Your guide to our Edexcel
AS and A level
Psychology
first teaching 2015
Hello and welcome

We’ve listened to feedback from all parts of the Psychology subject community, including Higher Education, and used this opportunity of curriculum change to redesign qualifications that reflect the demands of a truly modern and evolving environment – qualifications that enable your students to think like psychologists and give them the skills to succeed in their chosen pathway.

This guide gives you an overview of our new qualifications and sets out the ways in which you can co-teach AS and A level Psychology from 2015 as we know from our conversations with you that this is important.

Take a look through this guide to find out more about:

- what the new AS and A level Psychology specification looks like – pages 3-5
- approaches to teaching AS and A level Psychology – pages 6-7
- why you may want to continue teaching AS – pages 6-7
- the comprehensive resources and support we are planning for you to make sure that you are in a position to provide your students with the very best opportunity to succeed and get the results they deserve – page 8.

We look forward to meeting you at our launch events and answering any questions you might have about our new specification.

Our new Edexcel AS and A level Psychology

- Clear and coherent structure – four engaging and up-to-date topic areas, assessed through two AS and three A level examined papers.
- Supports progress – using psychological topics, students are introduced to the foundations of psychology before they develop the understanding and consider the various applications that help put their learning into real-world contexts.
- Thinking like a psychologist – students use psychological concepts and theories to give them an insight to the world of a psychologist. They focus on the fundamental areas that have laid the foundations of modern psychological understanding and then develop this further by considering how our understanding of psychology is applied today.
- Reflects developments in psychology – the new specification content provides students with a dynamic, engaging and contemporary course of study, by applying real-world contexts to develop knowledge and understanding of key contemporary questions for today’s society.
- Develops transferable skills for progression to higher education – students will develop a multitude of skills, including numeracy, communication, practical skills and critical thinking in order to make a smooth transition to the next level of study.

Kam Sohal
Psychology Product Manager

Stephen Nugus
Science Subject Advisor
For the latest information, please visit: www.edexcel.com/gcsemathsprop

Your at-a-glance guide to AS and A level Psychology

AS and A level: key points

- AS and A level have been ‘decoupled’, which means that AS marks or grades do not count towards the full A level.
- Students can still take AS exams at the end of Year 12 – but if they go on to do a full A level course, they will be assessed on the full content of that A level at the end of their study. This means that students will need to sit all three A level papers.
- A level assessments will be set at a higher level of demand than AS assessments. This means that while students will be assessed on some of the same content at A level that they were at AS, the questions they encounter will look different.
Approaches to teaching AS and A level Psychology

Separate AS and A level classes

The benefits of a separate, linear A level course include:

- more flexibility in structuring the course – for example, teaching all the research methods together (Topic 9) or following the specification sequentially and using AS papers for a mock exam at the end of year 12
- greater opportunity for students to make links between different elements of the course as they progress – for example, across the clinical psychology content
- more time for teaching and learning in the first year.

Running separate classes requires students to decide at the start whether to follow AS or A level, and potentially limits their options for switching later on.

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<th>Topics 3 &amp; 4</th>
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Co-teaching AS and A level

Co-teaching AS and A level provides flexibility for you and your students. Centres co-teaching the AS will deliver Topics 1, 2, 3 and Topic 4 in the first year. The topics could be run in parallel or taught sequentially, depending on what is most appropriate for staffing and timetabling within each centre.

Why offer AS?

We know that many of you will want to continue to offer AS Psychology alongside the full A level, despite the fact that it no longer contributes to the full A level grade. You have told us that:

- Breadth is important to students – some students may wish to supplement a three-A level programme of study with an additional AS in Psychology due to their interest in the subject, even though they might not want to take it further. They may well know this at the outset of their course.
- Some students will make the decision later – some students may wish to start on four A level courses knowing they are likely to ‘drop down’ to three full A levels in their second year. They may wish to postpone making this decision until they have taken one or more AS qualifications and seen the results.
- AS gives focus to Year 12 and would allow you to track student progress – some students may decide from the beginning of the course that they want to take the full A level, but entering them for the AS could provide a useful way of tracking their progress at the end of the first year of the course.
- It also gives universities visibility of a student’s progress in a subject.
Supporting you
Plan and implement the new specification with your package of support.

**Planning**

Your *Getting Started* guide will provide an overview of the new AS and A level specifications to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment, and to help you understand what these changes mean for you and your students. You will also receive a *course planner* and *scheme of work* that you can adapt to suit your department, and *mapping documents* to highlight key differences between the new and 2008 specifications.

**Teaching and learning**

There will be lots of *free teaching and learning support* to help you deliver the new specifications: component guides with suggested *resource lists* and *guidance on practicals* and *quantitative skills*, a *student guide* and *materials* for your options evenings.

**Understanding the standard**

*Exemplar student work* with examiner commentaries for the *sample assessment materials* will help your students to understand the standard for the grade they are targeting.

**Tracking student progress**

*ResultsPlus* provides the most detailed analysis available of your students’ exam performance. It can help you identify topics and skills where students could benefit from further learning. *Mock Analysis* provides feedback for your students through our past papers and mock exams.

**Support**

Our *subject advisor service*, led by Stephen Nugus, will ensure you receive help and guidance from us as well as sharing ideas and information with each other. You can sign up to receive e-newsletters from Stephen Nugus to keep up-to-date with qualification updates, and product and service news.

Learn more at: www.edexcel.com/2015pyschology