

Psychology

I. Course description and aims

At the core of the DP Psychology course is an introduction to three different approaches to understanding behaviour: the biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches. Students study and critically evaluate the knowledge, concepts, theories and research that have developed the understanding in these fields. The interaction of these approaches to studying Psychology forms the basis of a holistic and integrated approach to understanding mental processes and behaviour as a complex, dynamic phenomenon, allowing students to appreciate the diversity as well as the commonality between their own behaviour and that of others. The contribution and the interaction of the three approaches is understood through the four options in the course, focusing on areas of applied Psychology: Abnormal Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Health Psychology, and the Psychology of relationships.

The options provide an opportunity to take what is learned from the study of the approaches to Psychology and apply it to specific lines of inquiry. Psychologists employ a range of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative, to test their observations and hypotheses. DP Psychology promotes an understanding of the various approaches to research and how they are used to critically reflect on the evidence as well as assist in the design, implementation, analysis and evaluation of the students' own investigations. Surrounding the approaches and the options are the overarching themes of research and ethics. A consideration of both is paramount to the nature of the subject.

The aims of the psychology course at Standard Level and at Higher Level are to:

1. develop an understanding of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors affecting mental processes and behaviour
2. apply an understanding of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors affecting mental processes and behaviour to at least one applied area of study
3. understand diverse methods of inquiry
4. understand the importance of ethical practice in psychological research in general and observe ethical practice in their own inquiries
5. ensure that ethical practices are upheld in all psychological inquiry and discussion
6. develop an awareness of how psychological research can be applied to address real-world problems and promote positive change
7. provide students with a basis for further study, work and leisure through the use of an additional language
8. foster curiosity, creativity and a lifelong enjoyment of language learning

II. Curriculum model overview

Core

- Biological approach to understanding behaviour
- Cognitive approach to understanding behaviour
- Sociocultural approach to understanding behaviour
- Approaches to researching behaviour

Options

- Abnormal psychology
- Developmental psychology
- Health psychology
- Psychology of human relationships

Internal assessment

Experimental study

