

Changes to the syllabus

This is an overview of the changes made in the new DP psychology course (first assessment 2027). In building the psychology curriculum, the goals were to emphasize the application of psychology to real-world experiences by practising using research methods for studying human behaviour. The inclusion of diverse peoples and psychologies was another goal, so that students could see themselves reflected within the DP psychology curriculum. As a result, psychological literacy has become the theoretical framework for developing the DP psychology curriculum and assessment. Through the concepts, content and contexts in the new DP psychology course, students will be able to engage in psychological literacy to:

- understand basic concepts and principles of psychology
- understand scientific research process
- develop problem-solving skills
- apply psychological principles to personal, social and/or organizational problems
- act ethically
- think critically
- communicate well in different contexts
- develop cultural competence and respect for diversity
- develop self-awareness.

The modification of the aims and assessment objectives of the course reflects the importance of achieving the development goals while embedding opportunities to acquire psychological literacy.

Syllabus

The main content from the previous syllabus (first assessment 2019) has been renamed “Content” and contains similar material. The previous guide provided four options for which standard level (SL) students could select one area of study, while higher level (HL) students selected two areas of study. These four options have become the four contexts that all students must study. In the updated course model, abnormal psychology and health psychology are studied as part of health and well-being. Furthermore, learning and cognition is included to allow for the study of a cognitive process beyond memory (i.e. language and perception).

The HL extensions on the role of culture, motivation and technology have been selected as a way to emphasize their importance in shaping human behaviour.

Finally, the internal assessment (IA) task has changed from a simple experiment into a research proposal—in which students will have the opportunity to explore an area of interest and design a study. Class practicals are utilized as a way to assist in the scaffolding of the IA and to allow students choice in their investigation using one of four methodologies. While both SL and HL students need to engage in data analysis and interpretation, only HL students will be tested on this directly (within paper 3).

Syllabus (first assessment 2019)	(Syllabus first assessment 2027)
N/A	Concepts Bias Causality Change Measurement

	Perspective Responsibility
Core - Biological, cognitive, sociocultural approaches to understanding behaviour - Approaches to researching behaviour	Content Biological, cognitive, sociocultural approaches and research methodology
Options - Abnormal psychology - Developmental psychology - Health psychology - Psychology of human relationships	Context - Health and well-being - Human development - Human relationships - Learning and cognition - Integration of concepts, content and class practicals within each context
HL extensions - The role of animal research in understanding human behaviour - Cognitive processing in a technological world - the influence of globalization on individual behaviour	HL extensions - The role of culture, motivation and technology in shaping human behaviour - Data analysis and interpretation
IA task Simple experiment	IA task Research proposal

Overall, learning and teaching in psychology has shifted towards a concept-based approach, allowing for the transfer and consolidation of information across contexts. Through the class practicals and IA task, students will have an opportunity to apply research methods used in psychology and practise formulating a research proposal—required of any psychological research conducted through a university or organization. There is a deeper emphasis on culture and perspective, with the intention of learning about indigenous peoples and integrating perspectives from the local culture or community. Empirical research remains integral to the study of psychology; however, students no longer need to memorize the details of research studies, rather use them to support their position or argument.

Assessment

Changes in the curriculum have prompted changes in assessment. Students at SL and HL will have two common papers. Paper 1 assesses the concepts, content and concepts, while paper 2 focuses on research methodology. HL students will be assessed on data analysis and interpretation in paper 3. For IA, both the SL and HL students will have an opportunity to design a research proposal on a psychological topic of interest. Some students may wish to investigate topics like criminology or organizational psychology, which are topics outside the taught curriculum.

In conclusion, the new DP psychology syllabus focuses on the development of students' psychological literacy while allowing for inquiry into topics of interest. With the integration of class practicals, the hope is to turn classrooms into learning laboratories, where students can delve deeper into topics of interest, collaborate and apply psychology to real-world examples.