

The IB Diploma Programme, for students aged 16 to 19, is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education that prepares students for success at university and life beyond. Students take courses in six different subject groups, maintaining both breadth and depth of study. Psychology standard level is in group 3, individuals and societies. In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, action, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.

About the IB: For over 40 years the IB has built a reputation for high-quality, challenging programmes of education that develop internationally minded young people who are well prepared for the challenges of life in the 21st century and able to contribute to creating a better, more peaceful world.

The IB subject briefs illustrate four key course components in the IB Diploma Programme.

- I. Course description and aims
- II. Curriculum model overview
- III. Assessment model
- IV. Sample questions

Overview of the psychology standard level course and curriculum model

I. Course description and aims

The IB Diploma Programme standard level psychology course aims to develop an awareness of how research findings can be applied to better understand human behaviour and how ethical practices are upheld in psychological inquiry. Students learn to understand the biological, cognitive and sociocultural influences on human behaviour and explore alternative explanations of behaviour. They also understand and use diverse methods of psychological inquiry.

In addition, the course is designed to:

- encourage the systematic and critical study of human experience and behaviour and environments
- develop the capacity to identify, analyse critically and evaluate theories, concepts and arguments about the nature and activities of the individual and society
- enable students to collect, describe and analyse data used in studies of behaviour; test hypotheses; and interpret complex data and source material
- enable students to recognize that the content and methodologies are contestable and that their study requires the toleration of uncertainty
- develop an awareness of how psychological research can be applied for better understanding of human behaviour
- ensure that ethical practices are upheld in psychological inquiry
- develop an understanding of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural influences on human behaviour
- develop an understanding of alternative explanations of behaviour
- understand and use diverse methods of psychological inquiry

II. Curriculum model overview

Psychology standard level

Components	90 hours
<p><i>Core</i></p> <p>90 hours of standard level instruction on 3 topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biological level of analysis • The cognitive level of analysis • The sociocultural level of analysis 	90 hours

<i>Options</i>	30 hours of instruction on one additional topic	30 hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abnormal psychology • Developmental psychology • Health psychology • Psychology of human relationships • Sport psychology 	
<i>Experimental Study</i>	Introduction to experimental research methodology	30 hours
Total teaching hours		150 hours

III. Assessment model

Assessment for psychology standard level

The IB assesses student work as direct evidence of achievement against the stated goals of the Diploma Programme courses, which are to provide students with:

- a broad and balanced, yet academically demanding, programme of study
- the development of critical-thinking and reflective skills
- the development of research skills
- the development of independent learning skills
- the development of intercultural understanding
- a globally recognized university entrance qualification.

The assessments aim to test all students' knowledge and understanding of key concepts through:

- knowledge and comprehension of specified content, research methods and theories, such as key concepts, biological, cognitive and sociocultural levels of analysis
- application and analysis, including using psychological research and psychological concepts to formulate an argument in response to a specific question
- synthesis and evaluation of psychological theories, empirical studies, and research methods used to investigate behaviour
- selection and use of skills appropriate to psychology, the acquisition of knowledge, skills required for experimental design, data collection and presentation, data analysis and interpretation
- data analysis using an appropriate statistical test and write an organized response.

Assessment for psychology standard level (continued)

Students' success in the psychology standard level course is measured by combining their grades on an external and internal assessment.

On external assessments, students must be able to demonstrate an understanding of both basic facts and complex concepts related to the biological, cognitive and sociocultural levels of analysis. For their internal assessment, standard level psychology students plan, undertake and report on a replication of a simple experimental study

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)	Weighting of final grade (%)
External			75
<i>Paper 1</i>	Question response and an essay	2	50
<i>Paper 2</i>	Answer one of 15 questions in essay form	1	25
Internal			25
<i>Study Report</i>	A report of a simple experimental study conducted by the student		

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IV. Sample questions

The following questions appeared in previous IB Diploma Programme psychology standard level examinations.*

1. Discuss the use of one research method (e.g. experiments, case studies) in the cognitive level of analysis. Use relevant research studies in your response. (Paper 1)
2. Discuss how
 - biological, or
 - cognitive, or
 - socio-culturalfactors influence psychological disorders. (Paper 2)
3. Evaluate one theory of motivation in sport. (Paper 2)

* the syllabus for examinations current until 2016

Learn more about how the IB Diploma Programme prepares students for success at university by going online to www.ibo.org/universities or email us at recognition@ibo.org.