

DP Psychology

Curriculum Review

Summary report to teachers
May 2015

Introduction and review process

All IB Diploma Programme subjects undergo a review cycle in which both the curriculum and assessment models are examined for future development. The review process is a collaborative undertaking by the DP subject communities consisting of teachers and examiners and informed by external experts and relevant literature. Grounded in lessons learned from teaching of the present course as well as subject-specific and more general educational research and developments within the IB in general and Individuals and Societies in particular, the aim of the curriculum reviews is to ensure that each DP course is fit for purpose in a changing world.

The current DP psychology review began with a year of research and evaluation (2012-2013), and will culminate with the new course starting teaching in 2017, for first assessment in 2019.

The initial research compiled by the Curriculum Manager for psychology consisted of:

- Reports from Assessment Division colleagues and examiners involved in all assessment components of the current course
- A survey of teacher views on the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC)
- Feedback from DP psychology workshops
- Comparison with other psychology courses available to this age group
- Commissioned reports from academic psychologists
- Desk research into trends and movements in psychology, psychology education and education

The research was first discussed in an Internal Review Committee (IRC) involving senior members of the Academic and Assessment Division staff. The IRC endorsed the proposed overall directions emerging from the research.

Following the IRC, a three-day External Review Committee (ERC) took place in the IB AEM Global Centre in The Hague in November 2013 to discuss the proposals. There have since been three development meetings with teachers, consultants, academic specialists and examiners to take the developments forward. Their work has been supported by psychology teachers around the world via a virtual platform allowing interaction and discussion. Two further meetings are pending for completion which also includes the production of specimen papers and the Teacher Support Material.

This report gives an insight to teachers on the directions of the new DP psychology course and invites feedback on the progress made so far. The hope is that it will encourage new teachers to become involved in the review; new participants are welcomed throughout the review process.

If you would like to make a contribution to the psychology curriculum review, please contact:

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Curriculum Review Timeline:

Year	Activity
2012/13 T3	Research and evaluation year. Research and evaluation report compiled by Curriculum Manager. Invitations issued to participants in the review
2013/14 T4	Circulation of CM's report to review participants and 1 st External Review Committee meeting October 2013. Presentation of recommendations to Internal Review Committee. 1 st Development meeting Feb 2014.
2014/15 T5	2 nd Development meeting Oct 2014. 3 rd Development meeting Feb 2015.
2015/16 T6	4 th Development meeting Oct 2015. Specimen paper setting/TSM meeting Jan 2016. Final draft guide finished and presented to Diploma Review Committee
2016/17 T7	New guide published and posted on the OCC Jan 2017.
2017/18 T1	1 st Teaching of the new syllabus
2018/19 T2	1 st Exams of the new syllabus May 2019

The Guide

The fundamental layout of the current guide into the three levels of analysis and a choice of options was considered to be one of the main strengths of the syllabus and will not change. There will be some updating of content, but the current content is essentially seen as appropriate at this level.

The changes that have been proposed and are being worked on are two-fold:

1. Allocation of hours which can be seen in the summary below.

Syllabus outline

	Hours	
	SL	HL
Core: Biological, cognitive, sociocultural approaches	90	120
Research Methods	20	60
Options	20	40
IA	20	20
Total	150	240

The proposed extension to the Levels of Analysis for HL students (AHL) is to assist the majority of teachers who teach SL and HL together in one group, which frequently includes students studying for additional qualifications as well. It will allow for schemes of work with weekly extensions for the HL. Ideas on schemes of work will be included in the Teacher Support Material.

The **biological** approach to behaviour looks at:

- The contribution of biological factors to behaviour (SL and HL)
- Evolutionary explanations for behaviour (SL and HL)
- The value of animal studies for investigating and understanding human behaviour (AHL)

The **cognitive** approach to behaviour looks at:

- Approaches to the description and analysis of human behaviour (SL and HL)
- The influence of schematic representations on behaviour (SL and HL)
- Reliability of cognitive processes (SL and HL)
- Information processing as a model for cognition (AHL)

The **sociocultural** approach to behaviour looks at:

- The effect of others on individual behaviour (SL and HL)
- Cultural influences of individual attitudes and behaviour (SL and HL)
- The influence of globalisation on individual attitudes and behaviour (AHL)

The emphasis is on a holistic approach to the study of behaviour integrating different approaches whilst recognising the underlying complexity. **Ethical** considerations are an overarching theme. A consideration of ethics and the development of ethical practice is salient right across the syllabus and could be assessed in any context. Guidance on this will be available in the Teacher Support Material.

2. The layout of the Learning Outcomes (LOs). LOs are currently linked to specific command terms will be replaced with learning outcomes linked to and Assessment Objective level 1, 2 or 3.

Although LOs are currently linked to specific command terms, there is the proviso that they could be linked to any command term of equal or lower status.

In the developing guide, LOs are linked to groups of command terms and will only be addressed through a command term belonging to that group in an assessment. So if an LO is in AO3 then it will only be assessed at that level. AO1's will not be directly assessed as this would be a matter of rote learning, but are there to inform the understanding with LOs in AO2 and AO3 and would be expected to crop up in extended answers in support of the development of a train of thought or an explanation accompanying an answer. A summary can be seen below.

Assessment Objective	AO3 Synthesis and evaluation	AO2 Application and analysis of knowledge and understanding	AO1 Knowledge and understanding of specified content
Summary	The student is required to make a judgment based on evidence and when relevant construct an argument /rearrange component ideas into a new whole and make judgements based on evidence or a set of criteria.	The student is required to use and analyse knowledge and understanding/ explain actual situations, and to break down ideas into simpler parts and to see how the parts relate.	The student is required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding / learn and comprehend the meaning of information.
Command terms	Compare Compare and contrast Contrast Critically interpret Deduce Discuss Evaluate Examine Investigate Justify To what extent?	Analyse Apply Comment Demonstrate Derive Distinguish Explain Explore Interpret Suggest	Classify Define Describe Identify Formulate Outline Present State
Example: <i>from the biological approach to understanding behaviour</i>	The contribution of biological factors to behaviour.	The methods used to study the brain in understanding behaviour	Examples of areas of the human brain related to behaviour

Research methods

Research methods will become explicit in the course for both SL and HL students. The nature of psychology is such that knowledge and understanding is based on published research and studies and many good teachers already address the understanding of different methods as part of their teaching.

The methods need to be understood and the outcome of the research critically assessed in order to engage fully in the development of the thinking. SL students will concentrate on facets useful to their Internal Assessment. HL students will receive a broader understanding as this will replace the qualitative research AHL in the current guide. The intention is to ensure a parity of experience for students in all schools.

The options

It has been decided not to include Sports psychology as an option in this syllabus due to the low uptake. The remaining four options remain with some updating of content. They will be examined using scenarios and students will need to demonstrate their analytical and problem solving skills in their answers. There will be support in the Teacher Support Material for a problem based learning approach to teaching the options.

Internal Assessment

The internal assessment task will be the same for both HL and SL students and run along the lines of the current HL task. Group work will be mandatory but a range of options for organising the group will be made available. The marking criteria have been trialled and adjusted following the trials and reviewed by the virtual discussion group.

External assessment

The key points taken into account are:

1. A consideration of authentic modes of assessment related to the tasks psychologists engage in during the course of their work. The assessment structure therefore includes research analysis, the analysis of scenarios and contextualised extended answers.
2. The fostering of a holistic approach to the study of human behaviour allowing the students to show their abilities at integrating different approach to the subject matter.
3. The opportunity to demonstrate skills at critically assessing and evaluating research and studies.

Summary of assessment

	Time	%	Time	%
External Assessment		80		80
Paper 1	2 hrs	50	2 hrs	40
Paper 2	1 hrs	25	2 hrs	20
Paper 3			1 hr	20
Internal Assessment	20 hrs	25	20hrs	20
Total		100		100

All the above should be considered as a work in progress and may or may not reflect the material which will finally appear in the guide.

Finally, a big thank you to all in the DP psychology community and many others who have been involved in the review so far.