



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Psychology of Exercise

Unit code: F4S9 35

Unit purpose: This Unit introduces candidates to the psychological benefits of exercise and to intervention strategies based on client profiling.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Evaluate exercise programmes and explain the psychological benefits of exercise.
- 2 Evaluate psychological symptoms to create client profiles.
- 3 Implement and review a suitable intervention strategy.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: There is no specialist prior knowledge required but candidates will usually have two higher grades (A—C) or equivalent or relevant work experience. Ultimately entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the SCQF level 6 Higher Core Skills of Written and Oral Communication, *Information Technology*, *Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment: Assessment (1): **It is recommended that the entire content of Outcome 1 be assessed by a supervised, closed-book, restricted response question paper.** The nature of this paper therefore should contain questions that allow the candidate to demonstrate their knowledge of the various psychological benefits that exercise has. The candidate may be asked specifically about the benefits covered in the teaching material and the underlying mechanisms of such benefits. It may be that certain aspects of Outcome 2 will also be covered within the question paper: this should allow the candidate to appreciate the link between the needs of certain populations and the perceived benefits of appropriate exercise interventions.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment (2): **Outcome 3 and elements of Outcome 2 may be assessed by setting a case study.** It is possible that this could be theoretical in nature, or, if the centre prefers, the candidate will be required to find a client to work with. Given background information pertaining to the client, the candidate should be able to recommend a procedure designed to gather psychometric data from the client. This information should then be used to profile the client and advise an intervention strategy. It is expected that the intervention should be based around an exercise programme in which the candidate should offer a rationale for their chosen content of the programme. This may include, exercise intensity, frequency, objectives, dynamics, group or individual exercise and re-evaluation.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Evaluate exercise programmes and explain the psychological benefits of exercise

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Psychological benefits of exercise
 - Influence on anxiety
 - Influence on depression
- ◆ Lifestyles
- ◆ Mechanisms of such benefits

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the psychological benefits of exercise for a population with a sedentary lifestyle
- ◆ evaluate an exercise programme and how it can reduce symptoms of anxiety on an individual
- ◆ evaluate an exercise programme and how it can alleviate symptoms of depression on an individual
- ◆ describe the mechanisms of such benefits

Assessment Guidelines

Due to the specific nature of the Evidence Requirements for this Outcome it is advisable that this is assessed by a supervised, closed-book, open response question paper. It may also be that certain elements of Outcome 2 could be covered in the same question paper, ie questions relating to symptoms of anxiety and depression could allow the candidate to demonstrate their appreciation of client profiling.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Psychology of Exercise

Outcome 2

Evaluate psychological symptoms to create client profiles

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Purpose of client profiling
- ◆ Measurement devices and interpret results
- ◆ Recognition of symptoms
 - Anxiety
 - Stress
 - Depression

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain why a client will be profiled before an intervention is offered
- ◆ evaluate two different psychological symptoms to select and apply an appropriate measurement device
- ◆ analyse the results obtained to create client profiles

Assessment Guidelines

Elements of this Outcome could be assessed in combination with Outcome 1. This could be possible by the inclusion of questions that relate to the rationale behind client profiling and nominating specific tests designed to target corresponding psychological components, for example *The Profile of Mood Scale* would be selected to measure mood. The remaining elements of the Outcome could be combined with the assessment for Outcome 3. It is advised therefore that by setting a case study or by working with a client, the candidate is required to select an appropriate test for the client and be able to interpret results from this test.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Psychology of Exercise

Outcome 3

Implement and review a suitable intervention strategy

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Intervention strategies
- ◆ Evaluation of effectiveness
- ◆ Methods of ensuring adherence
- ◆ Analysis of results

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ create a detailed exercise based intervention strategy including a progression plan designed to address symptoms of psychological conditions
- ◆ explain how to evaluate the effectiveness of two such intervention strategies and comment on their desired aim
- ◆ describe possible methods that could be incorporated to help ensure adherence to the exercise programmes
- ◆ critically analyse and justify the intervention programmes effectiveness using a range of results

Assessment Guidelines

Having profiled a client and interpreted the results from the profiling procedure in Outcome 2, the candidate is now in a position to devise an intervention strategy, which should be based around an exercise programme and designed to target the symptoms highlighted by the profiling process. It is recommended that the programme includes details of exercise intensity, frequency, group dynamics, the inclusion of music, venue, goals and other factors that may be considered motivational or de-motivating depending on the client profile.

Whilst it may not be practical to apply their intervention to a real-life client, the candidate could comment on expected progress and how progress will be reflected by the re-evaluation stage. This could be done by use of a Case Study showing a possible Outcome of an intervention programme. The candidate should also be able to appreciate the concept of adherence and describe methods that they have incorporated to ensure that their client has the best possible chance of adhering to their intervention.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F4S9 35
Unit title: Psychology of Exercise
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Psychology of Exercise

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit offers an introductory appreciation of the psychological benefits of exercise and how such benefits can be maximised when working with a client. It aims to provide the candidate with the skills and knowledge to apply profiling techniques and intervention strategies in the industry. It may also be emphasised to the candidate however, the sensitive nature of psychological profiling and the objectives of a practising psychologist when working with clients that may be considered vulnerable.

Another primary aim of the Unit is to highlight the possible psychological benefits of exercise to a non-clinical population and to those with clinical conditions such as depression or stress related disorders. Within this area the candidate may appreciate the multi-dimensional nature of such benefits and that set objectives will vary between clients depending on initial profiling results and that an intervention may be appropriate for one client while being detrimental for another.

Candidates may be able to use knowledge gained from other Units to enhance their understanding of the mechanisms of such benefits and whether these mechanisms may be cognitive, somatic or social. Other areas such as quality of sleep, obesity, perceived competence and barriers to exercise may provide supplementary material.

On a more practical level the candidates will experience the concept of profiling a client and applying an intervention strategy according to the results of the profiling process. This should be exercise based in nature with emphasis on appropriate content to the needs of the client. Again, this will vary according to the fitness level and psychological profile of the client and should incorporate concepts such as perceived competence and perception of control.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

It is recommended that this Unit is delivered sequentially from Outcome 1 to Outcome 3. As mentioned previously Outcome 2 could successfully be split and included within assessments designed to cover Outcomes 1 and 3 respectively. Outcome 1 and elements of Outcome 2 could be delivered by classroom based material with possibilities for guided learning and discovery learning. The remaining elements of Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 are more practical in nature and lend itself well to group-work and candidate-led investigation. Knowledge and skills from this Unit may be useful in contributing towards other Units and the Graded Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Psychology of Exercise

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In order to develop the Core Skills mentioned early in the Unit specification the following opportunities could be taken:

Written Communication — candidates will have the opportunity to develop written communication through the answers given in both suggested assessments. This may be in the form of restricted response or a justification for a detailed recommendation.

Oral Communication — much of the profiling techniques covered in Outcome 2 will involve question and response sessions between client and practitioner, thereby providing the opportunity to develop oral communication.

Information Technology — candidates are encouraged to conduct background reading regarding the general subject or investigate alternative profiling techniques. This may involve CD-ROM or internet based activities.

Problem Solving — candidates will be shown how to, and through practice, be expected to be able to interpret results from profiling activities and recommend suitable interventions based on such data.

Working with Others — group work will form the basis of class discussions and allow results from profiling techniques to be shared amongst the group. One must be sensitive however to the confidential nature of results gained from psychological profiling.

Open learning

It is possible that this Unit may lend itself to an open learning style of delivery. It would be recommended that candidates could be directed to relevant areas of study to prepare them for the initial assessment. For the latter assessment a case study could be set or the candidate may be able to secure a client to work with in an applied context.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Psychology of Exercise

The field of psychology correctly considers 'Sports Science' and 'Exercise Science' as two separate areas of study. In your HNC year therefore you will be introduced to *Psychology of Exercise* and in your HND year the more sports orientated aspects of psychology and athletic training will be covered in *Psychological Skills Training in Sport*.

This year the Outcomes that you cover are:

- 1 Evaluate exercise programmes and explain the psychological benefits of exercise.
- 2 Evaluate psychological symptoms to create client profiles.
- 3 Implement and review a suitable intervention strategy.

During Outcome 1 you will be introduced to the psychological benefits that exercise may have on general and clinical populations. This will help you add to the physical reasons why exercise is recommended over a sedentary lifestyle if you go on to work in the industry. Knowing the mechanisms behind such benefits will also display your depth of knowledge and ability to refer and relate to other areas of study and consider exercise training more holistically.

You will also be able to recognise psychological symptoms of depression and anxiety and understand how these conditions may be improved through exercise intervention. This concept will be covered in Outcome 2 where you will learn how to profile clients with clinical conditions as a means of suggesting an intervention level and charting progress.

Outcome 3 leads on from what you have learned thus far and you will be expected to interpret the results of a psychological profile and make recommendations from it. This is likely to take the form of an exercise programme that should be tailored to suit the specific needs of the client. It is important therefore that you understand that while certain exercise modes may be very beneficial to one client, they could be deleterious to another. This Unit therefore aims to help you make the correct recommendations appropriate to specific client needs.

It is likely that delivery will initially be lecture style, possibly with Presentation Software where you should organise your notes and study material to prepare you for assessment. The latter part of the Unit may involve group discussions and practical demonstrations of how to psychologically profile a client and possible Case Study work. From the results of this profile you should, by then be able to design a suitable exercise programme: remember that the aim of this programme may not be physical fitness but rather improvement in psychological symptoms.

General information for candidates (cont)

Assessment for this Unit

This Unit will naturally be delivered and assessed from Outcome 1 progressing logically through to Outcome 3. Outcome 2 may be split and included within assessments designed to cover Outcomes 1 and 3 respectively.

Outcome 1 and elements of Outcome 2 may be delivered by classroom based material with possibilities for guided learning and discovery learning that will be relevant to the assessment. You will be required to complete a **restricted response question paper** to complete the assessment for these Outcomes.

It is likely that the remaining elements of the Outcome may be combined with assessment for Outcome 3. It may be therefore that by setting a **case study or by working with a client**, the candidate is required to select an appropriate test for the client and be able to interpret results from this test. Having profiled a client and interpreted the results from the profiling procedure in Outcome 2, the candidate is now in a position to devise an intervention strategy, which should be based around an exercise programme and designed to target the symptoms highlighted by the profiling process.

Core Skills:

There are opportunities to develop the SCQF level 6 Higher Core Skills of Written and Oral Communication, *Information Technology*, *Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.