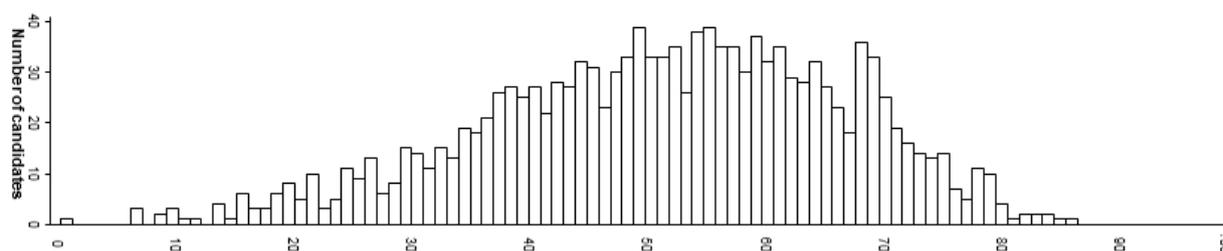




Summary report for candidates on the 2015 WACE examination in Psychology Stage 3

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2015	1389	23
2014	837	18
2013	952	13

Examination score distribution



Summary

The examination had an overall mean of 52.04% which is five per cent lower than the 2014 examination. Candidates' scores for the examination ranged from 0.57% to 86.75%.

Section means were:

Section One: Research methods	Mean 11.55(/20)	Max 19.43	Min 0.57
Section Two: Short answer	Mean 30.30(/55)	Max 51.00	Min 1.60
Section Three: Extended answer	Mean 10.46(/25)	Max 21.57	Min 0.00

The mean for all three sections of the examination were lower than in 2014 – 5% for Section One, 7% for Section Two and 4% for Section Three. These outcomes are disappointing because each year the examination panel addresses feedback from the previous examination with the aim of further improving the mean mark. Markers and examiners have great concern that many candidates appear to have significant gaps in their knowledge of the syllabus and either leave questions unanswered or write a response based on general knowledge.

The examination complied with the design brief and there were no changes in the types or format of questions included compared to previous years. The paper consisted of a total of 200 marks across the three sections and questions covered a broad range of the syllabus to provide candidates with the best opportunity to demonstrate the breadth, as well as depth, of their understanding. Some areas of the syllabus were deliberately resampled to see if there was an improvement in candidates' performance in these areas. It was apparent that some candidates had prepared responses to previous examination questions and provided those in the examination, even though the question was different. There are several areas in which fundamental misconceptions or incorrect responses continue to be demonstrated by candidates.

Feedback to date indicates that a substantial proportion of the questions in the examination relied on rote memory and some could be answered with general knowledge or knowledge from other courses. Commendations go to the candidates who were well prepared for the examination and demonstrated comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the syllabus through their accurate responses, use of psychological terminology, their ability to accurately apply psychological knowledge to real-world behaviour, and their application of psychological theories and research to support their responses.

General comments

Advice for candidates

- You are reminded that it is essential to prepare for the examination by having an understanding of content related to all components of the syllabus.
- You must be able to demonstrate your understanding through your response to novel questions rather than writing prepared responses to previous examination questions. Please read questions carefully to ensure that your response is aligned with what is being asked.
- Where a question asks you to respond to a specific scenario, please make sure that your response is contextualised to that scenario.
- Psychology is an evidence-based discipline and it is essential to have knowledge of a range of psychological research examples to cite as support for your statements in Section Three: Extended answer.
- Please ensure that you pay attention to correct spelling of psychological terms as in some cases incorrect spelling completely changes the word and these responses are unable to be awarded marks.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Written examination

Section One: Research methods

Attempted by 1388 Candidates

Mean 11.55(/20) Max 19.43 Min 0.57

Questions in this section required candidates to demonstrate knowledge and application of research methods in psychology. Questions related to the interpretation of statistical data, designing and conducting research and ethical and professional conduct in research.

Section Two: Short answer

Attempted by 1388 Candidates

Mean 30.30(/55) Max 51.00 Min 1.60

This section consisted of eight questions, each of which had multiple sub-parts. Questions were designed to assess knowledge as well as the application of knowledge to specific examples.

Section Three: Extended answer

Attempted by 1357 Candidates

Mean 10.46(/25) Max 21.57 Min 0.00

Despite the format of questions in this section being consistent with those in previous examinations and the need for candidates to cite examples of psychological theories and research to support their responses being stated in the examination design brief and in previous examination reports, it is disappointing that the average mark for this section still has not reached 50%. Some candidates impressed as making a good attempt to cover each aspect of the question and to demonstrate their knowledge, whilst a significant number of candidates provided no, or an extremely brief and generalised, response.