GCSE
PSYCHOLOGY

8182/1: Paper 1 Cognition and behaviour
Report on the Examination

General comments

The purpose of this report is to highlight both areas of good practice and areas for improvement stemming from students' answers in Paper 1 in 2022. Where appropriate, it will also offer guidance as to how future performances might be improved.

Although this was the fourth sitting of 8182/1, it was the first typical examination since Summer 2019. In light of the disruption to students' learning due to the pandemic, it was pleasing to see many impressive scripts, with students able to demonstrate their knowledge of relevant material, indicating effective teaching and learning. The overall performance suggested that many students had prepared well for this examination. There were relatively few scripts with unanswered questions and little evidence that students had run out of time. However, there were also some scripts that reflected a failure to apply some key skills to the examination – for example, where required, students should link their answers to the context of the stem. A significant number of responses were not contextualised and therefore failed to gain full credit.

There were a few questions that challenged students and there were examples of responses that were not related to the questions set in each section. These indicated that students do need to ensure that they read the questions – and any stem material - carefully if they are to provide answers that directly address the requirements of the question. Having said that, the paper performed well in allowing stronger students to show their ability through the higher-order skills of application to stems, and extended and elaborated evaluation. Questions that discriminated best were questions 4, 11, 15 and 17. Question 11 seemed particularly challenging for a number of students. Although not a new question style, students sometimes failed to notice that the second part required evaluation of something different to the description required in the first part.

Many answers suffered because students did not pay close attention to the question; time was often wasted on general pre-prepared but irrelevant description, for example in question 3.2 where many students gave a lengthy description of a case study before addressing the question's requirements. Students should take time to read the specific demands of each question carefully, rather than simply writing everything they know about the topic. For example, 'Outline' questions do not require evaluative material and 'Evaluate' questions do not require descriptive material.

It was pleasing to see the small mark, maths-based research methods questions throughout the paper performed well, encouraging good responses from students. However, an area of particular weakness was seen in question 8.2, where students were asked to state their answer using two significant figures.

As in previous examination series, the majority of students wrote their responses to questions clearly and in the appropriate space provided. However, it is important to remind students that these papers are marked online; answers written in the margins, or in blank spaces below other questions, can result in complete answers not being scanned correctly. Students who need to write more than the given space allows should use the additional pages; these will be matched with the response and marked as a complete answer. It is important to remind students to clearly identify the question number to which their response in the additional pages refers, for example, writing '22.4' rather than just '22', or providing no number at all.

It is also important that students use black ink or ball-point pen as instructed; some students did not use the correct pen with the result that their writing was very faint and thus difficult to read. Poor handwriting was an issue on some scripts; answers were barely legible, thus posing a

challenge for examiners using on-screen marking. This was particularly the case in question 15. Where clear handwriting is known to be a problem, teachers would do well to make special arrangements to ensure that their students are not disadvantaged.

Section A: Memory

Question 1

This question was answered well, with almost all students gaining at least one of the two marks available. However, many struggled with the instructions about how to indicate their choice of response in the appropriate mark box and even more with how to correctly amend their choices.

Question 2

Whilst this question was answered extremely well by many students, who demonstrated good skills of evaluation, many students seemed to have misread the question and either described or evaluated the 'War of the Ghosts' study, or described the theory. Almost half of all answers gained no marks.

Question 3.1

Most students attempted this question, and over three-quarters of responses gained the full six marks available. However, several students seemed to misread the start of the question that stated 'Use the article to identify …' and inserted their own examples of the different types of memory, thus not gaining credit. It was noted that some students mixed up procedural memory with episodic memory, and there were a few examples of the information being copied incorrectly from the article, for example 'The Eiffel Tower is in London'.

Question 3.2

As mentioned above, many responses began with a lengthy description of a case study followed by a very limited evaluation. Weaker students were able to gain one mark for stating that case studies are 'in depth', or 'detailed'.

Question 4

Several students tried to design interesting and unique experiments, but regrettably many described a distractor task rather than an interference task, so were limited to a maximum of 2 marks for the hypothesis. This was unfortunate as many students clearly knew how to design an experiment. Very few answers gained 5 or 6 marks, and over one-third gained no marks at all. Several responses involved designing studies that used an interview or a questionnaire, having missed the part of the question that said 'Design an experiment'. Many hypotheses only received one mark due to not being operationalised. A large number of answers provided very detailed descriptions of interference studies, but failed to include the hypothesis or results, thus limiting achievable marks. It might benefit students if they are encouraged to tick each bullet point as they answer it; some students did this and their answers were clear and accurate.

Question 5

This was generally answered very well, with most students able to provide accurate and detailed knowledge of Murdock's study. In many cases, the response was imbalanced, with students using additional pages for the description but only offering a brief sentence for the evaluation. This was a pity as it was not possible for these answers to achieve a Level 3 mark; students need to be reminded how AO1 and AO3 marks are split on 'Describe and evaluate' questions.

Section B: Perception

Question 6

This multiple-choice question proved to be more challenging than expected, with less than two-thirds of the responses gaining the 2 marks available.

Question 7

Many students were able to identify the correct description of occlusion, although once again many struggled with the instructions about how to indicate their choice of response in the appropriate mark box or how to correctly amend their choice.

Question 8.1

This question was generally well answered, with a high percentage of responses gaining the full two marks.

Question 8.2

Just over half of all responses gained the full 3 marks available. Approximately one-third of answers gained 2 marks for stating 80.6; it would appear that many students have a limited understanding of 'significant figures'.

Question 9

Approximately one-quarter of responses gained the full 4 marks available, with approximately the same number gaining no marks at all. Although many students accurately outlined an appropriately depth cue and applied their understanding to the scenario, several answers described a monocular depth cue, and more than a few had named convergence but described retinal disparity and vice versa.

Question 10

Most students had some knowledge of Gregory's theory and were able to gain at least 2 marks. There were some excellent responses where the theory was described in the student's own words, demonstrating both knowledge and understanding. There was often confusion with Gibson's theory, and some responses had both described and evaluated Gregory's theory.

Question 11

This synoptic question proved to be challenging for many students, with only a small percentage achieving a mark in Level 3. Whilst the majority of answers demonstrated some knowledge of the study, with many offering a great deal of accurate detail, there was a problem with several students confusing 'research method' with 'experimental design'. There were several excellent examples where the independent groups design had been evaluated, and these would have achieved full marks if that had been the question set. Where students did evaluate laboratory-based studies, there were several instances of points listed without elaboration – thus not providing the 'effective' evaluation that is required for Level 3 marks. Students need reminding that approximately half the marks in the synoptic question is for evaluation.

Section C: Development

Question 12

This multiple-choice question was answered very well by the majority of students.

Question 13

This proved to be very challenging, with less than one-fifth of all responses gaining the full 2 marks available. Many answers described the two different types of praise; several were able to give a definition of praise but without direct reference to the context of learning. A common error was to write 'for their learning' in an attempt to put it into context, instead of (for example) 'for their piece of work'.

Question 14

Approximately three-quarters of all answers gained the 1 mark available for this question. There seemed to be some confusion between fractions and percentages; 26% was seen on more than a few occasions. There were several answers of 37/50, suggesting that students had not correctly read the question.

Question 15

Surprisingly, this seemed to prove extremely challenging to a large majority of students, with a very small percentage achieving a Level 3 mark. There were many instances of confusion between nature and nurture, and a large number of students didn't refer to Dr Kumar or Dr Andersson in their response. Many answers did not go beyond the material that was provided in the stem, and it was common to see anecdotal information regarding the dangers of smoking and drinking during pregnancy that did not gain credit. Several responses suggested that nurture would not have an effect on the brain development of a baby before it is born because nurture only happens after birth.

This question posed problems for examiners when there were issues with the clarity of students' handwriting. It was often difficult to know if the student had written 'nature' or 'nurture'; several students referred to the doctors as 'Dr K' and 'Dr A', and it was unclear which doctor they were referring to when a student's handwritten K looked the same as their handwritten A.

Question 16

This question was answered well and there were a good percentage of Level 3 answers. Most students were able to describe the study with accuracy and detail, and almost all offered something that was able to gain credit. Evaluation was slightly weaker in many instances; some responses offered no evaluation and others gave evaluation only. Students need to be reminded to read the questions carefully, and to remember how the AO1 and AO3 marks are awarded in questions such as this.

Question 17

The vast majority of students attempted this question, and most demonstrated knowledge of fixed and growth mindsets. Both businesses were usually referred to but evaluation was often very brief or missing completely. It seemed that many students did not expect to have to answer three questions in one (describe, evaluate **and** apply) and struggled to address all three.

Section D: Research Methods

Question 18

The vast majority of students were able to gain the 1 mark available for this question.

Question 19

This question proved to be surprisingly challenging, with just over half the answers achieving the mark available.

Question 20

Most students knew that the correct answer was 'median' but there were many instances of incorrect spelling. A common error was to confuse the median with the mode.

Question 21

Approximately three-quarters of students gained at least one mark for this question, and many provided appropriate elaboration with examples of secondary data.

Question 22.1

Almost half of all answers gained the full 3 marks, but there were several limited responses for the second part of the question (identifying both conditions of the independent variable).

Question 22.2 and 22.3

22.2 was correctly answered by the majority of students, but approximately one-quarter of answers failed to gain any marks for 22.3. The workings in the box suggested that students expected the calculation to be more difficult than it actually was; 59.94% was a common (incorrect) answer.

Question 22.4

Most students correctly identified that smell did influence behaviour. However, less than half of all answers gained the full 3 marks as accurate data from Figure 1 was not used to explain the answer. Many responses used the terms 'more' or 'less' to explain the answer, but the numbers (or percentages) of participants in each condition was required to achieve full marks.

Question 22.5

This question proved more challenging than expected, with less than half of all answers gaining the full two marks. Many students confused the experimental design with the research method (as was seen in Question 11). Those who did identify an experimental design generally gave the correct response (independent groups), and were able to explain why this was the correct answer.

Question 22.6

Most students who correctly identified independent groups in 22.5 were able to explain a relevant weakness, although many responses were not clear and accurate enough to gain the full two marks.

Question 23

This question was answered rather poorly, with few students gaining a mark in Level 3. Almost one-third of responses gained zero marks, and over 15% did not attempt to answer the question. Many answers simply described correlations, or did not go beyond 'cannot show cause and effect'. There were several examples of a list of brief points without any elaboration – but there were also some very good responses where there was effective evaluation.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.