

INTERNATIONAL A-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY

PS04

Unit 4 Approaches and application

Mark scheme

January 2024

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [oxfordaqaexams.org.uk](https://www.oxfordaqaexams.org.uk)

Copyright information

OxfordAQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for OxfordAQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: OxfordAQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2024 OxfordAQA International Examinations and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A: Approaches in Psychology

Total for this section: 30 marks

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks
01	Which two of the following researchers are best associated with the behaviourist approach in psychology? Answer key: C – Pavlov E – Skinner	2 AO1 = 2

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks												
02	Jenny keeps the food for her dog in a large container. She keeps the food for her cat in a small container. When Jenny takes out the large container her dog begins to salivate. However, this does not happen when she takes out the small container. Use your knowledge of classical conditioning to explain the dog's behaviour when Jenny takes out the large container and when she takes out the small container. Possible content • Each time the dog saw the large container it received food. • The dog has associated the large container (NS) with food (UCS). • Receiving food (UCS) results in the dog salivating (UCR) (a reflex response). • The large container has become a conditioned stimulus (CS) that the dog associates with food and so it salivates (CR) (a learned response). • The small container is not associated with food for the dog and is not a conditioned stimulus. Credit other relevant material. Note: information presented in a diagram can be credited. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Marks</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Application of classical conditioning to explain the dog's behaviour towards the large and small container is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.</td><td>3–4</td></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Application of classical conditioning to explain the dog's behaviour towards the large and small container is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR just application to the large or small container at Level 2.</td><td>1–2</td></tr> <tr> <td>0</td><td>No creditable content.</td><td>0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Level	Description	Marks	2	Application of classical conditioning to explain the dog's behaviour towards the large and small container is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.	3–4	1	Application of classical conditioning to explain the dog's behaviour towards the large and small container is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR just application to the large or small container at Level 2.	1–2	0	No creditable content.	0	4 AO2 = 4
Level	Description	Marks												
2	Application of classical conditioning to explain the dog's behaviour towards the large and small container is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.	3–4												
1	Application of classical conditioning to explain the dog's behaviour towards the large and small container is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR just application to the large or small container at Level 2.	1–2												
0	No creditable content.	0												

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks
03	Briefly outline the biological approach in psychology. Award marks as follows: 2 marks for a clear outline of the biological approach in psychology. 1 mark for a muddled or vague outline of the biological approach in psychology. Possible content • Behaviour is influenced by genes, eg the role of inherited factors in schizophrenia. • Behaviour is influenced by neurochemistry, eg the role of serotonin in depression. • Behaviour is influenced by brain structures, eg the role of the hippocampi in laying down new memories. • Behaviours in modern humans exist because they brought advantages to our ancestors. Note: Any one of the above bullet points for full marks. Credit other relevant material.	2 AO1 = 2

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks												
04	A study was conducted into the role of schemas in memory. Participants were asked to listen to a story that came from a different culture. They were then asked to recall the story. The stories that were recalled were much shorter than the original story, because lots of the cultural details had been left out. Using your knowledge of the role of schemas, explain the results of this study. Possible application • The remembered stories were much shorter than the original story because any information without an existing schema could not be processed and stored so was not available to be recalled. • Details not in their schemas would not be processed accurately and therefore not remembered very well, making the recalled story shorter. • As the story came from a different culture it would contain cultural details that the participants were not familiar with and were therefore difficult to remember. Therefore, the story was shorter. Credit other relevant material. <table border="1" data-bbox="300 1032 1310 1473"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Marks</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Application of the role of schemas in processing information is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.</td><td>3–4</td></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Application of the role of schemas in processing information is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.</td><td>1–2</td></tr> <tr> <td>0</td><td>No creditable content.</td><td>0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Level	Description	Marks	2	Application of the role of schemas in processing information is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.	3–4	1	Application of the role of schemas in processing information is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.	1–2	0	No creditable content.	0	4 AO2 = 4
Level	Description	Marks												
2	Application of the role of schemas in processing information is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.	3–4												
1	Application of the role of schemas in processing information is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.	1–2												
0	No creditable content.	0												

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks															
05	Evaluate the cognitive approach. Possible evaluation • Many studies support the approach, eg Piaget's work on the role of schema, work on the multi-store model of memory. • It can help explain the fragility of memory and the usefulness of the research by Loftus and others on eyewitness testimony. • It has made a significant contribution in health psychology, eg Beck/Ellis' work on the role of negative thinking in depression. • The cognitive approach has led to the development of treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for depression and schizophrenia. • The cognitive approach takes a soft determinism position and therefore might be more appropriate as there is some consideration of free will. • The cognitive approach uses laboratory studies and brain scans which make the approach objective and allows others to replicate to see if similar results are obtained. • The approach relies on making inferences that might not be accurate as cognitive processes have to be assumed from observations of behaviour. • The move to cognitive neuroscience has meant that neural correlates of brain areas can now be associated with specific behaviours. Credit other relevant material. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Marks</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td><td>Evaluation of the cognitive approach is detailed and appropriate. The answer is clear with appropriate use of terminology.</td><td>5–6</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Evaluation of the cognitive approach is relevant but detail is lacking. The answer lacks clarity in places.</td><td>3–4</td></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Evaluation of the cognitive approach is very limited. The answer is vague/muddled.</td><td>1–2</td></tr> <tr> <td>0</td><td>No creditable content.</td><td>0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Level	Description	Marks	3	Evaluation of the cognitive approach is detailed and appropriate. The answer is clear with appropriate use of terminology.	5–6	2	Evaluation of the cognitive approach is relevant but detail is lacking. The answer lacks clarity in places.	3–4	1	Evaluation of the cognitive approach is very limited. The answer is vague/muddled.	1–2	0	No creditable content.	0	6 AO3 = 6
Level	Description	Marks															
3	Evaluation of the cognitive approach is detailed and appropriate. The answer is clear with appropriate use of terminology.	5–6															
2	Evaluation of the cognitive approach is relevant but detail is lacking. The answer lacks clarity in places.	3–4															
1	Evaluation of the cognitive approach is very limited. The answer is vague/muddled.	1–2															
0	No creditable content.	0															

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks
06	Arlo's father is baking a cake. Arlo, who is 3 years old, has his own bowl of ingredients. When his father mixes his ingredients with a spoon, Arlo watches carefully. Then Arlo gets a spoon and mixes the ingredients in his bowl. Discuss social learning theory. Refer to Arlo in your answer. Possible content • SLT focuses on learning via observation in social contexts. • Other people act as role models especially when they have status or are perceived to be like the observer. • Learning is indirect via seeing others rewarded for their actions (vicarious reinforcement). • Role of mediational processes in learning: attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation. • Knowledge of Bandura's bobo doll research. Possible application • Arlo is motivated to imitate his father baking a cake as he looks up to him as a role model. • He pays attention to the way his father mixes the ingredients with a spoon. • He imitates or copies his father's actions with his own spoon. • He identifies with his father as he is male and has status and therefore, he imitates his actions. Possible discussion • Support from Bandura's work on social learning theory. Further discussion of gender effects, ie boys more likely to imitate a male role model than a female, no difference in girls. • Support for role of vicarious effects: in one variation of the bobo doll study, model is told off for aggression towards the doll, in another variation the model is rewarded with sweets and lemonade. Children more likely to reproduce behaviour after seeing the reward condition. • Methodological criticisms of Bandura's research; weakens the support for SLT. • Made a valuable contribution to media regulation to protect children, eg age certificates on films and video games. • Helped understanding of the role of social learning in food preferences and eating disorders. • Social learning can be used as a treatment for phobias (modelling). • Overemphasis on social context rather than biological factors (effects of hormones on aggressive behaviour). Credit other relevant material.	12 AO1 = 6 AO2 = 2 AO3 = 4

	Level	Description	Marks	
	4	Discussion of social learning theory is mostly effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. Application is appropriate. The answer is clear, organised and focused. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively.	10–12	
	3	There is some effective discussion of social learning theory. Any application is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is mostly used appropriately.	7–9	
	2	Discussion of social learning theory is of limited effectiveness. There may be some attempt at application. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is occasionally used appropriately.	4–6	
	1	Discussion of social learning theory is limited and poorly focused. Application may be poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.	1–3	
	0	No creditable content.	0	

Section B: Issues and Debates in Psychology

Total for this section: 30 marks

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks												
07	Palika notices that people seem to be happier when the sun is shining than when it rains. She thinks that scores on a test of happiness will be higher when people are tested on days when the sun is shining, than when they are tested on days when it rains. She decides to investigate her idea that being in the sun makes people happy. Use your knowledge of theory construction and hypothesis testing to explain how Palika might carry out her investigation. Possible application • Palika's theory is that the weather/sun/rain affects happiness. • She will develop a hypothesis which can be tested. For example, that participants in sun (experimental group) will score higher on a happiness scale than those in rain (control group). • The null hypothesis (that exists) will be there is no difference in happiness score between those in the sun and those in the rain. • Once the data on happiness scores is gathered and analysed statistically, she will then retain or reject the null hypothesis. • If her data contradicts the theory that the weather/sun/rain affects happiness, she will have to change her theory. Credit other relevant material. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Marks</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Application of theory construction and hypothesis testing is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.</td><td>3–4</td></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Application of theory construction and hypothesis testing is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR application of one concept at Level 2.</td><td>1–2</td></tr> <tr> <td>0</td><td>No creditable content.</td><td>0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Level	Description	Marks	2	Application of theory construction and hypothesis testing is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.	3–4	1	Application of theory construction and hypothesis testing is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR application of one concept at Level 2.	1–2	0	No creditable content.	0	4 AO2 = 4
Level	Description	Marks												
2	Application of theory construction and hypothesis testing is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.	3–4												
1	Application of theory construction and hypothesis testing is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR application of one concept at Level 2.	1–2												
0	No creditable content.	0												

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks
08	Explain one strength and one limitation of using the empirical method in psychology. For a strength award marks as follows: 3 marks: The strength of using the empirical method in psychology is detailed. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology. 2 marks: The strength of using the empirical method in psychology lacks detail. The answer lacks clarity in places. 1 mark: The strength of using the empirical method in psychology is briefly presented. The answer is very limited/vague/muddled. Possible strengths • The empirical method uses objective observation and measurement of behaviour. This means that behaviour is not affected by emotions or prejudices and events are recorded as they happen. • Using the empirical method allows for methods to be controlled so that findings can be repeated with similar results. This gives the research credibility and allows it to be accepted by the scientific community. • It allows for theories to become general laws which can be used to describe, explain and predict human behaviour. PLUS For a limitation award marks as follows: 3 marks: The limitation of using the empirical method in psychology is detailed. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology. 2 marks: The limitation of using the empirical method in psychology lacks detail. The answer lacks clarity in places. 1 mark: The limitation of using the empirical method in psychology is briefly presented. The answer is very limited/vague/muddled. Possible limitations • The empirical method is reductionist as it isolates one small aspect of behaviour and ignores other influences that may have an effect on behaviour. • It is deterministic as it looks for a cause and effect relationship to explain behaviour and therefore, assumes that all behaviour has a cause. • The use of the empirical method often tells us that behaviour occurs but not why. The use of quantitative data collection means rich detail (such as thoughts, feelings and intentions) that could explain that behaviour is missed. • Sometimes a holistic, non-scientific approach to determining the cause of behaviour is preferred as human beings are complex and the causes cannot be reduced to a single factor that can be tested scientifically. Credit other relevant material.	6 AO3 = 6

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks
09	Discuss the nature-nurture debate in psychology. Refer to two topics you have studied in your answer. Possible content - Psychologists attempting to explain human behaviour have looked for causes. Some have focused on the idea that all behaviour comes from internal causes (nature), such as biological features of a person. - Other psychologists focus on the idea that humans are social animals and that the causes of behaviour are likely to be external (nurture) and from the environment. - Research has been conducted to try to identify the causes of behaviour. Nativists and those focusing on the nurture side of the argument approach this differently. - Research into the nature side of the debate often uses techniques including twin studies, brain scans and biochemical studies to identify biological processes that may determine behaviour. - Research into the nurture side of the debate focuses on examining people's behaviour in different social contexts. - The interactionist approach considers both sides of the nature-nurture debate and recognises that interaction between a person's biological processes and their environment shapes their behaviour. Possible application - Treating depression can be approached by drug therapy (nature) and cognitive therapy (nurture) and a combination of both is often the most effective. - Job motivation is related to the interaction of needs (nature/internal) and goal-setting (nurture/external). - In cognitive development mirror neuron systems focus on nature (activity of brain cells), whilst Vygotsky's theory focuses on nurture (role of more knowledgeable other and scaffolding). Possible discussion - Use of research evidence to support either side of the debate or the interactionist approach, eg Held and Hein (1963) kitten carousel (nature), Maguire (2000) taxi driver study (nurture). - Engel (1977) found that heart disease is likely caused by many factors including, genetic inheritance, lifestyle such as smoking, and the ability to cope with stress (interactionist approach). - Most psychologists now recognise that many behaviours are caused by a variety of nature and nurture factors. - The interactionist approach is holistic as it looks at the whole person and the various internal and external forces acting on them, allowing for better treatments. - As the interactionist approach takes a holistic view it is very difficult to test in a scientific way. Credit other relevant material.	20 AO1 = 8 AO2 = 4 AO3 = 8

Level	Description	Marks
4	Knowledge of the nature-nurture debate is mostly accurate and generally well detailed. Discussion is mostly effective. Application of two topics is appropriate. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear and focused. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively.	16–20
3	Knowledge of the nature-nurture debate is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. There is some effective discussion/application. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is mostly used appropriately.	11–15
2	Limited knowledge of the nature-nurture debate is present. Any discussion/application is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is occasionally used appropriately. OR one topic discussed/applied at level 3/4.	6–10
1	Knowledge of the nature-nurture debate is very limited. Discussion/application is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one topic discussed/applied at level 2	1–5
0	No creditable content.	0

Section C: Applied Psychology: Work and the Individual**Total for this section: 30 marks**

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks
10	Kyle has observed a lesson given by a teacher in his department. Kyle has some ideas about how the teacher could improve his teaching. As he has very little time, Kyle decides to send his ideas to the teacher in an email, rather than having a meeting together. Using your knowledge of the effects of email communication, explain why it might be better for Kyle to give his ideas for improvement in a meeting together rather than in an email. Award marks as follows: 3 marks: The application of the effects of email communication is detailed. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology. 2 marks: The application of the effects of email communication lacks detail. The answer lacks clarity in places. 1 mark: The application of the effects of email communication is briefly presented. The answer is very limited/vague/muddled. Possible application • If Kyle and the teacher meet there will be non-verbal cues that could make it easier to establish rapport and for Kyle to be supportive, eg nodding/smiling/ facial expressions during the conversation. • Kyle might focus on his opinions in a written communication but face-to-face feedback will help to prevent this egocentrism. • When Kyle can see the teacher's reaction to what he is saying in real time, this might help him to avoid damaging the rapport between them. • Kyle might understand the teacher's thinking better when the teacher gives his responses. This interaction would not be possible via email. • The teacher might ignore the advice or even deny receiving the email (online disinhibition effect). Credit other relevant material.	3 AO2 = 3

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks												
11	Briefly explain two limitations of research studies into cultural differences in personal space. Possible limitations • There is evidence that some psychologists overestimated cultural differences, Hall (1966). Not making eye contact/using personal items such as bags as barriers seem to be universal behaviours. • Research has focused on horizontal space and neglected vertical space which tends to be very similar across cultures, Hall et al (2005). • Evidence for biological mechanisms affecting some behaviours that are sometimes judged to be cultural rather than universal, eg amygdala damage is linked to a lack of personal space boundary. Credit other relevant material. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Marks</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2</td><td>The explanation of two limitations of research into cultural differences in personal space is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.</td><td>3–4</td></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>The explanation of two limitations of research into cultural differences in personal space is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one limitation at Level 2.</td><td>1–2</td></tr> <tr> <td>0</td><td>No creditable content.</td><td>0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Level	Description	Marks	2	The explanation of two limitations of research into cultural differences in personal space is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.	3–4	1	The explanation of two limitations of research into cultural differences in personal space is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one limitation at Level 2.	1–2	0	No creditable content.	0	4 AO3 = 4
Level	Description	Marks												
2	The explanation of two limitations of research into cultural differences in personal space is accurate with some detail. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology.	3–4												
1	The explanation of two limitations of research into cultural differences in personal space is limited, vague or muddled. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one limitation at Level 2.	1–2												
0	No creditable content.	0												

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks				
12	Researchers looked at the stress-related illness records for two groups of workers. They counted the number of days the workers were absent. Group A (low control): the workers were given a work schedule to follow. Group B (high control): the workers arranged their own work schedules. Table 1 shows the stress-related illness records for the two groups of workers. Table 1 The number of days absent due to stress-related illness <table><tr><th>Group A (low control)</th><th>Group B (high control)</th></tr><tr><td>180 days</td><td>64 days</td></tr></table> Using your knowledge of the effects of workload and control on stress, explain the findings in Table 1. Award marks as follows: 3 marks: The application of knowledge of the effects of workload and control on stress is detailed. The answer is clear with appropriate use of specialist terminology. 2 marks: The application of knowledge of the effects of workload and control on stress lacks detail. The answer lacks clarity in places. 1 mark: The application of knowledge of the effects of workload and control on stress is briefly presented. The answer is very limited/vague/muddled. Possible application • In group A the number of days absent is very high because the workers have low control/limited decision latitude over their workload and this increases the likelihood of developing a stress-related illness. • In group B the number of days absent is (a third) of the rate for group A because the workers have high control/high decision latitude over their workload and this decreases the likelihood of developing a stress-related illness. • The difference in the number of days absent demonstrates a (causal) link between the level of control over workload and illness of the workers. Credit other relevant material.	Group A (low control)	Group B (high control)	180 days	64 days	3 AO2 = 3
Group A (low control)	Group B (high control)					
180 days	64 days					

Question	Marking Guidance	Total Marks
13	Describe and evaluate research into group decision-making. Possible content • Group polarisation is where the group decision is more extreme than the original individual attitudes of its members. • Group polarisation operates through social comparison (normative social influence) and informational social influence. • Risky shift may occur due to a particular form of polarised group decision-making. • Groupthink occurs in group decision-making where the desire for group cohesion results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome. • Janis (1982) cites three main factors of groupthink; high group cohesiveness (unity must be maintained at all costs), structural faults (closed leadership style) and situational context (eg stressful external events). • Janis (1982) also devised three category types of groupthink; overestimations of the group in terms of its power and morality, closed-mindedness and the view of the opposition as weak and pressures towards uniformity. • Knowledge of research evidence to support group polarisation, risky shift and/or groupthink. Possible evaluation • Use of research evidence to support group polarisation, risky shift and/or groupthink. • Support for polarisation from Isenberg (1986) showing that social comparison theory and informational social influence operate simultaneously, but each could lead to group polarisation on their own. • Mock jury trials (Bray and Noble, 1978) show that group discussion led to harsher or more lenient punishments than those given by individual jurors. • Stoner (1961) found risky shift in group decision-making as well as individual decisions being riskier after group discussion suggesting acceptance of the group's decision. • Stoner's original risky shift research used management students who might perceive risk as an attribute and therefore, not want to appear cautious in front of their peers. This is a bias in the results. • Wallach et al (1962) used participants for whom risk was not particularly important and found similar risky shift results. • Risky shift can explain cultural differences in decision making. Risk taking is a desirable characteristic in some cultures which is more likely to be expressed in a group setting. • Risky shift could be the effect of having an extrovert leader. Groups with such leaders are more likely to take risky decisions. • Park (1990) meta-analysis found only 16 published studies on groupthink and these showed little or no support for the concept. • Fodor and Smith (1982) found that leaders with high motivation create atmospheres more susceptible to groupthink. Therefore, it may be an individual rather than a group phenomenon. • Group homogeneity and group insulation are also supported as factors likely to lead to groupthink. • Work on groupthink is based on real groups and therefore is difficult to test empirically.	20 AO1 = 8 AO3 = 12

Credit other relevant material.		
Level	Description	Marks
4	Knowledge of research into group decision-making is mostly accurate and generally well detailed. Evaluation is mostly effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear and focused. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively.	16–20
3	Knowledge of research into group decision-making is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. There is some effective Evaluation. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is mostly used appropriately	11–15
2	Limited knowledge of research into group decision-making is present. Any Evaluation is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is occasionally used appropriately.	6–10
1	Knowledge of research into group decision-making is very limited. Evaluation is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.	1–5
0	No creditable content.	0

PS04 grid

	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
Section A				
01	2			2
02		4		4
03	2			2
04		4		4
05			6	6
06	6	2	4	12
Section B				
07		4		4
08			6	6
09	8	4	8	20
Section C				
10		3		3
11			4	4
12		3		3
13	8		12	20
Unit total	26	24	40	90