

Post-16 Curriculum - Psychology

Subject Curriculum Overview

Subject	Psychology
Qualification / Specification	A Level
Awarding Body	EDUQAS
Level	3
Curriculum Lead	Nick Binfield
Teaching Staff	Vicky Thomas Rob Maddox
Guided Learning Hours	360
Year(s) Delivered	12 & 13
Last Review Date	June 2026
Next Review Date	June 2037

1. Curriculum Intent

The purpose of Eduqas A Level Psychology is to develop learners' understanding of human behaviour, mental processes, and psychological theory through the scientific study of individuals and groups. The subject encourages students to think critically about research, evidence, and real-world applications of psychology. It aims to build analytical, evaluative, and communication skills while increasing awareness of issues such as mental health, social influence, development, and criminal behaviour. Psychology also promotes curiosity about human experience and helps learners understand themselves and others within wider social contexts.

The curriculum provides a strong foundation for progression into higher education, apprenticeships, and employment. Students develop transferable skills including critical thinking, data analysis, essay writing, research methods, problem solving, and independent learning. These skills support progression into degree courses such as psychology, sociology, criminology, education, health sciences, business, law, and social work. The subject also prepares learners for careers in areas including clinical psychology, counselling, teaching, human resources, healthcare, policing, marketing, and research. The curriculum's emphasis on scientific investigation and evidence-based reasoning supports progression into both academic and vocational pathways.

Eduqas A Level Psychology aligns with university expectations by developing academic writing, research skills, statistical interpretation, and the ability to evaluate evidence critically. Employers value the subject because learners gain communication, teamwork, analytical thinking, and interpersonal understanding. The curriculum includes contemporary psychological issues and applications, helping students connect theory to real-life contexts such as mental health, consumer behaviour, and criminal psychology. The scientific and ethical aspects of the course also prepare learners for industries that require evidence-based decision making, empathy, professionalism, and strong problem-solving abilities.

Success in A Level Psychology is demonstrated through learners becoming confident, reflective, and independent thinkers who can apply psychological knowledge to unfamiliar situations. Successful learners can analyse and evaluate theories and research, construct well-supported arguments, interpret data accurately, and communicate ideas clearly using subject terminology. Beyond examination outcomes, success also includes increased resilience, curiosity, and awareness of human behaviour, enabling students to progress confidently into higher education, employment, or further training. Learners should leave the course with both academic confidence and transferable life skills that support future success.

2. Foundational Knowledge

Area	Essential Knowledge / Skills	Why It Matters
Research Methods	Understanding experimental design, observations, questionnaires, correlations, ethical considerations, data analysis, reliability and validity. Ability to interpret graphs, statistics, and psychological evidence.	Forms the scientific foundation of psychology and enables learners to critically evaluate research and make evidence-based conclusions. Supports progression to higher education and research-focused careers.
Psychological Approaches	Knowledge of key approaches including behaviourist, cognitive, biological, psychodynamic, and positive psychology. Ability to compare explanations of behaviour.	Helps learners understand different perspectives on human behaviour and develops critical thinking through comparison and evaluation of theories.
Memory	Understanding models of memory, eyewitness testimony, reconstructive memory, and factors affecting recall and accuracy.	Encourages learners to apply psychology to real-world issues such as criminal investigations and reliability of evidence.

Social Psychology	Understanding obedience, conformity, social influence, prejudice, and group behaviour. Skills in analysing social research and ethical implications	Helps learners understand behaviour within society and develops awareness of how individuals are influenced by others and wider social contexts.
Developmental Psychology	Knowledge of attachment, cognitive development, and developmental theories across the lifespan.	Supports understanding of human growth, relationships, education, and wellbeing throughout life.
Biological Psychology	Understanding the role of the brain, nervous system, hormones, genetics, and biological processes in behaviour.	Provides scientific understanding of behaviour and links psychology to health sciences and neuroscience.
Psychopathology and Mental Health	Knowledge of explanations and treatments for psychological disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, or phobias. Ability to evaluate therapies and research evidence.	Promotes understanding of mental health issues, reduces stigma, and connects psychology to healthcare and wellbeing professions.
Criminology and Applied Psychology	Understanding theories of criminal behaviour, offender profiling, rehabilitation, and real-world applications of psychology.	Demonstrates how psychology can be used to address social problems and informs careers in law, policing, and criminal justice.
Critical Thinking and Evaluation	Ability to analyse strengths and weaknesses of theories and studies, identify bias, and construct balanced arguments using evidence.	Develops independent learners who can question information critically and communicate reasoned judgments effectively.
Essay Writing and Communication	Writing structured extended responses using psychological terminology, evidence, and evaluation.	Essential for examination success, university study, and professional communication skills valued by employers.
Data Handling and Interpretation	Interpreting quantitative and qualitative data, using basic statistical techniques, and drawing conclusions from evidence.	Supports scientific literacy and transferable analytical skills needed in higher education and many careers.
Positive Psychology	Understanding the concept of wellbeing and how factors such as positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement contribute to it.	This allows psychologists to identify ways to improve quality of life and mental health, helping individuals and communities flourish rather than simply treating mental illness.
Stress	Understanding what stress is and recognising the difference between a stressor (the cause) and the stress response (the reaction).	This provides the basic knowledge needed to understand theories of stress, its effects on

		physical and mental health, and ways to manage or reduce stress.
Schizophrenia	Understanding what schizophrenia is, including its main symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, and disorganised thinking.	This provides the basic knowledge needed to understand explanations of schizophrenia, how it is diagnosed, and the treatments used to manage the disorder.

3. Powerful Knowledge

Powerful Knowledge Area	Why It Matters	Evidence of Understanding
Memory	Memory is reconstructive and can be distorted by leading questions and misinformation, shown through research by Elizabeth Loftus.	Challenges everyday assumptions about memory accuracy and helps learners understand the implications for criminal justice and eyewitness testimony.
Social Psychology	People may obey authority figures even when actions conflict with personal morals, demonstrated in studies by Stanley Milgram.	Helps learners understand the power of social influence and its relevance to historical events, organisations, and human behaviour.
Behaviourist Approach	Behaviour can be learned through conditioning, as shown in classical conditioning research by Ivan Pavlov.	Explains how behaviours develop and can be modified, influencing education, therapy, and behaviour management.
Biological Approach	Behaviour and mental processes are influenced by brain structure, neurotransmitters, hormones, and genetics.	Encourages scientific understanding of behaviour and links psychology to medicine, neuroscience, and mental health treatment.
Psychopathology	Mental disorders can be explained and treated using psychological and biological approaches, including therapies such as CBT.	Reduces stigma around mental health and promotes evidence-based understanding of psychological disorders and treatment.
Developmental Psychology	Early attachment relationships influence later emotional and social development, based on theories by John Bowlby.	Helps learners understand the importance of early experiences and informs parenting, education, and childcare practices.
Research Methodology	Psychological knowledge must be tested scientifically using valid, reliable, and ethical research methods.	Develops critical thinking and scientific literacy, enabling learners to evaluate evidence rather than rely on opinion or assumption.
Criminal Psychology	Criminal behaviour may result from social, cognitive, and biological influences rather than simply “bad choices.”	Encourages deeper understanding of crime, rehabilitation, and the role of psychological theory in justice systems.
Positive Psychology	Wellbeing and happiness can be developed through positive experiences, resilience, and mindset.	Supports learners’ understanding of mental wellbeing and practical ways to improve quality of life and resilience.

4. Curriculum Implementation

Term / Unit	Key Content	Foundational Knowledge	Powerful Knowledge	Assessment Opportunities
Year 12				
Autumn Term 1	Psychodynamic Approach and Research Methodology	Knowledge of key approaches including behaviourist, cognitive, biological, psychodynamic, and positive psychology. Ability to compare explanations of behaviour.	Knowing how the unconscious mind uses defence mechanisms like projection or displacement. This knowledge is powerful because it changes how you see the world. It is not just a fact you memorize for a test. It gives you a tool to understand real human behavior.	End of Unit Assessment
Autumn Term 2	Behaviourist Approach and Research Methodology	Knowledge of key approaches including behaviourist, cognitive, biological, psychodynamic, and positive psychology. Ability to compare explanations of behaviour.	Behaviour can be learned through conditioning, as shown in classical conditioning research by Ivan Pavlov.	End of Unit Assessment
Spring Term 1	Cognitive Approach and Research Methodology	Knowledge of attachment, cognitive development, and developmental theories across the lifespan.	Powerful knowledge in the cognitive approach is the idea that behaviour can be understood through the scientific study of mental processes such as thinking, perception, and decision-making. This knowledge goes beyond everyday assumptions and provides evidence-based explanations of human behaviour.	End of Unit Assessment
Spring Term 2	Biological Approach and	Understanding the role of the brain, nervous system, hormones,	Behaviour and mental processes are influenced by brain structure,	End of Unit Assessment

	Research Methodology	genetics, and biological processes in behaviour.	neurotransmitters, hormones, and genetics.	
Summer Term 1	Positive Approach and Research Methodology	Understanding the concept of wellbeing and how factors such as positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement contribute to it.	Wellbeing and happiness can be developed through positive experiences, resilience, and mindset.	End of Unit Assessment
Summer Term 2	Personal Investigations	Personal investigations involve using psychological research methods to design, carry out, analyse, and evaluate a study while following ethical guidelines.	A strong personal investigation shows understanding of how methodological choices, ethical considerations, and data analysis affect the validity, reliability, and usefulness of psychological research and its conclusions.	Mock Exam and end of unit assessment.
Year 13				
Autumn Term 1	Stress and Schizophrenia	This provides the basic knowledge needed to understand theories of stress, its effects on physical and mental health, and ways to manage or reduce stress. Understanding what schizophrenia is, including its main symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, and disorganised thinking.	Research into stress and schizophrenia shows that environmental stressors may trigger schizophrenia in people with a biological vulnerability, supporting the diathesis–stress model. This is powerful knowledge because it links biological and environmental explanations together and has important implications for treatment, such as combining medication with psychological therapies.	End of unit assessment

Autumn Term 2	Controversies in Psychology	The basic psychological facts, theories, studies, definitions, and concepts you need to accurately describe a controversy in Eduqas A Level Psychology.	The deeper evaluative understanding that allows you to apply, analyse, make synoptic links, judge implications, and form balanced conclusions about psychological controversies.	Mock Exam
Spring Term 1	Controversies and Criminal Behaviours	Criminal behaviour can be explained using biological, cognitive, and learning theories, alongside research into offending and anti-social behaviour.	Different explanations of criminal behaviour interact with each other, showing that offending is influenced by both biological and environmental factors, which has important implications for rehabilitation, punishment, and crime prevention.	Mock Exam
Spring Term 2	Personal Investigations	Personal investigations involve using psychological research methods to design, carry out, analyse, and evaluate a study while following ethical guidelines.	A strong personal investigation shows understanding of how methodological choices, ethical considerations, and data analysis affect the validity, reliability, and usefulness of psychological research and its conclusions.	End of unit assessment
Summer Term 1	Revision			
Summer Term 2				

5. Assessment Strategy

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency
Diagnostic	To review and assess student understanding of key topics and content with a significant focus on developing exam techniques.	At the end of each core unit of completion.
Formative	Formative assessment is conducted in class through verbal discussion with students and review of homework activities. The aim is to identify areas for development in student subject knowledge and exam technique.	On-going throughout the duration of the A Level guided learning hours.
Summative	Summative assessment is conducted at three distinct points during the programme of study. Mock exams in Year 12 and two in Year 13 provide opportunities to gain a thorough understanding of individual student	Once in Year 12 Twice in Year 13 covering all three examined components of the EDUQAS A level in Psychology; Paper C1

	knowledge and technique. Individual feedback is provided to each student to identify their areas for development.	Psychology Past to Present Paper C2 Psychology: Investigating Behaviour Paper C3 Psychology: Implications in the Real World
Synoptic	A02 questions on application of Psychological knowledge are regularly addressed through classroom teaching and assessment opportunities. This allows students to apply their knowledge to unique individual scenarios as detailed in the specification and through examined content.	On-going