Psychology **Exam Board: AQA**

This course of study comprises three 2 hour exam papers with no coursework. The emphasis is on applying knowledge and understanding, thereby developing students' transferable skills of analysis, evaluation and critical thinking. The A level Psychology qualification will give you a fundamental and lasting insight into human behaviour, thinking and reasoning. This will help you to cope better with your own life, but also it will help you to gain a better understanding of others. By studying the nature of memory and techniques for memory improvement you will learn methods of successful study skills, which should help you with other subjects as well. These qualifications are linear. Linear means that students will sit all of their A-level exams at the end of their A-level course.

A-level Subject content topics Assessment: 3 written exam papers;

Paper 1 (33.3%) - Introductory Topics in Psychology (96 marks) 2 hours-Topics 1-4

Paper 2 (33.3%) - Psychology in context (96 marks) 2 hours - Topics 5-7

Paper 3 (33.3%) - Issues and Options in psychology (96 marks) 2 hours - Topic 8 - 11

Question types Multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks for each section one section is 48 marks

A-level Topic Outline

Paper 1

Social influence: This topic involves conformity, including compliance and internalisation. Explanations of obedience, resistance to social pressures, and minority influence.

Memory: The multi-store model of memory. The working memory model. Explanations for forgetting: proactive and retroactive interference and retrieval failure due to absence of cues. Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony. Improving the accuracy of eyewitness testimony, including the use of the cognitive interview.

Attachment: Ainsworth's 'strange situation' and types of attachment such as secure and insecure, in addition to the cultural variations. Evolutionary and learning explanations of attachment. The influence of early attachments on adult relationships.

Clinical Psychology and Mental Health: Definitions in the field of mental health. The behavioural, cognitive and biological approach to explaining and treating disorders such as Phobias, Depression and OCD.

Paper 2

Approaches in Psychology: The basic assumptions of the following approaches: Learning approaches, Cognitive approach, Biological approach, Psychodynamic approach, Humanistic approach and comparison of approaches.

Biopsychological: The divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic). The structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons. The process of synaptic transmission. The function of the endocrine system: glands and hormones. The fight or flight response. Localisation of function in the brain and hemispheric lateralisation: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language centres; Broca's and Wernicke's areas, split brain research. Plasticity and functional recovery of the brain after trauma. Ways of studying the brain: scanning techniques; post-mortem examinations.

Research methods: Students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following research methods, scientific processes and techniques of data handling and analysis, be familiar with their use and be aware of their strengths and limitations. This includes experimental methods, observational techniques, self-reports and correlations.

Paper 3

Issues and debates in psychology: Gender and culture in psychology - universality and bias (e.g. androcentrism and ethnocentrism). Free will and determinism: The scientific emphasis on causal explanations. The nature-nurture debate: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour. Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation in psychology; biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism. Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation. Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity.

Relationships: Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships. Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's investment model. Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown. Virtual relationships in social media: self-disclosure in virtual relationships; effects of absence of gating on the nature of virtual relationships. Parasocial relationships: levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation.

Schizophrenia:Positive symptoms of schizophrenia, including hallucinations and delusions. Negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including speech poverty and avolition. Biological explanations for schizophrenia. Psychological explanations for schizophrenia. Drug therapy. Cognitive behaviour therapy and family therapy. The importance of an interactionist approach in explaining and treating schizophrenia; the diathesis-stress model.

Forensic Psychology: Offender profiling: the typology approach (organised and disorganised) and the data-driven approach (investigative psychology and geographical profiling). Biological explanations of offending behaviour: genetics and neural explanations. Psychological

explanations of offending behaviour: Eysenck's theory of the criminal personality; cognitive explanations; level of moral reasoning and cognitive distortions, including hostile attribution bias and minimalisation; differential association theory. Dealing with offending behaviour: the aims of custodial sentencing and the psychological effects of custodial sentencing. Behaviour modification in custody. Anger management and restorative justice programmes.

Mrs Sonali Lariko

Head of Psychology