

OxfordAQA

International GCSE

Psychology (9218)

Switching guide

Switching from AQA Examinations to OxfordAQA Examinations

For this new International GCSE Psychology specification, Oxford AQA Exams have blended the best of the AQA specification, which is one of the most popular specifications in England, with some new ideas, new concepts and new approaches to learning to make it more appropriate for international schools.

Teachers will find the specification an ideal vehicle to make International GCSE Psychology enjoyable and provide the right level of challenge. It allows a freedom to teach psychology in a variety of ways and incorporates core areas of psychological theory and research, enabling a broad understanding of the scope of psychological enquiry. Carefully chosen topics such as memory and communication ensure that the course content is relevant to people from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The research skills and data handling element will enable students to develop competence and confidence in important transferable practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills.

It has been put together following consultation with teachers who will see this as the ideal choice for students who want to study and excel in psychology at GCSE and beyond.

Topic by topic comparison

OxfordAQA International Exam specification (9218)	AQA specification (8182)
<p>Split into two units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognition and behaviour: Memory, Perception, Biopsychology and Research methods. • Social context and behaviour: Communication, Social influence, Mental health and Research methods. <p>Assessment structure: Two equally weighted examinations, each 2 hours in length. In each examination students are assessed on four topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total examination time: 4 hours. • Each exam is worth 50% of the full GCSE. • 100 marks available on each paper – 25 for each topic. • All content is compulsory. • Multiple choice, structured, short answer and extended writing responses. • No practical work is prescribed or assessed. <p>Linear qualification: both examinations to be completed at the end of the course and in the same series. 2 exams sessions: May/June and November</p> <p>General emphasis:</p> <p>A topic-based approach covering theory and research in core areas of psychology. Research methods assessed in both examination papers.</p>	<p>Split into two units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognition and behaviour: Memory, Perception, Development and Research methods. • Social context and behaviour: Social influence, Language, thought and communication, Brain and neuropsychology, and Psychological problems. <p>Assessment structure: Two equally weighted examinations, each 1 hour 45 minutes in length. In each examination students are assessed on the four topics, but are also expected to draw on their knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study in each examination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total examination time: 3 hours 30 minutes. • Each exam is worth 50% of the full GCSE. • 100 marks available on each paper – 25 for each topic. • All content is compulsory. • Multiple choice, short answer and extended writing responses. • No practical work is prescribed or assessed. <p>Linear qualification: both examinations to be completed at the end of the course and in the same series. 1 exam session: May/June</p> <p>General emphasis:</p> <p>A topic-based approach covering theory and research in core areas of psychology. Research methods assessed in both examination papers.</p>

Content and coverage

3.1.1 Memory

This is covered in unit 1 in both specifications.

Key differences:

- OxfordAQA International includes the working memory model: central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad and episodic buffer. It also includes features of each component of the working memory model: coding and capacity.
- OxfordAQA International includes dual processing tasks as investigated by Baddeley and Hitch.

3.1.2 Perception

This is covered in unit 1 in both specifications.

Key differences:

- OxfordAQA International includes two additional named studies of factors affecting perception: the investigations of Nisbett and Miyamoto on culture and perception, and Kunst-Wilson and Zajonc on emotion and perception.

3.1.3 Biopsychology

This is covered in unit 2 in the AQA specification. This topic is called Brain and neuropsychology in the AQA GCSE specification.

Key differences:

- OxfordAQA International includes the role of the endocrine system: the function of glands and hormones.
- OxfordAQA International includes Broca's area and Wernicke's area as named language areas under localisation of function in the brain.

3.1.4 Research methods

This is covered in unit 1 and unit 2 in both specifications.

For OxfordAQA international, it is topic 4 on unit 1 and topic 8 on unit 2. The same material is covered in each unit.

In the AQA specification, it is topic 4 on unit 1, and not listed as a main topic in unit 2. However, students are expected to show their knowledge and understanding of research methods in both examinations.

Key differences:

- OxfordAQA International refers to methods that produce quantitative and/or qualitative data under designing research. It also refers to the reliability and/or validity of quantitative and qualitative data. Reference to quantitative and qualitative methods has been removed.

3.1.4.1 Data handling

This is covered in unit 1 and unit 2 in both specifications.

Key differences:

- AQA includes standard form.

3.2.1 Communication

This is covered in unit 2 in both specifications. This topic is called Language, thought and communication in the AQA GCSE specification.

Both specifications cover the same content.

3.2.2 Social influence

This is covered in unit 2 in both specifications.

Key differences:

- OxfordAQA International refers to Conformity as investigated by Asch. This is a change of phrase from the AQA specification. The Asch study is a named study in both specifications.
- OxfordAQA International includes Obedience as investigated by Milgram. The AQA specification does not include Milgram as a named study.
- OxfordAQA International specifies studies of bystander behaviour, and includes two additional named studies – Latane and Darley’s smoke study, and Levine’s football supporter study.

3.2.3 Mental health

This is covered in unit 2 in both specifications. This topic is called Psychological problems in the AQA specification. This is where there are the most differences between the AQA specification and the OxfordAQA International specification.

AQA covers depression and addiction, OxfordAQA International covers obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Key differences:

- AQA includes characteristics of clinical depression, and the differences between unipolar depression, bipolar depression and sadness.
- AQA includes the use of International Classification of Diseases in diagnosing unipolar depression, the number and severity of symptoms including low mood, reduced energy levels, changes in sleep patterns and appetite levels, and decrease in self-confidence.
- AQA also includes biological and psychological explanations for depression, and covers interventions and therapies for depression including medications and CBT. Wiles’ study of the effectiveness of CBT is a named key study.
- OxfordAQA international includes the use of the International Classification of Diseases in diagnosing obsessive-compulsive disorder. It also covers characteristics of obsessions and compulsions and the diagnostic criteria.

- OxfordAQA international covers four theories of obsessive-compulsive disorder: biological explanation, genetic vulnerability explanation, psychological explanation, and the cognitive explanation. It also covers behaviour therapy for obsessive-compulsive disorder.
- OxfordAQA International includes a named study for the effectiveness of cognitive behaviour therapy for obsessive-compulsive disorder – Kearns’s study.
- AQA covers the difference between addiction/dependence and substance misuse/abuse. It also covers the use of International Classification of Diseases in diagnosing addiction (dependence syndrome), including a strong desire to use substance(s) despite harmful consequences, difficulty in controlling use, a higher priority given to the substance(s) than to other activities or obligations.
- AQA also includes biological and psychological explanations for addiction, and covers interventions and therapies for addiction including aversion therapy, self-management programmes, naming self-help groups and 12 step recovery programmes.
- AQA names Kaij’s twin study of alcohol abuse as a key study.
- OxfordAQA international includes the use of the International Classification of Diseases in diagnosing post-traumatic stress disorder. It also covers characteristics of post-traumatic stress disorder and diagnostic criteria.
- OxfordAQA International covers dual representation theory of post-traumatic stress disorder, and prolonged exposure therapy for post traumatic stress disorder
- Oxford AQA International includes a named study on the effectiveness of prolonged exposure therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder – Eftekhari’s study.

3.2.4 Research methods

This is covered in unit 1 and unit 2 in both specifications. The content for this topic is the same material as presented in 3.1.4 Research methods, and includes 3.1.4.1 Data handling.

Key differences:

- OxfordAQA International refers to methods that produce quantitative and/or qualitative data under designing research. It also refers to the reliability and/or validity of quantitative and qualitative data. Reference to quantitative and qualitative methods has been removed.

3.2.4.1 Data handling

This is covered in unit 1 and unit 2 in both specifications.

Key differences:

- AQA includes standard form.

Not covered in OxfordAQA International

AQA has the topic Development in unit 1.