
GCSE PSYCHOLOGY

(8182)

Specification

For teaching from September 2017 onwards
For exams in 2019 onwards

Version 1.1 14 October 2021



Contents

1 Introduction	5
1.1 Why choose AQA for GCSE Psychology	5
1.2 Support and resources to help you teach	5
2 Specification at a glance	7
2.1 Subject content	7
2.2 Assessments	7
3 Subject content	9
3.1 Cognition and behaviour	9
3.2 Social context and behaviour	13
4 Scheme of assessment	19
4.1 Aims and learning outcomes	19
4.2 Assessment objectives	19
4.3 Assessment weightings	20
5 General administration	21
5.1 Entries and codes	21
5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications	21
5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results	21
5.4 Resits and shelf life	22
5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites	22
5.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion	22
5.7 Safeguarding	23
5.8 Working with AQA for the first time	23
5.9 Private candidates	23
5.10 Use of calculators	23

Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA for GCSE Psychology

This engaging and effective qualification introduces students to the fundamentals of psychology, developing critical analysis, independent thinking and research skills.

Building on the success of our previous specification we've refreshed the topics and introduced the latest advances in the subject. We gained feedback from teachers to ensure it's as clear, engaging and easy-to-use as possible.

- You'll see many familiar and popular topics from our previous specification, which means you can continue to use many of your existing resources.
- Our assessments use multiple choice, short answer and extended writing/essays to assess knowledge, understanding, application and evaluation skills.

Knowledge of research methods gained through classroom experience of practical psychology will be assessed using scenario-based questions.

You can find out about all our Psychology qualifications at [aqa.org.uk/psychology](https://www.aqa.org.uk/psychology)

1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

1.2.1 Teaching resources

Visit [aqa.org.uk/8182](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8182) to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- flexible schemes of work to help you plan for course delivery in your own way
- specimen assessment materials that will give your students a clear idea of what is expected in the exams
- training courses to help you deliver AQA Psychology qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/8182](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8182) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- sample papers and mark schemes for new courses
- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
- example student answers with examiner commentaries.

Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at [aqa.org.uk/era](https://www.aqa.org.uk/era)

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit [aqa.org.uk/results](https://www.aqa.org.uk/results)

Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at [coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk](https://www.coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk)

Help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/8182](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8182)

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at [aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-computer-science](https://www.aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-computer-science)

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

E: psychology@aqa.org.uk

T: 01483 477 822

2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

2.1 Subject content

[Cognition and behaviour](#) (page 9)

1. [Memory](#) (page 9)
2. [Perception](#) (page 10)
3. [Development](#) (page 11)
4. [Research methods](#) (page 11)

[Social context and behaviour](#) (page 13)

1. [Social influence](#) (page 14)
2. [Language, thought and communication](#) (page 14)
3. [Brain and neuropsychology](#) (page 15)
4. [Psychological problems](#) (page 16)

2.2 Assessments

Paper 1: Cognition and behaviour
<p>What's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory • Perception • Development • Research methods <p>Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.</p>
<p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE
<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (25 marks) • Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (25 marks) • Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (25 marks) • Section D: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (25 marks)



Paper 2: Social context and behaviour

What's assessed

- Social influence
- Language, thought and communication
- Brain and neuropsychology
- Psychological problems

Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.

How it's assessed

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 100 marks
- 50% of GCSE

Questions

- Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (25 marks)
- Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (25 marks)
- Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (25 marks)
- Section D: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (25 marks)

3 Subject content

3.1 Cognition and behaviour

Students will be expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes, procedures and theories in relation to the specified Paper 1 content
- apply psychological knowledge and understanding of the specified Paper 1 content in a range of contexts
- analyse and evaluate psychological ideas, information, processes and procedures in relation to the specified Paper 1 content and make judgements, draw conclusions and produce developments or refinements of psychological procedures based on their reasoning and synthesis of skills
- evaluate therapies and treatments including in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness
- show how psychological knowledge and ideas change over time and how these inform our understanding of behaviour
- demonstrate the contribution of psychology to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity
- develop an understanding of the interrelationships between the core areas of psychology
- show how the studies for topics relate to the associated theory.

Knowledge and understanding of research methods (see [3.1.4 Research methods](#) (page 11)), practical research skills and mathematical skills (see [Appendix A: mathematical requirements](#) (page 25)) will be assessed across all topic areas in Paper 1. These skills should be developed by studying the specification content and through ethical, practical research activities, involving:

- designing research
- conducting research
- analysing and interpreting data.

By carrying out practical research activities, students will manage associated risks and use information and communication technology (ICT).

3.1.1 Memory

Content	Additional information
Processes of memory: encoding (input) storage and retrieval (output)	Different types of memory: episodic memory, semantic memory and procedural memory. How memories are encoded and stored.

Content	Additional information
Structures of memory	<p>The multi-store model of memory: sensory, short term and long term.</p> <p>Features of each store: coding, capacity, duration.</p> <p>Primacy and recency effects in recall: the effects of serial position.</p> <p>Murdock's serial position curve study.</p>
Memory as an active process	<p>The Theory of Reconstructive Memory, including the concept of 'effort after meaning'.</p> <p>Bartlett's War of the Ghosts study.</p> <p>Factors affecting the accuracy of memory, including interference, context and false memories.</p>

3.1.2 Perception

Content	Additional information
Sensation and perception	The difference between sensation and perception.
Visual cues and constancies	<p>Monocular depth cues: height in plane, relative size, occlusion and linear perspective.</p> <p>Binocular depth cues: retinal disparity, convergence.</p>
Gibson's direct theory of perception – the influence of nature	The real world presents sufficient information for direct perception without inference. Role of motion parallax in everyday perception.
Visual illusions	<p>Explanations for visual illusions: ambiguity, misinterpreted depth cues, fiction, size constancy.</p> <p>Examples of visual illusions: the Ponzo, the Müller-Lyer, Rubin's vase, the Ames Room, the Kanizsa triangle and the Necker cube.</p>
Gregory's constructivist theory of perception – the influence of nurture	Perception uses inferences from visual cues and past experience to construct a model of reality.
Factors affecting perception	<p>Perceptual set and the effects of the following factors affecting perception: culture, motivation, emotion, expectation.</p> <p>The Gilchrist and Nesberg study of motivation and the Bruner and Minturn study of perceptual set.</p>

3.1.3 Development

Content	Additional information
Early brain development	<p>A basic knowledge of brain development, from simple neural structures in the womb, of brain stem, thalamus, cerebellum and cortex, reflecting the development of autonomic functions, sensory processing, movement and cognition.</p> <p>The roles of nature and nurture.</p>
<p>Piaget's stage theory and the development of intelligence</p> <p>The role of Piaget's theory in education</p>	<p>Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development including concepts of assimilation and accommodation.</p> <p>The four stages of development: sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational. Application of these stages in education.</p> <p>Reduction of egocentricity, development of conservation. McGarrigle and Donaldson's 'naughty teddy study'; Hughes' 'policeman doll study'.</p>
The effects of learning on development	<p>Dweck's Mindset Theory of learning: fixed mindset and growth mindset. The role of praise and self-efficacy beliefs in learning.</p> <p>Learning styles including verbalisers and visualisers. Willingham's Learning Theory and his criticism of learning styles.</p>

3.1.4 Research methods

Content	Additional information
Formulation of testable hypotheses	Null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis.
Types of variable	Independent variable, dependent variable, extraneous variables.
Sampling methods	<p>Target populations, samples and sampling methods and how to select samples using these methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • random • opportunity • systematic • stratified. <p>Strengths and weaknesses of each sampling method.</p> <p>Understanding principles of sampling as applied to scientific data.</p>

Content	Additional information
Designing research	<p>Quantitative and qualitative methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the experimental method (experimental designs, independent groups, repeated measures, matched pairs, including strengths and weaknesses of each experimental design) • laboratory experiments • field and natural experiments • interviews • questionnaires • case studies • observation studies (including categories of behaviour and interobserver reliability). <p>Strengths and weaknesses of each research method and types of research for which they are suitable.</p>
Correlation	<p>An understanding of association between two variables and the use of scatter diagrams to show possible correlational relationships.</p> <p>The strengths and weaknesses of correlations.</p> <p>Computation of formulae is not required.</p>
Research procedures	<p>The use of standardised procedures, instructions to participants, randomisation, allocation to conditions, counterbalancing and extraneous variables (including explaining the effect of extraneous variables and how to control for them).</p>
Planning and conducting research	<p>How research should be planned, taking into consideration the reliability and/or validity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sampling methods • experimental designs • quantitative and qualitative methods.
Ethical considerations	<p>Students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethical issues in psychological research as outlined in the British Psychological Society guidelines • ways of dealing with each of these issues.

3.1.4.1 Data handling

Content	Additional information
Quantitative and qualitative data	The difference between quantitative and qualitative data.
Primary and secondary data	The difference between primary and secondary data.
Computation	Recognise and use expressions in decimal and standard form: use ratios, fractions and percentages, estimate results, find arithmetic means and use an appropriate number of significant figures.
Descriptive statistics	Understand and calculate mean, median, mode and range.
Interpretation and display of quantitative data	Construct and interpret frequency tables and diagrams, bar charts, histograms and scatter diagrams for correlation.
Normal distributions	The characteristics of normal distribution.

3.2 Social context and behaviour

Students will be expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes, procedures and theories in relation to the specified Paper 2 content
- apply psychological knowledge and understanding of the specified Paper 2 content in a range of contexts
- analyse and evaluate psychological ideas, information, processes and procedures in relation to the specified Paper 2 content and make judgements, draw conclusions and produce developments or refinements of psychological procedures based on their reasoning and synthesis of skills
- evaluate therapies and treatments including in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness
- show how psychological knowledge and ideas change over time and how these inform our understanding of behaviour
- demonstrate the contribution of psychology to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity
- develop an understanding of the interrelationships between the core areas of psychology
- show how the studies for topics relate to the associated theory.

Knowledge and understanding of research methods (see [3.1.4 Research methods](#) (page 11)), practical research skills and mathematical skills (see [Appendix A: mathematical requirements](#) (page 25)) will be assessed across all topic areas in Paper 2. These skills should be developed by studying the specification content and through ethical, practical research activities, involving:

- designing research
- conducting research
- analysing and interpreting data.

By carrying out practical research activities, students will manage associated risks and use information and communication technology (ICT).

3.2.1 Social influence

Content	Additional information
Conformity	<p>Identification and explanation of how social factors (group size, anonymity and task difficulty) and dispositional factors (personality, expertise) affect conformity to majority influence.</p> <p>Asch's study of conformity.</p>
Obedience	<p>Milgram's Agency theory of social factors affecting obedience including agency, authority, culture and proximity.</p> <p>Explanation of dispositional factors affecting obedience including Adorno's theory of the Authoritarian Personality.</p>
Prosocial behaviour	<p>Bystander behaviour: identification and explanation of how social factors (presence of others and the cost of helping) and dispositional factors (similarity to victim and expertise) affect bystander intervention.</p> <p>Piliavin's subway study.</p>
Crowd and collective behaviour	<p>Prosocial and antisocial behaviour in crowds: identification and explanation of how social factors (social loafing, deindividuation and culture) and dispositional factors (personality and morality) affect collective behaviour.</p>

3.2.2 Language, thought and communication

Content	Additional information
<p>The possible relationship between language and thought</p> <p>The effect of language and thought on our view of the world</p>	<p>Piaget's theory: language depends on thought.</p> <p>The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: thinking depends on language.</p> <p>Variation in recall of events and recognition of colours, eg in Native American cultures.</p>
Differences between human and animal communication	<p>Limited functions of animal communication (survival, reproduction, territory, food).</p> <p>Von Frisch's bee study.</p> <p>Properties of human communication not present in animal communication, eg plan ahead and discuss future events.</p>

Content	Additional information
Non-verbal communication	<p>Definitions of non-verbal communication and verbal communication.</p> <p>Functions of eye contact including regulating flow of conversation, signaling attraction and expressing emotion.</p> <p>Body language including open and closed posture, postural echo and touch.</p> <p>Personal space including cultural, status and gender differences.</p>
Explanations of non-verbal behaviour	<p>Darwin's evolutionary theory of non-verbal communication as evolved and adaptive.</p> <p>Evidence that non-verbal behaviour is innate, eg in neonates and the sensory deprived.</p> <p>Evidence that non-verbal behaviour is learned. Yuki's study of emoticons.</p>

3.2.3 Brain and neuropsychology

Content	Additional information
Structure and function of the nervous system	<p>The divisions of the human nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic), basic functions of these divisions.</p> <p>The autonomic nervous system and the fight or flight response. The James-Lange theory of emotion.</p>
Neuron structure and function	<p>Sensory, relay and motor neurons. Synaptic transmission: release and reuptake of neurotransmitters. Excitation and inhibition. An understanding of how these processes interact.</p> <p>Hebb's theory of learning and neuronal growth.</p>
Structure and function of the brain	<p>Brain structure: frontal lobe, temporal lobe, parietal lobe, occipital lobe and cerebellum.</p> <p>Basic function of these structures.</p> <p>Localisation of function in the brain: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language areas.</p> <p>Penfield's study of the interpretive cortex.</p>

Content	Additional information
An introduction to neuropsychology	<p>Cognitive neuroscience: how the structure and function of the brain relate to behaviour and cognition.</p> <p>The use of scanning techniques to identify brain functioning: CT, PET and fMRI scans.</p> <p>Tulving's 'gold' memory study.</p> <p>A basic understanding of how neurological damage, eg stroke or injury can affect motor abilities and behaviour.</p>

3.2.4 Psychological problems

Content	Additional information
<p>An introduction to mental health</p> <p>How the incidence of significant mental health problems changes over time</p>	<p>Characteristics of mental health, eg positive engagement with society, effective coping with challenges.</p> <p>Cultural variations in beliefs about mental health problems.</p> <p>Increased challenges of modern living, eg isolation.</p> <p>Increased recognition of the nature of mental health problems and lessening of social stigma.</p>
Effects of significant mental health problems on individuals and society	<p>Individual effects, eg damage to relationships, difficulties coping with day to day life, negative impact on physical wellbeing.</p> <p>Social effects, eg need for more social care, increased crime rates, implications for the economy.</p>
Characteristics of clinical depression	<p>Differences between unipolar depression, bipolar depression and sadness.</p> <p>The use of International Classification of Diseases in diagnosing unipolar depression: number and severity of symptoms including low mood, reduced energy levels, changes in sleep patterns and appetite levels, decrease in self-confidence.</p>

Content	Additional information
<p>Theories of depression</p> <p>Interventions or therapies for depression</p>	<p>Biological explanation (influence of nature): imbalance of neurotransmitters, eg serotonin in the brain.</p> <p>Psychological explanation (influence of nurture): negative schemas and attributions.</p> <p>Use of antidepressant medications.</p> <p>Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT).</p> <p>How these improve mental health, reductionist and holistic perspectives. Wiles' study of the effectiveness of CBT.</p>
<p>Characteristics of addiction</p>	<p>The difference between addiction/dependence and substance misuse/abuse.</p> <p>The use of International Classification of Diseases in diagnosing addiction (dependence syndrome), including a strong desire to use substance(s) despite harmful consequences, difficulty in controlling use, a higher priority given to the substance(s) than to other activities or obligations.</p>
<p>Theories of addiction</p> <p>Interventions or therapies for addiction</p>	<p>Biological explanation (influence of nature): hereditary factors/genetic vulnerability. Kaij's twin study of alcohol abuse.</p> <p>Psychological explanation (influence of nurture): Peer influence.</p> <p>Aversion therapy.</p> <p>Self-management programmes, eg self-help groups, 12 step recovery programmes.</p> <p>How these improve mental health, reductionist and holistic perspectives.</p>

4 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at [aqa.org.uk/pastpapers](https://www.aqa.org.uk/pastpapers)

This specification is designed to be taken over two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

GCSE exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2019 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our GCSE exams in Psychology include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their knowledge, skills and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide extended responses.

4.1 Aims and learning outcomes

Courses based on this specification must encourage students to:

- use specialist vocabulary, psychological concepts, terminology and convention to engage in the process of psychological enquiry
- acquire knowledge and understanding of psychology, developing an understanding of self and others, and how psychological understanding can help to explain everyday social phenomena
- understand how psychological research is conducted, including the role of scientific method and data analysis
- present information, develop arguments and draw conclusions through a critical approach to psychological evidence, developing as reflective thinkers
- develop an understanding of the relationship between psychology and personal, moral, social and cultural issues, and develop an understanding of ethical issues in psychology
- develop an understanding of psychological issues, the contribution of psychology to individual, social and cultural diversity, and how psychology contributes to society.

4.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Psychology specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes and procedures.
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes and procedures.
- AO3: Analyse and evaluate psychological information, ideas, processes and procedures to make judgements and draw conclusions.

4.2.1 Assessment objective weightings for GCSE Psychology

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)		Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	
AO1	17.5	17.5	35
AO2	17.5	17.5	35
AO3	15	15	30
Overall weighting of components	50	50	100

4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Paper 1	100	x1	100
Paper 2	100	x1	100
Total scaled mark:			200

5 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

5.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code:

- further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications
- only one of them will be counted for the purpose of the *School and College Performance tables* – the DfE's rules on 'early entry' will determine which one.

Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA GCSE in Psychology	8182	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCSE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCSEs
- Ofqual GCSE subject level conditions that apply to all GCSEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 603/0932/5.

5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There are no overlaps with any other AQA qualifications at this level.

5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The qualification will be graded on a nine-point scale: 1 to 9 – where 9 is the best grade.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard grade for grade 1 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

5.4 Resits and shelf life

Students can resit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

5.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. Tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published at jcq.org.uk

Students with disabilities and special needs

We're required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested aren't changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader.

To arrange access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as family bereavement. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

For more information and advice visit aqa.org.uk/access or email accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk

5.7 Safeguarding

Some of the content within this curriculum may generate discussions or disclosures from students which raise safeguarding concerns. If this happens, please follow your centre's safeguarding policy to arrange support.

5.8 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college hasn't previously offered our specifications, you need to register as an AQA centre. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](https://www.aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

5.9 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates.

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

A private candidate may be self-taught, home schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. They must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at [aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates](https://www.aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates)
- email privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk

5.10 Use of calculators

Students may use a calculator in the exam. They must ensure that their calculator meets the requirements as set out in the *JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations*. These instructions make it clear what the requirements are for calculators (what they must be) and what they are not (what they must not be). The instructions are regularly updated and can be found at [jqc.org.uk](https://www.jcq.org.uk)

Appendix – mathematical requirements

In order to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in psychology, students need to have been taught, and demonstrate competence, to select and apply the following areas of mathematics relevant to research methods in psychology.

6.1 Arithmetic and numerical computation

- Recognise and use expressions in decimal and standard form.
- Use ratios, fractions and percentages.
- Estimate results.

6.2 Handling data

- Use an appropriate number of significant figures.
- Find arithmetic means.
- Construct and interpret frequency tables and diagrams, bar charts and histograms.
- Understand the principles of sampling as applied to scientific data.
- Understand the terms mean, median and mode.
- Use a scatter diagram to identify a correlation between two variables.
- Know the characteristics of normal distributions.
- Understand range as a measure of dispersion.
- Understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative data.
- Understand the difference between primary and secondary data.
- Translate information between graphical and numerical forms.
- Plot two variables from experimental or other data and interpret graphs.

All mathematical content must be assessed within the lifetime of the specification.

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at

You can talk directly to the Psychology subject team:

E: psychology@qa.org.uk

T: 01483 477 822