PSYCHOLOGY

GENERAL COURSE

Year 11 syllabus

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Content

Rationale

Psychology is the scientific study of how people think, feel and act. It aims to answer important questions such as what factors influence human development. While there are other disciplines that overlap with psychology's main aim to understand humans, psychology is rigorous in its use of scientific method. This allows for systematic exploration into the complexities of human behaviour based on evidence gathered through planned investigations.

This course introduces students to a breadth of knowledge focusing on the psychology of self and others. Psychological knowledge helps us understand factors relating to individuals, such as: cognition, or the way we think; biological bases of behaviour; and personality, the enduring traits that distinguish individuals. Psychological knowledge also helps us understand the way that individuals function within groups. This consists of knowledge associated with socialisation, moral development, the formation of attitudes and also how people relate and communicate. On a larger scale, psychological knowledge can help us to understand how individuals function within different contexts and how this is influenced by culture, shaping people's values, attitudes and beliefs.

Psychology is very useful, both to individuals assisting us to improve ourselves and our relationships, and to society as a whole. It can be applied to any context in which humans are involved. Through this course, students gain valuable insights and understandings into both themselves and their worlds. Methods of communication studied enhance personal communication skills, both within the field of psychology and in the context of daily life. Students also develop important research skills as they engage in the exploration and evaluation of data to illustrate how empirical procedures are used to examine phenomena such as intelligence and personality.

This course is designed to integrate the understanding of scientific principles, the acquisition of psychological knowledge and the application of both in an enjoyable and contemporary way. The study of psychology is highly relevant to further studies in the health professions; education, human resources, social sciences, sales, media and marketing and management.

Course outcomes

The Psychology General course is designed to facilitate achievement of the following outcomes.

Outcome 1 – Psychological understandings

Students understand the bases of human behaviour.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- understand how human behaviour can be defined, and the relationship between the internal and external factors that influence how humans think, feel and act

- understand the different theoretical approaches to the various areas or domains of psychology

- understand psychology provides scientific explanations of behaviour with particular principles, procedures and approaches to data.

Outcome 2 – Investigating in psychology

Students use information gathering methods to explore and answer questions about human thinking, emotion and behaviour.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- develop and select questions and ideas or hypotheses and plan and conduct research to test these ideas in a reliable, valid and ethical way

- collect, record, classify, quantify and process data and information in organised, logical and ethical ways

- interpret and evaluate findings in relation to ideas or hypotheses being tested and reflect on the design of the research.

Outcome 3 – Applying and relating psychological understandings

Students select and apply knowledge, understandings and skills to the study of human behaviour.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- use psychological knowledge and understandings to explain thoughts, feelings and behaviour

- apply knowledge and understandings reflecting the values of the discipline of psychology

- explore and interpret human behaviour in the everyday world using psychological theory and principles.

Outcome 4 – Communication in psychology

Students use appropriate skills and processes to communicate their understanding of human behaviour.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- use psychological discourse

- interpret information received and communicate feelings, thoughts and ideas with purpose, understanding and critical awareness

- explain psychological understandings to a range of audiences for a range of purposes.

Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

Structure of the syllabus

The Year 11 syllabus is divided into two units, each of one semester duration, which are typically delivered as a pair. The notional time for each unit is 55 class contact hours.

Unit 1

This unit provides a general introduction to personality and intelligence. Students explore a number of influential theories including Freud's psychodynamic approach, Eysenck's trait theory and Spearman's theory of general intelligence. Beyond the individual, the impact of culture and others on behaviour is a key focus. Students examine agents of socialisation and the role of verbal and non-verbal communication in initiating, maintaining and regulating relationships. Students are introduced to qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and explore fundamental ethical considerations pertinent to psychological research.

Unit 2

This unit introduces students to the human brain and the impact of factors influencing behaviour, emotion and thought. The scientific study of development is an important component of psychology and students review aspects of development and the role of nature and nurture. Students learn about stages of development and the impact of external factors on personality development. The impact of group size on behaviour and the influence of culture in shaping attitudes is explored. Students interpret descriptive data and apply it to create tables, graphs and diagrams, distinguish patterns and draw conclusions.

Each unit includes:

• a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit

• unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

Organisation of content

For each unit the content is organised as follows:

Content organisers	Sub-organisers	
	Unit 1	Unit 2
Self	Personality	Biological influences/bases of behaviour
	Cognition	Developmental psychology
Others	Relational influences	Social psychology
	Communication	Culture and values
Research methods	Planning and conducting psychological research	
	Processing and evaluating psychological research	

Mathematical skills expected of students studying the Psychology General course

The Psychology General course requires students to use the mathematical skills they have developed through the Year 7–10 Mathematics Curriculum, in addition to the numeracy skills they have developed through the Science Inquiry Skills strand of the Science Curriculum.

Within the Science Inquiry Skills strand, students are required to gather, represent and analyse numerical data to identify the evidence that forms the basis of scientific arguments, claims or conclusions. In gathering and recording numerical data, students are required to make measurements using appropriate units to an appropriate degree of accuracy.

It is assumed that students will be able to:

- perform calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of quantities

- perform approximate evaluations of numerical expressions

- express fractions as percentages, and percentages as fractions

- calculate percentages

- recognise and use ratios

- transform decimal notation to power of ten notation

- translate information between graphical, numerical and algebraic forms

- construct and interpret frequency tables and diagrams, pie charts and histograms

- describe and compare data sets using mean, median and inter-quartile range

- interpret the slope of a linear graph.

Progression from the Year 7–10 curriculum

This syllabus continues to develop science inquiry skills, building on those acquired in the Year 7–10 Science Curriculum. Science inquiry involves identifying and posing questions; planning, conducting and reflecting on investigations; processing, analysing and interpreting data; and communicating findings. Science inquiry is also concerned with evaluating claims, investigating ideas, solving problems, reasoning, drawing valid conclusions, and developing evidence-based arguments.

Investigations in psychology are activities in which ideas, predictions or hypotheses are tested and conclusions are drawn in response to a question or problem. The collection and analysis of data to provide evidence plays a major role. This can involve collecting or extracting information and reorganising data in the form of tables, graphs, flow charts, diagrams, text, keys, spreadsheets and databases. The analysis of data to identify and select evidence, and the communication of findings, involve the selection, construction and use of specific representations, including mathematical relationships, symbols and diagrams.

Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Psychology General course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Literacy

Students develop literacy skills as they are introduced and become familiar with the specific discourse used in psychology. This course provides a specific and rich context for students to develop reading and writing abilities and skills in viewing and speaking as they apply language in different contexts and for different purposes. Students develop literacy capability as they learn key research and investigative skills which enhance their ability to access, interpret, analyse and challenge information, and evaluate the changing knowledge base in psychology. Students use language structures to formulate hypotheses, relate information, provide explanations and construct evidence-based arguments. Students communicate research findings using multiple ways of representing data to articulate and illustrate relationships they have observed or constructed.

Numeracy

Students develop numeracy skills as they consider and evaluate psychological research, including the ability to display and interpret quantitative data, and apply processes of correlation and probability to inform the development of evidence-based conclusions.

Information and communication technology capability

In the Psychology General course, students develop and apply information communication and technology (ICT) capability as they learn to effectively and appropriately access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively. Students research psychological concepts, collect and analyse data and communicate understandings using a range of technologies.

Critical and creative thinking

Students develop critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, consider alternatives and solve problems. In this course, critical and creative thinking is embedded in the skills of planning, conducting, processing and evaluating psychological research. Students generate and examine hypotheses, make predictions, solve problems and analyse and evaluate evidence.

Personal and social capability

Psychology seeks to explain how individuals think, feel and act. In this course, students develop personal and social capabilities as they engage in the study of key theories which seek to explain how emotions, self-understanding and relationships influence decisions and actions. Students learn about the impact of groups and effective communication processes, and are encouraged to reflect on how relationships can be improved. Personal and social capability is also enhanced as students apply psychological knowledge to make informed choices about issues that impact their lives and consider the application of psychological concepts to meet a range of personal and social needs.

Ethical understanding

In this course, students learn about key psychological theories and the way in which the rights, integrity and propriety of people, who are the subject of psychological research, are held in high regard. Students develop the capacity to form and make ethical judgements through the study of ethics in the Psychology General course and explore and apply ethical guidelines as they engage in planning, conducting, processing and evaluating psychological research.

Intercultural understanding

Cultural attitudes and perspectives are important influences on behaviour and relationship development. Students examine how culture impacts on beliefs, attitudes and practices.

Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities

The cross-curriculum priorities address contemporary issues which students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the priorities into the teaching and learning program for the Psychology General course. The cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have longstanding scientific traditions. They have developed knowledge about the world through observation, prediction, creating hypotheses and making generalisations. In this course, scientific methods which propose to explain human behaviour are consistent with those which have been practised and transmitted in Aboriginal culture from one generation to the next. The study of the scientific method used in psychology has close links to the way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People view their world and therefore contributes to a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia provides rich and engaging contexts for developing students' scientific knowledge, understanding and skills. In this course, students learn about the diversity of cultures, traditions and beliefs and their impact on human behaviour, including the influence of traditional and contemporary Asian cultures.

Sustainability

Through the process of scientific investigation, students identify and understand relationships between variables and the notion of cause and effect. They develop skills in observation and analysis which enable them to examine relationships in the world around them and appreciate the contribution of science toward the development of a sustainable future.

Unit 1

Unit description

This unit provides a general introduction to personality and intelligence and seeks to explain how individuals are influenced by their surroundings. Students explore a number of influential theories used to describe and/or explain personality such as Freud's psychodynamic approach and Eysenck's trait theory. A range of intelligence theories are reviewed and cultural influences with respect to intelligence testing and child-rearing are examined. Beyond the individual, the impact of others on behaviour is a key focus. Students examine different agents of socialisation, focusing on the impact of parenting style on behaviour. Types of communication and the role of verbal and non-verbal communication in initiating, maintaining and regulating relationships are studied. Students are introduced to qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and explore fundamental ethical considerations in research including informed consent and voluntary participation.

Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Self

Personality

- introduction to personality theories
  - Psychodynamic – Freud
  - Trait theories – Eysenck
  - Humanistic theories – Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
  - Type theory – Meyer-Friedman

- nature of personality
  - continuity over time
  - consistency across situations

Cognition

- introduction to theories of intelligence
  - measuring mental age and intelligence quotient – Binet and Simon, Terman
  - empirical approaches to intelligence – Wechsler
  - multiple intelligences – Gardner
  - emotional intelligence – Goleman

- cultural bias in intelligence testing

Others

Relational influences

- agents of socialisation
  - family – attachment and parenting styles
  - peers
  - media

- cultural differences in child-rearing

Communication

- types of non-verbal communication
  - body language
  - gestures
  - physical distance
  - facial expressions
  - touch and smell

- effective communication
  - listener/receiver attributes

- role of language in initiating, maintaining and regulating interpersonal relationships – peer, family, work

Research methods

Planning and conducting psychological research

- psychology as a scientific endeavour to describe and explain how we think, feel and act

- terminology – psychologist and psychiatrist

- ethics in psychology research
  - informed consent
  - confidentiality
  - voluntary participation

- psychological research
  - cross-sectional and longitudinal research designs – uses and limitations

- data collection
  - qualitative methods
  - quantitative methods

Processing and evaluating psychological research

- displaying quantitative data – tables, graphs, diagrams

- data interpretation
  - mode
  - mean
  - median
  - range

- conclusions related to patterns in the data

Unit 2

Unit description

This unit introduces students to the human brain, focusing on the major parts. Students explore the impact of factors influencing behaviour, emotion and thought, including heredity, hormones, physical activity and psychoactive drugs. The scientific study of development is an important component of psychology. Students review physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and the role of nature and nurture. Erikson's stages of psychosocial development are examined as students learn about the impact of external factors on personality development. Students examine the impact of group size on behaviour and look at the influence of culture in shaping attitudes towards issues such as mental illness and disability. Students interpret descriptive data such as mean and range. They use this data to create tables, graphs and diagrams and draw conclusions using patterns observed in the data.

Unit content

This unit builds on the content covered in Unit 1.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Self

Biological influences/bases of behaviour

- identify major parts of the brain
  - hindbrain
  - midbrain
  - forebrain
  - left and right hemispheres and their influence on behaviour
  - corpus callosum
- factors that affect behaviour, emotion and thought
  - heredity – the role of genetics in determining behaviour
  - hormones – the effects of adrenaline and noradrenaline
  - physical activity – the effects of exercise on mood
  - recreational drugs – the effects of cannabis, alcohol, and amphetamine

Developmental psychology

- types of development – cognitive, physical, social, emotional
- changes with age
- role of nature and nurture
- Erikson's stages of psychosocial development

Others

Social psychology

- definition of a group

- group behaviour
    - cooperation
    - competition
    - impact of group size

- diffusion of responsibility

Culture and values

- definition of attitudes

- social categorisation
    - formation of stereotypes and consequences

- ways to reduce stereotypes

- cultural differences in attitudes towards
    - disability
    - ageing
    - mental illness

Research methods

Planning and conducting psychological research

- psychology as a scientific endeavour to describe and explain how we think, feel and act

- terminology – psychologist and psychiatrist

- ethics in psychology research
    - informed consent
    - confidentiality
    - voluntary participation

- psychological research
    - cross-sectional and longitudinal research designs – uses and limitations

- data collection
    - qualitative methods
    - quantitative methods

Processing and evaluating psychological research

- displaying quantitative data – tables, graphs, diagrams

- data interpretation
    - mode
    - mean
    - median
    - range

- conclusions related to patterns in the data

School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual* contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The table below provides details of the assessment types for the Psychology General Year 11 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

Assessment table – Year 11

Type of assessment	Weighting
Investigation Students plan and conduct a study to answer a research question that can include predicting, hypothesising, designing, controlling variables, gathering and organising data and interpreting and/or evaluating research findings. Evidence can include: an experimental design brief, a formal investigation or laboratory report, research notes, journals, quantitative and/or qualitative analyses of data from observation checklists, and/or self or peer evaluation tools.	30%
Response Students apply knowledge and skills to analyse, interpret and evaluate data, and identify ethical issues. Evidence can include: reports, literature searches, tests, observations during the analysis process, evaluation forms and/or journals.	40%
Project Students communicate psychological knowledge, skills and processes in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Evidence can include: observation checklists, evaluation forms, questionnaires, posters, observations during discussion, journals, video and/or audio recordings, group work, role plays and/or oral presentations.	30%

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units (or for a single unit where only one is being studied).

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks

- include a general description of each task

- indicate the unit content to be assessed

- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type

- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least once over the year/pair of units. In the assessment outline where a single unit is being studied, each assessment type must be included at least once.

The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes.

Grading

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

Grade	Interpretation
A	Excellent achievement
B	High achievement
C	Satisfactory achievement
D	Limited achievement
E	Very low achievement

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units (or for a unit where only one unit is being studied). The grade is based on the student's overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Psychology General Year 11 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au.

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 11

A	**Conceptual knowledge and understanding** Identifies and explains a range of theoretical approaches and domains in the fields of psychology related to the way humans think, feel and act both individually and in a group. Makes direct reference to relevant psychological theories, principles and concepts to describe and explain human behaviour in the everyday world. Uses a range of appropriate psychological terminology consistently to explain behaviour, adapting language to suit specific audiences and purposes. Expresses ideas in a clear, accurate and logical way. **Research methods** Interprets a situation to plan and conduct an ethical investigation. Formulates an hypothesis and controls several variables. Collects, records and organises data. Describes trends in data, relates findings to the hypothesis and develops scientific explanations that are consistent with the data. Suggests specific changes that would improve the techniques used or the design of the investigation.
B	**Conceptual knowledge and understanding** Identifies and explains key theoretical approaches and domains in the fields of psychology related to the way humans think, feel and act both individually and in a group. Makes direct reference to psychological theories, principles and concepts to describe and explain human behaviour in the everyday world. Uses simple psychological terminology consistently to accurately explain human behaviour. **Research methods** Plans and conducts investigations, taking into account the main variables. Recognises the need for fair testing. Collects and organises data. Summarises and explains patterns in the data in relation to the research prediction. Gives general suggestions for improving the investigation.
C	**Conceptual knowledge and understanding** Describes theoretical approaches and domains in the fields of psychology related to the way humans think, feel and act, both individually and in a group. Uses basic psychological terminology to describe and explain human behaviour in the everyday world. Plans, rehearses and considers own communication skills. Requires some frameworks to organise ideas. **Research methods** Plans investigations, with guidance, recognising the need for fair testing in most instances. Presents simple scientific data with minor inaccuracies. Identifies some patterns in the data to describe simple findings that have a few inaccuracies, but relate to the research prediction. Identifies the main difficulties experienced in conducting the investigation.

D	**Conceptual knowledge and understanding** Shows a limited recall of theoretical approaches and domains in the fields of psychology. Identifies patterns of human behaviour and describes behaviour using simple psychological terms. Uses minimal psychological terminology to describe human behaviour. Needs to be provided with structures and frameworks to organise and connect ideas. **Research methods** With guidance, identifies the main aspects of a scientific investigation and makes simple predictions. Demonstrates minimal skill in the planning, designing, organising and explanation of investigation findings.
E	Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.