

In-Class Assessment 1 MOCK Model Answers (Brief Bullet-Point Format)

Section A: Short Answer Questions

1. Define the key components of informed consent in psychological research (10 marks)

- Participants must receive sufficient information about the study purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits.
- Participation must be voluntary and free from coercion or undue influence.
- Participants must have the capacity to understand the information and make an informed decision.
- Individuals must be informed of their right to withdraw without penalty.
- Researchers should explain how confidentiality and data protection will be maintained.
- Consent should normally be documented and obtained before data collection.
- Additional safeguards are needed for vulnerable populations.
- Guided by principles in BPS and informed consent frameworks.

2. Explain research integrity and how it differs from general ethical conduct (10 marks)

Research Integrity

- Refers to honesty, transparency, accuracy, rigour, and accountability throughout the research process.
- Includes responsible data collection, analysis, storage, reporting, and publication.
- Requires avoidance of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism.

Difference from Ethical Conduct

- Ethical conduct focuses on protecting participants and minimizing harm.
- Research integrity focuses on the trustworthiness and quality of the research itself.
- A study may treat participants ethically but still lack integrity if data are manipulated or selectively reported.
- Both are essential for credible psychological research

3. Ethical issues in online psychological research and strategies to mitigate them (10 marks)

Ethical Issues

- Difficulty verifying participant identity and age.
- Challenges obtaining genuine informed consent.
- Data privacy and cybersecurity risks.
- Confidentiality concerns.
- Potential participant distress without immediate researcher support.

Mitigation Strategies

- Use secure encrypted platforms.
- Provide clear online consent forms.
- Comply with GDPR and data protection policies.
- Use debriefing procedures and support contacts.
- Anonymise data where possible.
- Ensure secure data storage and controlled access.

4. Role and importance of an ethics review board (IRB/REC) (10 marks)

Role

- Reviews research proposals before data collection.
- Assesses risks and benefits.
- Evaluates participant protection measures.
- Ensures compliance with ethical and legal standards.

Importance

- Protects participant welfare, rights, and dignity.
- Promotes public trust in research.
- Reduces risk of ethical misconduct.
- Ensures researchers meet institutional and professional requirements.
- Provides independent oversight of research activities.

5. Importance of transparency and reproducibility in psychological research (10 marks)

- Transparency involves openly reporting methods, procedures, analyses, and limitations.
- Reproducibility allows other researchers to repeat studies and verify findings.
- Reduces questionable research practices and publication bias.
- Enhances reliability and credibility of psychological evidence.
- Supports scientific progress through verification and replication.
- Encouraged by professional guidance such as BPS, UKRIO, and Open Science practices.

Section B: Scenario-Based Questions

Scenario 1: Exam Stress Study Using a Mobile App (25 marks)

Three Ethical Considerations

1. Privacy and Confidentiality

- Sleep and activity data are sensitive personal information.
- Risk of data breaches or unauthorised access.

2. Informed Consent

- Participants must understand what data are collected and how they will be used.
- They should know who can access their information.

3. Potential Harm and Participant Welfare

- Monitoring stress may increase anxiety or discomfort.
- Participants may feel pressured to continue once enrolled.

How to Address These Concerns

Privacy Protection

- Use encrypted data collection and storage systems.
- Remove identifying information where possible.
- Restrict access to authorised researchers only.

Consent Procedures

- Provide detailed participant information sheets.
- Clearly explain data use, storage, and withdrawal rights.
- Obtain explicit informed consent before participation.

Welfare Measures

- Allow withdrawal at any time.
- Provide debriefing information.
- Offer signposting to wellbeing and counselling services.
- Minimise data collection to only what is necessary.

Ethical Principles Demonstrated

- Respect for persons.
 - Beneficence.
 - Non-maleficence.
 - Confidentiality and data protection.
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Scenario 2: Unpublished Data Used Without Acknowledgement (25 marks)

Ethical Implications

- Constitutes a breach of research integrity.
- May amount to plagiarism or data misappropriation.
- Fails to give proper credit to the original contributor.
- Undermines transparency and accountability.
- Could damage professional trust and collaboration.
- May violate institutional and publication policies.

Appropriate Response

- Decline to use the data without permission and acknowledgement.
- Discuss authorship or acknowledgement with the colleague.
- Ensure proper consent for data sharing and publication.
- Follow institutional and journal guidelines.
- Seek advice from supervisors or ethics/integrity officers if necessary.

Research Integrity Principles Involved

- Honesty.
- Transparency.
- Accountability.
- Fair recognition of contributions.
- Responsible publication practices.
- Respect for intellectual property and stewardship of research data.