# VCE Psychology 2016-2021: The Story

## UNIT 1: How are behaviour and mental processes shaped?

### Area of Study 1: How does the brain function?
- Role of the brain in mental processes and behaviour
- Brain plasticity and brain damage

### Area of Study 2: What influences psychological development?
- The complexity of psychological development
- Atypical psychological development

### Area of Study 3: Student-directed research investigation

Students communicate a substantiated response to a selected question related to one of six topics: biopsychology; brain and the use of technology; cognition; psychological development; mental health and disorder; and changing thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

## UNIT 2: How do external factors influence behaviour and mental processes?

### Area of Study 1: What influences a person's perception of the world?
- Sensation and perception
- Distortions of perception

### Area of Study 2: How are people influenced to behave in particular ways?
- Social cognition
- Social influences on behaviour

### Area of Study 3: Student-directed practical investigation

Students design and undertake a practical investigation related to external influences on behaviour.

## UNIT 3: How does experience affect behaviour and mental processes?

### Area of Study 1: How does the nervous system enable psychological functioning?
- Nervous system functioning
- Stress as an example of a psychobiological process

### Area of Study 2: How do people learn and remember?
- Neural basis of learning and memory
- Models to explain learning
- Process of memory
- Reliability of memory

## UNIT 4: How is wellbeing developed and maintained?

### Area of Study 1: How do levels of consciousness affect mental processes and behaviour?
- Nature of consciousness
- Importance of sleep
- Effects of sleep disturbances and possible treatments

### Area of Study 2: What influences mental wellbeing?
- Defining mental health
- Factors that contribute to the development and progression of mental health disorders
- Application of a biopsychosocial approach, as a scientific model, to explain specific phobia
- Maintenance of mental health

### Area of Study 3 (Unit 3 and/or 4): Practical investigation

Students design and undertake a practical investigation related to mental processes and psychological functioning.

## Key skills

The development of a set of key science skills, listed below, applies to all VCE science studies across Units 1 to 4 in all areas of study. These skills have been contextualised for Psychology and are further specified in the VCE Psychology study design:

- Develop aims and questions, formulate hypotheses and make predictions
- Plan and undertake investigations
- Comply with safety and ethical guidelines
- Conduct investigations to collect and record data
- Analyse and evaluate data, methods and scientific models
- Draw evidence-based conclusions
- Communicate and explain scientific ideas