

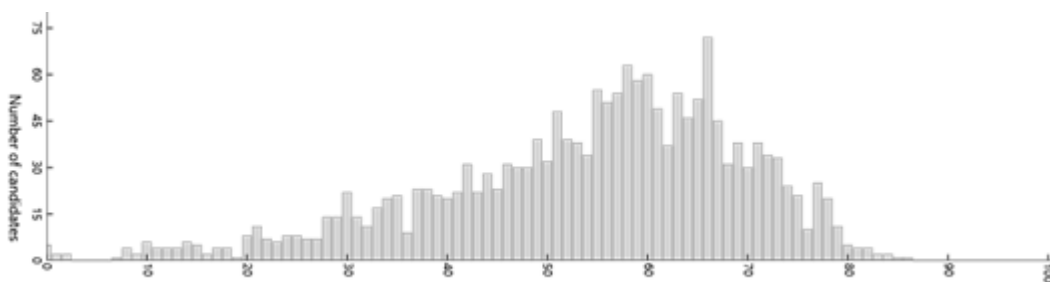


Summary report of the 2021 ATAR course examination report: Psychology

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2021	1824	48
2020	1839	49
2019	1950	22
2018	2108	30

The number of candidates sitting and the number attempting each section of the examination can differ as a result of non-attempts across sections of the examination.

Examination score distribution–Written



Summary

The examination followed the design brief, utilising syllabus terminology to formulate the questions. The recent trend to incorporate empirical data as stimuli for questions continued. Research methods were assessed in the extended answer for the first time to remove the erroneous notion that psychological theories and applications exist in isolation from research. The overall mean for the paper increased from 49.16% in 2020 with higher means in Sections One and Two.

Attempted by 1820 candidates Mean 53.89% Max 86.18% Min 0.00%

Section means were:

Section One: Research methods	Mean 53.73%		
Attempted by 1816 candidates	Mean 10.75(/20)	Max 20.00	Min 0.00
Section Two: Short answer	Mean 56.32%		
Attempted by 1817 candidates	Mean 30.97(/55)	Max 49.83	Min 0.00
Section Three: Extended answer	Mean 48.67%		
Attempted by 1775 candidates	Mean 12.17(/25)	Max 22.69	Min 0.00

General comments

The examination was accessible with the maximum possible mark reached for every question, including all components of the Extended answer questions. The examination allowed for discrimination between the candidates. There was a good balance of questions from across the syllabus, with content being assessed that had not been assessed in the recent papers. The majority of candidates could complete all of the paper in the given time.

Advice for candidates

- Use syllabus content points as the primary reference for any revision.

- Remember that any and all parts of the syllabus are examinable content.
- Know the syllabus theorists related to psychology covered in the course.
- Do not rely on one particular textbook as it may not provide all the information needed to succeed and may not address all syllabus content.
- Use psychological language correctly and often.
- There is an expectation that you can understand, explain, and apply your learning. There is also an expectation that you can recount the simpler understandings.
- Ensure you are answering the question being asked and avoid pre-prepared responses.
- Pay attention to the verb of the question and respond accordingly.
- Attempt all question parts.
- If using diagrams in the extended response section, ensure they are referred to in the body of the text.
- Plan your Extended answer responses to maximise marks.

Advice for teachers

- There are varying levels of questioning in all examinations; emphasise the need for students to recall, explain, and apply elements of the syllabus.
- Ensure the correct theorists are referred to, with attention to dates. For instance, Baddley and Hitch (1974) are specified in the syllabus, which does not reference the episodic buffer which is included in a later revision by Baddley (2000).
- Do not rely solely on one textbook; use various resources and textbooks to cover the syllabus.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Research methods (33 Marks)

Section One consisted of two questions covering syllabus content on planning, conducting, processing, and evaluating psychological research. The average of 53.73% was higher than in 2020 (45.39%). Some candidates demonstrated limited or generic understanding of areas of the syllabus content. Research designs and evaluation (particularly sources of error) were areas of weakness identified in this examination.

Section Two: Short answer (101 Marks)

Section Two's mean improved compared to the 2020 paper. While most candidates did well in lower-order questions requiring recall, etc., they struggled with application style questions. Some theories appeared to be superficially understood, and more depth of knowledge is required to be able to apply the theories and research to unknown scenarios or experimental data. Candidates need to be reminded that they need to follow the syllabus as that is what is assessed. In addition, candidates are encouraged to read the question carefully and concisely to formulate their responses.

Section Three: Extended answer (54 Marks)

The mean for Section Three was lower than the 2020 paper. Candidates who did poorly were not coherent in their responses, and their answers did not flow well. This made it difficult to award marks. Candidates should be encouraged to plan their answers and ensure they answer the questions being asked and not to use rote-learned information without applying it to the question or using pre-prepared responses. Stronger candidates used psychological terminology correctly and regularly.