

Curriculum Outline 2026-2027: PSYCHOLOGY

Core Substantive Content

Threshold Concepts

Concepts that are necessary to have been covered to access this topic

Careers in the curriculum: linked to character virtues (Intellectual, Moral and Performance).

See <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182/subject-content-a-level/introductory-topics-in-psychology> for specification references.

Students will be expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, research studies, research methods and ethical issues in relation to the specified content
- apply psychological knowledge and understanding of the specified content in a range of contexts
- analyse, interpret and evaluate psychological concepts, theories, research studies and research methods in relation to the specified content
- evaluate therapies and treatments including in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness.

Knowledge and understanding of research methods, practical research skills and mathematical skills will be assessed throughout all topic areas. These skills should be developed through study of the specification content and through ethical practical research activities, involving:

- designing research
- conducting research
- analysing and interpreting data.

Note on Research Methods: this threshold concept will be necessary to understand and evaluate all research evidence across all topics. Understanding is built upon throughout the course, and Research Methods concepts revisited in every lesson.

YEAR 12 PSYCHOLOGY					
Term 1a	Term 1b PPE 1 (in class)	Term 2a	Term 2b	Term 3a PPE 2 (Main Hall)	Term 3b
Memory (4.1.2) Coding, capacity and duration of memory. Models of memory. Explanations of forgetting. Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony.	Social Influence (4.1.1) Conformity & obedience Resistance to social influence; minority influence.	Approaches (4.2.1) Overview of the Learning, Cognitive and Biological Approaches. Overview of the Humanistic and Psychodynamic Approaches in Psychology. Comparison.	Attachment (4.1.3) Required concept: 4.2.1 Animal studies and explanations of attachment. The effects of maternal deprivation. English and Romanian Adoptees project Impacts of attachment on later life.	Biopsychology (4.2.2.) Endocrine system including Fight or Flight response Localisation of function. Hemispheric lateralisation. Plasticity and functional recovery; methods of studying the brain.	Clinical Psychology and Mental Health (4.1.4) Required concepts 3.2.1.1 and 4.2.1 <i>Definitions in the field of mental health</i> - Definitions of 'abnormality'; Phobias, Depression; Obsessive Compulsive disorder.
Careers in the curriculum: <u>Neuropsychologist</u> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> Studies how brain damage or dysfunction affects memory and other cognitive processes. Assesses memory loss (e.g. amnesia) and links it to brain areas like the hippocampus. Works in hospitals or clinics helping patients with conditions like dementia or brain injury <u>Educational Psychologist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Reflection (Intellectual)</i> Uses knowledge of memory (e.g. working memory, long-term memory, retrieval) to improve learning. Applies strategies like rehearsal, chunking, and revision techniques. Works in schools or local authorities supporting students' learning and development	Careers in the curriculum: <u>Political Campaign Strategist</u> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Analyses how citizens are influenced by messaging, media, and group identity. Helps design campaigns using persuasion techniques. Works with political parties, governments, or NGOs. <u>Advertising agencies or market research</u> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> Use social influence to understand why people buy things. Applies persuasion, social proof, and branding strategies. <u>Educational Psychologist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Reflection (Intellectual)</i> Explores how peer influence affects learning and behaviour in schools. Helps develop strategies to improve	Careers in the curriculum: <u>Clinical Psychologist/Therapist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Psychodynamic, cognitive and humanistic approach explain behaviour through unconscious processes and thought patterns, which guide treatment methods for mental illness. Uses therapies like CBT or talking therapies to treat mental health disorders. Works in hospitals, mental health services, or private practice <u>Psychiatrist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who diagnoses mental disorders and prescribes medication to treat them.	Careers in the curriculum: <u>Clinical Psychologist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Works with individuals (often children and families) with emotional or attachment difficulties. Uses attachment theory (e.g. Bowlby, Ainsworth) to understand relationships and trauma <u>Child Psychologist / Developmental Psychologist</u> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i> <i>Reflection (Intellectual)</i> Focuses on how early attachments affect development. Works in schools, clinics, or research <u>Social Worker</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Integrity (Moral)</i> Supports children and families, especially in care systems. Uses attachment	Careers in the curriculum: <u>Neuroscientist</u> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Studies how the brain and nervous system influence behaviour. Research areas like localisation of function, brain injury, and neurotransmission. Works in labs, universities, or medical research settings. <u>Neuropsychologist</u> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> Assesses and treats patients with brain injuries or neurological conditions. Uses knowledge of brain-behaviour relationships (e.g. effects of damage to specific brain areas). Works in hospitals or clinics. <u>Neurorehabilitation Therapist (e.g. Occupational Therapist)</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i>	Careers in the curriculum: <u>Clinical Psychologist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Assesses and treats a wide range of mental health disorders (e.g. depression, anxiety, schizophrenia). Uses psychological therapies like CBT and psychodynamic therapy. Works in hospitals, mental health services, or private practice <u>Mental Health Nurse</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> Provides care and support for people with mental health conditions. Helps manage symptoms, administer medication, and support recovery. Works in hospitals, community teams, or psychiatric units <u>Counsellor / Therapist</u>

YEAR 12 PSYCHOLOGY

Term 1a	Term 1b PPE 1 (in class)	Term 2a	Term 2b	Term 3a PPE 2 (Main Hall)	Term 3b
<u>Cognitive Neuroscientist</u> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Research how memory works in the brain, including encoding, storage, and retrieval. Studies processes like forgetting, eyewitness testimony, and memory reliability. Works in universities, research labs, or medical settings.	engagement and reduce negative social influence. Works in schools, local authorities, or private practice.	Heavily influenced by the biological approach; brain function, genes, and neurochemistry, which informs medical treatment. Works in hospitals or mental health settings as a medical doctor.	theory to assess home environments and parenting. Helps place children in stable, secure attachments (e.g. fostering/ adoption decisions)	<i>Perseverance (Performance)</i> Helps patients recover skills after brain injury, stroke, or neurological illness. Applies biopsychology to understand how damage affects movement, memory, or behaviour Designs therapy programmes to rebuild independence. <u>Pharmacist:</u> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> <i>Integrity (Moral)</i> Dispenses medication and advises patients, using knowledge of how drugs affect the brain and body to treat conditions. Biopsychology shows how the nervous system and synaptic transmission affect behaviour, which links to pharmacy because medications work by altering neurotransmitters and communication between neurons at synapses. <u>Psychopharmacologist</u> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Studies how drugs affect the brain and behaviour. Develops and tests medications for mental health conditions. Works in research labs or pharmaceutical companies.	<i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> Helps people cope with emotional and psychological difficulties. Uses talking therapies to explore thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Works in schools, charities, healthcare settings, or private practice.

YEAR 12 PSYCHOLOGY					
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Research Methods (4.2.3) will be delivered weekly throughout Year 1					
Experimental method: hypothesis testing, variables, experiments, designs	Experimental method: Sampling, ethics, pilots, types of data.	Non-experimental methods Descriptive statistics, self report techniques	Non-experimental methods Observations, Content analysis,	Further non-experimental methods case studies Correlations Correlations 'Plan a study'	Research Methods Peer review, reporting investigations, reliability, validity, features of a science
Careers in the curriculum: <u>Data Analyst</u> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> <i>Reason and judgement (Intellectual)</i> Collects, analyses, and interprets data. Uses skills from research methods like: statistics, data handling, identifying patterns and trends. <u>Research Scientist / Research Assistant</u> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Designs and carries out studies (experiments, observations, surveys). Uses: experimental designs, hypothesis testing etc. <u>Market Researcher</u> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i> Investigates what people think, want, and do for companies. Uses research methods like questionnaires, interviews, sampling techniques.					

Year 13 PSYCHOLOGY

Term 1a PPE 1 (in class)	Term 1b	Term 2a PPE 2 (Main Hall)	Term 2b	Term 3a	3b
<u>Miss Winwood</u> <u>Research Methods</u> Peer review, reporting investigations, reliability, validity, features of a science Inferential statistical testing. <u>Schizophrenia</u> Required concepts 3.2.1.1 and 4.2.1 Classifications of Schizophrenia, symptoms, reliability/ validity of diagnosis. Biological explanations and drug therapy (antipsychotics). Psychological explanations of schizophrenia and psychological treatments. Interactionist approach.	<u>Miss Winwood</u> <i>Finish Schizophrenia</i> <u>Forensic Psychology</u> Required concepts 3.2.1.1 and 4.2.1 Offender profiling (top down and bottom up); Biological explanations of offending (genetics and neural). Psychological explanations of offending behaviour (Cognitive; Differential association theory); Dealing with offending behaviour (custodial sentences; token economy; anger management; restorative justice).	<i>Finish Forensic Psychology</i>	<i>Revision</i>		
<u>Careers in the curriculum:</u> <u>Mental Health Nurse</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> Supports people with schizophrenia, helping manage symptoms like hallucinations and delusions. Uses knowledge of treatments (e.g. antipsychotic medication, CBT) and the impact of institutionalisation. Works in hospitals, community mental health teams, or psychiatric units <u>Clinical Psychologist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Uses psychological explanations (cognitive, biological, family dysfunction) to understand schizophrenia. Provides therapies like CBTp (CBT for psychosis) to reduce symptoms and improve functioning. Works in mental health services, hospitals, or private practice <u>Psychiatrist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> Focuses on the biological aspects of schizophrenia (dopamine hypothesis, brain function). Diagnoses the disorder and prescribes.	<u>Careers in the curriculum:</u> <u>Forensic Psychologist</u> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> <i>Integrity (Moral)</i> Applies psychological theories to understand criminal behaviour (e.g. offender profiling, explanations of offending). Assesses offenders and contributes to rehabilitation programmes. Works in prisons, courts, or secure hospitals. <u>Police Officer / Investigator</u> <i>Courage (Performance)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Uses knowledge of offender behaviour and profiling to help solve crimes. Applies understanding of factors influencing criminal behaviour (e.g. social influence, cognition). Works in law enforcement agencies investigating and preventing crime. <u>Probation Officer</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Integrity (Moral)</i> Works with offenders after release to reduce reoffending. Uses knowledge of risk factors, rehabilitation, and behaviour change. Works in the community supporting reintegration into society				

Year 13 PSYCHOLOGY

Term 1a PPE 1 (in class)	Term 1b	Term 2a PPE 2 (Main Hall)	Term 2b	Term 3a	3b
Miss Kader <i>Finish Clinical Psychology and Mental Health.</i> Recap of 4.2.1 plus all previously learned core content Issues and Debates Key issues and debates within Psychology: Cultural bias; gender bias. Key issues and debates within Psychology; free-will and determinism; Nature vs. Nurture; Holism and Reductionism; Idiographic and nomothetic; Ethical implications of research. Revision of Approaches.	Miss Kader <i>Finish Issues and Debates</i> Relationships Required concept: 4.2.1 Factors affecting attraction, Theories of romantic relationships. Duck's model of relationship breakdown, virtual relationships in social media, parasocial relationships	<i>Finish Relationships</i>			
Careers in the curriculum: <u>Clinical Psychologist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> Careers in the curriculum: <u>Journalist</u> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> <i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Explains psychological research and debates (e.g. determinism, cultural bias) to the public. Evaluates whether research is scientific and unbiased. Works in media, education, or publishing <u>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Officer</u> <i>Justice (Moral)</i> <i>Respect (Moral)</i> Uses debates like cultural bias and gender bias to reduce discrimination. Ensures policies and practices are fair and inclusive. Works in organisations, schools, or government <u>Research Psychologist</u> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i>	Careers in the curriculum: <u>Relationship Counsellor / Therapist</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> Helps individuals and couples understand and improve their relationships. Uses theories of attraction, attachment, and breakdown (e.g. communication, empathy, repair strategies). Works in counselling services, charities, or private practice. <u>Family Support Worker</u> <i>Compassion and empathy (Moral)</i> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> Supports families experiencing conflict, breakdown, or parenting difficulties. Uses research on attachment and relationship dynamics to improve family functioning. Works in social services, schools, or charities. <u>Relationship Consultant for online dating businesses</u> <i>Communication (Intellectual)</i> <i>Curiosity (Intellectual)</i>				

Year 13 PSYCHOLOGY					
Term 1a PPE 1 (in class)	Term 1b	Term 2a PPE 2 (Main Hall)	Term 2b	Term 3a	3b
<i>Critical thinking (Intellectual)</i> Considers debates like reductionism vs holism and psychology as a science when designing studies. Ensures research is valid, reliable, and ethically sound. Works in universities or research institutes	Uses research on attraction (e.g. similarity, self-disclosure, physical attractiveness). Helps design matching systems or improve user success in forming relationships. Works in tech companies, matchmaking services, or coaching.				