

Case Studies (A2 Only) - Mark Scheme

Q1.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

(a) **AO3 = 2**

A case study is an in-depth study of one person or a group of people over time. It is usually carried out in the real world. They are idiographic and very individualistic.

1 mark for a basic answer and a further mark for elaboration. Note that the answer does not have to be linked to psychopathology.

(b) **AO3 = 2**

Weakness of case study:

- Findings cannot be generalised very easily to other individuals.
- The information gathered is often based on retrospective data, which might not be accurate.
- Because it is very difficult to replicate a case study they lack reliability.
- As case studies are unique situations it is difficult to generalise (to other situations).

1 mark for a basic answer and a further mark for elaboration.
Note that the answer does not need to be linked to psychopathology.
Reference to ethical issues are not creditworthy.

Q2.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

Although the essential content for this mark scheme remains the same, mark schemes for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) take a different format as follows:

- A single set of numbered levels (formerly bands) to cover all skills
- Content appears as a bulleted list
- No IDA expectation in A Level essays, however, credit for references to issues, debates and approaches where relevant.

(a) **AO3 = 2**

Confidentiality could be maintained by making sure individuals are not identifiable when reporting the case study. This could be done by using a different name or initials, avoid publishing details of address, schools etc.

1 mark for identification of a relevant way.

2nd mark for some elaboration (which could be an example) or for identification of a second way of maintaining confidentiality.

(b) **AO2 = 2**

Psychologists may use psychological tests eg IQ testing. They could observe his behaviour in different situations. They might interview people, such as family members, to find out the circumstances of his early life.

1 mark for simply naming any appropriate techniques such as IQ test, observation or interviews.

2nd mark for some elaboration.

(c) **AO3 = 4**

The main limitation is that each individual, and their experience, is unique and the results cannot therefore be generalised to others. Evidence from an individual's past may be difficult to verify.

Researchers may get to know the individual well, which may lead to loss of objectivity.

Although description of specific case studies is not relevant, candidates may refer to examples as part of and explanation of limitations.

AO3 Knowledge of limitations of case studies
4 marks Accurate and reasonably detailed Accurate and reasonably detailed answer that demonstrates sound knowledge of at least one limitation.
3 marks Less detailed but generally accurate Less detailed but generally accurate answer that demonstrates relevant knowledge of at least one limitation.
2 marks Basic Basic answer that demonstrates some relevant knowledge of one or more limitations, but lacks detail and may be muddled.
1 mark Very brief / flawed Very brief or flawed answer demonstrating very little knowledge of limitations.
0 marks No creditworthy material.