority and the power to punish on obedience explain the effect of consensus on obedience explain the criticisms of situational factors as an explanation of obedience consider dispositional factors as an alternative theory, with specific reference to the role of the authoritarian personality in obedience.
Core study: Bickman (1974)	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe Bickman's field experiment into effects of uniform outline limitations of Bickman's study.
Application of research into obedience: keeping order in institutions and situations	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how psychological research relates to keeping order in institutions, e.g. use of punishment in schools, use of authority in armed forces, effect of prison setting.

2.1.5 Individual Differences

Atypical Behaviour

Key concepts

Candidates should be able to:

- distinguish between typical and atypical behaviour in relation to fear
- outline common types of phobia: agoraphobia, social phobia, school phobia, acrophobia and arachnophobia.

Core theory: behaviourist theory

Candidates should be able to:

- distinguish between an unconditioned stimulus, a neutral stimulus and a conditioned stimulus
- distinguish between an unconditioned response and a conditioned response
- use the process of classical conditioning to explain the onset of phobias
- explain the criticisms of the behaviourist theory of atypical behaviour
- consider evolutionary theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to preparedness.

Core study: Watson and Rayner (1920)

Candidates should be able to:

- describe Watson and Rayner's experiment to induce a phobia in a young child
- outline limitations of Watson and Rayner's study.

Application of research into atypical behaviour: behaviour therapy for phobias

Candidates should be able to:

- explain how psychological research relates to behaviour therapy for phobias, e.g. use of stimuli in systematic desensitisation, use of classical conditioning in flooding and implosion therapy, cognitive therapy for going beyond behaviour modification.

2.2 Unit B542: Studies and Applications in Psychology 2

2.2.1 Biological Psychology

Criminal behaviour

Key concepts

Candidates should be able to:

- outline the problems of defining and measuring crime
- explain the concept of a criminal personality.

Core theory: biological theory

Candidates should be able to:

- explain the role of heritability in criminal behaviour
- explain the role of brain dysfunction in criminal behaviour
- describe the facial features associated with criminals
- explain the criticisms of the biological theory of criminal behaviour
- consider social learning theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to vicarious reinforcement of role models in the learning of criminal behaviour.

Core study: Mednick *et al* (1984)

Candidates should be able to:

- describe Mednick *et al*'s adoption study into the genetic basis of criminal behaviour
- outline limitations of Mednick *et al*'s study.

Application of research into criminal behaviour: crime reduction

Candidates should be able to:

- explain how psychological research relates to crime reduction, e.g. biological perspective on use of prisons, implications of research for crime prevention, reinforcement and rehabilitation.

2.2.2 Cognitive Psychology

Perception

Key concepts

Candidates should be able to:

- describe the difference between sensation and perception using shape constancy, colour constancy and visual illusions
- explain depth cues, including linear perspective, height in plane, relative size, superimposition and texture gradient.

Core theory: constructivist theory

Candidates should be able to:

- outline the role of experience in perception
- explain the concept of top-down processing
- explain the concept of perceptual set
- explain the criticisms of the constructivist theory of perception
- consider the nativist theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to bottom-up processing in perception.

Core study: Haber and Levin (2001)

Candidates should be able to:

- describe Haber and Levin's experiment into depth perception and familiarity of objects
- outline limitations of Haber and Levin's study.

Application of research into perception: advertising

Candidates should be able to:

- explain how psychological research relates to advertising, e.g. use of context in perceptual set, use of motivation in perceptual set, subliminal advertising and levels of perception.

2.2.3 Development Psychology

Cognitive development

Key concepts	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how cognitive development occurs in invariant and universal stages outline the stages of cognitive development: sensori-motor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational.
Core theory: Piaget's theory	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the concept of object permanence describe the concept of egocentrism and the process of de-centring describe the concept of conservation explain the criticisms of Piaget's theory of cognitive development consider Vygotsky's theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to the zone of proximal development.
Core study: Piaget (1952)	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe Piaget's experiment into the conservation of number outline the limitations of Piaget's study.
Application of research into cognitive development: educating children	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how psychological research relates to educating children, e.g. key stages in relation to Piaget's stages, active/discovery learning, scaffolding in relation to Vygotsky's theory.

2.2.4 Social Psychology

Non-verbal communication

Key concepts	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outline examples of body language as a form of non-verbal communication outline examples of facial expressions as a form of non-verbal communication.
Core theory: social learning theory	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the role of observation and imitation in learning non-verbal behaviour describe the role of reinforcement and punishment in learning non-verbal behaviour describe cultural variations in non-verbal communication explain the criticisms of the social learning theory of non-verbal behaviour consider evolutionary theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to survival and reproduction.
Core study: Yuki <i>et al</i> (2007)	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe Yuki <i>et al</i>'s experiment into cross-cultural differences in interpreting facial expressions outline limitations of Yuki <i>et al</i>'s study.
Application of research into non-verbal communication: social skills training	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how psychological research relates to social skills training, e.g. rehabilitation of criminals, customer-service training, managing conflict by managing body language.

2.2.5 Individual Differences

The Self

Key concepts	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the idea that individuals are unique explain the concept of free will.
Core theory: humanistic theory	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinguish between self concept and ideal self in relation to self esteem explain the idea of unconditional positive regard explain the idea of self actualisation explain the criticisms of humanism as an explanation of the self consider trait theory as an alternative theory, with specific reference to extraversion and neuroticism.
Core study: Van Houtte and Jarvis (1995)	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe Van Houtte and Jarvis' interviews about pet ownership amongst pre-adolescents outline limitations of Van Houtte and Jarvis' study.
Application of research into the self: counselling	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how psychological research relates to counselling, e.g. raising self esteem in depressed people, individual choice in careers counselling, humanistic principles of relationship counselling.

2.3 Unit B543: Research in Psychology

It is recommended that in preparation for this unit, candidates carry out research in the classroom.

2.3.1 Planning research

Hypotheses	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frame a null hypothesis • frame an alternate (research) hypothesis • distinguish between null hypotheses and alternate hypotheses.
Variables	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between independent variables and dependent variables • outline what is meant by an extraneous variable • explain how extraneous variables can be controlled, including standardisation.
Experimental designs	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between repeated measures and independent groups designs • describe the strengths and weaknesses of a repeated measures design • describe the strengths and weaknesses of an independent groups design.
Sampling techniques	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between a target population and a sample • distinguish between random sampling and opportunity sampling • describe the relative strengths and weaknesses of random and opportunity sampling with reference to representative samples and biased samples.
Ethical considerations	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss the issues of informed consent and right to withdraw • discuss the issues of confidentiality • discuss the issues of protection of participants, including deception, and health and well-being.

2.3.2 Doing research

Experiments

Candidates should be able to:

- describe the use of laboratory experiments
- describe the use of field experiments
- describe the strengths and weaknesses of laboratory and field experiments.

Questionnaires

Candidates should be able to:

- describe the use of questionnaires as a method of self report
- distinguish between open and closed questions
- describe the strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires.

Interviews

Candidates should be able to:

- describe the use of interviews as a method of self report
- distinguish between structured and unstructured interviews
- describe the strengths and weaknesses of interviews.

Observations

Candidates should be able to:

- describe the use of observations
- identify the differences between covert and overt observations, and between participant and non-participant observations
- describe the strengths and weaknesses of the different types of observations.

Types of studies

Candidates should be able to:

- describe the use of case studies
- describe the use of correlation studies
- compare the use of longitudinal studies and cross-sectional studies.

2.3.3 Analysing research

Types of data

Candidates should be able to:

- explain what is meant by quantitative data
- explain what is meant by qualitative data
- describe data collected from investigations.

Descriptive data

Candidates should be able to:

- use and interpret modes
- use and interpret medians
- use and interpret means.

Tables, charts and graphs

Candidates should be able to:

- use and interpret tables of data
- use and interpret bar charts
- use and interpret line graphs.

Evaluating findings

Candidates should be able to:

- explain the concept of validity, including ecological validity
- explain the concept of reliability, including inter-rater reliability
- outline the problems of demand characteristics, observer effects and social desirability.

Sources of bias

Candidates should be able to:

- explain the concept of gender bias
- explain the concept of cultural bias
- explain the concept of experimenter bias.

Candidates should have experience of using the following methods: experiment, questionnaire, interview and observation. They will be asked to plan an investigation (based on one of the above methods) in the examination.

2.3.4 Planning an investigation

Investigation skills

Candidates should be able to:

- carry out an experiment
- carry out a questionnaire
- carry out an interview
- carry out an observation.

Design skills

Candidates should be able to:

- state the hypothesis for an investigation
 - describe and justify the sample used in an investigation
 - describe ethical issues involved in an investigation
 - describe and justify how the variables are measured in an investigation
 - describe and justify the control of extraneous variables in an investigation
 - describe the procedure used in an investigation
 - explain the strengths of the method used in an investigation
 - explain the weaknesses of the method used in an investigation
 - describe how data is analysed in an investigation.
-

3.1 Overview of the assessment in GCSE Psychology

For GCSE Psychology candidates must take units B541, B542 and B543.

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Unit B541: *Studies and Applications in Psychology 1*

40% of the total GCSE

1 hour 15 mins written paper

80 marks

This question paper has **five** sections:

One topic is selected from **each** of the five approaches in Section A, B, C, D, E. Four of the five topics are assessed in four sections worth 15 marks each. The first three sections contain only short-answer questions, with questions worth up to four marks. The fourth section also comprises short-answer questions, with the last one worth six marks.

The final topic is assessed in one section worth 20 marks. This section contains graduated questions with the final question being worth 10 marks.

In each section, short-answer questions may include stimulus questions, e.g. completing tables, multi-choice, matching concepts and interpreting sources.

Different topics are assessed in different sections across the series of examinations.

This unit is externally assessed.

Unit B542: *Studies and Applications in Psychology 2*

40% of the total GCSE

1 hour 15 mins written paper

80 marks

This question paper has **five** sections:

One topic is selected from **each** of the five approaches in Section A, B, C, D, E. Four of the five topics are assessed in four sections worth 15 marks each. The first three sections contain only short-answer questions with questions worth up to four marks. The fourth section also comprises short-answer questions with the last one worth six marks.

The final topic is assessed in one section worth 20 marks. This section contains graduated questions with the final question being worth 10 marks.

In each section, short-answer questions may include stimulus questions, e.g. completing tables, multi-choice, matching concepts and interpreting sources.

Different topics are assessed in different sections across the series of examinations.

This unit is externally assessed.

Unit B543: *Research in Psychology*

20% of the total GCSE

1 hour written paper

40 marks

This question paper has **two** sections:

Section A: Candidates are required to answer a series of questions, based on and around a source, that test knowledge of the research process. The source material presented in the exam describes a piece of research. This section is worth 25 marks.

Section B: Candidates are required to plan an investigation based on a stimulus provided in the exam. The method will be specified and chosen from an experiment, questionnaire, interview or observation. The questions are based on the design skills listed in the specification.

This section is worth 15 marks.

This unit is externally assessed.

3.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

Candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to:

AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of psychology and how psychology works.
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding of psychology and how psychology works.
AO3	Interpret, evaluate and analyse psychological data and practice.

3.2.1 AO weightings – GCSE Psychology

Unit	% of GCSE			Total
	AO1	AO2	AO3	
Unit B541: <i>Studies and Applications in Psychology 1</i>	17.5	17.5	5	40%
Unit B542: <i>Studies and Applications in Psychology 2</i>	17.5	17.5	5	40%
Unit B543: <i>Research in Psychology</i>	0	0	20	20%
Total	35%	35%	30%	100%

3.3 Grading and awarding grades

GCSE results are awarded on the scale A* to G. Units are awarded a* to g. Grades are indicated on certificates. However, results for candidates who fail to achieve the minimum grade (G or g) will be recorded as *unclassified* (U or u) and this is **not** certificated.

Most GCSEs are unitised schemes. When working out candidates' overall grades OCR needs to be able to compare performance on the same unit in different series when different grade boundaries may have been set, and between different units. OCR uses a Uniform Mark Scale to enable this to be done.

A candidate's uniform mark for each unit is calculated from the candidate's raw mark on that unit. The raw mark boundary marks are converted to the equivalent uniform mark boundary. Marks between grade boundaries are converted on a pro rata basis.

When unit results are issued, the candidate's unit grade and uniform mark are given. The uniform mark is shown out of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, e.g. 58/60.

The specification is graded on a Uniform Mark Scale. The uniform mark thresholds for each of the assessments are shown below:

(GCSE) Unit Weighting	Maximum Unit Uniform Mark	Unit Grade								u
		a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	
40%	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16	0
20%	40	36	32	28	24	20	16	12	8	0

A candidate's uniform marks for each unit are aggregated and grades for the specification are generated on the following scale:

Qualificaton	Max Uniform Mark	Qualification Grade								U
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
GCSE	200	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40	0

The written papers will have a total weighting of 100%.

The candidate's grade will be determined by the total uniform mark.

3.4 Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the assessment may be balanced by better performance in others.

The grade descriptors have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

3.4.1 Grade F

Candidates recall and recognise some structures, models or processes outlined in the specification and give a partial description of them.

They show a basic understanding of, and apply in a superficial way, a few concepts, terms and theories. They recognise and describe relevant issues or debates.

They use a limited range of methods, sources, information and data uncritically and in a simple manner to find out about issues or topics. They demonstrate a limited ability to interpret information, make judgements and reach conclusions.

3.4.2 Grade C

Candidates recall, select and communicate knowledge to describe and give a partial analysis of a variety of structures, models or processes of psychology, including contemporary contexts.

They show understanding of, and apply a variety of, concepts, terms and theories. They recognise and describe relevant issues or debates and select appropriate arguments in relation to the issues, theories and evidence. They make straightforward links between structures, processes and issues.

They use a range of methods, sources, information and data to find out about issues or topics and can indicate why they were chosen. They handle and evaluate information and data to make reasonable judgements, and present plausible conclusions that are supported by relevant evidence. They use concepts, terminology and conventions appropriately.

3.4.3 Grade A

Candidates recall, select and communicate relevant knowledge to produce substantiated analyses and explanations of a variety of structures, models or processes of psychology, including contemporary contexts.

They show precise understanding of, and apply accurately, appropriate concepts, terms and theories. They analyse links between structures, processes and issues. They recognise and explain appropriate issues or debates, and substantiate these with evidence and reach valid conclusions.

They identify and use appropriate methods, sources, information and data for a particular purpose and justify their selection. They interpret information and data presented in a variety of forms, critically evaluate its relevance in relation to the arguments and reach substantiated conclusions. They use concepts, terminology and conventions accurately and appropriately.

3.5 Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is assessed in units B541 and B542 and is integrated in the marking criteria.

Candidates are expected to:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear
- present information in a form that suits its purpose
- use an appropriate style of writing and, where applicable, specialist terminology.

4.1 Free resources available from the OCR website

The following materials will be available on the OCR website:

- GCSE Psychology Specification
- [specimen assessment materials for each unit](#)
- [teachers' handbook](#)
- [sample schemes of work and lesson plans](#)

4.2 Other resources

OCR offers centres a wealth of high quality published support with a choice of 'Official Publisher Partner' and 'Approved Publication' resources, all endorsed by OCR for use with OCR specifications.

4.2.1 Publisher partners

OCR works in close collaboration with publisher partners to ensure you have access to:

- published support materials available when you need them, tailored to OCR specifications
- high quality resources produced in consultation with OCR subject teams, which are linked to OCR's teacher support materials.



Heinemann is the publisher partner for OCR GCSE Psychology.

Heinemann produces the following resources for OCR GCSE Psychology:

- OCR GCSE Psychology Student Book – Mark Billingham, David Groves
ISBN: 978 0 435807 69 6
- OCR GCSE Psychology Teachers Presentations – available free online
ISBN: 978 0 435807 69 6

4.2.2 Endorsed publications

OCR endorses a range of publisher materials to provide quality support for centres delivering its qualifications. You can be confident that materials branded with OCR's 'Official Publishing Partner' or 'Approved publication' logos have undergone a thorough quality assurance process to achieve endorsement. All responsibility for the content of the publisher's materials rests with the publisher.



These endorsements do not mean that the materials are the only suitable resources available or necessary to achieve an OCR qualification.

4.3 Training

OCR will offer a range of support activities for all practitioners throughout the lifetime of the qualification to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to deliver the qualification.

Please see [Event Booker](#) for further information.

4.4 OCR support services

4.4.1 Active Results

Active Results is available to all centres offering OCR's GCSE Psychology specifications.

activeresults

Active Results is a free results analysis service to help teachers review the performance of individual candidates or whole schools.

Data can be analysed using filters on several categories such as gender and other demographic information, as well as providing breakdowns of results by question and topic.

Active Results allows you to look in greater detail at your results:

- richer and more granular data will be made available to centres including question level data available from e-marking
- you can identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual candidates and your centre's cohort as a whole
- our systems have been developed in close consultation with teachers so that the technology delivers what you need.

Further information on Active Results can be found on the [OCR website](#).

4.4.2 OCR Interchange

OCR Interchange has been developed to help you to carry out day-to-day administration functions online, quickly and easily. The site allows you to register and enter candidates online. In addition, you can gain immediate and free access to candidate information at your convenience. Sign up on the [OCR website](#).

5 Equality and Inclusion in GCSE Psychology

5.1 Equality Act information relating to GCSE Psychology

GCSEs often require assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised GCSE qualification and subject criteria were reviewed by the regulators in order to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments and to demonstrate what they know and can do. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* by the Joint Council www.jcq.org.uk.

Candidates who are unable to access part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

The access arrangements permissible for use in this specification are in line with Ofqual's GCSE subject criteria equalities review and are as follows:

	Yes/No	Type of Assessment
Readers	Yes	All written examinations
Scribes	Yes	All written examinations
Practical assistants	Yes	All written examinations
Word processors	Yes	All written examinations
Transcripts	Yes	All written examinations
Oral language modifiers	Yes	All written examinations
BSL signers	Yes	All written examinations
Modified question papers	Yes	All written examinations
Extra time	Yes	All written examinations

5.2 Arrangements for candidates with particular requirements (including Special Consideration)

All candidates with a demonstrable need may be eligible for access arrangements to enable them to show what they know and can do. The criteria for eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the JCQ document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*.

Candidates who have been fully prepared for the assessment but who have been affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control at the time of the examination may be eligible for special consideration. As above, centres should consult the JCQ document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*.

In December 2011 the GCSE qualification criteria were changed by Ofqual. As a result, all GCSE qualifications have been updated to comply with the new regulations.

The most significant change for all GCSE qualifications is that, from 2014, unitised specifications must require that 100% of the assessment is terminal.

Please note that there are no changes to the terminal rule and re-sit rules for the January 2013 and June 2013 examination series:

- at least 40% of the assessment must be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is certificated
- candidates may re-sit each unit once before certification, i.e. each candidate can have two attempts at a unit before certification.

For full information on the assessment availability and rules that apply in the January 2013 and June 2013 examination series, please refer to the previous version of this specification [GCSE Psychology \(July 2009\)](#) available on the website.

The sections below explain in more detail the rules that apply from the June 2014 examination series onwards.

6.1 Availability of assessment from 2014

There is one examination series available each year in June (all units are available each year in June).

GCSE Psychology certification is available in June 2014 and each June thereafter.

	Unit B541	Unit B542	Unit B543	Certification availability
June 2014	✓	✓	✓	✓
June 2015	✓	✓	✓	✓

6.2 Certification rules

For GCSE Psychology from June 2014 onwards, a 100% terminal rule applies. Candidates must enter for all their units in the series in which the qualification is certificated.

6.3 Rules for re-taking a qualification

Candidates may enter for the qualification an unlimited number of times.

Where a candidate re-takes a qualification, **all** units must be re-entered and all units must be re-taken in the same series as the qualification is re-certificated. The new results for these units will be used to calculate the new qualification grade. Any results previously achieved cannot be re-used.

6.4 Making entries

6.4.1 Unit entries

Centres must be approved to offer OCR qualifications before they can make any entries, including estimated entries. It is recommended that centres apply to OCR to become an approved centre well in advance of making their first entries. Centres must have made an entry for a unit in order for OCR to supply the appropriate forms and administrative materials.

It is essential that correct unit entry codes are used when making unit entries.

Unit entry code	Component code	Assessment method	Unit titles
B541	01	Written Paper	<i>Studies and Applications in Psychology 1</i>
B542	01	Written Paper	<i>Studies and Applications in Psychology 2</i>
B543	01	Written Paper	<i>Research in Psychology</i>

6.4.2 Certification entries

Candidates must be entered for qualification certification separately from unit assessment(s). If a certification entry is **not** made, no overall grade can be awarded.

Candidates may enter for:

- GCSE Psychology certification code J611.

6.5 Enquiries about results

Under certain circumstances, a centre may wish to query the result issued to one or more candidates. Enquiries about results for GCSE units must be made immediately following the series in which the relevant unit was taken and by the relevant enquiries about results deadline for that series.

Please refer to the JCQ Post-Results Services booklet and the OCR *Admin Guide: 14–19 Qualifications* for further guidance on enquiries about results and deadlines. Copies of the latest versions of these documents can be obtained from the OCR website at www.ocr.org.uk.

6.6 Prohibited qualifications and classification code

Every specification is assigned a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs. The classification code for this specification is 4850.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCSE qualification with the same classification code will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

Centres may wish to advise candidates that, if they take two specifications with the same classification code, colleges are very likely to take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same view may be taken if candidates take two GCSE specifications that have different classification codes but have significant overlap of content. Candidates who have any doubts about their subject combinations should seek advice, either from their centre or from the institution to which they wish to progress.

7.1 Overlap with other qualifications

There is no significant overlap between the content of this specification and that for other GCSE qualifications to our knowledge.

7.2 Progression from this qualification

GCSE qualifications are general qualifications which enable candidates to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Progression to further study from GCSE will depend upon the number and nature of the grades achieved. Broadly, candidates who are awarded mainly Grades D to G at GCSE could either strengthen their base through further study of qualifications at Level 1 within the National Qualifications Framework or could proceed to Level 2. Candidates who are awarded mainly Grades A* to C at GCSE would be well prepared for study at Level 3 within the National Qualifications Framework.

7.3 Avoidance of bias

OCR has taken great care in preparation of this specification and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind. Special focus is given to the 9 strands of the Equality Act with the aim of ensuring both direct and indirect discrimination is avoided.

7.4 Regulatory requirements

This specification complies in all respects with the current: *General Conditions of Recognition; GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice; GCSE Controlled Assessment regulations* and the *GCSE subject criteria for Psychology*. All documents are available on the [Ofqual website](#).

7.5 Language

This specification and associated assessment materials are in English only. Only answers written in English will be assessed.

7.6 Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues

This specification offers opportunities which can contribute to an understanding of these issues.

Many aspects of psychology, such as developmental, social, individual differences and cognitive psychology, allow the candidate the opportunity to reflect upon human diversity in behaviour and thinking, and the nature of humanity.

A number of topics within the specification, such as criminal behaviour, attachment and research methods, raise moral and ethical questions concerning human behaviour.

Several topics within the specification, such as sex and gender and the self, raise questions concerning the individual's relationship with normative groups and the wider society.

An integral part of the specification is a consideration of cultural diversity, and this is highlighted in topics such as obedience and non-verbal communication.

7.7 Sustainable development, health and safety considerations and European developments, consistent with international agreements

There are no sustainable development issues or health and safety considerations in this specification.

The specification encourages candidates to study the work of European psychologists such as Piaget.

7.8 Key Skills

This specification provides opportunities for the development of the Key Skills of *Communication*, *Application of Number, Information and Communication Technology*, *Working with Others*, *Improving Own Learning and Performance* and *Problem Solving* at Levels 1 and/or 2. However, the extent to which this evidence fulfils the Key Skills criteria at these levels will be totally dependent on the style of teaching and learning adopted for each unit.

The following table indicates where opportunities may exist for at least some coverage of the various Key Skills criteria at Levels 1 and/or 2 for each unit.

Unit	C		AoN		ICT		WwO		IoLP		PS	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
B541	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B542	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B543	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

7.9 ICT

In order to play a full part in modern society, candidates need to be confident and effective users of ICT. Where appropriate, candidates should be given opportunities to use ICT in order to further their study of research methods.

7.10 Citizenship

Since September 2002, the National Curriculum for England at Key Stage 4 has included a mandatory programme of study for Citizenship. Parts of this Programme of Study may be delivered through an appropriate treatment of other subjects.

The following table offers guidance on opportunities for developing knowledge, skills and understanding of citizenship issues during the course.

Citizenship issues	GCSE Psychology
Legal rights and human rights and responsibilities underpinning society and how they relate to citizens, including the role and operation of the criminal and civil justice systems.	There are some opportunities to discuss these issues when studying the criminal behaviour and obedience topic.
The origins and implications of the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding.	There are some opportunities to address some of these issues in some of the social psychology topics.
The work of parliament, the government and the courts in making and shaping the law.	There are some opportunities to discuss these issues when studying the criminal behaviour topic.
The importance of a free press and the media's role in society, including the Internet, in providing information and affecting opinion.	There are some opportunities to discuss these issues in the perception topic.
The rights and responsibilities of consumers, employers and employees.	There are some opportunities to discuss these issues in the memory and perception topic.

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YOUR CHECKLIST

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