

Switching Guide

International AS and A-level

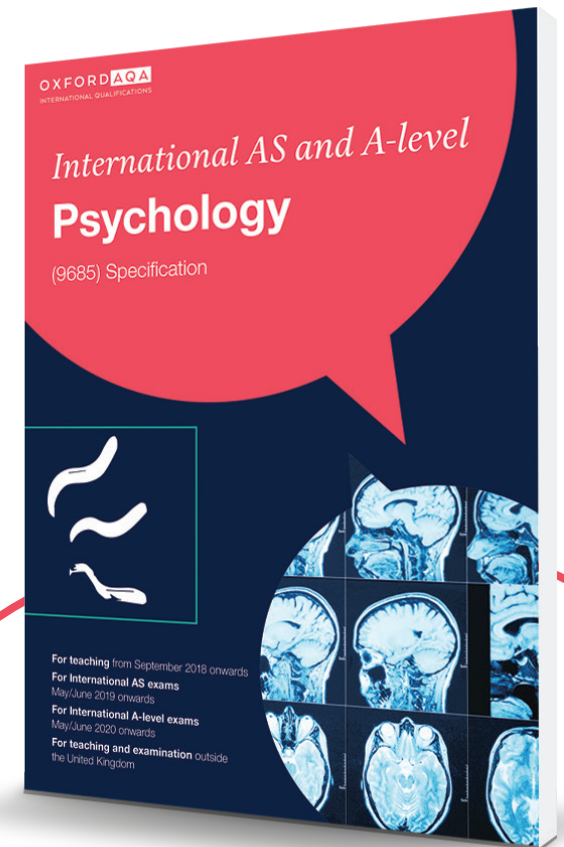
Psychology

(9685)

**Switching from Pearson Edexcel or
Cambridge International to
OxfordAQA International Qualifications**

oxfordaqa.com

OXFORDAQA
INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



At OxfordAQA
we put fairness first

Switching to OxfordAQA International AS and A-level Psychology (9685)

The **OxfordAQA International AS and A-level Psychology** specification is based on the best of the AQA specification, with an emphasis on psychological ideas, concepts and research that have universal relevance to make it more appropriate for international schools.

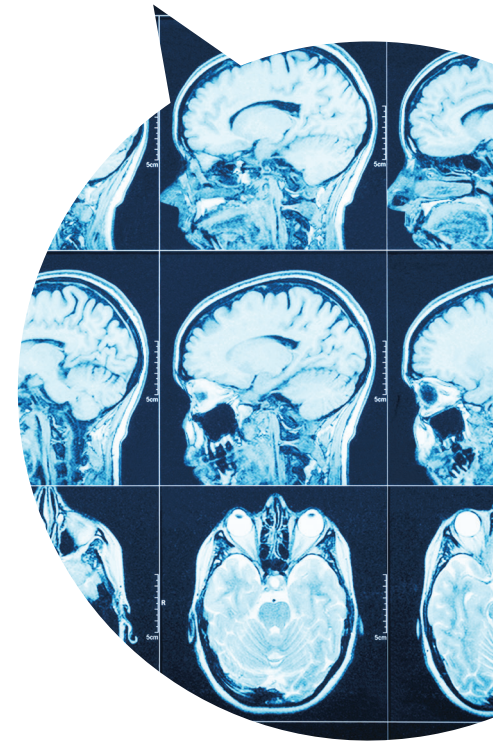
Teachers will find the specification an ideal vehicle to make International AS and A-level Psychology enjoyable and provide the right level of challenge.

It is an accessible, topic-based approach combining theory and application that provides a stimulating, effective introduction to psychology, and develops skills valued by universities and employers such as critical analysis and independent thinking.

Key features:

- Based on the UK market-leading AQA A-level taken by 80% of Psychology students in England.
- Topics selected for their engaging content and universal relevance to human experience in a global context, for example, the psychology of sleep and the psychology of the workplace.
- A focus on data handling and analysis at A2 helps students develop transferable scientific working skills.

The international exam board *that puts fairness first*



Topic by topic comparison

OxfordAQA specification (9685)	Pearson Edexcel specification (XPS01 and YPS01)	Cambridge International specification (9990)
Overall structure		
<p>Split into four units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory topics in psychology: Memory, Social psychology, Psychopathology. • Biopsychology, Development and Research Methods 1. • Advanced topics: Sleep, Schizophrenia and Research Methods 2. • Approaches and applications: Approaches, issues and debates in psychology, Applied psychology of work. 	<p>Split into four units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and cognitive psychology, with research methods and practical investigation. • Biological psychology, learning theories and development, with research methods and practical investigation. • Applications of psychology (development and criminological psychology OR health psychology) with research methods. • Clinical psychology and psychological skills. 	<p>Split into three themes, five areas of core content and five specialist choices</p> <p>With an emphasis on core studies, assessed in three units:</p> <p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology • Approaches and perspectives • Issues and debates. <p>Core content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive psychology • Social psychology • Developmental psychology • Physiological psychology • The psychology of individual differences. <p>Specialist choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology and education • Psychology and health • Psychology and environment • Psychology and abnormality • Psychology and organisations.

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Assessment structure		
<p>AS-level</p> <p>Two equally weighted AS exams, each 90 minutes in length. In each exam students are assessed on three topics.</p> <p>A-level</p> <p>Two equally weighted A-level exams, each 90 minutes in length. In each exam students are assessed on three topics.</p> <p>Total exam time: 6 hours.</p> <p>AS exams are worth 40% of the full A-level.</p> <p>All content is compulsory.</p>	<p>AS-level</p> <p>Two AS exams: Paper 1 is worth 40% of the AS qualification, Paper 2 is worth 60% of the AS qualification. Paper 1 is 90 minutes. Paper 2 is 120 minutes. In each exam students are assessed on three topics.</p> <p>A-level</p> <p>Two A-level exams: Paper 3 is worth 20% of the A-level, Paper 4 is worth 30% of the A-level. Paper 3 is 90 minutes. Paper 4 is 2 hours.</p> <p>Total exam time: 7 hours.</p> <p>AS exams are worth 50% of the full A-level.</p> <p>Content of three units is compulsory, with the choice of one option from two in Unit 3.</p>	<p>AS-level</p> <p>Two equally weighted AS exams, each 90 minutes in length. In each exam students are assessed on core studies and themes.</p> <p>A-level</p> <p>One A-level exam of 3 hours duration. In this exam students are assessed on their two chosen options.</p> <p>Total exam time: 6 hours.</p> <p>AS exams are worth 50% of the full A-level.</p> <p>AS content is compulsory. At A-level, students have a choice of two options from five.</p>
No practical work is prescribed or assessed.	For units 1, 2, 3, and 4, design, conduct, analysis and reporting of specific practical work is prescribed on the specification. Questions on this practical work appear on exam papers but the work is not submitted for external assessment.	No practical work is prescribed or assessed.
<p>General emphasis: A topic based approach covering theory and research in core areas of psychology. Research methods assessed in papers 2 and 3. Assessment of knowledge and understanding of inferential statistics at A-level only.</p>	<p>General emphasis: A topic based approach covering theory and research in core areas of psychology plus focus on differences between classic and contemporary research studies. Research methods assessed in all papers. Assessment of inferential statistics, including calculation in exams, at both AS and A-level.</p>	<p>General emphasis: At AS, a depth approach with focus on detailed analysis of named research studies plus assessment of themes; at A-level, a breadth approach with focus on less detailed knowledge of named research studies plus assessment of themes and general theory. Research methods assessed in all papers. No assessment of inferential statistics.</p>

OxfordAQA specification (9685)	Pearson Edexcel specification (XPS01 and YPS01)	Cambridge International specification (9990)
Content	Coverage	Coverage
3.1.1 Memory	<p>This is covered in Unit 1 of the Edexcel specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA includes types of long-term memory and eyewitness testimony. • Edexcel includes reconstructive memory, comparison of specific classic and contemporary studies elements of research methods and statistics, and stipulates the design, conduct and reporting of a practical experiment into memory to include both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis (Wilcoxon test). 	<p>This is represented in 6.2 of the Cambridge International specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA takes a topic based approach covering theories of memory, eyewitness testimony and relevant research. • Cambridge International focuses on the detail of one study: Loftus and Pickrell (false memory).
3.1.2 Social psychology	<p>This is covered in Unit 1 of the Edexcel specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA includes types of long-term memory and eyewitness testimony. • Edexcel includes reconstructive memory, comparison of specific classic and contemporary studies elements of research methods and statistics, and stipulates the design, conduct and reporting of a practical experiment into memory to include both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis (Wilcoxon test). 	<p>This is represented in 6.2 of the Cambridge International specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA takes a topic based approach covering key concepts, theory and research into conformity and obedience. • Cambridge International focuses on the detail of four studies: Milgram (obedience); Haney et al (prison study); Piliavin et al (bystander effect); Tajfel (intergroup discrimination).

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3.1.3 Psychopathology	<p>This is covered in Unit 1 of the Edexcel specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At AS, OxfordAQA focuses on an introductory overview of psychopathology which includes definitions, plus explanations and treatments of phobias and depression. • Edexcel does not cover Psychopathology at AS. At A-level, Edexcel focuses on schizophrenia and either depression of anorexia nervosa, and includes classification systems. Edexcel also includes elements of research methods, comparison of specific classic and contemporary studies, and stipulates the design, conduct and reporting of a practical study into mental health to include content analysis. 	<p>This is represented at AS level in 6.2 and at A-level in 6.3 of the Cambridge International specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At AS, OxfordAQA focuses on an introductory overview of psychopathology which includes definitions, plus explanations and treatments of phobias and depression. • At AS, Cambridge International students sample two relevant studies, at A-level, students can choose to study Psychology and abnormality but this is optional. • At AS, for Cambridge International, psychopathology is represented in studies by Rosenhan (psychiatric diagnosis), Thigpen and Checkley (multiple personality). • At A-level, for Cambridge International, students can choose the option Psychology and abnormality which covers depression and phobias (as on the OxfordAQA AS specification) but also includes schizophrenia, addiction and obsessive compulsive disorder.
3.2.1 Biopsychology	<p>This is covered in Unit 2 of the Edexcel specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edexcel includes body rhythms. For OxfordAQA this appears at A-level in the topic Psychology of sleep. • Edexcel includes a specific application to aggression. • OxfordAQA refers to general activity of endocrine system and role of adrenaline. • Edexcel also includes elements of research methods, comparison of specific classic and contemporary studies, and stipulates the design, conduct and reporting of a correlational study into either aggression or body rhythms, to include both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis (Spearman's test). 	<p>This is represented in 6.2 of the Cambridge International specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA takes a topic based approach covering key biological structures and functions. • Cambridge International focuses on the detail of four studies: Schachter and Singer (emotional states); Dement and Kleitman (rapid eye movement); Maguire et al (hippocampus and memory); Dematte et al (olfactory cues).

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3.2.2 Cognitive development	<p>This is covered in Unit 3 of the Edexcel specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA introduces developmental psychology at AS with the focus on cognitive development. • For Edexcel, developmental psychology is introduced in year two, where it also includes attachment, deprivation and privation, and social and emotional development. • Edexcel also includes elements of research methods and comparison of specific classic and contemporary studies. 	<p>This is represented in 6.2 of the Cambridge International specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA takes a topic based approach covering key concepts, theory and research into cognitive development. • Cambridge International focuses on the detail of four developmental studies: Bandura et al (modelling aggressive); Freud (Little Hans); Langlois et al (facial preference in infants); Nelson (moral dilemmas).
3.2.3 Research methods 1	<p>This is covered in Units 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Edexcel specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For OxfordAQA, at AS, knowledge of research methods and data analysis is taught and assessed solely in Paper 2. • For Edexcel, at AS, knowledge of research methods and data analysis is included in topic content and is assessed in both AS papers. Coverage of research methods also takes place during design, conduct, analysis and reporting of the prescribed research studies in Units 1 and 2, although the activities themselves are not assessed. • OxfordAQA does not include inferential statistics at AS. • Edexcel does include inferential statistics at AS. 	<p>This is covered in the Cambridge International specification in Section 6.1 under Methodology.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For OxfordAQA the specified research methods content is explicitly listed in the bullet points under 3.2.3. • For Cambridge International the methodological content to be assessed is not listed in a separate section of the specification, but emerges through the coverage of each core study.

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3.3.1 Psychology of sleep	Minimally represented in Unit 2 of the Edexcel specification. Key differences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA includes sleep as a whole topic. • Edexcel does not cover sleep except for body rhythms. 	Minimally represented in 6.2 of the Cambridge International specification under Physiological psychology. Key differences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA includes sleep as a whole topic. • Cambridge International includes detail of one study, Dement and Kleitman (rapid eye movement during sleep).
3.3.2 Schizophrenia	This is covered in Unit 4 of the Edexcel specification. Key differences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA covers schizophrenia in greater detail to include cognitive explanations and therapies. • Edexcel includes other content alongside schizophrenia: definitions of abnormality; classification systems; either depression OR anorexia nervosa. • Edexcel also includes elements of research methods, comparison of specific classic and contemporary studies and stipulates the design, conduct, analysis and reporting of a content analysis into mental health. 	This is covered in 6.3 of the Cambridge International specification in the option, Psychology and abnormality. Key differences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compulsory topic for OxfordAQA. • Part of the abnormality option for Cambridge International. This option also includes definitions of abnormality (covered at AS in OxfordAQA), abnormal affect/depression (covered at AS in OxfordAQA), addiction, phobias (covered at AS in OxfordAQA), and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). • Greater emphasis on named studies in Cambridge International.

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3.3.3 Research methods 2	<p>This is covered in Units 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Edexcel specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA, the research methods content of Paper 3 builds on the introduction to research methods introduced in Paper 2. • For OxfordAQA, knowledge of research methods and data analysis is taught and assessed solely in Papers 2 (AS) and 3 (A-level). • For Edexcel, knowledge of research methods and data analysis is included in topic content and is assessed in all papers. Coverage of research methods also takes place during design, conduct, analysis and reporting of the prescribed research studies, although the activities themselves are not assessed. • For Edexcel, research methods form a large component of the assessment in Paper 4. • OxfordAQA does not require calculation of inferential tests in exams. • Edexcel does require calculation of inferential tests in exams. • Greater emphasis on mathematical skills and calculation in Edexcel exams.. 	<p>This is covered in the Cambridge International specification in Section 6.1 under Methodology.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For OxfordAQA the specified research methods content is explicitly listed in the bullet points under 3.3.3. • For Cambridge International the methodological content to be assessed is not listed in a separate section of the specification, but emerges through the coverage of each core study. • Cambridge International requires no knowledge or understanding of inferential statistics.

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3.4.1 Scientific approaches in psychology	<p>This is covered in Unit 2 (Learning theories) of the Edexcel specification.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA includes the cognitive and biological approaches to explaining behaviour. • Edexcel includes the Freud’s psychosexual stages of development and psychoanalysis. • Edexcel also includes elements of research methods, comparison of specific classic and contemporary studies, and stipulates the design, conduct, analysis and reporting of two observations, to include Chi-square analysis. 	<p>This is covered in the Cambridge International specification in Section 6.1 under Approaches and perspectives.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For OxfordAQA the specified approaches content is explicitly listed in the bullet points under 3.4.1. • For Cambridge International the approaches content to be assessed is not listed in a separate section of the specification, but emerges through the coverage of relevant core studies and options in 6.3. • Note that the Approaches content is more prevalent in some options than others, for example, they are referred to explicitly in the Psychology and education and Psychology and abnormality options, but not in others.
3.4.2 Issues and debates in psychology	<p>Some aspects are covered in Unit 4 of the Edexcel specification under Psychological skills.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxfordAQA have a separate topic for key issues and debates. • Edexcel refer to ‘objectivity’ in all Units and includes reductionism v holism and psychology and science in Unit 4 with the content on research methods. • Edexcel does not include reference to determinism and the nature-nurture debate. 	<p>This is referred to in the Cambridge International specification in Section 6.1 under Issues and debates.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For OxfordAQA, the issues and debates content is specified and explicitly listed in the bullet points under 3.4.2. • For Cambridge International, issues and debates appear to be non-specific and are not listed in a separate section of the specification. Presumably these emerge through the coverage of relevant core studies and Options in 6.3. • Note that no specific reference to issues and debates (as delineated in the OxfordAQA specification) could be identified in any of the specification content.

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3.4.3 Applied psychology: Work and the individual	Not represented in the Edexcel specification.	<p>Minor content in common with Cambridge International 6.3 option Psychology and organisations.</p> <p>Both OxfordAQA and Cambridge International include a point on job motivation and satisfaction and both include reference to groupthink.</p> <p>Key differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For OxfordAQA, the focus is on factors affecting the individual in a work environment, eg social processes, communication, motivation and stress. • For Cambridge International, the focus is on areas that have traditionally been seen as occupational or workplace psychology, including selection processes and leadership.
	Other content not noted elsewhere	
Not covered in OxfordAQA.	Edexcel has Criminological psychology as an option in Unit 3.	Not covered in Cambridge International.
Not covered in OxfordAQA.	Edexcel has Health psychology as an option in Unit 3.	Cambridge International has Psychology and health as an option in 6.3.
Not covered in OxfordAQA.	Not covered in Edexcel.	Cambridge International has Psychology and the environment as an option in 6.3.
Not covered in OxfordAQA.	Edexcel includes Appendix D: Mathematical skills with a statement that at least 10% of the assessment for the qualification will focus on mathematical skills at Level 2 or above.	Not included in Cambridge International.
Not covered in OxfordAQA.	Edexcel includes Appendix E: formulae for standard deviation, Spearman's test, Chi-squared test and Wilcoxon test. Appendix E also includes statistical tables for Spearman's test, Chi-squared test and Wilcoxon test.	Not included in Cambridge International.

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Thank you for your interest in OxfordAQA, the international exam board that puts fairness first.

Benchmarked to UK standards, our exams only ever test subject ability, not language skills or cultural knowledge.

This gives every student the best possible chance to show what they can do and get the results they deserve.



Get in touch

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