

Sensorveiledning FOR THOSE WHO GRADE THE EXAM

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IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ FIRST

Below, I describe the **ideal answer** and an **acceptable answer** for each question.

The ideal answer is **really an ideal, and it is also not exhaustive** – more points could be added in a very good answer.

It is **not expected that any student** would completely answer in the ideal way, and the maximum score should be given if many points of the ideal answers (or other good points) are present.

The **acceptable answer** describes what suffices for the student to PASS on this question. Note: It is still possible that a different answer is also acceptable – these are essays and arguments, not a multiple choice test, and this document is a guide, not a checklist. Knowledge of the pensum is necessary to grade the essays, and when in doubt, please refer to the book chapters, and use your background knowledge of social and personality psychology.

You combine the performance on the separate questions by averaging them. In order to pass the exam (get a grade > F), one question can be missed, but then the performance on the other two questions has to be very good to still pass. If one question is not answered or failed completely and one of the others is also just mediocre, the exam is failed.

The emphasis of the grading is on explanation and psychological insight. Using the correct terminology is a plus, but sometimes a phenomenon can be described correctly even without using the scientific terms.

Do not downgrade answers because of lacks in grammar and spelling, unless that hinders understanding of the written text.

Note: We **changed** the book for social psychology some semesters ago. The two sources are now:

Social psychology: Alcock, J. & Sadava, S. (2014). An introduction to social psychology. Global Perspectives. Los Angeles: Sage. Chapters: Chapters 1-8, 10, 12, 13

Personality psychology: Larsen, R.J., Buss, D.M., & Wismeijer (2013). Personality psychology. Domains of knowledge about human nature. New York: McGraw-Hill. Kap. 1, 3-8, 14 og 18 (278 sider)

OR the new edition:

Larsen, R.J., Buss, D.M., & Wismeijer, A., Song, J. (2017). Personality psychology. Domains of knowledge about human nature (2nd Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill. Kap. 1, 3-8, 13, 17.

Social Psychology

1.

Discuss at least 2 different factors that can contribute to attraction.

Drøft minst 2 ulike faktorer som kan bidra til tiltrekning.

The ideal answer would start with a definition of attraction and a note why attraction is important to study. The textbook describes attraction simply as the motivation to be with, relate to, or spend time with another person, and sees it as a precursor to both friendship and intimate relations, so both definitions are possible. Hopefully the answer makes clear that attraction is not only sexual attraction.

The ideal answer would also point out that being attractive has many real life consequences that go beyond finding friends and having partners, including effects on academic achievement, work achievement, and mental health. The book also mentions downsides, for instance that very attractive people may actually not always be sought out as relation partners, because people are sometimes intimidated.

The textbook offers 4 perspectives regarding explanations:

1. an evolutionary explanation, where attractive features are those that maximize reproductive fitness, ie. promise healthy offspring from mating. Cues to that would be physical health, youthful appearance, and body/face symmetry
2. averageness – especially for faces, averageness seems attractive
3. closeness to ideals of warmth/trustworthiness, vitality, and status/resources
4. social factors such as proximity, familiarity, attitude similarity, and self-disclosure – these can take various theoretical routes, e.g. through mere exposure or social comparison
5. Reinforcement and reciprocity as leading to attractiveness

The ideal answer would mention 2 of them and then discuss the variability of these explanations.

The ideal answer would also point out that attraction cannot have one single reason, but is caused in parallel by several processes.

The acceptable answer would mention at least 2 with a satisfying description.

2.

What functions does non-verbal behaviour have? Name 3 functions and give an example for each.

Hvilke funksjoner har ikke-verbal adferd? Nevn tre funksjoner og gi et eksempel på hver.

The ideal answer would provide a definition of non-verbal behaviour and name various channels in which it can work.

The textbook provides a detailed list of many functions of *nonverbal communication* on p. 219ff

- Assist verbal communication, e.g. provide more details when vocabulary is limited
- Second channel for the coordination of verbal communication
- Provide genuine and trustworthy information, e.g. expressions of emotions
- Establishment of social relations, such as dominance and social closeness, through their immediate impact
- Provide qualities of the speaker (e.g., attractiveness)

The following sections on the various channels provide more examples. E.g.:

- Steering of shared attention through gaze
- Communication of Group membership through accent, clothing, hairstyle etc.

This list is probably not exhaustive, more function can be named. Please evaluate the functions that the candidate names, and whether the example provided makes sense. Note that the question asks about non-verbal behaviour – if the candidate interprets this more broadly than non-verbal communication, that should be accepted.

The ideal answer will provide correctly 3 functions that are analytically different from each other, and good examples for all three. A still acceptable answer would have 2 functions with fitting examples.

3.

What is self-esteem? What does it depend on, and in what ways can it be maintained or strengthened?

Hva er selvfølelse (self-esteem)? Hva avhenger selvfølelse av, og på hvilke måter kan selvfølelse opprettholdes eller styrkes?

The ideal answer should define self-esteem as *how positive or negative* one thinks about oneself (p. 87 in the textbook) – another way to say this would be the “affective component of the self-concept”. It should also note that people in general strive to have a positive self-esteem – especially in Western cultures.

Two parts in the textbook are most relevant: the parts about self-serving bias and attribution of responsibility, p. 58f, and the part about self-evaluation, p. 87f, but also the previous pages on self-knowledge in general (p. 78f)

The ideal answer would provide a general analysis of what self-esteem depends on:

- Social comparison to others
- Comparison to self-guides (ideal and ought), p. 91, or something similar.

These should then be explained in more detail. For instance:

- Self-serving bias creates positive self-esteem by attributing success more likely to internal, stable causes, and failure more likely to external, transient causes.
- Defensiveness steps in when some internal attribution cannot be avoided: We try to put at least some responsibility, especially for severe negative consequences, on others, e.g. the victim on a crime, to face less negative self-esteem consequences.
- Social stereotypes impact self-esteem (e.g. through stigmatization). Conversely, becoming a member of a high status group, or increasing the value of one's group (e.g., through ingroup favouritism) is a way to maintain or strengthen self-esteem.

Several ways of protecting self-esteem for members of low status groups are named on p. 89:

- Attributing failure or other unwanted outcomes to prejudice against themselves,
- Making social comparisons with members of one's own group rather than with advantaged groups
- Placing more value on success in areas where the own group tends to do well

As another strategy, the book mentions self-handicapping: arranging in advance for impediments to successful performance, and thus facilitating external attribution of failure.

Self-esteem is also strengthened through self-presentation (the mechanism here is social comparison) – the book mentions here ingratiation and self-promotion (p. 98f)

The ideal answer would provide at least two well-discussed strategies that differ from each other. An acceptable answer would provide at least one.

Personality Psychology

1.

Explain what is meant by person by situation interaction. Describe different ways in which personality traits interact with the situation.

Forklar hva som menes med person-situasjon interaksjoner. Beskriv forskjellige mekanismer for hvordan personlighetstrekk interagerer med situasjoner.

Definition: $p \times s$ interaction means that behavior is a function of the interaction of personality traits and situational forces

Possible ways of interaction as identified in the old textbook:

- Situational specificity: a specific situation causes behavior that is otherwise “out of character” for the individual
- Strength/weakness of situations: Strong situations cause almost all people to behave in the same way, while weak situations leave room for personality to have influences
- Situational selection: tendency for individuals to choose the situations which fit the own personality
- Evocation: certain personality traits evoke specific responses from the environment, and thus create situations
- Manipulation: various means by which people influence the behavior of others, and thus change situations

The new textbook explains in detail only 3 of those:

- Situational selection
- Evocation
- Manipulation,

While situational specificity and strong/weak situations are explained in the preceding section, but don't get their own heading.

An ideal answer would

- Start by noting that the very definition of personality implies stability over time and situations, and thus contradicts the idea of situational influences on behavior
- point out the debate with Mischel after his challenge to the trait approach and his notion of situationism
- bring formula $B = f(P \times S)$ instead of $B = f(P)$ or $B = f(S)$
B: Behavior, P: Personality, S: Situation
- explain possible at least two ways of interaction of the 5 mentioned above
- Conclude that aggregation of behavioral manifestations across situations is crucial for personality measurement; personality is the average tendency across situations
- Point out that stability of personality across time and situation is a core assumption, and strong situational influences are antithetical to the notion of personality

An acceptable answer should explain at least two of the possible ways of interaction above.

2.

Discuss the evolutionary psychology approach to individual differences. Give examples from important empirical studies.

Drøft den evolusjonspsykologiske tilnærmingen til individuelle forskjeller. Gi eksempler fra sentrale empiriske studier

The ideal answer would first introduce the general idea of any evolutionary analysis, namely to assume that traits emerge because they are adaptive and increase fitness and offspring. It can then also name some traits/psychological processes that are assumed to have evolved and be rather culturally universal (need to belong, tendency to help, the 6 basic emotions).

The new textbook provides a detailed answer to this question starting on p. 197ff, after discussing the evolutionary psych approach to sex differences. The old textbook has this on p. 210ff

The framework identifies 4 processes:

- Expression of inherited traits (universal adaptations) depending on the environment (everybody has the same adaptations, but they only get expressed for individuals in certain environments, thus leading to interindividual differences)
- Expression of inherited traits depending on other traits the same individual has (similar to the previous option, but here one's other traits are the "environment") – e.g., "a hair-trigger temperament" is advantageous and thus expressed when the individual is physically strong
- Individual differences can arise due to frequency-dependent selection. Here, two or more heritable variants evolve, and the fitness depends of the frequency of the other variants. The book mentions co-operative dispositions and mating strategies.
- Differences in inherited traits arise because the optimal value of a trait varies across environmental differences (in space and time) – an analogy would be lactose intolerance, which developed for some parts of humanity because if it was advantageous in certain environments. The book does not go into detail on this process, i.e. it does not have an additional section on it, as it has on the previous three.

Note that the question asks for the approach to individual differences in general, not difference between the sexes. However, this can be seen as a special case of frequency-dependent selection or environment-dependent expression. If the candidate only provides argument about sex differences, it should be somehow clear that they have understood that this is a special case of something more general.

The ideal answer would describe at least two of the mentioned 4 processes. An acceptable answer would provide only one.