

Assessment Schedule – 2025**Scholarship Psychology (93405)**

The candidate answers THREE questions. Each response is marked out of 8 against the descriptors for the Psychology Scholarship Performance Standard.

Schedule 1: Criteria for Question One

Score		
Outstanding scholarship	8	Response demonstrates: • a critical evaluation of the study's purpose • an integrated analysis and evaluation of ethics, reliability, validity, and potential biases relevant to flaws identified within the study • accurate and confident integration of psychological evidence • insightful and fully justified improvements to the method.
	7	Response demonstrates ALL the requirements for 8 as above, but: • lacks consistency in one of the above performance descriptors.
Scholarship	6	Response demonstrates: • in-depth analysis of the study's purpose and design • comprehensive analysis and evaluation of combination of ethics or reliability or validity or potential biases within the study • accurate application of psychological evidence • valid and reasoned improvements to the method.
	5	Response shows ALL the requirements for 6 as above, but: • may be confusing in parts or lacks clarity. • analysis and evaluation of a combination of ethics or reliability or validity or potential biases
Below scholarship	4	Response demonstrates: • explanations of significant flaws in the study's purpose and design - some analysis and evaluation of a combination of ethics or reliability or validity or potential biases - some use of psychological evidence relevant to the response • realistic improvements to the method.
	3	Response demonstrates: • identification of flaws in the study's purpose or design
	2	- limited analysis and evaluation of ethics, reliability, validity, and potential biases relevant to the flaws identified within the study - reference to psychological evidence relevant to the response
	1	• some realistic improvements to the method.

Examples of possible approaches to Question One

Ash, an Honours student in Psychology, used the research into how language restructures cognition (Resource A) to plan a research study (Resource B) investigating whether the processing of navigation instructions is influenced by language. Find flaws in the current design of Ash's research study and suggest improvements.

The candidate needs to find the key flaws presented in Resource B and should present the most compelling areas for improvement to demonstrate their understanding of research design. Resource A provides the candidate with guidance about the area of research.

The critique should explicitly link flaws in the design to suggested improvements. Explicit reference must be made to the scientific method, including reliability, validity, and ethics. Candidates need to be aware that focusing on research design alone is not enough; mention must be made of ethics.

In the critique, candidates should mention at least two of the most significant flaws, and offer realistic improvements, using their own knowledge of psychological research methods.

The three most significant flaws are:

- (1) the lack of detailed procedures to ensure ethical compliance with New Zealand Code of Ethics,
- (2) a procedure that is incomplete, leading to unreliable and invalid data, and
- (3) an unclear link between the findings of the study in Resource A, and the decision to focus on new migrants.

Flaws in the design could include:

Ideas / flaws	Solutions
There is no aim in this research design; it is unclear exactly what Ash is proposing to research.	Ash needs to have a clear focus for their psychological study to be able to set up an ethical and valid area of study.
Hypothesis 2 does not have a direct link back to Resource A and is not specific and therefore, is not evidence-supported direction of study and does not set up clear variables.	Ash needs to explore the literature in greater detail to see if there are studies that have looked at a range of populations and languages.
Participants: numbers and range. It will be difficult to recruit 100 bilingual migrants to New Zealand and 100 monolingual English speakers and to also use a stratified random sampling method because the bilingual population group is a) geographically spread out across New Zealand, b) many will still be adjusting to life in New Zealand and could be experiencing refugee-related trauma, culture-shock, and / or in study / employment. There is no consideration of, or controlling for, the actual languages of the bilingual group. Even if this could be achieved, it is ethically questionable to cold-call recruits from this population, as it would breach Principle One of the New Zealand Psychologist Code of Ethics: Te Tikanga Te Matatika, which is Respect for the Dignity of Persons or People.	- Ash needs to consider how to engage with the many new migrant communities (which can include former refugees) to begin the process of ensuring that this research will be of benefit to the community, that participants can give informed consent, and that the process of participating will not cause harm. One way to do this could be to use stakeholders initially and gain presumptive consent to develop the research design further. - Furthermore, Ash has not shown any awareness that these two groups have very different arrival pathways into New Zealand and may be showing some cultural bias in assuming that a design where Ash tests one person at a time will be an appropriate one. - Ash also needs to include a recognised, standardised English fluency test to ensure her participants meet an agreed level of fluency.

Ideas / flaws cont.	Solutions cont.
The design of this research will take each participant a significant length of time as they must complete training, the actual maze, and a post-test. It must be assumed that this is all to be carried out in one session, as no details have been provided about this taking place over two or three sessions. Participants may experience significant levels of stress during the data collection phase as they will be 'tested' in a 1:1 setting over an extended period.	- Ash should have the research design reviewed by an ethical committee to be prepared to explicitly state how participants' welfare will be maintained, including the right to withdraw at any point during the research. - More importantly, Ash should consider if they are employing a research method that will be effective, given the ethical concerns. An improvement to this would be to pilot a survey method and an interview method where participants could share examples from real-life situations where they have employed spatial memory and navigational skills.
This is a breach of Principle Two of the New Zealand Psychologist Code of Ethics: Te Tikanga i te Tangata, which is Responsible Caring.	
Interrate reliability – relying on a one-time test without test / retest assessment could introduce random measurement errors.	Ash should consider how to make the measurement more reliable.
Ecological validity – does an online map reflect reality?	Look to conduct the experiment in the real world in addition to the spatial task.
Demand characteristics reduce validity of the experiment (especially with Ash now watching). Participants might try to please the researcher, behave in a socially desirable way, or even deliberately try to disrupt the experiment. Therefore, the results may not reflect the true effects of the independent variable, but rather the participants' attempts to fulfil the perceived expectations.	Again, Ash should consider if they are employing a research method that will be effective, given these concerns. An improvement to this would be to pilot a survey method and an interview method where participants could share examples from real-life situations where they have employed spatial memory and navigational skills.
The maze design – it differs significantly from the research described in Resource A, and this could introduce a confounding variable that could lead to inaccurate conclusions. Some participants could find the technology difficult or stressful to learn, while others may have a good working knowledge of the technology. The maze differs to the table-top examples in Resource A and is likely to make some participants stressed if they are not familiar with the technology. It's quite likely that comfort using the maze / technology will heavily influence the time taken and the recall of the maze.	Ash should consider piloting a range of directional puzzles and mazes, including the one referred to in Resource A.
Current recall of the maze-testing memory more than navigation? No mention of measurement scoring. How will accuracy be quantified? What constitutes correct vs. incorrect recall? Memory interference – simple recall could be affected by language used during instruction rather than spatial memory itself.	- Have participants draw a map of the maze. - Ask for verbal description of the route. - Recall from end to start.

Schedule 2: Criteria for Question Two

Score		
Outstanding scholarship	8	Response demonstrates: • structured and coherent discussion, and a logical and powerful response to the question • judicious use and evaluation of resources, relevant theories, studies, methods, and / or findings • accurate and confident use of psychological evidence to explain human behaviour • interwoven theories and findings, and independent and insightful thought, not necessarily representative of orthodox critical views • a high-level, integrated response, which demonstrates understanding of human behaviour.
	7	Response demonstrates ALL the requirements for 8 as above, but: • lacks consistency in one of the above performance descriptors.
Scholarship	6	Response demonstrates: • clarity of thought • selection and use of resources, theories, studies, methods, and / or findings suitable to the purposes of the question • accurate and appropriate psychological evidence to explain human behaviour • interwoven theories and findings • presentation of ideas and arguments in a clear and concise discussion
	5	Response shows ALL the requirements for 6 as above, but: • may be confusing in parts or lacks clarity.
Below scholarship	4	Response demonstrates: • reference to resources, theories, studies, methods, and / or findings suitable to the purposes of the question • accurate use of psychological evidence to explain human behaviour • some interwoven theories and findings • some structured and coherent discussion of the question.
	3	Response demonstrates: • limited use of psychological evidence
	2	• some use of psychology, with limited relevance to the purposes of the question • references to resources, theories, studies, methods, and findings
	1	• possibly unbalanced discussion of the question.

Examples of possible approaches to Question Two

Analyse how resources C–E examine an issue in cognitive psychology. Provide your own insight into possible solutions, using psychological approaches.

The candidate could focus on possible solutions centred around one of the following issues: cultural bias, gender bias, or ethical practice. These are issues that candidates should be very familiar with. However, theories and studies are not explicitly included in the resource material. Mention of theories and key research studies could allow candidates to make pertinent and insightful comments, which would reflect a clear and comprehensive knowledge of this topic. For example, as errors and subjectivity can occur at any stage of the research process and / or psychological practice, processes to safeguard researchers and practitioners from unethical practices need to be institutionalised using ethical frameworks and / or using indigenous psychology frameworks.

Equally, the candidate could focus on the word “insights” when analysing possible solutions, allowing them to argue how an issue is being played out across several of the resources as indicative of individual differences in learning, memory, and attention. Candidates should argue that the solutions to their chosen issue will positively impact individuals, as they either acknowledge individual differences and address any negative impacts on an individual, group, or population, or acknowledge the contestable and changeable nature of the evidence provided. For example, findings from cognitive psychology research should analyse both the range of quantitative data and qualitative data sources, the representativeness of the sample to the general population, and the sample size, before findings are published.

- Candidates that can make convincing connections between the resources will gain higher marks.
- Candidates who provide a response where they analyse more than one issue may struggle to provide an analysis that addresses all the elements of the question.

Ideas from the resources could include:

Resource C: ADHD

Highlights that ‘training’ to improve memory is a flawed concept – indicating that, either it is more innate / biological than we appreciate, or that the chosen strategies need more work. Also highlights that memory training is influenced by other factors, such as age and attention span. Highlights the lack of valid real-world application for memory training programmes. The candidate could argue that validity is an issue in studies such as these, with demand characteristics impacting results. Candidates could make a link to evolutionary psychology (advantages of focusing on one thing versus many things) or social psychology (impact of role models in learning tasks) when discussing why individual differences persist.

Resource D: Mobile phones

Highlights that environmental stimuli affect attention. Looking at technology in particular, it raises questions about the appropriateness of heavy technology use by younger people, which could be a future research focus. A link between Resources C and D is that a) both show how research findings testing memory are impacted by participant attention / lack of attention, and b) there is no acknowledgement that a cohort effect may be at work, yet the results could be interpreted as being able to be applied to all populations.

Resource E: Eyewitness testimony

Highlights that the stress response affects memory. A poor understanding of this may influence court case outcomes. The importance of understanding the relationship may be discussed. Potentially could be picked up as a confounding factor that may make research into memory unreliable. Candidates could make a link to Loftus and Palmer as a key historical study into eyewitness testimony and how this information is now reasonably well-known through the popularity of Elizabeth Loftus on Ted Talks, which is influencing how different groups of people apply the knowledge. Candidates may make a link with Resource C in that all these influences show how results can be applied incorrectly in the real world.

Schedule 3: Criteria for Question Three

Score		
Outstanding scholarship	8	Response demonstrates: • extensive and detailed knowledge of the topic addressed • accurate and confident use of psychological evidence to explain human behaviour • interwoven theories, studies, methods, and findings suitable for the topic addressed • independent thought, not necessarily representative of orthodox critical views • integrated critique of relevant debates • a structured and coherent presentation of an overarching view of the topic, argued with flair.
	7	Response demonstrates ALL the requirements for 8 as above, but: • lacks consistency in one of the above performance descriptors.
Scholarship	6	Response demonstrates: • convincing knowledge of the topic addressed • accurate and appropriate psychological evidence to explain human behaviour • insightful analysis with theories, studies, methods, and findings suitable for the topic addressed • analysis and evaluation of relevant debates within psychology • synthesis of a reasoned response to the topic addressed.
	5	Response shows ALL the requirements for 6 as above, but: • may be confusing in parts or lacks clarity.
Below scholarship	4	Response demonstrates: • accurate and broad knowledge of the topic addressed • use of psychological evidence to explain human behaviour • application of theories, studies, methods, and findings suitable for the topic addressed • some analysis and evaluation of links to relevant debates within psychology • a response, potentially unbalanced, to the topic addressed.
	3	Response demonstrates: • limited knowledge of the topic addressed
	2	• use of psychological evidence to explain human behaviour • reference to theories, studies, methods, and findings suitable for the topic addressed
	1	• explanation of relevant debates • a response, potentially unbalanced, to the topic addressed.

Examples of possible approaches to Question Three

Select ONE of the statements below. Use your own knowledge of psychology to address the statement, including links to debates within psychology, and an analysis of different sides of the argument.

Candidates are expected to use their knowledge of various psychological approaches and key debates in psychology. Candidates should provide examples from psychological practice to support their argument.

Statement	Responses could include opinions and evidence about:
(a) Current memory models oversimplify human memory.	- the limitations of models that focus on learning knowledge rather than autobiographical memory - the role of emotions in encoding and recalling memory are not factored into the standard memory models.
(b) Learning is best explained by cognitive theories.	the analogy of the 'mind as a computer' ignores compelling information about social learning theories, and the role of the brain, specifically the limbic system, in learning and recall in real-world settings. Cognitive theories do not adequately account for disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder or phobias, for example. Yet, cognitive theories (CBT) are currently very popular within psychology, as they emphasise that a person can employ their free will and consciously alter their thoughts.
(c) Your working memory capacity is the best predictor of intelligence.	Reducing intelligence to the level of working memory is a reductionist approach. A holistic approach to cognitive psychology emphasises understanding human cognition by considering the interconnectedness of various factors like biological, social, and cultural influences, rather than focusing solely on individual cognitive processes. It views the mind as an integrated system where different parts interact and influence each other.
(d) Intelligence is more about adaptability than problem-solving ability.	While Binet and Spearman emphasised the role of logic and recall in their testing, Gardner did not and considered creativity and socio-emotional skills as equally important. Intelligence has been variously defined as 'book-smarts' and 'street-smarts', and whether intelligence is fluid or crystallised has been hotly debated. The nature-nurture debate has been particularly relevant to the topic of intelligence.

Cut Scores

Scholarship	Outstanding Scholarship
13–18	19–24