

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Can students take dictionaries into the examination?**

Candidates are allowed a simple translation dictionary.

### **What support materials are available?**

Syllabus

Specimen question papers and mark schemes (revised syllabus from 2012)

AS/A level Standards Booklet - this contains examples of marked student answers to AS and A level questions and has a commentary from senior examiners

Question papers and mark schemes

All the above are available from CIE Publications.

### **How many hours contact time do you recommend for AS/A level?**

Over a two-year A level course approximately 5 hours per week of teaching time would be sufficient. Students will be expected to do individual work outside of this time.

### **The new syllabus that will be examined in 2012 will be taught from Sept 2011. The current year 12s are currently preparing for examination in 2011 with the current specification, but will we start teaching them the new syllabus (for year 13) in Sept 2011 for examination in June 2012, or do we teach the same syllabus as we are currently doing?**

1) For candidates taking staged assessment with the AS examination (Papers 1 and 2) in 2011 and the A2 (Paper 3) in 2012:

Use the 2011 syllabus (the 'old' syllabus) for the AS part (Papers 1 and 2), but use the 2012 syllabus (the 'new' syllabus) for Paper 3.

2) For candidates taking Papers 1, 2, 3 in 2011:

Use the 2011 syllabus (the 'old' syllabus) for all 3 papers.

3) For candidates taking Papers 1, 2, 3 in 2012:

Use the 2012 syllabus (the 'new' syllabus) for all 3 papers.

### **I'm having trouble locating some of the Core Study articles referred to in the syllabus. Can you help?**

There are links to the new Core Studies (for the revised 2012 syllabus) on the discussion forum at

<http://teachers.cie.org.uk/community/forum/forums/show/1201.page>.

There are also links in the syllabus to the original articles (see pages 33-34).

If these links don't work the articles can also be found at

<http://www.psychexchange.co.uk>. Search 'George's resources' and the articles will come up. (We are unable to send you copies of the Core Study articles listed in the syllabus because of copyright regulations.)

The core studies are the prescribed content for Papers 1 and 2, and it is recommended that teachers consider the original studies themselves (see below).

Texts which summarise the studies are particularly useful in providing the necessary teaching material but no textbook covers all of the core studies:

**Key Studies in Psychology** by Gross, R. (2007), 5th Edition, Hodder Arnold (ISBN 9780340947395)

This book provides a comprehensive account of many of the required studies. Some are reproduced in full and others reduced to manageable proportions. The text also

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contains full evaluations and background notes, and is recommended as being made available to candidates for reference if it is not selected as a main reader for the course.

**Introducing Psychological Research**; seventy studies that shape psychology by Banyard, P. and Grayson, A. (2007), 3rd Edition, Palgrave (ISBN 9781403900388) This book contains summaries and major details relating to many of the prescribed studies and suggests tasks arising from the findings. It is comprehensive in reference and accessible in style.

### **I am teaching AS Psychology for the first time and I'm looking to you for some guidance on the order of teaching topics.**

It is up to you to decide the order in which to teach the studies in the course – there is no set way of doing this and the order may depend on how you teach particular core studies, what resources your school has and so on. However, if you are planning to teach the full A level we would recommend that the Core Studies are taught before the Specialist Choices, even if students take all 3 exams in the same session.

### **Are there any Psychology conferences for the syllabus?**

There are no seminars or conferences specifically arranged for the CIE syllabus, but general support for teaching Psychology can be found from The Association for the Teaching of Psychology (ATP). The ATP is mainly concerned with the teaching of psychology in schools and colleges. It arranges events for teachers and produces a range of helpful publications. Contact details for the ATP are as follows:

The Association for the Teaching of Psychology  
c/o The British Psychological Society  
St Andrews House  
48 Princess Road East  
Leicester  
LE1 7DR  
United Kingdom

### **In questions such as 'Outline two types of response of abnormal affect due to trauma', should the answer be two different types of abnormalities (mental disorders of this category) or two clusters of symptoms of one mental disorder of this category?**

Candidates could give two responses/symptoms for one type of trauma or they could give two symptoms that different responses have in common. For example, 'recurring phenomena' is a general response to trauma - or it could be a symptom of the more specific PTSD.

Whatever approach taken by the teacher will be fine; either approach will be marked as correct.

### **Several of my Psychology students want to sit both the A level and AS level examinations in the June session. However, if they don't do well in the A level paper but do so in their AS level, can they drop the A-level mark and keep the AS level one?**

Your students would need to be entered for the A level option. If they fail the A level they would be awarded a compensatory AS providing they had achieved enough marks on Paper 1 and Paper 2 to achieve an AS grade. However, if they achieved a grade on the A level (i.e. did not fail it) but it wasn't as high a grade as they would have liked, they can't then receive an AS. An alternative option that you might wish

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to consider is entering your candidates for the AS papers in one session, then entering them for the A level papers in a later session and carrying forward the AS mark.

**For Paper 3, in Psychology and Abnormality section, under 'Abnormal Avoidance and Need' topic, there is a disorder as 'elective withdrawal'. Well I am unable to find information on it from anywhere, for that matter it is not even mentioned in DSM IV-TR. I would really appreciate if I can get some information on it.**

Elective withdrawal generally applies to children who choose (i.e. elect) to withdraw themselves from school - usually because of bullying or some other problem. A specific example is elective mutism (there are lots of web references for this). This is an abnormal behaviour, but is not in DSM. Please note that elective withdrawal is not included in the revised syllabus (first examination in 2012). For further guidance on Papers 1 and 2 we would recommend referring to the Teacher Support Site for mark schemes and principal examiner reports for teachers. There is also a standards booklet on the website which gives sample answers and guidance on how to award marks for these answers.

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### **Does the CIE syllabus include any coursework or practical investigations at AS?**

There isn't any coursework for AS (or A level). For AS the question papers are based on the 20 core studies listed in the syllabus.

### **Is there any way I could get hold of some mark schemes or sample essays?**

In terms of support materials, please refer to our website for a publications order form.

The 'Standards Booklet' is a document that contains sample answers, and a senior examiner's commentary on how marks were awarded for these answers.

Other publications available are examiner reports, past papers and mark schemes. When ordering these you will need to quote the session (e.g. November 2010) and the syllabus code 9698. For past papers you will also need to quote the paper numbers, e.g. Paper 1 and Paper 2 for the AS level.

There are specimen papers and mark schemes available on the website, but please note that the format of Paper 1, Section B is a little different now with 4 parts to each question rather than 3.

### **Can you suggest any websites that could be used as teaching aids?**

#### **General**

**British Psychological Society** [www.bps.org.uk/index.cfm](http://www.bps.org.uk/index.cfm)

**Psychnet UK** [www.psychnet-uk.com/](http://www.psychnet-uk.com/)

#### **Psychology electronic journals and periodicals**

[psych.hanover.edu/Krantz/journal.html](http://psych.hanover.edu/Krantz/journal.html)

**Personality Tests** Free personality tests on the web [www.2h.com/personality-tests.html](http://www.2h.com/personality-tests.html)

#### **Physiological Psychology**

**Crime Times** Linking brain dysfunction to disordered/criminal/psychopathic behaviour [www.crime-times.org/](http://www.crime-times.org/)

**Crime Library** Case studies and information on offender profiling approaches [www.crimelibrary.com/](http://www.crimelibrary.com/)

**Introductory Psychology Image Bank** Images for teaching the functions of the brain (as well as others); notes on all the core studies and health and education [www.mhhe.com/socscience/intro/ibank/set1.htm](http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/intro/ibank/set1.htm)

**University of Iowa P.E.T Imaging Center** The University of Iowa Imaging Centre site with information on PET scans and their uses [pet.radiology.uiowa.edu/webpage/Research/CaseStudies/Brain.html](http://pet.radiology.uiowa.edu/webpage/Research/CaseStudies/Brain.html)

**Sleep Quest** Site on sleep and sleep disorders, where Dr. Dement gives a weekly commentary. The site also has a "chat with Dr. Dement" opportunity on it [www.sleepquest.com](http://www.sleepquest.com)

**Splitting the human brain** [www.indiana.edu/~pietsch/split-brain.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~pietsch/split-brain.html)

#### **Cognitive Psychology**

**The Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute** Gardner and Gardner [www.cwu.edu/~cwuchci/](http://www.cwu.edu/~cwuchci/)

**Elizabeth F Loftus** Contains the autobiography of Loftus [faculty.washington.edu/eloftus/](http://faculty.washington.edu/eloftus/)

**Autism Society of America** Baron Cohen [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

**Sleepnet** Dement [www.sleepnet.com/](http://www.sleepnet.com/)

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### Health

**Health Education Board for Scotland** You can get information on this site about mental health, alcohol and drug abuse in Scotland

[www.healthscotland.com/topics/index.aspx](http://www.healthscotland.com/topics/index.aspx)

**Web of Addictions** Site with links on drugs and alcohol. Mostly American

[www.well.com/user/woa/](http://www.well.com/user/woa/)

**Eurocare** Statistics about how different European countries deal with alcohol

[www.eurocare.org](http://www.eurocare.org)

**BBCi Health** Looks at back pain [www.bbc.co.uk/health/backchat/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/backchat/)

**On Paper 1 of the revised syllabus how many advantages and disadvantages you would expect for Section B, Question 16? For an answer to reach the top mark boundary the comment box suggests plural and yet time restraints would make it difficult to write a balance of two advantages and disadvantages during the examination. Thus, if students are advised to write one detailed strength and one detailed disadvantage would they be able to achieve the ten marks available?**

For a good mark we would expect candidates to be giving at least 2 advantages and 2 disadvantages. There should be sufficient time for candidates to give several advantages and disadvantages (we would expect more than one of each for candidates to reach the top 2 mark bands). There is 1 hour 30 minutes for the question paper and candidates should have relatively more time for Section B questions on the revised syllabus compared with the 'old' syllabus as there are only 20 marks now for Section B compared with 40 marks before. Each **Section B** question part carries equal marks and so the amount of writing for each question part should be similar. As a rule of thumb about 50 minutes should be spent on **Section A** and about 30 minutes should be spent on **Section B** (with about 15 minutes per question part plus 5 minutes of reading and thinking time per question).

**On Paper 2, Section A, Question 1(c), how many ethical and practical problems would you recommend students write to achieve the 9-10 mark band?**

To achieve marks in the 9-10 mark band for Paper 2 we would be expecting to see a discussion covering at least 2 problems (one ethical and one practical), including a good amount of detail. Ideally we would advise candidates to cover 3 problems across ethical and practical.

**This year there is not a specimen question written on the approaches and perspectives. Could you please clarify which paper this content may be examined on, and in which section, so we can have a clearer idea of how these will be examined?**

Approaches and Perspectives can be examined on any paper.

On Paper 1 Section A, candidates may be asked questions about themes: methods, approaches and perspectives, and issues and debates as they apply to each core study.

On Paper 2, Approaches and Perspectives are covered in the following way: Section A (25 marks) will have 1 question on approaches and perspectives, and issues and debates with a named core study (25 marks) and Section B will have 1 question on approaches, issues and debates (20 marks) related to a number of core studies from

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a choice of 2 questions. The paper will examine how well candidates can draw out and apply the themes of methods, approaches and perspectives, and issues and debates in the course to the core studies. Candidates will be asked to make comparisons and distinctions between a number of core studies as well as placing them within the broader context of general debates within psychology.

Paper 3: Questions will require candidates to consider various themes in psychology: methods, approaches and perspectives, and issues and debates.

**On the syllabus page 13, the issues and debates are collectively listed. Is it possible to have clarification of which content you deem a 'debate' and which content an 'issue'? Can we expect issues to be on Paper 1 and debates to be examined on Paper 2? Furthermore, given that some key psychological debates for example, the nomothetic/idiographic debate and 'is psychology a science' are not named does this mean we are not expected to explicitly deliver this content? The reason I am asking this is because if I have understood the specimen Paper 2, Section B, Question 3, correctly the only debates that can be examined would be nature/nurture or individual/situational explanations.**

There is no real difference between a debate and an issue, and certainly not in exam question terms. Generally nature nurture is a debate because it has two sides to it, but ethnocentrism is an issue because it only has one side and so no debate. Issues and debates can appear on Paper 1 and on Paper 2.

Other issues could be included on the syllabus but have not been. If something is not on the syllabus then it cannot be examined and so it could be said that there is no point in teaching it. Alternatively, if a teacher thinks a debate or issue is relevant it will not harm students if it is taught and it will add to their global knowledge.

Question 3 is an example of a debate question, but it could equally read 'outline what is meant by ethnocentrism in psychology' and 'describe whether each of these studies is ethnocentric' and what problems when...investigate ethnocentrism. We have no intention to test 'nomothetic/idiographic' or 'is psychology a science' (although the content of the latter is somewhat inevitable given that methods and approaches are so central to the syllabus).

**On Paper 3 I have commenced the A2 course with the Abnormal Unit. To prepare the students well I went through the specimen paper, all sections, formulating a range of potential examination questions based on the variations given in this document. I am concerned that if a given abnormality might be evaluated in relation to any of the issues and debates it becomes overwhelming in terms of content and preparation. Once again is it possible for the relevant examiner to specify the issues and debates that might be examined for abnormality, and the work and organisations and education units? For example, nature and nurture, reliability and validity seem to be the most relevant for abnormality.**

As is pointed out, to consider every issue and debate for every topic area is a mammoth task. The answer is that some debates and issues and indeed methods simply do not apply. This is the case for core studies - ethnocentrism would not be considered in relation to every single study for example but to a limited number to which it is most applicable. The same applies to Paper 3. For abnormality the main 'evaluation issues' would be perspectives, approaches, debates such as nature-nurture, reductionism and different methods (and reliability and validity). An examiner

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is mindful that any examination is set for 16-18 year olds who have knowledge at that level. The aim is never to trick any candidate. This means that the issues that are chosen will be the most logical and obvious ones that most candidates will be able to do with little difficulty.

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**Would it be possible for teachers to have access via the CIE website to specimen student exemplar answers so that we can feel more confident that we are preparing our students well? Would it also be possible, to have guidance regarding the expectations of length, and depth of answers for both AS and A2 year levels?**

We will be publishing a 'Standards Booklet' based on the June 2012 examination. This booklet will contain candidate answers from the June 2012 examination, along with a commentary from the examiners about how marks are awarded. In terms of guidance on depth of answer and expectations of length, you may find it helpful to refer to past examiner reports on the 'old' syllabus. Although there are some syllabus changes for 2012, a lot of the guidance still applies to the new syllabus and matters of length and depth are covered in some past reports. It is important for students to balance the length of their answers in line with the number of marks available. See, for example, the comments about Paper 1 above. Some candidates find it helps to answer Section B first on Paper 1 then go on to answer the Section A questions.

Although specimen papers go through many of the same checks as live papers, there is not the same level of standardisation of the mark scheme (as there will have been no live papers). This means that we cannot provide truly reliable student exemplars of work, hence we will not be providing such materials until after the first examination of the new syllabus.