

Year 3

Essay-Based Exams

Essay-based exams

Year 3 Exam Format: Essay-based exams

Structure:

- Choose 1 out of 2 question options
- 1500-word (max) essay
- 2 hour writing period
- No access to Turnitin, so please ensure all writing is your own

Exam Procedure:

- Online exam via QMPlus
- Open at set time, published in exam timetable (local London time)
 - Download Exam Paper (Microsoft Word document)
 - Write your answer in the Exam Paper Word document (save every 15 minutes in a safe location)
 - Upload your answer to QMPlus
 - Can also email your answer to Sbbs-psych-onlineassessment@qmul.ac.uk as a back-up if you're having trouble with QMPlus

Essay Based Exams

Timing

- Exam opens at set time
- 2 hour “writing period”, THEN 30 minute “upload period”
 - Extended upload window to reduce stress of submitting your exam
 - Please note that QMPLus SLOWS DOWN when lots of people are uploading, so please give yourself PLENTY OF TIME!
 - If you start your exam upload with just a few minutes to go, it is likely that your exam will be received late
 - Because there is an extended upload window, “QMPlus is slow” is unfortunately not an excuse for a late exam

Before you start: Review Marking Criteria

Please Review the Psychology Essay-Based Exam Marking Criteria

- a) Log onto QMPlus, search for the *Information for Psychology Students* QMPlus page
- b) Click on the tab, “Exam Preparation”
- c) Click on “Psychology Essay Marking Scheme” to review the grading criteria
- d) Click on “BSc Psychology Essay-style Marking Scheme Video Walkthrough” to watch detailed video on the mark-scheme, elements that distinguish between a 1:1 and a 2:1 (for example), and note that expectations differ for timed essay-based exams compared to coursework essays.

Before you start: Review Marking Criteria

Psychology Essay-Style Marking Scheme

Psychology Essay Marking Scheme

Please review the Psychology Essay Marking Scheme prior to completing the mock essay exam. This will help you to understand how your lecturers will evaluate your essays, and help you to structure your writing.

Please also watch the video below, where Dr. Gwen Brekelmans describes the Essay-style Marking Scheme in detail.

112.3 KB

BSc Psychology Essay-style Marking Scheme Video Walkthrough [22 min]

Before you start: Review Marking Criteria

You will see in the “Psychology Essay Marking Scheme” points 2 and 6 that the expectations for timed essays are not the same as coursework essays!

- **We do not expect your writing to be perfectly polished**
- **We do not expect the essay to be perfectly structured**
- **We do not expect perfect references**

We know that you are writing in 2 hours, so we expect an answer that can be created in that time, with the information that you have in your memory from revision and your module learning.

Coursework essay ≠ Exam Essay!

Essay exam vs. Coursework essay

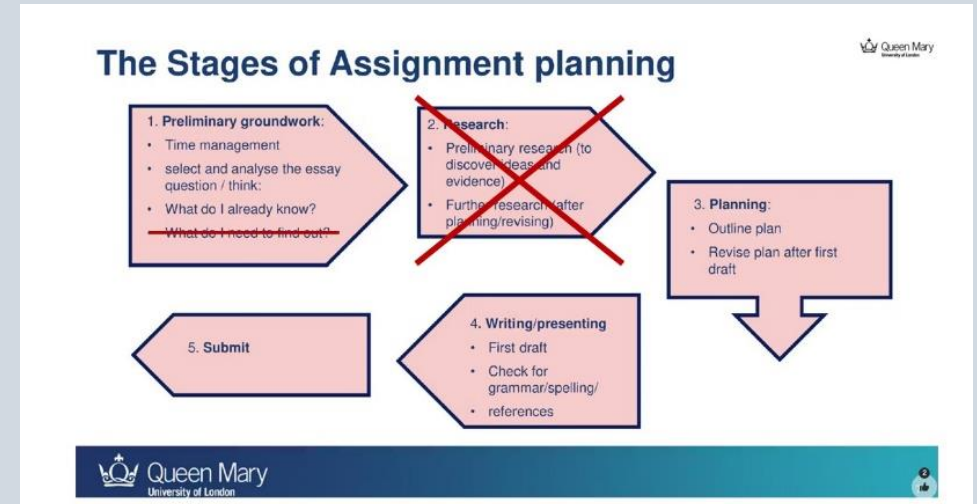
How does a timed essay differ from a regular essay?
It doesn't include research!

You are expected to answer the question *with the knowledge that you have gained from the module and your revision that is readily available in your head.*

This is why **REVISION** is extremely important in an online essay-based exam.

However, all the other stages of essay planning are the same!

- Preliminary Groundwork
- Planning
- Writing
- Submission



Source image from PSY100 Essential Skills, Week B5 "How to write your first essay"

Tips & Tricks

1) Read the question options carefully!

- This is the most critical part of your essay!
- Look for key terms “describe”, “analyse”, “compare” and make sure to answer the specific term required in your writing
- Look for questions with multiple parts, like “What theory could explain X behaviour? Using your learning from this module, what strategies would you recommend to improve x behaviour?” and **make sure that you answer all parts of the question**
- Suggestion: **highlight** key terms and multiple questions so that you don’t forget!

2) Outline your answer

- Ensure outline includes all question elements

3) Set a timer for each section & stick to it

- Help you to ensure that you answer all question parts, even briefly
- Set a timer to start upload

Missing parts of the question or not answering the question asked is probably the most frequent reason why students lose marks on an essay!

Tips & Tricks

Practice writing essays in 2 hours

- a. It takes practice to get used to the timed-writing format!
 - i. At minimum, practice outlining an essay and adding evidence in 20 min
- b. Write your own questions/share with a classmate for practice
- c. Practice writing this question in full!
- d. Practice writing in the same (quiet) location as you will write your exam
- e. Turn off your phone/internet while you practice to minimize distractions
- f. Submit practice essay to Studiosity for Feedback!

Plus General
Practice
Exam on
*Information
for
Psychology
Student
QMPlus
page*

Week 10: Scheduled Practice Exam for Sem A Modules

Further Exam Support

You will receive further training & support within each of your exam modules!

- Examples could include:
 - Information on the exam structure
 - Practical tips on answering the exam question and revision strategies
 - Practice exercises (i.e., outlining an answer, case study practice)
 - Feedback on coursework, exercises, and explanations for how it can be applied to the exam
 - Revision sessions tailored to the exam

Information for Psychology Students QMPlus page, tab “Exam preparation”

- <https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=11270>
- Practice questions, FAQs, advice & training on Academic Integrity

Extra Writing Support

Want extra support? Please visit our QMUL Library Skills team!

Visit: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/library/academic-skills/accessing-support/>

- Workshops
 - “Developing your writing” October 31, 12:00-12:50pm Mile End Library Seminar Room
 - “Literature searching for systematic reviews” November 25, 2 – 3:30pm, Teaching Room 1
- Bookable one-on-ones
- Weekly drop-ins for support with academic writing, etc
 - Wednesdays, 2 – 4pm in Mile End Seminar Room
- Studiosity same-day writing feedback <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/library/academic-skills/studiosity-/>

References?

Do I need references in an essay-based exam?

“Good evidence of broad-based reading” is an important criterion for A-grade papers, as described in the *Psychology Essay Marking Scheme*. One possible source of this evidence is in-text citations and a reference list. They’re a great way to show that you’re using evidence-based reasoning in your writing and that you’ve expanded on what is taught in the module.

However, please note that citations and references do not need to be formatted perfectly in a timed exam! We know you’re under time pressure, so even just a name and/or title is sometimes sufficient to show your source.

How should I prepare references for an exam? We recommend creating a reference list "crib sheet" as part of your revision strategy for the exam. Add a note about what the study demonstrates in your crib sheet, and structure the sheet so that you have references/citations for each of the module topics. Look for connections across references/weeks and even across different modules as part of your revision strategy. This will not only help you consolidate your learning for the module, but also give you a tool to use in your exam to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the literature.