



VCE PSYCHOLOGY

INFORMATION GUIDE



120 CELEBRATING 100 YEARS
1904-2024

Kilbreda College

VCE PSYCHOLOGY

RATIONALE

VCE Psychology is designed to enable students to explore the complex interactions between thought, emotions and behaviour. They develop an insight into biological, psychological and social factors and the key science skills that underpin much of psychology. VCE Psychology is designed to promote students' understanding of how society applies such skills and psychological concepts to resolve problems and make scientific advancements. The study is designed to promote students' confidence and their disposition to use the information they learn in the study in everyday situations.

UNIT 1

Area of Study 1

What influences psychological development?

In this area of study students explore how these factors influence different aspects of a person's psychological development, recognising that individuals are not fixed from birth but instead can grow and change psychologically across their lives.

Area of Study 2

How are mental processes and behaviour influenced by the brain?

In this area of study students explore how the understanding of brain structure and function has changed over time, considering the influence of different approaches and contributions to understanding the role of the brain. They develop their understanding of how the brain enables humans to interact with the external world around them and analyse the interactions between different areas of the brain that enable the processing of complex sensory information, the initiation of voluntary movements, language, decision-making, and the regulation of emotions

Area of Study 3

How does contemporary psychology conduct and validate psychological research?

In this area of study students investigate how science is used to explore and validate contemporary psychological research questions. Making connections between the research of others and their own learning enables students to explore and compare responses to contemporary psychological concepts as well as engage in the analysis and evaluation of methodologies, methods and conclusions of research studies.

UNIT 2

Area of Study 1

How are people influenced to behave in particular ways?

In this area of study students explore the interplay of psychological and social factors that shape the identity and behaviour of individuals and groups. Students consider how factors such as person perception, attributions, attitudes and stereotypes can be used to explain the cause and dynamics of individual and group behaviours. Students explore how cognitive biases may assist with the avoidance of cognitive dissonance. They also consider the important role that heuristics have in problem-solving and decision-making.

Area of Study 2

What influences a person's perception of the world?

In this area of study students explore the role of attention in making sense of the world around them and they consider two aspects of human perception – vision and taste – and consider how perception is influenced by cultural norms and historical experiences.

Area of Study 3

How do scientific investigations develop understanding of influences on perception and behaviour?

In this area of study students adapt or design and then conduct a scientific investigation into the internal or external influences on perception and/or behaviour. They generate appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative data, organise and interpret the data, and research a conclusion in response to the research question.

CAREER OPTIONS

- Counsellor
- Criminology and Policing
- Disability Services Officer
- Education
- Forensic Psychologist
- Human Resources
- Occupational Therapist
- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- Social Worker
- Sociologist
- Speech Pathology
- Welfare Worker
- Youth Worker

UNIT 3

Area of Study 1

How does the nervous system enable psychological functioning?

In this area of study students explore the role of different branches of the nervous system in enabling a person to integrate, coordinate and respond to internal and external sensory stimuli. Students apply their understanding of neurotransmitters in the transmission of neural information across a neural synapse to produce excitatory and inhibitory effects and explore the effect that neuromodulators have on brain activity. The interaction of gut microbiota with stress and the nervous system in the control of processes and behaviour is also explored.

Area of Study 2

How do people learn and remember?

In this area of study students evaluate models to explain learning and apply their knowledge of learning to a range of everyday experiences and contemporary social issues. Students explore the interconnectedness of brain regions in storing explicit and implicit memories and the role of semantic and episodic memory in cognition. They consider the use of mnemonics to increase the encoding, storage and retrieval of information.



UNIT 4

Area of Study 1

How does sleep affect mental processes and behaviour?

In this area of study students focus on sleep as an example of an altered state of consciousness and the different demands humans have for sleep across the life span. They compare REM and NREM sleep as examples of naturally occurring altered states of consciousness and investigate the biological mechanisms of the sleep-wake cycle in terms of the timing of sleep, what causes individuals to be sleepy at night and why individuals wake when required.

Area of Study 2

What influences mental wellbeing?

In this area of study students explore mental wellbeing in terms of social and emotional wellbeing, levels of functioning, and resilience to cope with and manage change and uncertainty. Students investigate the concept of mental wellbeing as a continuum, recognising that an individual's mental wellbeing is influenced by the interaction of internal and external factors and fluctuates over time. They recognise that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people mental wellbeing is one element of a multidimensional and holistic view of wellbeing. Students apply a biopsychosocial approach to consider how biological, psychological and social factors are involved in the development and management of a specific phobia. Students explore protective factors that contribute to an individual's mental wellbeing from a biopsychosocial perspective and the importance of cultural determinants to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Area of Study 3

How is scientific inquiry used to investigate mental processes and psychological functioning?

Students undertake a student-designed scientific investigation in either Unit 3 or Unit 4, or across both Units 3 and 4. The investigation involves the generation of primary data relating to mental processes and psychological functioning. The investigation draws on knowledge and related key science skills developed across Units 3 and 4 and is undertaken by students in the laboratory and/or the field.

To find out more information about VCE Psychology at Kilbreda College, please contact:

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This flyer is correct as of July 2024, however may be subject to change.

