# Psychology marking guide and response

External assessment 2025

## Combination response (95 marks)

### Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

1. describe and explain localisation of function in the brain, visual perception, memory, learning, social psychology, interpersonal processes, attitudes and cross-cultural psychology
2. apply understanding of localisation of function in the brain, visual perception, memory, learning, social psychology, interpersonal processes, attitudes and cross-cultural psychology
3. analyse evidence about localisation of function in the brain, visual perception, memory, learning, social psychology, interpersonal processes, attitudes and cross-cultural psychology to identify trends, patterns, relationships, limitations or uncertainty
4. interpret evidence about localisation of function in the brain, visual perception, memory, learning, social psychology, interpersonal processes, attitudes and cross-cultural psychology to draw conclusions based on analysis.

**Note:** Objectives 5, 6 and 7 are not assessed in this instrument.

# Purpose

This document consists of a marking guide and a sample response.

The marking guide:

- provides a tool for calibrating external assessment markers to ensure reliability of results
- indicates the correlation, for each question, between mark allocation and qualities at each level of the mark range
- informs schools and students about how marks are matched to qualities in student responses.

The sample response demonstrates the qualities of a high-level response.

# Mark allocation

Where a response does not meet any of the descriptors for a question or a criterion, a mark of ‘0’ will be recorded.

# Marking guide

## Multiple choice

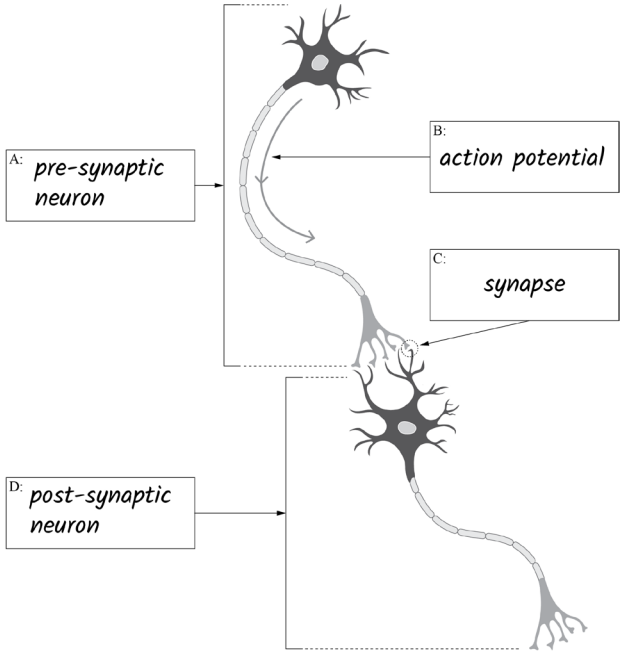
| Question | Response |
|---|---|
| 1 | B |
| 2 | B |
| 3 | C |
| 4 | C |
| 5 | D |
| 6 | A |
| 7 | D |
| 8 | A |
| 9 | C |
| 10 | B |
| 11 | B |
| 12 | A |
| 13 | A |
| 14 | D |
| 15 | D |
| 16 | C |
| 17 | A |
| 18 | C |
| 19 | D |
| 20 | A |

## Paper 1: Short response

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 21 | The PNS sends sensory information to the CNS and receives command signals from the CNS that provide instructions to the body. | • describes a function of the PNS **[1 mark]**<br>• describes a second function of the PNS **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 22 | Symptom: uncontrollable tremors<br>Neurotransmitter: dopamine | • identifies a symptom **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies dopamine **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 23 | The biological influence is genetic. The affected gene for this disorder is on the X chromosome, of which males have only one, making them more susceptible. | • infers that the biological influence is genetic **[1 mark]**<br>• appropriately explains reasoning **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 24 |  | • identifies A as pre-synaptic neuron **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies B as action potential **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies C as synapse **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies D as post-synaptic neuron **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 25 | In social learning theory, modelling describes the process of learning by simply observing and copying the behaviour of others (models). Vicarious conditioning occurs when an observer sees a model being rewarded or punished for a behaviour and is thus conditioned vicariously to increase or decrease the rate of that behaviour themselves.<br>An example of modelling would be observing someone washing the dishes and as a result increasing your frequency of dishwashing. Vicarious conditioning would be observing someone being rewarded for washing the dishes, and as a result increasing your frequency of dishwashing. | • describes modelling in social learning **[1 mark]**<br>• provides an example **[1 mark]**<br>• describes vicarious conditioning in social learning **[1 mark]**<br>• provides an example **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 26a) | Players of violent video games expected more aggressive responses than players of nonviolent video games.<br>This is evident in the graph as the mean scores for all measures were lower for players of nonviolent games. The inferential test found that the differences were significant ($p < .007$). | • describes the relationship **[1 mark]**<br>• refers to the graph **[1 mark]**<br>• refers to the inferential test **[1 mark]** |
| 26b) | Advertising can make aggressive behaviours seem more normal and as a result, lead to desensitisation to these behaviours.<br>For example, advertising campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of domestic violence can present graphic images intended to shock. Repeated exposure to these can lead to desensitisation to the violence they were intended to reduce. | • explains the effect **[1 mark]**<br>• provides an example **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 27 | Contact: the more time people spend together, the greater the chance that they will develop a shared emotional connection.<br>Quality of interaction: the more the interactions are positive and rewarding, the more likely an emotional connection is to develop. | • describes one way **[1 mark]**<br>• describes a second way **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 28a) | A Penrose triangle is an example of an impossible figure. It is difficult to interpret because features of the two-dimensional figure cue the viewer to perceive an impossible three-dimensional object. The depth cue of interposition helps to explain this. Lines in the figure overlap and block others, giving the impression that certain parts of the apparent three-dimensional object are simultaneously at the near side and the far side of the object. | • provides an example of an impossible figure **[1 mark]**<br>• explains the difficulty interpreting the figure **[1 mark]**<br>• refers to a relevant pictorial depth cue in the explanation **[1 mark]** |
| 28b) | Education that provided experience of 2D representations of 3D objects. | • identifies a relevant cultural factor **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 29 | The person is influenced to take on attitudes that match those of the friend, which is an example of identification. | • explains why the person changed their attitude **[1 mark]**<br>• refers to the process **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 30 | Cognitive dissonance might result from the clash between the student's values (I am proud of my academic integrity) and their behaviour (I have submitted work that is not my own).<br>The dissonance can be reduced by either changing the behaviour (scrapping the AI work and producing their own) or changing their belief (deciding that using generative AI does not violate academic integrity). | • explains the conflict between beliefs/values and behaviour **[1 mark]**<br>• describes an action that would reduce dissonance **[1 mark]** |

## Paper 2: Short response

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 1a) | As group size increases there are more people with whom an individual bystander can share a sense of responsibility and as a result the individual can feel a relatively low degree of personal responsibility to help. | • describes the concept of diffusion of responsibility **[1 mark]**<br>• describes its effect on the likelihood of helping **[1 mark]** |
| 1b) | Bystanders can be reluctant to help in the presence of others because they are self-conscious about how the others might see them if they help.<br>For example, a bystander might notice that others are not helping, and worry that they have misunderstood the situation, offering help when it is not required. | • describes audience inhibition **[1 mark]**<br>• provides a relevant example **[1 mark]** |
| 1c) | If participants had been indifferent, the number of people in the group would have made no difference to the likelihood of helping, which would have been low for all group sizes. In contrast, the study found that the larger the group, the less likely individuals were to help. | • infers a result consistent with indifference **[1 mark]**<br>• contrasts the inferred with the actual result **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 2a) | 8.5 seconds | • identifies mean walking time **[1 mark]** |
| 2b) | Between 5 and 6 seconds | • identifies the range of values **[1 mark]** |
| 2c) | Priming significantly decreased walking speed, as shown by the non-overlapping error bars, indicating that the difference between the means is statistically significant. | • concludes that priming decreases walking speed **[1 mark]**<br>• provides evidence from the graph **[1 mark]** |
| 2d) | 11 seconds | • identifies walking time **[1 mark]** |
| 2e) | The correlation coefficient is very close to one, meaning that there is a very strong relationship between the variables. As priming increases, so does walking time. | • concludes that the relationship is strong **[1 mark]**<br>• concludes that the relationship is positive **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 3a) | Similarity: Classical and operant conditioning are both behavioural learning approaches.<br>Difference: Classical conditioning is concerned with involuntary behaviours and operant conditioning with voluntary behaviours.<br>Significance: The significance of this is that operant conditioning is more suited to training (e.g. dogs) to perform desired voluntary behaviours (e.g. sitting). | • identifies a similarity **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies a difference **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies a significance **[1 mark]** |
| 3b) | The UCS is the treat and the NS is the word 'yes!' before it has been associated with the treat and starts causing salivation. | • identifies unconditioned stimulus **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies neutral stimulus **[1 mark]** |
| 3c) | After training, if Rocky is repeatedly given the command without a reward, he might stop producing the behaviour in response to the command. | • describes how extinction might occur **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 4a) | Duration: 12 to 30 seconds<br>Capacity: 5 to 9 items | • states the duration of STM **[1 mark]**<br>• states the capacity of STM **[1 mark]** |
| 4b) | Episodic memory involves events that have occurred in the past, while semantic memory relates to remembered concepts. For example, an episodic memory might be a memory of your last birthday party, while a semantic memory might be the knowledge of how old you are. | • distinguishes between episodic and semantic memory **[1 mark]**<br>• provides an example of episodic memory **[1 mark]**<br>• provides an example of semantic memory **[1 mark]** |
| 4c) | The visuospatial sketchpad was being tested. This is because the task is explicitly visuospatial, with different visual elements located spatially in a matrix, or grid. | • deduces that the visuospatial sketchpad was tested **[1 mark]**<br>• provides justification **[1 mark]** |
| 4d) | Visual interference reduced memory task performance on visual tasks only. Evidence for this is that it reduced performance on visual tasks by about 35%, but for spatial tasks the visual interference condition had 25% higher performance. | • determines the effect of visual interference on performance **[1 mark]**<br>• provides evidence related to visual tasks **[1 mark]**<br>• provides evidence related to spatial tasks **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 5a) | The standard error measures the error in the sample means. It is greater in the noisy test group (0.58) than in the silent test group (0.38). | • identifies the standard error as the error in the sample means **[1 mark]**<br>• contrasts the two standard error values **[1 mark]** |
| 5b) | Test performance was higher in the silent test group than the noisy test group. Participants who tested in silence had a mean performance of about 14.1, while those in the mismatched condition had a mean performance of about 11.7. | • describes the relationship between test group and test performance **[1 mark]**<br>• provides evidence **[1 mark]** |
| 5c) | Context cues improve the retrieval of meaningful material. This can be seen in the statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the matched and mismatched conditions. | • draws a conclusion **[1 mark]**<br>• justifies the response **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 6a) | The type of messaging with the lowest level of theft used injunctive norms with a strong focus. | • identifies injunctive norms **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies strong focus **[1 mark]** |
| 6b) | Both schools used injunctive norms. School A's signs were strongly focused. School B's signs were weakly focused. | • identifies type of norm and strength of focus for school A **[1 mark]**<br>• identifies type of norm and strength of focus for school B **[1 mark]** |
| 6c) | School A's signs should be more effective, because these used strongly focused injunctive messaging, the type that was most effective in the Cialdini et al. study. | • predicts school A **[1 mark]**<br>• provides evidence **[1 mark]** |

| Q | Sample response | The response: |
|---|---|---|
| 7a) | Participants might have complied in order to gain the approval of the group. They might have also felt that the group knew something they didn't, which explained why the group unanimously agreed on an answer that seemed incorrect. | • describes a possible reason **[1 mark]**<br>• describes a second possible reason **[1 mark]** |
| 7b) | In this modern replication, we would expect a lower rate of conformity. Anonymous responses would decrease conformity because most normative influence would be removed, given that the group would not know how the individual responded. The cash incentive would provide a reason to emphasise correct responses over agreeing with the group. | • predicts the degree of conformity **[1 mark]**<br>• justifies with reference to anonymous responses **[1 mark]**<br>• justifies with reference to incentive for correct responses **[1 mark]** |