



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

CODE F5B4 10

COURSE Psychology (Intermediate 1)

SUMMARY

This Unit will enable candidates to gain an understanding of a number of psychological processes, which individuals experience, by studying specified topics from the key Domains of Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology. Candidates have the opportunity to develop an understanding of the following key psychological processes: self-concept and learning theories. Different ways of explaining these behaviours are considered, as well as the ways in which psychological knowledge is used in practice, in everyday life.

For those new to the subject the Unit should stimulate interest and enjoyment, and may serve as an introduction to further study within the discipline.

As part of Intermediate 1 Psychology Course, the Unit provides suitable preparation for subsequent Units and for progression to Intermediate 2 Psychology. Whether as part of a Course or on a free-standing basis, the Unit may offer preparation for employment or career advancement; alternatively, it may be studied simply for interest. The topics for study are likely to be of relevance to candidates personally, socially and professionally.

OUTCOMES

1 Describe specified topics from developmental, cognitive and physiological psychology.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. There are no formal entry requirements, however, it would be beneficial if candidates had achieved the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ a Standard Grade Social Subject at Foundation level or relevant Access Units
- ◆ **and** Standard Grade English at Foundation level or Communication at Access 3

Administrative Information

Superclass: PK

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*).

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Opportunity to deliver aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Describe specified topics from developmental, cognitive and physiological psychology.

Performance Criteria

- (a) State key features of psychological theories, concepts and research evidence relevant to the specified topics.
- (b) Describe the application of psychological knowledge from the specified topics.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the appendix to the statement of standards

Written an/or oral evidence is required to demonstrate the achievement of the Outcome and Performance Criteria for the Unit. The evidence must be produced under closed-book, supervised conditions within a time limit of **30 minutes**.

As candidates will increase their knowledge, understanding and skills throughout their study, assessment should take place towards the end of the Unit. The use of a cut-off score may be appropriate for this assessment.

The instrument of assessment will provide opportunities for both Performance Criteria to be fulfilled, by means of sampling across the range of content of the Unit. The pattern of sampling of content will vary from one instrument to the next, and each instrument will sample from the two topics. Thus, sampling of content for assessment should be relatively unpredictable, and candidates must, therefore, learn all of the Unit content in order to be able to answer questions on any part of it.

Each assessment will allow candidates to generate evidence which covers:

- ◆ **one** topic which covers all three domains
- ◆ **one** application
- ◆ relevant research for each topic
- ◆ accurate use of psychological terminology

If a re-assessment is required, it should contain a different sample from the range of content.

The standard to be applied, breadth of coverage and an appropriate cut-off score are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank (NAB) items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

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. It is suggested that approximately 16 – 20 hours be allocated to each of the two topics.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Content and context for this Unit can be found in the appendix to the statement of standards.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

An ethical approach to learning and teaching

Teachers/lecturers should be aware that some topics may be sensitive for individual candidates, based on stages of development or personal experiences, and discretion should be used. To this end, care should be taken in the delivery of material and sensitivity should be shown. Candidates should not be made to feel pressurised to disclose personal information, for example in discussions which may relate to health, relationships and emotions, teachers/lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress. The power relationship that, of necessity, prevails in the classroom, should be recognised and handled with care.

Such concerns are particularly relevant to delivery methods involving classroom research demonstrations, and teachers/lecturers should be familiar with two sources of ethical guidance: the *BPS Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines* (2000), at www.bps.org.uk; and the *ATP Guide to Ethics for Teachers and Students of Psychology at Pre-Degree Level* (2003), the latter being included in the SQA document *Research Investigation Guidance for Higher Psychology* (revised 2005).

Resources for learning and teaching

A wide range of good quality resources for studying psychology is readily available, including textbooks, candidate journals, videos, CD-ROMs, commercially-produced resource packs, websites and online materials. A number of published introductory textbooks are at a suitable level for this Unit and the Course, and teachers/lecturers may wish to recommend one of these as a set text, or to obtain a set, either to issue to candidates or for use in class. However, it is unlikely that any single book will fully cover all content for the Unit or Course, therefore, teachers/lecturers should ensure that additional resources are available for candidates, eg a number of single copies of different texts, copies of handouts/worksheets from journals or resource packs (ie resources that are designated suitable for photocopying in the copyright information), centre-produced learning packs, teachers'/lecturers' own handouts. Some materials for other Units/Courses may be adapted to support this Unit, at the teacher's/lecturer's discretion.

As well as these resources for classroom/homework learning, teachers/lecturers may enhance the variety of their delivery by means of, for example, a visit to a science museum, a nursery/crèche /primary school, or to a university psychology department, attending a revision or coursework conference, use of invited speakers.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

Delivery of the Unit

In this Unit two topics will be studied: self-concept and learning theories. As Intermediate 1 and 2 Units are sometimes delivered in bi-level classes, this guidance is identical to that provided for this Unit at Intermediate 2, however, teachers/lecturers should adjust learning activities to suit the needs of learners at both levels, where applicable.

To help candidates achieve the Unit Outcomes/Performance Criteria and the Course assessment objectives, where relevant, it is suggested that teachers/lecturers' delivery of content address the activities below, for each topic. The nature/nurture debate should underpin the teaching of this Unit.

- ◆ Introduction to the three Domains, **Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology** which are covered within each topic. For example briefly introduce key features of **Developmental Psychology**, as a starting point for studying **self-concept** eg, factors affecting the development of self-concept. **These introductions will not be assessed.**
- ◆ Start with **definitions** of key terms relevant to the topic, and use the terminology throughout the delivery of the topic, including ensuring that candidates adopt these terms in their own work.
- ◆ Explain relevant **theories/models/concepts**. These should normally be presented in chronological order, ie following historical development of evidence and theory, and for most topics should refer to both **classic** and **contemporary** literature. For example, in the **learning theories** topic, candidates should be familiar with classical and recent research and theory (as well as, of course, the key developments in between).
- ◆ For many topics, a variety of psychological explanations will be relevant. For example, in studying **learning theories**, candidates will encounter elements of behaviourist theory and these will crop up again under, say, self-concept and the influences of parents. The teacher/lecturer should identify the strengths and weaknesses of each explanation rather than presenting one single explanation as being correct in relation to each given topic.
- ◆ Refer to a number of relevant **research studies**; study **some** of these in more detail, such that candidates can describe aims, methods, and conclusions, and can evaluate the research.
 - to **describe**: Who did the research? When? What was done? Who were the participants? What were the results?
 - to **interpret**: What conclusions can be drawn?

Research studies can thus provide an ideal problem-solving activity: candidates are given a brief description of research (eg from a textbook, or learning pack), and, in groups, identify aims, methods, and conclusions, plus various other elements of the research. This can be done regularly, perhaps one or two examples for each topic, so that candidates develop a systematic approach to understanding the role of research in psychology. For candidates taking the Course, relevance to the *Psychology: Investigating Behaviour* Unit should be made clear. Topic areas vary in the amount of research that has actually been conducted, however, the teaching of each topic should be supported with reference to a number of research studies.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

- ◆ Conduct **classroom demonstrations**, wherever the subject matter lends itself to this. Such activities not only bring topics ‘alive’, but also support learning of research methods; they may also contribute to the teaching and learning of the Unit *Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Intermediate 2)*. They also provide opportunities for the teacher/lecturer to model research procedures, including the consideration of ethical principles; for example, when introducing any classroom research demonstration, the teacher/lecturer (in the role of *researcher*) should obtain informed consent of candidates (in the role of *participants*); another illustration of ethical issues would occur with the use of a self-concept or self-esteem rating scale, which would need to be treated sensitively.
- ◆ Class and homework tasks may be set, to incorporate structured answers for each topic, reflecting the types of answers required in internal (Unit) and external (Course) assessments.
- ◆ Psychological principles could also be applied to assist candidates with **revision strategies and examination techniques**. For example, candidates may be encouraged to use memory aids to learn material for the Unit (and Course) assessment, and to apply principles of:
 - self- and time-management to reduce anxiety (cognitive approach)
 - self-reinforcement (behaviourist approach)
 - peer-collaborative strategies (social approach) to increase motivation for revision
 - relaxation and physical exercise to reduce stress (biological approach)

If this Unit is studied first as part of the Intermediate 1 Course, then, having learned such strategies in this Unit, candidates taking the Course will also enjoy the benefit of practising these strategies for every Unit assessment, thus establishing good study habits.

- ◆ Newspaper articles or website news articles on **topical issues** may be used to stimulate discussion. For example, items on parents’ influences on their children often appear in the media; such issues might be discussed in relation to the development of the self-concept. Such activities will need to be dealt with sensitively by teachers/lecturers.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Through Unit and Course assessments, candidates will be required to answer written and oral questions. This will give the opportunity to develop aspects of Written and Oral Communication.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Instruments of assessment

Teachers/lecturers may devise their own assessment tasks and the National Assessment Bank will provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The most appropriate means of obtaining evidence of attainment of the Outcome of this Unit will be a question paper comprising a mixture of multiple choice, restricted response and close questions, and may be based on stimulus material.

Timing

Where assessment evidence is gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the Unit, care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and re-assessment if required.

Weighting of Outcomes

Candidates' performance in this Unit is assessed holistically, ie fulfilment of Unit requirements is assessed by means of a single percentage score for the Unit.

At Intermediate 2 level, skills of analysis and evaluation are required, whereas at Intermediate 1 level only knowledge and understanding are required. Knowledge and understanding can be applied to familiar contexts, which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process. Instruments of assessment should, therefore, comprise questions/items that demand knowledge and understanding. In the Course assessment a greater depth of knowledge and understanding is required.

Added value

The Unit assessment provides evidence of the specific level of achievement demanded by the Unit. However, the Unit assessment may allow candidates to demonstrate *added value*, ie performance beyond the minimum standard required for achievement of the Unit. Therefore, evidence gathered for internal Unit assessment may, along with other evidence, be used for Course grade estimates and for appeals for external Course assessment. For details of the Grade Descriptions for external assessment, and further information on *added value*, please refer to the Intermediate 1 Psychology Course Arrangements documentation, including the Course Assessment Specification.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

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).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

APPENDIX: Content and context

This appendix is within the statement of standards, and demonstrates the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

This Unit has the same content as *Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 2)*; however, the Units are differentiated by Outcomes, Performance Criteria and Evidence Requirements. It follows that in a bi-level class, while candidates will cover the same content, Intermediate 1 candidates will not be expected to master it to the same depth of knowledge and understanding as Intermediate 2 candidates. Analytical and evaluative skills are **not** required at Intermediate 1 level.

Three of the six core Domains are covered within each topic: Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology; the focus is on understanding individual processes. **Two** topics are studied and each topic has several specified areas, at least one of which is an applied aspect of the topic. All areas of each topic include theory, concepts, and research evidence. The amount of content in each area of the topic will vary. The nature/nurture debate should underpin the teaching of this Unit.

Candidates should be briefly introduced to the three Domains; Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology. **These introductions will not feature in assessments.**

Domain: Developmental Psychology

Definition of development; types of psychological development (physical-motor, cognitive, emotional, social, etc); traditional emphasis on child development has given way to the contemporary lifespan approach.

Domain: Cognitive Psychology

Definition of cognition; the scope of cognitive psychology (ie attention, perception, memory, language, problem-solving, etc); its importance for learning processes, eg memory and problem-solving, the current information-processing approach. Both cognitive and behavioural aspects of learning are considered. Themes to be highlighted are: the contrast between the behaviourist emphasis on observable behaviour and cognitive emphasis on internal mental processes; ‘nature’ influences in cognitive-developmental approach, ‘nurture’ influences in cognitive and behaviourist approaches.

Domain: Physiological Psychology

There is no specific topic associated with this domain. However, an overview of the role of the brain and nervous system in influencing thoughts, feelings and behaviour, the influence of evolutionary and genetic factors on behaviour.

Examples of processes studied in physiological psychology, such as emotion, motivation, sleep and dreams, and some forms of atypical behaviour.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

Topic: self-concept

- ◆ The nature and components of the self-concept: self-image, self-esteem, ideal self, self-efficacy, social identification
- ◆ Development of the components of the self-concept: research studies of self-concept development in early childhood, self recognition, such as rouge test (Lewis and Brooks-Gunn), egocentrism, studies demonstrating decentring or theory of adaptation of schema (Piaget)
- ◆ Factors affecting development of the self-concept in adolescence: peers, media, parents (including Coopersmith and Erikson)

Topic: learning theories

- ◆ Classical and Operant conditioning: the work of Pavlov and Watson, classical conditioning process of learning by association, the work of Skinner, process of learning through consequences of actions, ie reinforcement or punishment, the effectiveness of reinforcement and punishment
- ◆ Social learning theory (SLT): the research studies of Bandura, processes of observational learning, imitation and identification, role of cognition in these processes, SLT as an explanation of aggression and gender roles
- ◆ Illustrations of reinforcement, punishment and SLT processes from everyday life