IQM3008

LEVEL 3 · CONTROLLED STAFF DOCUMENT

INTO QUALIFICATIONS

Sociology and Psychology

Component 3: Paper 2 - Psychology

STAFF ONLY · Mark scheme

Duration
2 hours

Total marks
100

Assessment window
Sample assessment

Assessment set
Set S of 2026

Audience
Staff only

Release timing
exam release

Exam date
_____

Assessment set ID
2026-S

STAFF ONLY · Use only this assessment-specific scheme and approved standardisation decisions.	
Assessment window Sample assessment	**Exam date** _____
Paper Paper 2 Psychology	**Assessment set** Sample 2026 · ID 2026-S

General marking principles

- Record every awarded mark in the corresponding OCR-readable annotation on the candidate response document.
- Credit equivalent valid answers only where the approved item-specific scheme permits them.
- Do not infer grade boundaries from raw marks; award boundaries are held in programme specifications.
- In Section C mark one selected alternative under Question 50 and one under Question 51.

Section A: award 1 for the single correct option, otherwise 0. No negative marking. Mark an unambiguously indicated replacement.
Section B: use the point allocations and stated alternatives; do not double-credit repeated ideas.
Section C: mark one selected alternative for Question 50 and one for Question 51. Read the whole answer, select the best-fit band, then place one integer mark according to accuracy, focus and quality of discussion. Do not add separate AO scores.
Credit supported disagreement and accurate alternatives. Indicative content is guidance, not a mandatory checklist of studies. Unsupported invented findings earn no credit as evidence.

Keep raw marks distinct from actual moderation and approval decisions. Apply controlling programme rules for grades, access and misconduct.

Section A · Multiple-choice questions

Award 1 mark for each correct answer.

Question	Correct answer
A1	C · Biological predispositions and experience can jointly influence behaviour. Interaction concerns the joint influence of biological and environmental factors.
A2	A · Allow them to stop without a penalty. Consent is ongoing; initial agreement does not remove the right to stop participation.
A3	D · A hormone. Cortisol is a hormone; measuring it does not by itself establish a causal explanation of behaviour.

Question	Correct answer
A4	B · Brain activity is associated with task performance. An association with task performance does not establish a complete or exclusive causal account.
A5	B · Schema. A schema organises prior knowledge and guides interpretation.
A6	D · Negative reinforcement. Removing an unpleasant stimulus increases the preceding response; negative does not mean punishment.
A7	A · A conditioned stimulus. The light acquires its capacity to elicit the learned response through association.
A8	C · Vicarious reinforcement. The learner observes consequences for the model rather than being directly rewarded.
A9	A · People can exercise choice and work towards personal growth. Humanistic accounts emphasise agency, subjective experience and growth.
A10	B · Self-actualisation. Self-actualisation concerns fulfilment of potential rather than a basic physiological need.
A11	C · Normative social influence. The stated motive is acceptance rather than believing the group is correct.
A12	D · Conformity to a social role. The behaviour follows expectations attached to the position.

Question	Correct answer
A13	D · Legitimacy of authority. Perceived entitlement to give orders supports obedience.
A14	C · A tendency towards an authoritarian personality. A dispositional explanation refers to characteristics of the person rather than the immediate situation.
A15	B · It provides social support for an independent response. A dissenting other can reduce isolation and support resistance without guaranteeing it.
A16	A · Internal locus of control. Internal control involves perceived influence through one’s own actions; it does not guarantee resistance.
A17	C · How long can information remain available?. Duration concerns time, distinct from amount and representational form.
A18	D · Phonological loop. The phonological loop includes temporary verbal storage and articulatory rehearsal.
A19	A · Proactive interference. Earlier learning interferes with later learning or recall.
A20	B · Context acts as a retrieval cue. A cue present during encoding may support access to stored information.
A21	D · Social and cultural learning. Exposure and shared practices can influence preferences; the example does not exclude biological influences.

Question	Correct answer
A22	A · Genetic factors may contribute to vulnerability alongside other influences. Risk association does not establish inevitability, exclusivity or a single sufficient cause.
A23	C · Appetite regulation can interact with food availability and learned eating patterns. The integrated account allows biological mechanisms and environments to interact without reducing weight to willpower.
A24	B · Stopping the substance produces physiological withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal following physiological adaptation is evidence relevant to physical dependence.
A25	A · It increases likelihood without making the outcome inevitable. Risk is probabilistic, not a guarantee or diagnosis.
A26	C · The setting has become associated with nicotine use. A previously associated setting can become a cue for craving.
A27	D · Variable ratio. The number of responses required varies unpredictably; this differs from a time-based interval schedule.
A28	B · Identifying triggers and practising alternative responses while examining beliefs. The approach can address learned patterns and beliefs and develop coping responses.
A29	B · Negative reinforcement. Relief from anxiety reinforces avoidance; this describes maintenance rather than necessarily initial acquisition.
A30	A · Combining relaxation with gradual exposure through a fear hierarchy. The approach pairs graded exposure with relaxation.

Question	Correct answer
A31	D · Self, world and future. These are the three linked areas of negative thinking in the cognitive triad.
A32	C · Cognitive behavioural therapy. The example combines examination of a thought with a behavioural task.
A33	C · Supporting the person to refrain from the usual compulsive response. ERP includes facing relevant triggers while resisting compulsions, with therapeutic support.
A34	B · The differences could be causes, consequences or correlates of the disorder. The observation does not determine causal direction or rule out other influences.
A35	A · Predisposition and environmental stress can jointly influence risk. An interactionist account allows vulnerabilities and stressors to combine; neither is universally sufficient.
A36	D · The field experiment manipulates a variable in an everyday setting. Both can manipulate variables; setting is the key distinction in this comparison.
A37	B · Sound condition during reading. The researcher manipulates the sound condition and measures comprehension as the outcome.
A38	C · A natural experiment. The relevant change occurs independently of the researcher’s manipulation.
A39	A · It offers a fixed set of response categories. Fixed response categories constrain responses; they do not guarantee validity.

Question	Correct answer
A40	D · Negative correlation that does not by itself establish causation. The variables vary in opposite directions; association alone does not establish cause.

Extended-response questions

Item ID	Question / requirement	Solution and allocation	Alternatives / notes	Max
B41	Distinguish obedience from conformity.	1 mark(s) AO1: Obedience involves responding to a direct order from an authority figure. 1 mark(s) AO1: Conformity involves changing behaviour or beliefs in response to real or imagined group pressure; the contrast must be clear.	Credit equivalent valid answers. Award distinct points once; an undeveloped label does not earn an explanation mark.	2
B42	A study finds that adults with more experience of a navigation task show a difference in a brain region compared with less experienced adults. The study measures everyone once. Explain one strength and one limitation of using this study to explain the biological basis of navigation.	1 mark(s) AO1: Identify a relevant strength, such as measurement of a biological correlate using a consistent procedure. 1 mark(s) AO3: Explain how this provides evidence linking brain characteristics to the navigation behaviour rather than relying only on self-report. 1 mark(s) AO1: Identify a limitation such as uncertain causal direction or a pre-existing group difference. 1 mark(s) AO3: Apply it: the brain difference may precede experience, result from it, or relate to another factor; a single measurement cannot distinguish these accounts.	Credit equivalent valid answers. Award distinct points once; an undeveloped label does not earn an explanation mark.	4

Item ID	Question / requirement	Solution and allocation	Alternatives / notes	Max
B43	A trainee watches a colleague demonstrate a new task. The next day the trainee remembers the sequence but cannot perform one movement accurately. Explain how retention and motor reproduction account for these two observations in social learning theory.	1 mark(s) AO1: Retention involves storing a representation of the observed action. 1 mark(s) AO2: Remembering the sequence the following day indicates retention of the demonstration. 1 mark(s) AO1: Motor reproduction involves the capacity to translate the representation into action. 1 mark(s) AO2: Difficulty performing one movement shows that remembering a model does not guarantee the ability to reproduce it accurately.	Credit equivalent valid answers. Award distinct points once; an undeveloped label does not earn an explanation mark.	4
B44	A researcher gives one group a word list in the morning in a quiet room and a different group the same list in the afternoon in a noisy room. Recall is measured after the same delay. The researcher concludes that noise reduced recall. Identify two potential confounds and explain how to control each one.	1 mark(s) AO2: Time of day differs with sound condition; test both sound conditions at comparable times or balance morning/afternoon across conditions. 1 mark(s) AO3: This prevents time of day, such as fatigue differences, from systematically explaining the sound comparison. 1 mark(s) AO2: Participant differences may differ with group; randomly allocate participants, match relevant characteristics, or use a suitable repeated-measures design with order controls. 1 mark(s) AO3: Explain how the chosen method reduces systematic participant differences, such as prior memory ability, between sound conditions.	Award each confound/control pair up to 2: a correctly identified confound with a workable control (1), and explanation of why that control helps (1). Accept other genuinely distinct confounds supported by the scenario. Delay and list are already controlled.	4

Item ID	Question / requirement	Solution and allocation	Alternatives / notes	Max
B45	In a constructed study, participants remember a short sequence of spoken digits. They perform better while tapping a simple spatial pattern than while repeatedly saying an irrelevant word. Use the working memory model to explain this pattern and give one limitation of what it establishes.	1 mark(s) AO1: Describe verbal storage/rehearsal in the phonological loop. 1 mark(s) AO2: Repeating an irrelevant word competes with rehearsal of the spoken digits. 1 mark(s) AO1: Describe a partly separate visuospatial system. 1 mark(s) AO2: The spatial tapping task uses more distinct resources, so may interfere less with verbal retention. 1 mark(s) AO3: Identify a relevant limitation, such as different secondary-task difficulty or incomplete measurement of all working-memory components. 1 mark(s) AO3: Explain that another source of task interference could contribute, or that one task comparison does not establish the entire model.	Credit equivalent valid answers. Award distinct points once; an undeveloped label does not earn an explanation mark.	6
B46	Students learn words while a distinctive background sound plays. Later, the same sound improves recall compared with silence. Explain this result using retrieval failure, then explain one reason it does not show that the memory was permanently lost in silence.	1 mark(s) AO1: Retrieval failure occurs when stored information is inaccessible because suitable cues are absent. 1 mark(s) AO2: The sound present during learning can serve as a cue when reinstated. 1 mark(s) AO3: Improved recall when the cue returns indicates that at least some information remained stored. 1 mark(s) AO3: Failure to recall in silence therefore does not distinguish inaccessible information from information that has been lost; performance depends on retrieval conditions.	Credit equivalent valid answers. Award distinct points once; an undeveloped label does not earn an explanation mark.	4

Item ID	Question / requirement	Solution and allocation	Alternatives / notes	Max
B47	A person continues gambling both after occasional wins and when gambling temporarily distracts them from unpleasant feelings. Explain how positive and negative reinforcement could each maintain the behaviour.	1 mark(s) AO1: Positive reinforcement adds a rewarding consequence that increases behaviour. 1 mark(s) AO2: Occasional wins can reward gambling and increase its repetition. 1 mark(s) AO1: Negative reinforcement removes or reduces an unpleasant state and increases behaviour. 1 mark(s) AO2: Temporary relief or distraction from unpleasant feelings can reinforce further gambling; it is not punishment.	Credit equivalent valid answers. Award distinct points once; an undeveloped label does not earn an explanation mark.	4
B48	In a constructed evaluation, volunteers choose cognitive behavioural therapy for depression or a waiting-list group. After six weeks, the therapy group reports a larger reduction in symptoms. Explain two limitations of concluding from this comparison that the therapy caused the difference.	1 mark(s) AO3: Identify selection or pre-existing differences arising from volunteers choosing the groups. 1 mark(s) AO3: Explain that motivation, initial severity or other differences could influence change independently of therapy. 1 mark(s) AO3: Identify a distinct issue such as expectancy/self-report effects, other support received, or differential dropout or non-completion. 1 mark(s) AO3: Explain how the stated issue could affect reported change or the comparison independently of the specific therapy.	Credit two distinct developed causal limitations. Do not double-credit two examples of the same group-selection problem. A short follow-up limits durability claims, but by itself does not explain why the six-week between-group difference is non-causal.	4
B49	A researcher wants to understand why some students avoid speaking in seminars. Compare one advantage and one limitation of using semi-structured interviews rather than only closed questionnaire items.	1 mark(s) AO1: Identify an advantage such as follow-up questions or opportunity for detailed accounts. 1 mark(s) AO2: Explain how probing students' reasons can clarify unexpected meanings or experiences that fixed categories may miss. 1 mark(s) AO1: Identify a limitation such as interviewer influence, reduced standardisation or time required. 1 mark(s) AO2: Explain how it affects this enquiry, for example variable prompting makes comparisons of reasons less consistent than identical closed items.	Credit equivalent valid answers. Award distinct points once; an undeveloped label does not earn an explanation mark.	4

Item ID	Question / requirement	Solution and allocation	Alternatives / notes	Max
C50(A)	Discuss the contribution of the cognitive approach to understanding memory.	Use the common 12-mark best-fit scale. Explain mental information processing through relevant models and mechanisms, such as separate working-memory components, encoding or retrieval. Apply accurate examples or research findings to what is explained. Evaluate the evidence and explanatory scope: controlled experiments, task validity, inferences about unobservable processes, everyday memory and the contribution of biological or social factors. Compare explanations where useful and reach a reasoned judgement. A catalogue of model components without discussion is insufficient for the strongest bands; do not require one named study as a checklist.	Indicative content is not an exhaustive checklist. Credit accurate alternative material and supported judgements. Award one holistic integer mark, with no additional unlisted cap.	12
C50(B)	Discuss the contribution of the humanistic approach to understanding human behaviour.	Use the common 12-mark best-fit scale. Explain agency/free will, subjective experience, self-actualisation or Maslow's needs, and show how these concepts account for behaviour and personal growth. Apply suitable examples or evidence. Evaluate the approach's focus on the person, applications and limits, including testability, cultural assumptions, evidence and comparison with deterministic accounts. Reach a supported judgement about contribution, without assuming all people follow an identical hierarchy or treating criticism as proof of no value.	Indicative content is not an exhaustive checklist. Credit accurate alternative material and supported judgements. Award one holistic integer mark, with no additional unlisted cap.	12

Item ID	Question / requirement	Solution and allocation	Alternatives / notes	Max
C51(A)	Discuss learning explanations of phobias and how they inform treatment.	Use the common 12-mark best-fit scale. Explain acquisition through association and/or observational learning and maintenance through reinforced avoidance. Link those mechanisms to behavioural treatment, such as graduated exposure with relaxation, explaining how the treatment aims to change learned responses. Evaluate explanatory coverage and treatment evidence, including cases without a recalled conditioning event, biological preparedness or cognitive factors where relevant, generalisation, acceptability and durability. Distinguish symptom improvement from proof of the original cause; reach a supported judgement.	Indicative content is not an exhaustive checklist. Credit accurate alternative material and supported judgements. Award one holistic integer mark, with no additional unlisted cap.	12
C51(B)	Discuss the value of combining biological and psychological explanations of schizophrenia.	Use the common 12-mark best-fit scale. Explain relevant biological vulnerability and psychological or environmental processes, and how they may interact rather than merely listing them. Apply evidence or examples carefully. Evaluate genetic/neural associations, causal direction, variability and the strengths and limitations of vulnerability–stress accounts. Consider how an integrated account may inform combined support without claiming one universal cause or guaranteed treatment success. Reach a supported judgement; do not credit unsupported blame directed at individuals or families as evidence.	Indicative content is not an exhaustive checklist. Credit accurate alternative material and supported judgements. Award one holistic integer mark, with no additional unlisted cap.	12

12-mark best-fit scale

Mark range	Descriptor
10–12	Accurate, generally detailed knowledge relevant to the question. Thorough, effective discussion. Clear, coherent and focused answer, with effective specialist terminology. Minor detail or expansion of an argument may be lacking.
7–9	Relevant knowledge is evident, with occasional inaccuracies. Discussion is apparent and mostly effective. Mostly clear and organised, with specialist terminology mostly used effectively; focus is lost in places.
4–6	Relevant knowledge is present, but the focus is mainly descriptive. Discussion is only partly effective. Clarity, accuracy and organisation are uneven; specialist terminology is sometimes used inappropriately.
1–3	Limited knowledge. Discussion is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer lacks clarity, contains many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is absent or used inappropriately.
0	No relevant content.