

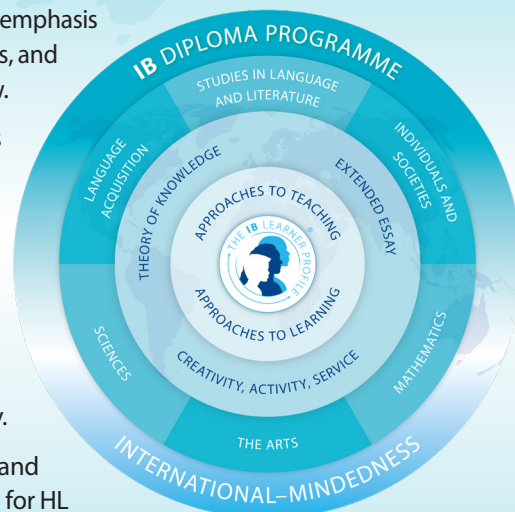
Individuals and Societies: Psychology

First assessment 2027

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

The course is presented as six academic areas enclosing a central core. Students study two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and one of the creative arts. Instead of an arts subject, students can choose two subjects from another area. It is this comprehensive range of subjects that makes the Diploma Programme a demanding course of study designed to prepare students effectively for university entrance. In each of the academic areas students have flexibility in making their choices, which means they can choose subjects that particularly interest them and that they may wish to study further at university.

Normally, three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 240 teaching hours for HL subjects and 150 hours for SL. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL. In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, activity, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.



I. Course description and aims

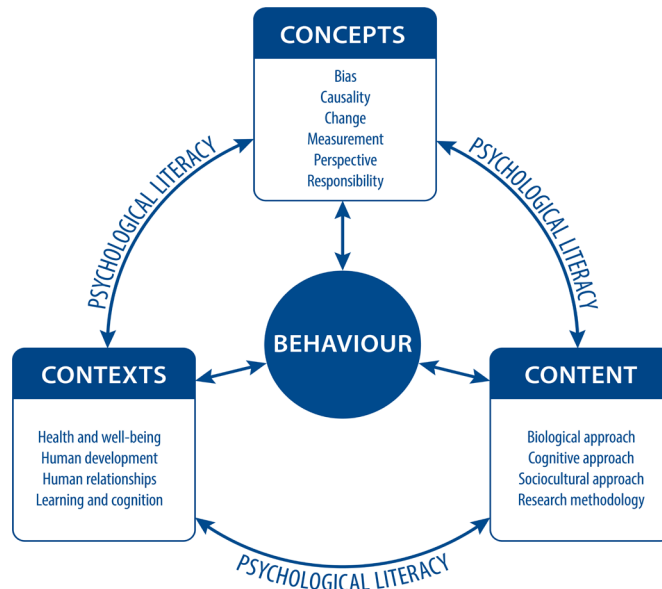
The DP psychology course aims to develop students' knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, content and contexts, as well as the models and theories associated with these areas. Through the course, students will develop the ability to engage in critical thinking, assess evidence and acknowledge the evolving nature of knowledge. They will acquire the ability to seek new information and generate understanding by employing research methodologies. The goal of the DP psychology course is not to create psychologists, but to promote psychological literacy.

The aims of the psychology course are for students to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, content and contexts including models and theories
- think critically and creatively about behaviour and cognitive processes
- engage with problems facing individuals, groups and societies using psychological understanding and skills.

II. Curriculum model overview

The DP psychology course focus is on conceptual understanding and the ability to apply concepts across a variety of contexts as opposed to simple memorization of theories supporting studies. Framing the psychology course through concepts, content, and context allows for the development and application of psychological knowledge when studying the contexts.



Concepts, content and contexts are meant to be integrated when investigating human behaviour. The content provides the psychological terminology and theories needed to understand how the biological, cognitive, and sociocultural approaches assist in understanding behaviour in different contexts while using a variety of research methodology. Concepts provide a framework through which specific content is considered and contexts provide the real-world setting in which concepts and content is applied.

SL and HL students will investigate four contexts using psychological content and concepts relevant to that area of study. The internal assessment will require HL students to create a research proposal to investigate a topic with a population of interest. Reading empirical research and everyday claims in the media are opportunities to identify concepts and further the knowledge of psychological content applied within a context. Students will be required to think critically about data analysis and interpretation in psychological research and everyday claims (for example, in social media). However, only HL will be directly assessed on data analysis and interpretation. HL students further investigate the role of culture, motivation, and technology in shaping human behaviour, and data analysis and interpretation.

| Syllabus component | Teaching hours | |
|---|----------------|-----|
| | SL | HL |
| Concepts, content and contexts | 110 | 110 |
| Integrating concepts and content in the understanding of contexts | | |
| Class practicals (minimum 4) | 40 | 40 |
| Extensions (HL only) | | |
| The role of culture, motivation and technology in shaping human behaviour | n/a | 30 |
| Data analysis and interpretation | | 40 |
| HL only | | |
| Internal assessment | n/a | 20 |
| Psychology research proposal to investigate a topic relating to a specified population of interest. | | |
| Total teaching hours | 150 | 240 |

III. Assessment model

By the end of the psychology course at SL or at HL, students will be expected to demonstrate the following.

Knowledge and understanding (AO1)

- A range of psychological concepts, contexts, theories, models, and examples
- Biological, cognitive, and sociocultural approaches to understanding human behaviour
- Research methodology for understanding human behaviour

Application and analysis (AO2)

- Explain and formulate arguments in response to a specific question or prompt using relevant/appropriate concepts and psychological research
- Apply and analyse a range of psychological theories and models
- Apply and analyse knowledge relevant to psychology in a variety of contexts

HL

- Interpret data to draw conclusions for experimental and non-experimental research

Synthesis and evaluation (AO3)

- Evaluate psychological theories and research
- Draw conclusions from different types of evidence
- Justify a position and critique claims
- Discuss how psychological concepts interact

HL

- Draw conclusions about the influence of culture, motivation, and technology on human behaviour
- Design a study to investigate a research question

| Assessment objective | Paper 1—SL and HL | | | Paper 2—SL and HL | | Paper 3 (HL only) | Internal assessment (HL only) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Section A | Section B | Section C | Section A | Section B | | |
| AO1 – knowledge and understanding | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | |
| AO2 – application and analysis | √ | √ | | √ | | √ | |
| AO3 – synthesis and evaluation | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |

Assessment at a glance

Assessment outline—SL

| Assessment component | Weighting |
|---|-----------|
| External assessment (3 hours) | 100% |
| Paper 1 (1.5 hours) Integration of the concepts, content and contexts (35 marks) Section A: two compulsory short-answer questions from two of the three content areas. Section B: two compulsory short-answer questions asking students to apply their knowledge of content to an unseen situation, each from one of four contexts. Section C: two concept-based extended response questions, each from a different context. | 50% |
| Paper 2 (1.5 hours) Applying concepts and content to research contexts (35 marks) Section A: four compulsory questions that focus on the class practicals Section B: evaluation of an unseen research study with regard to two or more concepts | 50% |

Assessment outline—HL

| Assessment component | Weighting |
|--|-----------|
| External assessment (4.5 hours) | 80% |
| Paper 1 (1.5 hours) Integration of the concepts, content and contexts (35 marks) Section A: two compulsory short-answer questions from two of the three content areas. Section B: two compulsory questions asking students to apply their knowledge of content to an unseen situation, each from one of four contexts. Section C: two concept-based extended response questions, each from a different context. | 25% |
| Paper 2 (1.5 hours) Applying concepts and content to research contexts (35 marks) Section A: four compulsory questions that focus on the class practicals Section B: evaluation of an unseen research study with regard to two or more concepts | 25% |
| Paper 3 (1.75 hours) Data analysis and interpretation of research data (30 marks) Four source-based questions with quantitative and qualitative findings. The focus of the questions will be from one of the HL extensions. A resource booklet will be provided. | 30% |

IV. Sample questions

Paper 1: Concepts, contexts and content

Section A: Two compulsory short-answer questions designed to assess knowledge and content from two of the three content areas (biological, cognitive, sociocultural)

Biological approach to understanding human behaviour

1. Describe how **one** chemical messenger plays a role in **one** human behaviour. (4 marks)

Cognitive approach to understanding human behaviour

2. Explain anchoring bias with reference to **one** example of human behaviour. (4 marks)

Section B: Two compulsory short answer questions that are designed to assess the student's ability to apply knowledge to a new situation or in a new scenario.

3. With reference to this study, explain the role of models in the study of cognitive processes. (6 marks)
4. Explain how social learning theory could be used to achieve this goal. (6 marks)

Section C: Two concept-based extended response questions, each from a different context. Students will choose one of the two questions to answer.

5. In the context of human development evaluate one or more strategies used by developmental psychologists to measure theory of mind. (15 marks)
6. One claim in health and well-being psychology is that one perspective is not enough to explain mental health.
Discuss this claim with reference to one biological explanation of one or more disorders.
(15 marks)

Paper 2: Research methodology

Section A: Four compulsory questions that focus on the class practicals.

- 1a. Describe how you used an interview or focus group in your class practical. (4 marks)
- 1b. Explain the concept of bias in relation to your interview or focus group class practical. (4 marks)
- 1c. Compare and contrast the use of an interview or focus group used in your class practical with an experiment. (6 marks)
- 1d. Design an observation to investigate the same topic as you investigated in your class practical. (6 marks)

Section B: An experiment or non-experimental study from one of the contexts is provided as stimulus material for which students discuss applying two or more concepts.

2. Discuss the following study with reference to two or more of the following concepts: bias, causality, measurement, and/or responsibility. (15 marks)

Paper 3 (HL only): Source-based questions

Students will be presented with 4–6 sources with research from one of the HL extension topics. Questions will be on the interpretation of graphs, data analysis, research considerations and a synthesis of the sources.

1. Explain **one** issue that limits the interpretation of the data in source 1. (3 marks)
2. Analyse the findings from source 2 and state a conclusion linked to the claim that use of technology in education may have a negative effect on the mental health of students. (6 marks)
3. Discuss how the researcher could improve the credibility of the findings in source 3. (6 marks)
4. To what extent can we conclude that the use of technology in education may have a negative effect on the mental health of students? (15 marks)

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