



## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Intermediate 1)

**CODE** F5B5 10

**COURSE** Psychology (Intermediate 1)

### SUMMARY

This Unit will enable candidates to gain an understanding of two psychological processes which individuals experience, by studying selected topics from the key Domains of the Psychology of Individual Differences and Social Psychology. Candidates have the opportunity to develop an understanding of two selected topics from the following key psychological processes: personality; group processes; non-verbal communication; and altruism. Explanations of 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 selected for study are likely to be of relevance to candidates personally, socially and professionally.

### OUTCOMES

1 Describe selected topics from social psychology and the psychology of individual differences.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. There are no formal 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

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### Administrative Information

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT**      Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (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**

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit Specification.

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards

### UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (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 selected topics from social psychology and the psychology of individual differences.

#### Performance Criteria

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

#### EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

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

Written and/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 topic of personality in individual differences and from the three optional topics in social psychology. Thus, sampling of content for assessment should be relatively unpredictable, and candidates must, therefore, learn all of the Unit content in relation to the topics chosen 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 from either domain
- ◆ **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 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: The Individual in the Social Context (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 10–12 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 statements 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, emotions etc, 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](http://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 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: The Individual in the Social Context (Intermediate 1)

#### Delivery of the Unit

In this Unit **two** topics will be taught. There is one mandatory topic, **personality**, from the Domain of Psychology of Individual differences, and teachers/lecturers will choose **one** topic from the following three, **group processes, non-verbal communication and altruism** from within the Domain of Social Psychology.

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 every topic. 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 1, however, teachers/lecturers should adjust learning activities to suit the needs of learners at both levels, where applicable.

- ◆ Introduction to the **Domain** within which the topic is located, for example briefly introduce key features of **social psychology**, as a starting point for studying **altruism**; the psychological processes of altruism, interaction and influence between individuals and groups. The impact of the social environment on individual experience and behaviour. Social psychology addresses issues of interpersonal and inter-group perception, interaction and influence. These introductions will **not** be assessed. The nature/nurture debate should underpin the teaching of this Unit.
- ◆ 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 **group processes** topic, candidates should be familiar with Tuckman's (1965) idea of stages of group development, through to recent research and theory as well as the key developments in between.
- ◆ For many topics, a variety of psychological explanations will be relevant. For example, in studying **non-verbal communication**, candidates will encounter explanations which take an innate or biological perspective as opposed to those who attribute non-verbal communication to socio-cultural factors. The teacher/lecturer should help candidates identify the strengths and weaknesses of each explanation rather than presenting one single explanation as being correct in relation to each given topic.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Intermediate 1)

- ◆ Refer to a number of relevant **research studies**; study **some** of these in more detail, such that candidates can describe aims, methods, sample, procedure, results and conclusions, and can interpret and evaluate the research.
  - to **describe**: Who did the research? When? What was done? Who were the participants? What were the results?
  - to **interpret**: What do the results mean? ie in relation to existing theory(ies).
- ◆ Conduct **classroom experimental demonstrations**, wherever the subject matter lends itself to this: eg *group processes* can be demonstrated by giving groups specific tasks to complete, eg construct tower/bridge from materials provided. A participant observer can be used to record interpersonal interactions, roles and group development. 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 1)*. 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 an attributional style rating scale, which, because of its role in mental health, would need to be treated sensitively.
- ◆ Newspaper articles or website news articles on **topical issues** may be used to stimulate discussion. For example, items on rescue operations (at sea, house fires, etc) often appear in the media; such issues might be discussed in relation to group processes and altruism. Such activities will need to be dealt with sensitively by teachers/lecturers.
- ◆ Class and homework tasks may be set, to incorporate structured answers for each topic, reflecting the types of answers required in internal and external assessments.
- ◆ Psychological principles should also be applied to assist candidates with revision strategies and examination techniques. For example, candidates may be encouraged 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.

### 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 Written and Oral Communication.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

**UNIT**      Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (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.

Whereas at Intermediate 2 level Outcomes of analysis and evaluation are required, 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.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Intermediate 1)

#### 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.

#### 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

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

### UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (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: The Individual in the Social Context (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.

**Two** of the six core Domains are covered: Social Psychology and the Psychology of Individual Differences. The focus is on psychological processes in the context of social interaction. **Two** topics are studied: one mandatory topic from Individual Differences, and **one** other topic from Social Psychology. 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.

**Domain:** Individual Differences.

Candidates should be introduced to the Domain of individual differences: definitions and examples of individual differences; scope of the Domain; dominance of psychometric approach in the fields of Personality and intelligence, and its applications (eg in education and the workplace); the area of Psychology within which the study of atypical/abnormal behaviour and psychological disorder is located, and which, therefore, gives rise to wide application in therapy; influence of individual differences in virtually every other area of psychology, eg developmental, physiological, cognitive processes. **This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.**

**Topic:** personality (mandatory topic)

- ◆ Historical theory of personality: Freud's psychoanalytical approach, development of personality structuring in terms of the id, ego, superego. Psychosexual stages of development should be explained; oral, anal, phallic, latent, genital. Emphasis should be placed on the link between **fixation** at any stage and personality development, eg oral fixation, anal retention, etc.
- ◆ Multitrait theories of personality; Eysenck, introversion-extraversion and neuroticism-stability, Costa and McCrae, the Big 5 (OCEAN) **O**penness, **C**onscientiousness, **E**xtraversion, **A**greeableness, **N**euroticism.
- ◆ Types and uses of personality tests: the importance of validity and reliability\*.

*\*Full explanations of the different types of reliability and validity are not required. Rather, the focus should be on basic principles, ie the need for a test to be consistent in its results, and to measure what it is claimed to measure.*

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

### UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Intermediate 1)

#### APPENDIX: Content and context (cont)

**Domain:** Social Psychology (**one** topic to be studied from this Domain)

Candidates should be introduced to the Domain of **social psychology**. Social psychology deals with the impact of the social environment on individual experience and behaviour; social psychology addresses processes of interpersonal and intergroup perception, interaction and influence.

Many aspects of social psychology have immediate relevance to major societal issues and problems (eg racism, anti-social behaviour, relationship breakdown) and numerous applications in these areas, as well as extensive research and applications in organisational behaviour. **This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.**

**Topic:** group processes

- ◆ Definition of groups; maintenance of group norms through conformity, factors affecting group cohesiveness, characteristics of formal and informal groups.
- ◆ Group developmental processes: Tuckman's five stages, ie forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.
- ◆ Factors in group decision-making; evidence of group polarisation (Stoner, 1961) and groupthink (Janus, 1932).

**Topic:** non-verbal communication (NVC)

- ◆ Types of NVC; facial expressions, posture, gesture, paralanguage, proximity, etc; differences between verbal and non-verbal communication, functions of NVC, eg to aid speech, to replace speech (gestures), to signal attitudes (size of pupils), to signal emotional states (Hess).
- ◆ Nature and nurture factors in the origins and development of NVC; evidence of innate factors in universal facial expressions of emotion (Ekman)
- ◆ Awareness of cultural differences and gender differences in NVC.

**Topic:** altruism

- ◆ Definition of altruism; research studies into bystander behaviour in emergencies to include Latane & Darley's studies on Bystander Apathy, diffusion of responsibility and pluralistic ignorance, victim characteristics should refer to Piliavin's 'Good Samaritan' study.
- ◆ Theories of altruistic behaviour; biological approach with emphasis on kin selection, psychological theories, including cost-reward analysis and empathy-altruism
- ◆ Strategies for encouraging altruism, eg reinforcement and modelling.