

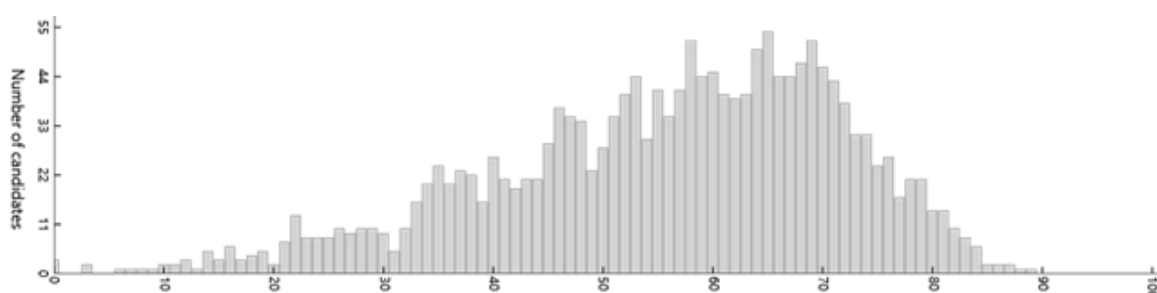


## Summary report of the 2023 ATAR course examination report: Psychology

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2023	1762	35
2022	1700	57
2021	1824	48
2020	1839	49

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



### Summary

The examination followed the design brief, utilising syllabus terminology and key verbs from the *Glossary of key words used in the formulation of questions*. The examination allowed candidates sufficient time to complete it and was fair and accessible to all candidates. A range of verbs was used, allowing candidates to achieve at varying levels of difficulty. The overall mean increased by 4.28% from 2022, with all three sections of the examination having means over 50%.

Attempted by 1759 candidates      Mean 55.68%      Max 88.24%      Min 0.00%

Section means were:

Section One: Research methods	Mean 55.01%		
Attempted by 1756 candidates	Mean 11.00(/20)	Max 19.21	Min 0.00
Section Two: Short answer	Mean 56.64%		
Attempted by 1759 candidates	Mean 31.15(/55)	Max 50.67	Min 0.00
Section Three: Extended answer	Mean 54.11%		
Attempted by 1742 candidates	Mean 13.53(/25)	Max 23.28	Min 0.00

### General comments

Maximum marks were achieved for all questions of the examination, including all components of the Extended answer questions, indicating that the examination was accessible to candidates. Questions allowed for discrimination between candidates and there was a balance of questions from across the syllabus and between Units 3 and 4. Responses indicated that candidates could complete the examination in the given time. Candidates struggled with command words such as 'compare' (which required a similarity and difference) and 'contrast' (which required a response showing how things are different or opposite).

### *Advice for candidates*

- Pay attention to the verb of the question and respond accordingly. Learn the command verbs as defined in the *Glossary of key words used in the formulation of questions*, which is available online through the course page.
- Use syllabus content points as the basis for your revision.
- Know the theorists related to Psychology covered in the syllabus.
- Do not rely on a 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.
- Be aware of the correct spelling for key terms/theorists in the syllabus.
- There is an expectation that you can define, understand, explain, and apply your learning.
- Ensure you are answering the question being asked directly.
- Ensure you are referring to the context or scenario for a question when instructed to.
- Attempt all question parts.
- Plan your Extended answer responses, based on the scaffolded dot points to maximise marks.

### *Advice for teachers*

- Refer to, use, and direct students to the *Glossary of key words used in the formulation of questions*. Provide students with opportunities to practise and understand these verbs within different contexts.
- Ensure students have opportunities to practise applying their knowledge in varying levels of questioning; define, explain, apply and/or create.
- Use various resources (both sources and source type) to ensure students have a strong grasp of syllabus content.
- Theorist focus should be around their work as relevant to the syllabus.
- Be aware that Erikson's stage theory of identity involves crises which can have both positive and negative outcomes.
- Give students practice in applying the findings of studies from the syllabus to other contexts.

## **Comments on specific sections and questions**

### **Section One: Research methods (38 Marks)**

Section One consisted of three questions covering syllabus content on planning, conducting, processing, and evaluating psychological research. The average of 55.01% was marginally lower than in 2022 (55.97%). Maximum marks were achieved on all questions. Some candidates had difficulty applying more complex areas of the syllabus, in particular Question 3 part (b) which focused on practical considerations. Results from Question 3 reduced the mean of Section One quite significantly (down from 63.7% for Questions 1 and 2).

### **Section Two: Short answer (89 Marks)**

Section Two consisted of seven questions, with only Question 8 proving difficult for candidates. The overall mean was significantly higher than for the 2022 examination (increasing by 6.25%). Difficulties were seen in questions using the verbs 'contrast' and 'compare' and there was a clear weakness in knowledge of Erikson's stage theory of identity.

**Section Three: Extended answer (58 Marks)**

Candidates performed marginally better in Question 12 than in Question 11. To achieve full marks, candidates needed to ensure they were following the scaffolded dot points, inclusive of mark allocation. Most responses in both questions were coherent and well thought out. Many responses used psychological terminology where the questions allowed it.