

Psychology

Advanced GCE A2 7876

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS 3876

Report on the Units

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Advanced GCE Psychology (7876)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Psychology (3876)

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Chief Examiner's Report

General Comments

The number of candidates continues to grow and the AS entry has now topped 15 000 while the A2 entry exceeds 10 000. The most popular options are Crime and Health but Environment continues to grow. The highest marks were accessible on all units and some candidates and their teachers can be pleased that they achieved such very high marks across contributing to a satisfactory spread of marks that allows for greater differentiation between the grade boundaries. Communication via the e-list (<http://community.ocr.org.uk/community/psychology-a.home>) provides help and support for new teachers, a forum for debate and a source of information for all. The specification is now well supported by texts for students and teachers.

In relation to this year's assessment, the individual Principal Examiner's reports are well worth scrutiny and analysis, as is the mark scheme with its notes on indicative content. A common theme throughout the units was that 'a' grade candidates answer questions in detail with confident use of psychological terms and concepts, providing appropriate examples and effective analysis. At the 'e' grade, boundary answers were frequently anecdotal or only peripherally relevant and points were not elaborated. Regrettably, some candidates did not address the questions set, making assumptions without reading the question, or reiterating prepared answers that did not fit. The use of generic evaluation points without specific examples or application to the question was common among weaker candidates. Incorrectly targeted answers received little credit. Across all the units, candidates are expected not only to demonstrate their knowledge but also their understanding. This means they cannot expect to have previously learnt the required response, rather they must apply their knowledge to and focus on the actual question.

There are again a number of candidates who lack examination skills in relation to time management and attention to the rubric. Some candidates ran out of time, or failed to realise there are always twenty questions on Core Studies 1. Others gave more detail than was expected in the Section A of the A2 option papers and less than was required in Section B, where more marks were available. Candidates should plan their answers and leave sufficient time to give balanced answers to all parts of the question. While examination stress limits performance, timely reminders and practice papers might reduce the frequency of such errors allowing candidates to achieve their true potential.

2540: Core Studies 1

General Comments

Some candidates produced impressive answers particularly to the more challenging questions. There was evidence of Centre effects where some candidates did not appear to know all of the studies whilst others had obviously done their revision thoroughly and had a good understanding of all the 20 studies. There seemed to be few timing problems or rubric errors with the majority of candidates completing the paper. Candidates need to be made aware of the need to link answers to the study where requested and to 'outline' or 'identify' again as requested in the question.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1(a)

This question was answered very well by the vast majority of candidates.

Question 1(b)

The two most common correct answers here were that the participant's memory of the crash had been altered by the leading question/verb used, or the participants did not have an accurate memory in the first place and so the answer was influenced by the verb used.

Question 2

This question was answered well with the majority of candidates offering one of the findings from the Deregowski study such as Hudson's picture of the antelope and man as an example of how people from different cultures interpret the same picture suggesting that pictures do not offer a universal language.

Question 3

There were some confused word combinations that were not true to the ones listed in the original study but correct answers included; gimme tickle, open food drink, and listen dog. This highlights the need to teach from the original studies and to check textbook versions against this.

Question 4

Many correct answers suggested that the control questions were used to ensure that the children knew the correct names of the dolls (naming question), where the marble was really (reality question) and where the marbles had been originally (memory question). Incorrect answers referred to the belief question which measured theory of mind and was not a control question.

Question 5

Candidates were able to identify correctly a range of ethical issues relating to the study by Freud on little Hans including protection issues, withdrawal and confidentiality.

Question 6

This question was answered very well with the majority of candidates identifying age, the number of questions asked or materials as factors that affected the children's ability to conserve.

Question 7(a)

This question was also answered well with candidates correctly identifying characteristics used to match the comparison groups with the ex-institutional adolescents, including age, sex, one or two parent families etc.

Question 7(b)

This question was answered less well by some candidates who were unable to outline a limitation of establishing a comparison group at the age of 16. Good answers referred to the lack of control over experience before the age of 16 among other correct issues.

Question 8

This question required an understanding of 'controls'. Incorrect answers identified the independent variables such as the aggressive/non-aggressive model rather than the controls including the size of the bobo doll, the one way mirror used to observe the children, among many others.

Question 9

Many accurate descriptions of the tests used in the study by Sperry were given including the visuo-tactile, speech, writing, visual tasks etc.

Question 10(a)

Candidates either did or did not understand the study and answers were split in this way. Good answers referred to the findings for a specific group of participants such as the Epi- ignorant.

Question 10(b)

Many candidates obviously understood the Two-Factor Theory and referred to the role of cognitions, situation, arousal etc.

Question 11

This question was answered surprisingly well, showing many candidates had a good understanding of reductionism and were able to discuss the complexity of why people commit murder and all the factors influencing people. Candidates made good points about the use of brain scans in relation to this complex issue.

Question 12

This question addressed the skill of interpreting data tables and arriving at conclusions. Many candidates correctly identified conclusions about REM that could be drawn from the table. Weaker answers just stated the findings from the table without drawing any conclusions.

Question 13

Although the dispositional hypothesis is central to the study by Haney, Banks and Zimbardo and is discussed at length in the original study, this question threw some candidates who just guessed at the meaning. Other candidates gave a sound explanation of the term.

Question 14

This question was answered well by most candidates who gave a variety of different weaknesses of the sample used in the subway Samaritan study including the lack of control over who took part.

Question 15(a)

Candidates who knew the study had no problem describing one way in which inter-group discrimination was demonstrated in this study and made reference to the allocation of points from the matrices.

Question 15(b)

A good range of answers were given in response to this question including the idea that the boys in the study were competitive or that they were responding to the allocation to in and out groups.

Question 16

The majority of candidates knew the study by Milgram well and were able to identify two findings from the study.

Question 16(b)

A good variety of examples of obedience outside the laboratory were given here including pupils and teachers, civilians and police etc.

Question 17

This question was answered very well with many candidates referring to the black pride movement and other appropriate answers.

Question 18

Some good answers here but full marks were only given to those which linked their disadvantage of field experiment to Rosenhan's study as requested in the question.

Question 19(a)

Again there were many good strengths outlined of quantitative data but full marks were only awarded to those that linked specifically to measuring intelligence, as requested in the question.

Question 19(b)

Again, there were many good weaknesses outlined of quantitative data but full marks were only awarded to those that linked specifically to measuring intelligence, as requested in the question.

Question 20

Many candidates outlined the differences in personality found between Eve White and Eve Black accurately. Weaker answers were vague or lacked specific detail.

2541: Core Studies 2

General Comments

This year the marks achieved by candidates whilst covering the whole mark range were, in general terms, slightly lower than in previous years. Although many candidates showed detailed knowledge and understanding and therefore got the mark they deserved, there are others with the same qualities who failed to do themselves justice through faulty examination technique. This is disappointing for the examiner and, of course, for the candidate who ought to achieve higher marks.

The most common errors in technique this year were:

1. For question 1 and 2 part (c), fulfilling the assessment request to suggest an alternative way of gathering data but not considering how this might affect results.
2. For questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 part (b), not setting out general strengths/weaknesses or problems relevant to the topic area but, instead, considering specific points about the studies.
3. Again, in questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 part (b), taking the injunction to 'Briefly discuss....' Too literally and thereby providing insufficient detail to achieve a significant number of marks.
4. Finally, and again, in the part (b) responses noted earlier, a tendency to rely on psychological concepts such as 'demand characteristics', 'reliability', 'validity' etc to fit any question regardless of the issue under consideration.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

Question 1 (the use of specialist and complex equipment)

Candidates could choose one of three named studies, those of Dement and Kleitman, Sperry, Raine, Buchsbaum and La Casse. Dement and Kleitman proved to be the most popular choice of study, with candidates showing detailed knowledge of the equipment used in the study. Where Raine et al was the preference, most candidates could write detailed descriptions of the equipment although some referred to the continuous performance task as specialist equipment. Very few candidates chose Roger Sperry's study as their discussion vehicle and those who did tended to struggle to describe the equipment effectively.

Part (a) Very few candidates scored 0, 1 or 2 marks with most descriptions scoring significantly higher. For top marks, candidates had to describe how specialist equipment was used to collect the data rather than a description of the study itself. The best did as required and were awarded marks accordingly though weaker candidates, using Dement and Kleitman for example, filled the account with references to abstinence from caffeine and alcohol, discussions on dream content and so on.

Part (b) This proved problematic for a significant number of candidates, particularly those using Raine et al. Although answers were often extremely detailed, they tended to focus on the technique of PET scanning rather than, as noted in the mark scheme for several years, providing general advantages/disadvantages related to the use of equipment.

Part (c) Candidates choosing Dement and Kleitman offered a variety of suggested alternative ways of data collection without the use of specialist equipment and the better answers referred to how results would be affected. For example, the inability to measure brain activity and eye and muscle movement and problems in relating these to REM and non-REM sleep. Those choosing either of the other two studies, whilst coming up with viable alternatives, were rarely able to offer anything about the effect of these alternatives on results.

Question 2 (the developmental approach)

This was a slightly less popular choice of Section A question though there was little difference in the range of marks achieved by candidates choosing this rather than question 1.

Candidates could choose one of three named studies, those of Freud, Samuel and Bryant and Bandura, Ross and Ross. Freud was the most popular choice of study with Bandura a close second and Samuel and Bryant the least popular.

Part (a) Again very few candidates scored 0, 1 or 2 marks with most descriptions scoring significantly higher. For top marks candidates had to describe what the chosen study told us about development rather than a description of the study itself. A minority of candidates described the study without reference to development in their answer, which restricted their mark to a maximum of 3 of the 6 available for this subsection. Candidates using Freud either produced excellent answers referring to Hans being fixated at the phallic stage, linking this to his phobia and the Oedipus complex, or made no reference to Hans or Oedipus, giving detailed accounts of Freud's theory of psychosexual developmental stages. Answers using Bandura or Samuel and Bryant were generally thorough although occasionally the latter choice produced lengthy discussion on Piaget.

Part (b) This was generally well answered, especially if the candidates chose Freud or Bandura as their illustrative study. Some of the best answers referred to subjective interpretations of children's intentions, the assumption that all children develop at the same rate and at the same time, the problems of obtaining informed consent etc. On the other hand, there were a number of weaker answers which were little more than well rehearsed criticisms of the study itself and failed to make general points about the problems of studying development.

Part (c) Candidates, whatever the chosen study, often came up with acceptable alternatives though, as with question 1 (c), they did not meet the assessment criteria by showing how this alternative suggestion might affect the result. This effectively reduced the maximum mark to 4 when 4 further marks were on offer for consideration of possible effects.

Section B

Question 3 (psychometric measurement)

This question seemed markedly less popular than question 4 and, on the whole, produced lower marks than those for the other Section B question. This was largely a consequence of a lack of clear understanding of psychometric measurement rather than any actual difference in the level of difficulty between questions 3 and 4. Indeed candidates who achieved high marks for this question showed good knowledge of the studies and the issue under discussion.

Part (a) As always, a small number of candidates chose to write about one study instead of four and consequently could only score a maximum of 3 out of the 12 marks available for this subsection. For the remaining candidates, three of the studies presented few problems in discussing the psychometric measures used, Hodges and Tizard being the exception with candidates referring to interviews and questionnaires instead of standardised measures such as

the Rutter B scale assessing mental health. Thigpen and Cleckley sometimes presented similar difficulties with reference to interviews, projective testing and even hypnosis as examples of psychometric measurement.

Part (b) This provided some excellent answers with candidates clearly understanding issues related to objectivity, reliability, validity and the enhanced status of Psychology as a scientific subject using scientific methods of data collection. As noted earlier, the weaker responses were either due to a lack of understanding of psychometric measurement or a study focused response to the question.

Question 4 (usefulness)

This was the more popular choice of question in this section with responses covering the whole range of marks. The best showed impressive knowledge, understanding and effective examination technique especially the use of 'point, example, comment' in answering part (b) although Centres and candidates should be mindful that the marginal use of 'P, E, C' by some candidates could be misconstrued as an attempt to influence the examiner!

Part (a) Whilst the occasional answer focused on one study only (with the inevitable consequence on the overall mark), a number of candidates omitted Schachter and Singer from their discussion and a surprising few 'mistook' Zimbardo for Milgram or Piliavin for Loftus and Palmer. Generally however this section was answered extremely well if the candidates remembered to state clearly how the study was useful and discuss issues related to real life application. Some of the best answers related to Milgram in assisting our understanding of the Holocaust, Tajfel in showing how best to avoid the effects of discrimination and Loftus and Palmer in providing advisory caution to the authorities in the use of eye witness testimony. Where Schachter and Singer were discussed, only a relative few related their answers to the usefulness of the study in, say, understanding their emotions better. However, on occasion, there was a tendency to describe the study in detail without reference to usefulness or to write about its usefulness with no reference to any specific information from the study.

Part (b) Being the last subsection on the paper, this was the area in which some candidates came up against time management issues and could not write enough to do justice to their previous effort. The best candidates made effective use of 'point, example, comment' referring to problems related to ecological validity, the use of limited samples, reductionism etc., and using information from the named studies to illustrate their points in a concise manner. Some candidates, however, lacked elaboration, particularly with regard to providing a comment which was genuine evaluation or implication, merely repeating some sort of mantra that 'it was more valid' or 'making it valid and reliable'. Similarly, a number failed to achieve marks in this and other part (b) answers by limiting their answers to ethical considerations only, a repetitive response over four paragraphs which does not demonstrate the breadth of psychological knowledge or understanding required by this particular paper.

2542: Psychological Investigations

General Comments

As usual, the standard of scripts on this unit was very good. Most Centres are preparing candidates well for this assessment. Nearly every candidate is able to describe the aims, procedures and findings of the activities that they have conducted. Stronger candidates offer considered and contextualised evaluation as opposed to generic issues. There is also evidence that stronger candidates have a clear understanding of the process of statistical analysis. There are fewer examples of inappropriate activities although Centres are reminded that the ethical guidelines that apply to Unit 2543 also apply to this unit. In particular, candidates should not be conducting research that asks personal or potentially embarrassing questions. Finally, Centres are reminded that every candidate should submit a Practical Investigations Folder with their examination paper and that there are restrictions on what may be recorded in this folder.

Comments on individual questions

Activity A

Question 1

Most candidates were able to provide a clear example of a question and were awarded 2 marks. Occasionally candidates offered a statement, which clearly needed an associated question such as 'to what extent do you agree with this statement?', and / or some form of rating scale. These answers were seen as incomplete and awarded 1 mark.

Question 2

Stronger answers to this question were contextualised whereas weaker answers were generic, suggesting weaknesses of questionnaire / self reports in general. Examiners were looking for appropriate weaknesses outlined in the context of the candidate's own activity to award full marks.

Question 3(a)

Answers that suggested alternative questions, types of questions or ways of asking questions (such as interview rather than written questionnaire) were appropriate here, as were answers that suggested the use of totally different methods such as observation. Simply identifying an alternative such as an observation was enough for one mark and further marks were awarded for more detail.

Question 3(b)

Many candidates were awarded 2 marks here from a possible 4. General strengths and weaknesses of the proposed alternative method were awarded 1 mark each and answers that were given in the context of the candidate's 'suggested alternative' were given 2 marks each. Even strong candidates overall often failed to score full marks here.

Activity B

Question 4

Nearly all candidates scored 2 marks here.

Question 5

Most candidates scored full marks here. Occasionally only one finding was given and occasionally candidates gave the same finding twice, for example stating that more males than females did something and then that less females than males did the same thing. Occasionally findings were unclear and these were awarded one mark out of a possible two.

Question 6(a)

Most candidates gave a general response to this question and seemed to ignore the end of the question 'in observational research'. Many candidates gave answers such as 'it means that if you repeat the experiment then you will get the same results' which is a good general definition of reliability but is not focussed on reliability in observational research. Fewer candidates referred to consistency between observers.

Question 6(b)

There was a wide range of responses to this question. Many candidates focussed on validity and examiners were unable to award these answers any marks. Other suggested the use of multiple observers – to give you inter-rater reliability which is not quite accurate but usually achieved some marks. Better answers suggested training observers in the use of coding schemes, piloting the observation to ensure consistent use or changing specific categories to allow for more reliable categories. Very good answers were again contextualised.

Activity C

Question 7

Most candidates were able to write a clear null hypothesis with fewer incidences of directional, alternate or correlational hypotheses than in previous years. As usual, certain activities cause problems for candidates, most notably the Stroop Test, where candidates struggle (despite their folders) to write accurate hypotheses. Most think that colour is the independent variable rather than 'congruency / incongruency'.

Question 8(a)

A significant number of candidates lost marks here. They should have given their conclusion in relation to their null hypothesis, for example stating that the null was rejected because'. Some simply said that it was rejected and others made reference to their alternate hypothesis rather than their null.

Question 8(b)

Most candidates realised that this was asking for details of their statistical analysis and only a small number gave details of their procedure. There were some very strong answers to this question with those that displayed understanding of significance levels and/or probability being awarded full marks.

Question 9(a)

Candidates are still drawing graphs or tables of raw data here despite the fact that this question has appeared numerous times previously. A simple bar chart showing the means for each condition is enough to achieve full marks if labelled appropriately. This would be relatively quick to 'sketch' and unfortunately candidates are wasting a great deal of time producing tables / graphs of raw data that are not awarded any marks. Even when candidates draw appropriate tables / graphs they do not always label them appropriately and marks were lost here. For example candidates may draw a table labelled mean, median and mode and condition A / condition B with no indication of what the conditions are or of what the scores are. Not giving some indication of the scores (no. of words recalled, time etc) was the common failing.

Question 9(b)

Most candidates were able to do this although some gave conclusions that could not be inferred from the graph or were unclear and some gave statistical information here.

Activity D

Question 10

Most candidates were able to identify the variables that they had used in their correlation although some gave variables that were either inappropriate for correlations (e.g. gender) or variables such as 'television' which needed clarification (such as hours of television watched).

Question 11

Most candidates were able to explain how their variables were measured although some could have given more detail. Good answers gave details of rating scales etc rather than stating simply 'a questionnaire'.

Question 12

Candidates generally did well on this question producing detailed answers. Occasionally the suggestions offered were not measuring the same variable and these answers lost marks. However, most candidates were able to consider a range of effects of their alternative measurement and marks were generally high for this question.

2543: Psychological Research Report

General Comments

Generally the standard has been maintained. Many Centres have taken time and care in the preparation and reporting of the practical project and in the supervision of the assignment. Most Centres advised their candidates to keep their work within the maximum word limits but worryingly, some candidates were reported for malpractice for misrepresenting the number of words submitted. There is a maximum of 1400 words for the practical project and 1000 words for the assignment. Candidates are disadvantaged by exceeding these limits and declaring false word counts risks serious penalties. Centres must also guard against candidates who have simply cut and pasted research from Internet sites.

Most investigations conformed to the ethical guidelines and proposal forms were enclosed with the reports. It is essential that candidates comply with any provisos suggested by the adviser. Within class sets, candidates were expected to investigate their own individual hypotheses with different variables or by different methods. In Centres where candidates submitted a wide variety of practical projects that clearly reflected their interests, greater understanding of the research process was shown within the reports.

Assignments, in response to the three tasks in the specification, related a source, usually a newspaper article, to Psychology. The vast majority of candidates found their own suitable source, identified appropriate issues and went beyond the core studies to present apposite evidence. Candidates generally received appropriate guidance in the selection of their sources and areas to research evidence.

Comments on individual parts of the report

The Practical Project

Reports for the practical project almost always followed the standard format and only used the first person in the discussion. Most Centres were aware of requirements of the practical project and appeared to offer appropriate levels of supervision and guidance to candidates.

The abstracts were usually clear and concise.

The backgrounds were generally well written with clear concise information that led to the aim and operationalized hypotheses. However some candidates gave very brief psychological backgrounds while others failed to show how the background related to the aim or hypotheses. Some candidates did not operationalize their hypotheses. It should be clear from an operational hypothesis exactly what was measured.

Methodology sections were clear and judged to be replicable. Unfortunately, some candidates omit vital materials and many do not describe their sample or how it was selected. It is not advisable to name the Centre either here or in the discussion, as this is a breach of confidentiality. There was some redundancy of effort, and a waste of words, in the repetition of controls and ethics under separate headings especially if the points made had already been incorporated within the procedure.

The results section is one in which few candidates score full marks. While the presentation of data and appropriate analysis was good, many candidates did not appropriately display the data or show understanding of their findings. Pie charts are the best ways to display nominal data and bar charts of frequency distributions for ordinal data. Bar charts were appropriately used to display means. Most errors occurred with the inappropriate use of chi-squared tests. Candidates should be encouraged to comment on their data to show understanding beyond a simple inferential statement of significance. This is generally easier for ordinal data and the level of

measurement should be considered when designing the investigation. Some candidates produce too many charts, repeating the same information in different formats, which only demonstrates a lack of understanding.

The discussion sections clearly discriminated between candidates who appreciated the weaknesses of their methods and the improvements that they had or could have made and those who did not. Weaker candidates tended to produce a list of headings that were not always appropriate with only brief comments and without any justification that applied to their own project.

Presentation and communication was, for most candidates, good. References were usually supplied but many candidates did not reference the statistical tests or computer programs used for statistical analysis.

The Assignment

The sources selected were appropriate for the tasks and in line with the specification in both the date of publication; within two years of the examination, and the length; no more than two pages of tabloid or three pages of A4 where Internet sites are used. The selection of sources involving rape, torture and murder is distressing in itself for both the candidate and the examiner. Centres might consider directing their candidates to less distressing events, especially when they are treated superficially.

For good candidates, the issues were clearly identified and appropriately related to the source and psychological evidence. Weaker candidates did not always identify the issues raised clearly, or justify them, usually because the issues were not always appropriate. They also frequently attempted to link to and describe well known but inappropriate evidence.

In the evidence section, the evidence itself was usually well described and related to the situation described in the source. While evidence gleaned from the Internet is acceptable, there is a worrying amount that is anecdotal or 'pop' Psychology rather than from a reputable academic source. It is not acceptable to cut and paste evidence from any source without quotation marks and the appropriate reference. It is expected that more emphasis be placed on the detailed description of the evidence than on describing its relationship to the source.

In the application section, the best suggestions were specific and pragmatic, supported by psychological theory or empirical research and related to the situation in the source. Weaker candidates offered vague suggestions without psychological support or appropriate links to the situation in the source. Evaluation or critical comment relating to the suggestion clearly demonstrated understanding.

The presentation and communication could have been improved. Candidates should be reminded that this is a psychological assignment and encouraged to use appropriate terminology. The reference section was frequently neglected with candidates failing to make it clear where accreditations in the text were to be found. Full references are required, not just a bibliography.

2544: Psychology and Education

General Comments

This year's paper has produced a full range of marks and this was true for all questions. Candidates seemed to be well prepared for this examination and the overall performance is good. However, Centres are advised to encourage their candidates to pace themselves better and spend more time answering the evaluative parts to the questions and less on part (a) in both Section A and B. Part (c) on questions 3 and 4 were disappointing and candidates are encouraged to focus more specifically on the scenario they are presented with, making sure they link their response to psychological evidence.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

This question was generally well answered. Candidates answered in a variety of ways from taking a general humanistic perspective, for example taking into account the whole child, basing the perspective on the work of Rogers or Maslow or emphasising the freedom in schools like Summerhill. All these approaches were acceptable as long as they were applied to learning in school.

Question 1(b)

There were some good answers highlighting the main differences between the humanistic and behaviourist approaches to learning using appropriate terminology such as nomothetic vs ideographic. Weaker candidates spent more time describing the behaviourist application whereas stronger candidates raised differences such as mechanistic and reductionist for the behaviourist approach vs a child centred, individualist approach for the humanist. Very few candidates compared the humanistic approach with the cognitive but a few did both. In this case the best of two was credited.

Question 2(a)

This was the more popular of the Section A questions and although it was generally well answered many candidates just described a study rather than an improvement to the classroom environment. Popular choices were seating arrangements such as Bennet and Blundell and noise reduction using Bronzaft as an example of the deleterious effects of noise.

Question 2(b)

This was well answered by many candidates but a lack of depth of explanation or an answer that focused too heavily on the problem of individual differences may not have got into the top band. In order to get into the top band, candidates should give a good range of points that consider the difficulties in creating better environmental conditions for learning. Unfortunately, some candidates missed the point and evaluated the research in this area without addressing the question.

Section B

Question 3(a)

This question provided candidates with the opportunity to describe a wide range of research related to assessment of educational performance. Some candidates described psychological evidence in detail and accurately from the three subsections of the specification: 'types and limitations of psychometric tests' - they included the Wechsler tests and Simon-Binet; 'types of performance assessments at different ages' - they described baseline, formative and summative assessments along with Key Stage assessments; and thirdly 'categorization' - Rosenthal and Jacobson was popular. Weaker candidates provided anecdotal accounts of assessment throughout their school life and some even attacked the 'unfairness' of the present paper because it didn't have the 'right' questions.

Question 3(b)

The quality of responses was dependent on the answer to part (a). Too many candidates fail to evaluate and simply provide more information on assessing educational performance. The evaluation needed to be focused on the issues related to assessment. Some excellent responses included the evaluation issues of validity and reliability, ethnocentrism, individual differences, particularly related to tests and methodological issues of carrying out the tests.

Question 3(c)

Candidates gave many ideas for an alternative to formal written examinations when only one in detail is required. Hence they need to develop an idea more fully and this should be linked to psychological research. Candidates had some good ideas including the use of criterion referenced assessment via portfolio work and greater use of formative assessment via coursework but their use of psychological terminology was limited and their ideas described too briefly.

Question 4(a)

This was probably the most popular question in Section B and elicited some good responses. Candidates had detailed knowledge of many different theories and measurement of learning and teaching styles which included Curry's Onion model, Honey and Mumford's questionnaire, Grasha's six learning styles and Bennett's teaching styles. Candidates were very familiar with visual, auditory and kinaesthetic styles of learning and were able to use different learning perspectives appropriately. Weaker candidates tended to give anecdotal answers with little detail or rationale for their selections.

Question 4(b)

As in question 4(b), candidates sometimes gave descriptive comments rather than evaluative, particularly for issues like individual differences. However, there were some good answers with effective analysis of psychological evidence in the form of comparisons and contrasts linked to clearly defined issues.

Question 4(c)

Candidates were asked to suggest one strategy for a new teacher to make students' learning more effective. However, many candidates gave too many different strategies without detail and without linking them to psychological evidence. There were many possible answers to this question and the best candidates focused on a learning strategy such as SPELT or PQRST and gave details of how this could improve learning. However, full credit was given to responses on the use of a particular perspective or Kolb's learning inventory to match teaching and learning.

2545: Psychology and Health

General Comments

Overall this paper was successful in eliciting the full range of marks; it allowed for knowledgeable and well prepared candidates to demonstrate what they had learned about Psychology and Health whilst also distinguishing between these candidates and those who were less knowledgeable or prepared. There was a slightly unequal split between the questions: 1 (non-adherence) and 2 (measuring pain) and questions 3 (stress) and 4 (health and safety). There were some clear general patterns noted by examiners which are worthy of mention here. Questions 1 and 2 parts (b) clearly discriminate between candidates with only the very strongest candidates showing the ability to engage with the question, raising and applying relevant points. The majority of candidates managed to identify some points but failed to make them truly relevant to the question. Similarly in questions 3 and 4 part (b) the majority of candidates could identify relevant issues with which to evaluate the research and theory described in part (a) but fewer were able to address all aspects of the evaluation to warrant top marks on each of the mark-scheme criteria. In a similar vein, answers to questions 3 and 4 part (c) tended to be polarised. Many candidates were well prepared for the demands of these questions and clearly offered their suggestions which they backed up with evidence and well explained psychological rationale. Weaker candidates tended to mis-interpret the question or offer answers which were purely descriptive and often anecdotal.

Comments on the individual questions

Question 1(a)

This required candidates to describe one study which investigates reasons why patients do not adhere to medical advice. Many very poor responses to this question were seen by examiners where candidates failed to even identify an appropriate study or indeed offer a study at all. Essentially good answers offered a detailed, accurate and well organised description of a study which made clear how the findings explain why patients do not adhere to medical advice. Weaker answers tended to either describe a relevant study but failed to make the connection between the description and reasons for non adherence or failed to describe a study at all: candidates who did this limited themselves to the lower mark band. Some excellent answers to this demanding question were seen by examiners where the candidates gave a clear account of a study from a psychological perspective, demonstrating a clear understanding.

Question 1(b)

This part required candidates to discuss the difficulties of studying why patients do not adhere to medical advice. It was encouraging to note a number of candidates who were able to answer this question by addressing a number of key points, such as the challenge of obtaining valid data, by considering the various methods available to psychologists. Other effective arguments considered the ethical difficulties or issues surrounding the available sample. Weaker answers either completely failed to address the question or only did so by default as they used the Section B part (b) approach to evaluating evidence which failed to attract many marks. The very best answers were supported with examples and used psychological terminology. Weaker answers tended to list points and attempt to apply them to evidence which may or may not have been presented in part (a). This attracted little credit from the mark scheme as it essentially failed to answer the question.

Question 2(a)

A range of different methods used to measure pain were seen by examiners. The most frequently offered included the McGill pain questionnaire and the UAB pain behaviour scale. Other less well documented methods were occasionally noted but regardless of method presented the credit given to an answer was determined by the clarity of the technique and the extent to which the description was from a psychological perspective. Those answers receiving the highest marks were detailed, well organised and showed clear understanding.

Question 2(b)

Candidates were required to discuss the validity of methods used to measure pain. Candidates who considered a number of techniques and the extent to which they truly measured pain tended to construct effective answers. Some of the significant issues raised related to individual differences in the experience of pain and the subjectivity of many measurement techniques. Weaker answers tended to consider only one technique and/or fail to address the issue of validity. The very best answers offered a good range of points relating to the validity of pain measurement techniques with confident use of psychological terms and concepts. A coherent, thorough and clearly explained answer which clearly demonstrated the meaning of validity in this context received the higher band marks.

Section B

Question 3

The majority of candidates selecting this question were able to offer relevant concepts, terminology and evidence to the area of Stress. Many different combinations of evidence were successfully presented to achieve full marks in section (a). It was not necessary to cover all three sub-sections of the specification in order to provide a suitable answer due to the openness of the question. Nonetheless those candidates who did present evidence covering the three areas frequently did so very effectively.

The answers to part (b) of this question, which required candidates to evaluate what psychologists have discovered about Stress, produced in general one of two responses: by far the most common response was to consider a range of issues such as validity, ethics, usefulness and so on, and how these impinged on the research presented in part (a). A less common approach was to take a less structured strategy to analysing and evaluating the research. In both instances however the most credit went to answers which clearly identified, explained and made relevant the issues in the context of Stress and the research carried out in this area.

Sadly, as in previous sessions, there was a significant number of candidates who failed to appreciate the demands of this section of the question by simply offering more description. A number of candidates/Centres still appear to be unaware of the requirements of this section which is of concern as poor performance in this section had drastic consequences for some otherwise strong candidates.

Part (c) was on the whole answered extremely well with the majority of candidates able to offer appropriate techniques to measure the stress of A-level students. The very strongest answers supported their suggestions with appropriate evidence and explained the reasons for their suggestions using clear psychological rationale. This part of the question offered candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply Psychology to a situation. An impressive number of candidates demonstrated the ability to do this effectively.

A number of candidates failed to access the higher marks either because they limited their suggestion to only one technique when techniques were clearly asked for or they failed to

support their suggestions with any psychological evidence or rationale. Essentially these weaker responses were anecdotal. By far the most catastrophic error made by a number of candidates was to make suggestions relating to the management of stress in A-level students. Unless the answer incorporated a description of measurement of stress, these answers received little or no credit. This is not the first time that candidates have been known to answer the question they had expected or wanted to see rather than the actual question on the paper and as such is worthy of note for the future.

Question 4

The open nature of the question allowed for a wide range of evidence and pieces of research to be offered and indeed an impressive range of theories, explanations and appropriate studies of health and safety were presented by the majority of candidates. Some weak answers were seen to this question which tended to offer predominantly anecdotal evidence.

The points outlined in relation to question 3 part (b) are again relevant here. The strongest answers raised, explained and made relevant a number of issues which they went on to evaluate in relation to the evidence presented in part (a). Only the very strongest candidates demonstrated the ability to offer analysis in the form of comparisons and contrasts between the issues as applied to the evidence presented. Equally, only the very best answers contextualised their analysis and evaluation within the context of Health and Safety thus making the answer truly meaningful, relevant and impressive. In some cases argument structure was weak, often as a result of candidates failing to present a meaningful answer to the question.

Many appropriate answers to part (c) were seen by examiners. The majority of candidates offered good suggestions of ways in which Psychology could be applied to reduce the number of serious injuries to young cyclists. The answers attracting the most credit were those which supported their suggestions with appropriate evidence and explained it using psychological rationale and terminology. Once again it was pleasing to note a number of candidates who demonstrated an impressive ability to apply Psychology in a given situation. The very best answers had considered the target of young cyclists on their way to school and tailored their suggestions accordingly. Weak answers were essentially anecdotal and unsupported by psychological evidence or rationale.

2546: Psychology and Organisations

General Comments

There was a good spread of marks on this paper from a small entry of 476 candidates. This suggests that the level of difficulty of the paper was appropriate and in fact very few candidates misunderstood the questions or made rubric errors. Most candidates balanced their time between Section A and B in line with the weighting of the marks. However, there were a few candidates who spent too long answering Section A, leaving themselves insufficient time for Section B. Some of these candidates may have been unprepared for the depth and detail required in the Section B essay and therefore dwelt on the aspect of Organisational Psychology they could answer best.

Examiners are aware of the breadth of psychological research candidates have to learn in preparation for these modules and if it is used effectively there is no reason why evidence such as goal setting theory or Maslow's hierarchy of needs cannot be used in a number of different answers. Examiners were impressed with the way candidates are able to relate psychological theory to organisational settings using a variety of different workplaces, but candidates must not forget that psychological evidence is of paramount importance in providing a well argued response. In section A, part (b) some candidates failed to evaluate with a range of points and drifted into description of alternative psychological research. In Section B, candidates had most difficulty with part (b). Some candidates used this part to describe further research instead of focusing on evaluation in relation to issues. There is no prescribed way of answering this part, but better candidates take three or four issues in turn and evaluate two or three pieces of evidence in relation to that issue, often using comparisons and contrasts. The candidates who evaluate different pieces of research in turn often do not present their argument so coherently.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

This was a popular question and Lewin, Lippett and White's research appeared regularly. It was generally well answered with good detail.

Question 1(b)

Candidates had more difficulty with this part and often gave anecdotal answers without highlighting a range of points clearly. Some candidates evaluated the research into leadership styles without assessing its usefulness.

Question 2(a)

There were some good answers to this question with many candidates referring to job rotation or reward systems. Better candidates focused on one suggestion and elaborated on it rather than straying into a variety of ways to increase job satisfaction.

Question 2(b)

As in 1(b) weaker candidates evaluated the research rather than addressing the question; which in this case was to discuss the difficulties of increasing job satisfaction. Better prepared candidates were able to give a range of difficulties which were well supported, including individual differences, cost and other practical issues.

Section B

Question 3(a)

This was probably the more popular of the two section B questions and many candidates gave good, accurate, detailed answers. Candidates were confident in writing about Maslow, Equity theory, Herzberg and goal setting theories.

Question 3(b)

Some candidates carried on describing more theories of motivation in this section rather than evaluating the material they had described in part (a). However, most candidates made a reasonable attempt at evaluating the research using evaluation issues such as individual differences, reductionism, generalisability and validity.

Question 3(c)

A number of candidates referred to the boring nature of working in the car assembly plant and suggested ways, such as job rotation or enrichment, to improve job satisfaction and hence reduce absenteeism. Some candidates are not confident in developing their suggestion to make it clear what their solution to the problem is.

Question 4(a)

For candidates who knew the psychology of group behaviour, this was a straightforward question. Many candidates included research on the risky shift phenomenon, groupthink, Belbin's team roles and Tuckman.

Question 4(b)

There were some good answers to this question, but like 3(b), some candidates followed on from 4(a) with more description of research rather than evaluation.

Question 4(c)

Even some good candidates failed to link their suggestion to the IT environment or a new business. Belbin's team roles were developed by a few candidates, but some answers were more anecdotal and suggested paint-balling or bonding. Candidates must realise that, to get into the top mark bands, their suggestion must be linked to psychological evidence.

2547: Psychology and Environment

General Comments

As in previous years, the standard of entry for Environment was generally good with a number of candidates achieving very high marks. There were very few rubric errors although a small number of candidates ran out of time, usually either failing to answer, or only partially completing, Section B, part (c).

Section A, part (a) was generally answered well with most candidates citing detailed research. However, weaker answers were either mainly anecdotal or contained only brief details of research evidence. For part (b), performance was more variable. Stronger candidates put forward three or four points and discussed these in relation to evidence from the topic area whereas weaker answers typically made a number of points but without elaboration.

Section B - candidates were generally well prepared for Section B, with most candidates citing a range of research/theory/evidence from the topic area for part (a) although weaker answers often used anecdotal or peripherally relevant research. Part (b) elicited more of a Centre-effect with some excellent answers using a range of issues and discussing/analysing relevant evidence. However, candidates from some Centres failed to meet markscheme requirements, often by not describing evidence for issues or failing to analyse within each issue. Section B, part (c) still tends to be answered less well than parts (a) or (b) as candidates will typically make a reasonable suggestion but then fail to link it to psychological research or fail to give a rationale for the suggested application.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

This was usually answered well with detailed evidence effectively described. However, weaker candidates tended to describe anecdotal material rather than psychological evidence. Most frequently cited studies were Milgram (handshaking), Levine (helping behaviour), Newman and McCauley (eye contact), Fisher (eating attitudes in adolescents).

Question 1(b)

A good range of problems were addressed (e.g. methods used, sample, ecological validity, measurement, ethics, individual/cultural differences, etc) and linked effectively to the topic area. Weaker answers tended either to merely list problems without discussing them or failed to make points relevant to urban living.

Question 2(a)

This was by far the more popular of the two Section A questions with Pepler and Brennen the most commonly cited studies. Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates failed to read the question properly and described a study on the effects of social behaviour (usually aggression or affiliation) rather than performance and therefore were unable to gain credit.

Question 2(b)

Answers to this question were variable. Stronger candidates described 3 or 4 methods (usually from correlation, field/laboratory/natural experiment, questionnaires/interviews) and considered the effectiveness of each method. Weaker candidates either described only one method or produced prepared answers to a 'difficulties' question, e.g., 'My first difficulty is ecological validity....' without relating it to a specific method.

Section B

Question 3(a)

This was the least popular of the 2 Section B questions but was generally answered well by candidates. Most commonly cited studies were Zimbardo (deindividuation), Waddington, Marsh, Reicher and theoretical approaches such as emergent norm, and the work of Le Bon. As in previous exam questions on this topic, weaker candidates sometimes cited studies on density and crowding instead of crowds and collective behaviour.

Question 3(b)

Some candidates were clearly very well prepared for Section B, part (b) answers with a good range of issues, appropriate evidence selected and discussed and with effective analysis (most commonly in the form of comparisons and contrasts). Weaker answers merely listed points without developing an argument or discussing what effect this might have on the evidence. Some candidates evaluated each study individually making it more difficult to gain marks for analysis.

Question 3(c)

Most candidates answered this with good suggestions, usually citing research from the Crowds/Collective Behaviour topic area (e.g. Waddington's suggestions on crowd control; CCTV cameras or a ban on 'hoodies' to reduce deindividuation) but also some suggestions were based on research from other areas, e.g. crowds in emergency situations; prior warnings etc. Although most candidates managed to describe one or more suggestions and usually linked to some research or theory, candidates often lost marks because they failed to give a rationale for their suggestion.

Question 4(a)

Almost all candidates were able to describe relevant studies on health, social behaviour and performance from this topic area; most frequently cited studies were Matthews & Cannon, Page, Cohen, Glass & Singer, Baron & Bell with most candidates giving accurate and detailed descriptions. Weaker answers often described anecdotal or peripherally relevant evidence or merely listed studies with no attempt to make them relevant to the topic area. Some candidates used studies on positive effects of music although the question asks for research into noise as an environmental stressor.

Question 4(b)

As 3(b)

Question 4(c)

There were some well thought out and interesting suggestions put forward for this question. The most commonly cited studies were North and Hargreaves (cafeteria), Milliman (supermarket), North (telephone queuing), Shaw (Mozart effect) suggesting how music could reduce stress

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through relaxation, increase alertness, enjoy the surroundings of library (link to cafeteria study), work quicker to faster paced music. As in Question 3 part (c), candidates often failed to gain marks for 'Application Interpretation' as they did not give a rationale for their suggested application.

2548: Psychology and Sport

General Comments

The overall impression is of a paper of general comparability and consistency with recent years' examination papers. There was a good range of answers across the mark scheme. It clearly differentiated across the whole range of abilities. There were minimal rubric errors or timing difficulties. It seems that teachers have impressed the importance of not throwing away marks from Section B with many candidates starting with this section. Previous reports have noted that when this strategy has been employed there was a need to emphasise that the third of total marks available in Section A are still important! This advice appears to have been largely heeded with a marked improvement in the responses to Section A.

Reading and responding directly to the requirements of the question provided the clearest means of differentiating candidates. This was particularly noted in the Section A responses. Better candidates gave appropriate and detailed responses to questions. Weaker candidates fell short of this in two areas in particular:

- (i) Not responding precisely to the question. For example, not evaluating attentional *style* (Q1(a)) or using Sherif's Robbers Cave study to demonstrate group cohesion but laboriously detailing the whole study rather than describing the relevance to group cohesion.
- (ii) Not locating answers in a sporting context. For example, describing research into leadership (Great Man theory, Lewin, Lippitt and White study) without referring to sport (Q4(a)).

Most candidates referred to psychological theory, evidence and concepts, but to varying degrees of detail, accuracy and breadth. Once again, the evaluation sections were clear areas for differentiating the candidates. In Section A, (b) in particular, there seems to be a tendency among weaker candidates to provide extended description and fail to provide much evaluative comment at all. A Centre effect still prevails, with a clear distinction between quality of scripts from Centres where candidates are well prepared and can develop, with evidence, evaluative and analytical comment. This is best achieved by comparing/contrasting by issue, but is by no means restricted to this approach.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

This question provided a range of responses and a range in quality of response. Many students knew a relevant study in good detail and scored highly. Weaker candidates could not respond to the notion of attentional *style*, maybe producing generalised references to 'attention' research without relation to sport or style, most notably broad references to Cherry's cocktail party scenario, or sometimes circumnavigating attention altogether and offering imagery or arousal instead.

Question 1(b)

Responses tended to correspond to the quality of answers given in part (a). Better answers responded to the specific demands of the question, namely *assessing the difficulties of measuring*. Weaker responses tended to evaluate in a very general way which could have applied to any psychological construct. This may have involved general catch-all (maybe pre-

learned) comments that were evaluative but not about measuring specifically, or the difficulties of measuring attention and certainly getting nowhere near assessing these.

Question 2(a)

This was the more popular of the questions in Section A. Many candidates were able to call on knowledge of research which was directly relevant and sports specific, most commonly Tuckman, Carron, Latane or Ringlemann, the latter being considered a relevant group phenomenon. Some successfully identified examples of group cohesion in other research, most notably the aforementioned Robber's Cave study by Sherif. Weaker candidates churned out such studies without referring to the group cohesion part in these studies. Others used inappropriate research areas and failed to reference it convincingly to group cohesion.

Question 2(b)

The more popular and better answered of the Section A part (b) questions. Better candidates were not only able to consider where research may be generalised but also consider the extent of this. Weaker candidates churned out glib phrases about generalisation ("can't be generalised to the whole world") with poor application to group cohesion and no consideration of the *extent* to which it could be generalised. Some candidates tried to twist inappropriate research to fit the question. In other instances, answers in the absolute often showed lack of understanding eg you *cannot* generalise because the sample was too small or reductionism is reducing the complex to *one* factor.

Section B

Question 3(a)

This was less popular than Q4 but was often better answered. Both breadth of response and placing in a sporting context marked the better answers to this question. Stronger candidates were clearly well-informed about the contents of this section, often launching straight into attribution theory or looking at Morgan's work on mood states. They expanded their responses by providing elaboration and examples. When marks were dropped, it tended to be for responses which only partially addressed the question and drifted into other areas such as leadership or audience effect. Some responses could certainly have been more convincing in terms of understanding demonstrated.

Question 3(b)

As ever, the clearest section for differentiating candidates. Better candidates addressed all parts of the question, and were often marked out by how well they located the evaluation in a context, such as the identification of the issue, locating it in relevant research, analysing it appropriately and making an effective case. Weaker answers failed to develop and elaborate upon their evaluation issues, or failed to include comparisons in their evidence. Most candidates, however, could identify relevant issues and relate evidence correctly. Some Centres had clearly encouraged their candidates to analyse the issues in relation to research available. In some others, however, the same evaluation issues were regurgitated regardless of how relevant they were or how well that particular candidate could apply them.

Question 3(c)

Generally pleasing answers, with many candidates giving a surprisingly clear response to a tricky scenario. Weaker responses failed to give precise or detailed *practical* suggestions. Others failed to give a clear rationale or include appropriate psychological evidence.

Question 4(a)

The most popular choice from this section. Weaker responses were rather list-like in their presentation of research into leadership and coaching. This meant that answers lacked breadth or sometimes failed to refer to sport. Better answers were broader, were placed in a sporting context and clear understanding was demonstrated with “This shows that/This suggests.....” type statements. Again elaboration and applied examples typified stronger responses.

Question 4(b)

Comments consistent with those for 3(b) above.

Question 4(c)

As above (3(c)). Rather too few top mark answers with candidates providing lots of ‘how’ and ‘why’ responses in a general sense, yet clearly lacking in specific, *practical* suggestions.

2549: Psychology and Crime

General Comments

The view of examiners overall was that the paper was set at an appropriate standard of difficulty. Section A was more challenging than Section B. This was because question 1 departed from the style of previous questions to a certain extent. However, most candidates managed to generate appropriate points in the end and the mark scheme enabled them to receive credit. This section got candidates thinking and allowed for effective differentiation, albeit with those who had good understanding and could think creatively achieving more highly than those who might have put in more preparation for the exam but were less adept at thinking on their feet or perhaps only had a superficial understanding of the research they had learnt.

Of the four questions, question 4 (profiling) showed the weakest responses, exposing serious misunderstanding of what a profile entails.

Questions 1 (victim effects) and 3 (explanations) appear to have been the most popular. As before, Section B, part (b) evaluation was superficial and poor in many cases. Section B, part (c) questions were well answered in the main with almost all candidates achieving more than 3 marks out of eight.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

This was set on the victim responses bullet point of the crime victim interaction topic. Candidates were asked to outline the effects of becoming a victim of crime. This attracted a wide range of responses from the repetitive and anecdotal to the broad and insightful. Some focused on just the one study (particularly Donaldson, Beaton or Riordan), but more often candidates described findings from a few studies. Many mentioned PTSD, but few were able to demonstrate a detailed, organised understanding of the symptoms of this. The main problem here was to describe the study without focussing on the results and conclusion which is what the question required.

Question 1(b)

Candidates were asked to discuss why people exaggerated the risk of becoming a victim of crime. As for part (a), this question challenged candidates to think on their feet. Some produced descriptive answers that needed to be focused more tightly on the question. Others produced answers that addressed the question but lacked any real psychological content. The best answers were a combination of both, with candidates making a range of relevant points that were backed up with appropriate psychological material (e.g. Heath regarding how the media can act to stoke up fear). The mark scheme allowed many different answers to gain credit, including using methodological points relating to the measurement of victimology.

Question 2(a)

Generally well answered possibly because it was a predictable question asking for a study of aids to recall. Answers tended to centre on Christie and Ellis, Lindsay and Wells or Malpass and Devine, although many stopped at the results and didn't provide a clear interpretation of the implications of them for the criminal justice system, as an aid to recall. Some candidates used Loftus and Palmer incorrectly here.

Question 2(b)

A common misunderstanding occurred here, with candidates evaluating part (a) studies and not clearly answering the question in terms of a discussion of effectiveness etc. In the best responses, candidates drew on research that they were familiar with in respect of identikit or identity parades and used these as the basis for making focused, psychologically informed points about the effectiveness of these aids to recall. Surely all psychological research should be taught with a clear relation to what it tells us about its practical application. After all, almost all candidates cite 'usefulness' as an issue in Section B.

Section B

Question 3(a)

There were generally very good answers to this question with a whole range of studies/theories used; however, we are still seeing Bandura, Zimbardo and Asch described in detail with a token or no link at all to how they might explain crime. For example, in the case of Bandura's study, we are seeing a sample of pre-school children imitating an adult play fighting a toy being applied to explaining adult criminality. This is obviously quite a stretch and needs a lot of convincing argument to work at all. As has been said before in these reports; candidates are likely to get more marks for using research which has been done with criminals explicitly (see the indicative content).

Question 3(b)

This was approached in a range of ways but, whether structured around evaluation issues or around the studies, all too often the points were asserted in a token way rather than being fully developed. The weakest responses were not only superficial in their content but lacked any discernable structure. Candidates from some Centres used more description in this part of the essay and gained few marks.

Question 3(c)

Candidates seemed to enjoy writing answers to this question. Some were anecdotal but better responses went beyond this, applying a range of psychological concepts to the question. (E.g. Social Learning Theory, or deindividuation, diffusion of responsibility). Nonetheless, candidates could be quite creative in what they brought to this question and there were some responses that showed impressive insight and understanding on the part of the candidates writing them.

Question 4(a)

This elicited weaker responses than question 3. Candidates drew on the US and/or UK approaches to offender profiling, or the studies by Copson, Pinizzotto and Finkel, Mokros and Alison or Kocsis, in particular. However, weaker responses saw candidates spending too much time describing a case study (typically either the John Duffy or Rachel Nickell cases). The Rachel Nickell case is a particular problem as it entices the candidates to spend far too long describing irrelevant detail about entrapment rather than the psychological components of the profile and profiling stance of Paul Britton. There is a general lack of understanding about what a profiler does.

Question 4(b)

Evaluation again tended to be asserted rather than exemplified, although students who focused on the research into offender profiling generally found it easier to generate convincing arguments than those who focused on the two approaches which are very difficult to evaluate.

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This part of the specification is obviously very challenging for a weaker candidate and needs careful preparation.

Question 4(c)

Some candidates did not score well on this. Instead of stating how profiling might be best with rape or murder cases, due to this as its basis of development, candidates made comments such as 'when there is evidence' or 'when they want to do a 'Crimewatch' show. A few candidates wrote good suggestions, based on research and justified it by saying why it would help in such cases, but these were rare; once again revealing a basic lack of understanding of the field of profiling.

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Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
2540	Raw	60	41	36	31	27	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2541	Raw	50	31	27	23	20	17	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2542	Raw	50	40	37	34	31	28	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2543	Raw	80	60	54	48	42	36	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2544	Raw	50	39	35	31	27	24	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2545	Raw	50	38	34	30	26	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2546	Raw	50	36	32	28	24	20	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2547	Raw	50	37	33	29	25	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2548	Raw	50	38	34	30	26	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2549	Raw	50	37	33	29	25	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3876	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7876	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3876	15.8	34.2	55.3	74.9	88.8	100	15312
7876	16.5	45.3	72.8	90.6	98.0	100	10392

25704 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

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