Summary report of the 2019 ATAR course examination: Psychology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number who sat</th>
<th>Number of absentees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2108</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1721</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Examination score distribution—Written

Summary
The mean and minimum and maximum marks all increased marginally compared to the 2018 examination results. Compared to last year, the mean of Section Two decreased slightly, while the mean of Section Three increased.

The examination focussed on areas of the syllabus that were either not covered in recent examinations or done poorly on previous examinations. The number of marks per section closely reflected the weighting for each section.

Attempted by 1949 candidates Mean 52.24% Max 86.92% Min 0.53%

Section means were:
Section One: Research methods Mean 49.88%
Attempted by 1949 candidates Mean 9.98/(20) Max 17.37 Min 0.53
Section Two: Short answer Mean 53.10%
Attempted by 1945 candidates Mean 29.20/(55) Max 50.05 Min 0.55
Section Three: Extended answer Mean 53.24
Attempted by 1921 candidates Mean 13.31/(25) Max 23.66 Min 0.00

General comments
There were no changes in the types or format of questions compared to previous years. The maximum possible mark was achieved for every question of the examination. Questions ranged from recall/definitions through to application, however, candidates seemed to find many of the ‘easier’ questions difficult.
Advice for candidates

- Candidates are reminded that the examinable content of the syllabus is the basis of examination.
- The syllabus is not aligned with one textbook. You will need to explore a number of resources to cover the theorists listed in the syllabus.
- You need to understand, explain and apply your learning.
- Answer the question being asked.
- Attempt all questions.

Advice for teachers

- Use the most up-to-date syllabus.
- Don’t rely on one text, using a range of resources when teaching concepts and theories to help student understanding.
- An examination does not cover all the syllabus.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Research methods (38 Marks)
Section One consisted of three questions that covered planning, conducting, processing, and evaluating psychological research. The mean of 49.88% was marginally higher compared to 2018. Many candidates seemed to lack knowledge around sources of error, conclusions and data collection methods.

Section Two: Short answer (100 Marks)
Strong candidates did well across the section and seemed to understand most concepts. Weaker candidates did well across the section and seemed to understand most concepts. Weaker candidates exhibited a lack of depth, demonstrating a lack of understanding. A number of low-level questions were answered poorly. More demanding questions, however, discriminated between candidates very well.

The Mischel and social-cognitive theory was done very poorly, suggesting a lack of understanding.

Section Three: Extended answer (56 Marks)
Overall, candidates completed this section well, with the highest section mean of the examination. There were less non-attempts compared to 2018.