



Research methods 4: experiments - setting & design

Module

PSYB2

PSYB1

Sections A, B & C

Section C

Important: this material is examined on **both AS modules**. On **PSYB2** it is examined through the social psychology (social influence), cognitive psychology (remembering and forgetting) and individual differences (anxiety disorders) topics. On your PSYB2 paper, **one** of the three topics (you cannot predict which) will contain questions that test your knowledge and understanding of research methods, to the value of **6 marks** (10% of the marks available). On your **PSYB1** paper, there is an entire section on research methods, to the value of **20 marks** (33% of the marks available).

What we will be learning about

In this topic we will look at different settings in which experiments can be conducted and different ways of arranging the conditions of an experiment, each with its own strengths. We will be revisiting a range of research from the social, cognitive and individual differences topics.

What you could be tested on

	A01 – knowledge & understanding	A02 – application, analysis & evaluation	A03 – methods, statistics & ethics (how science works)
You must be able to...	Define laboratory, field and quasi experiment, ecological validity. Outline experimental designs: independent groups, repeated measures, matched pairs.	State the relationship between setting and ecological validity. Outline the controls associated with independent and related designs. Analyse examples to identify setting and experimental design used.	Demonstrate these knowledge, understanding and skills in the context of material drawn from the PSYB2 topics (social, cognitive, individual differences).
You should be able to...	Describe the relationship between setting, control and ecological validity. Define participant variables, practice & order effects. Explain the controls associated with different experimental designs (counterbalancing, random assignment to conditions).	Assess the strengths and weaknesses of different settings and designs generically and with reference to examples. Analyse examples to identify poor design. Suggest improvements to poor experimental design.	As above.
You could be able to...	Explain why quasi experiments are more prone to confounding variables than true experiments. Describe circumstances under which different experimental settings/designs would be preferred.	Justify choice of setting and experimental design in terms of what was being investigated.	As above.

