

## **Detailed Marking Scheme for Research Skills lab-reports:**

These are the criteria according to which the four lab-reports for this course will be marked.

NB: for the *first* report, on the results of the questionnaire study in the autumn term, allowance will be made for the fact that many students constructed questionnaires on topics that have little relevant psychological research on them (e.g. hobbies). The chief emphasis this year is on getting the format of the reports right, i.e. making sure that they are consistent with the A.P.A.'s guidelines for presentation, referencing, etc, but obviously they should be well-written (clear and packed with relevant, well-researched information).

### **TITLE (max. 2 marks):**

0 marks: no title, or too vague. e.g. "Lab report", "Free Recall", etc.

1 mark: Too long, or does not identify the IV and/or DV. Contains superfluous phrases, such as "An investigation into.." or "An experiment on..."

2 marks: identifies the IV and DV, not too vague or too long, encapsulates the purpose of the report well.

### **ABSTRACT (max 12 marks):**

0-5 marks: no abstract at all, or an inappropriate abstract (e.g. far too long or fails completely to adequately and accurately summarise the study).

5-6 marks: Not set out correctly, has relevant material but with a confused layout.

7 marks: written correctly, but has missed out something, e.g. the implications of the results.

8+ marks: clear and succinct (150 words at most) summary of the aims, methods, results and conclusions of the study. Includes all the necessary information, and is well written.

### **INTRODUCTION (max 20 marks):**

0 marks: section missing completely.

0-10 marks: very short and skimpy, with no attempt to include any references to relevant theoretical and empirical work.

10-11 marks: has included everything that was in the relevant handout, but elements are missing - e.g. no justification for the study, no extra reading, poor structure, no hypotheses.

12-14 marks: has included everything that was in the relevant handout, and some evidence of extra reading, but the structure isn't very clear and appears disjointed. OR it is well written, but shows no evidence of any extra reading.

15+ marks: clearly written, well structured, with evidence of relevant extra reading, flows well. Identifies the main aims, and ends with a clear outline of the study's hypotheses. Also has something novel in it, compared to the handouts that were supplied, and includes the rationale for performing the study.

**METHOD (max 20 marks):**

0-10 marks: one or more sub-sections (e.g. participants, design, apparatus or procedure) are missing, confused, parts included under the wrong sub-section.

10-11 marks: somewhat confused and bits are missing within subsections. Parts have been included under the wrong headings.

12-14 marks: good structure, but some relevant information has been omitted.

15+ marks: contains all of the relevant information about the methods used; clearly and systematically described in such a way that a naive reader could replicate the study from this description. Correctly describes the formal design of the study, including an accurate specification of the IV(s) and DV(s) used.

**RESULTS (max 20 marks):**

0-10 marks: has graphs or tables, but without any accompanying written explanation. OR has some writing, but no tables or graphs.

10-11 marks: does not appear to have understood the results. No graphs, or graphs are in the wrong place (e.g. in an appendix). Only skimpy or inaccurate explanations supplied. Has included irrelevant graphs, or has included the raw data in the results section.

12-14 marks: standard deviations or standard errors missing from tables or graphs, figures/tables labelled incorrectly. Does show some understanding, and has presented the information in a logical format.

15+ marks: logical and clear presentation of relevant descriptive and inferential statistical results. Clear, well-labelled figures and tables, with a clear accompanying written description of what they show, in the context of the study.

**DISCUSSION (20 marks):**

0-10 marks: skimpy (e.g. one paragraph) with no attempt to relate results to relevant theoretical and empirical research.

10-11 marks: poor structure, things in the wrong order, shows little understanding of what the study was about, what the results mean, or how they relate to previous work.

12-14 marks: poor structure, but contains the essential elements. OR the structure is good, but elements are missing.

15+ marks: clear summary of main results, followed by a successful attempt to relate the findings to relevant previous theoretical and empirical research. Intelligent evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of the study that was performed, and sensible suggestions for possible improvements and extensions to it. Well organised and clearly written.

**REFERENCES (6 marks):**

Maximum marks will be awarded if the references in the text and in the reference list conform in all respects to the formatting conventions laid out in the 5th edition of the American Psychological Association's Publication Manual. (A summary of these conventions can be found on my website ([www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/grahamh/teaching06](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/grahamh/teaching06)))

References in the text should consist of author(s) surnames (no initials) and date only; references in the reference list should be full references, in alphabetical order. References in text and reference-list should match -i.e. there should be no missing references.

**APPENDICES (no marks):**

All appendices should be included: copies of handouts, SPSS printout or other evidence of working-out where appropriate, etc.