

Psychology A Level

Examination Board: AQA Specification

Who should take the course?

The course will appeal to students who:

- Are interested in all aspects of people's behaviour and thoughts, including the underlying motivations behind our behaviour, such as biological influences.
- Enjoy science, as part of the course you will learn about the scientific methods psychologists use to observe, measure and analyse behaviour and mental processes.
- May be looking for a career in the psychology fields including: *Clinical Psychologists, Occupational Psychologists, Forensic Psychologists, Research Psychologists, Educational Psychologists, Health Psychologists, Sports Psychologists, Counselling Psychologists, Consumer Psychologists,*
- *Would like to develop research skills and scientific enquiry.*

What is the course about?

Throughout the two year course, candidates will develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the core areas of psychology. The main aim is to understand the causes of behaviour, to look at the means by which psychologists study the subject and how psychology can help change or adapt behaviour. A range of topic based options is also studied, which bring together explanations from different approaches and engage students in issues and debates in psychology.

Paper 1 (Introductory topics in psychology) will cover:

- Memory, including models of memory, explanations of forgetting and eye witness testimony.
- Attachment, including research into attachment, issues with attachment following deprivation and institutionalisation and the effect on later relationships.
- Social psychology, conformity, obedience and independent behaviour.
- Psychopathology, including definitions of abnormality; characteristics and explanations of phobias, depression and obsessive compulsive disorder; related therapies.

Paper 2 (Psychology in context) will cover:

- Approaches in Psychology, including the learning, cognitive, biological, psychodynamic and humanistic approaches.
- Biological psychology, including the nervous and endocrine system, localisation of function in the brain, ways of studying the brain and biological rhythms.
- Research methods, including types of experiment, scientific processes and techniques of data handling and analysis, and inferential statistics.

Paper 3 (Issues and options in psychology) will cover:

- **A compulsory content** – Issues and debates in psychology
- **Optional content, where one topic is chosen from each option block**
 - Option 1 – Relationships, gender and cognition and development
 - Option 2 – Schizophrenia, eating behaviour and stress

- Option 3 – Aggression, forensic psychology and addiction

Psychology A Level (continued)

How is it assessed?

Assessment will take place at the end of the two year course and will cover the knowledge and understanding, application of knowledge and the scientific investigation of Psychology. This will be through formal examinations consisting of multiple choice questions, short structured questions and longer extended writing questions.

Where will it take me?

Candidates taking psychology will be able to continue their psychology studies at all universities with courses ranging from general psychology to more specific areas as in the list above. In addition, the broad range of skills developed spanning those traditionally associated with arts and science, offer a wide range of career prospects.