



Higher Psychology — draft Course rationale and summary

May 2011



This edition: May 2011, draft version 1.0

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ
Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

www.sqa.org.uk

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2011

Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Course rationale | 1 |
| Background | 1 |
| Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles | 2 |
| Purpose and aims of the Course | 2 |
| Information about typical learners who might do the Course | 3 |
| Course summary | 4 |
| Course outline | 4 |
| Course structure and conditions of award | 5 |
| Assessment | 6 |

Course rationale

Background

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

Learning in Psychology draws on the principles and practice for health and wellbeing¹ as well as learning in the social studies and science curriculum areas.

Psychology provides a context for learning that is outside traditional subject boundaries. Learners have the opportunity to explore aspects of human behaviour which may offer understanding of factors that can influence individual wellbeing.

This Course develops learners' knowledge and understanding of the mind and behaviour. Learners will use communication and research skills that increase their knowledge and understanding of factors that influence human behaviour.

Learners will examine and explain human behaviour in different contexts. They will also use thinking and reasoning skills to develop as successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors. These thinking and reasoning skills have value for learners in both personal and professional contexts.

A range of skills, including literacy and numeracy skills that are important for learning, life and work, are also developed through study in this area.

Purpose and aims of the Course

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. As a research-based subject, psychology provides an opportunity to conduct practical research with human participants.

The main purpose of the Course is to enable learners to develop an understanding of the human mind and behaviour and to enhance the learner's interest in psychology.

The Course aims to:

- ◆ develop an understanding of the role of evidence in explaining human behaviour
- ◆ develop and use thinking skills to investigate and analyse the human mind and behaviour
- ◆ develop research skills
- ◆ raise awareness of ethical and scientific standards

¹ Health and wellbeing principles and practice paper
www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/healthandwellbeing/principlesandpractice/index.asp

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

This Course is suitable for all learners with an interest in finding out more about the human mind and behaviour.

Learners will find that the Course provides opportunities to develop their research and thinking skills and knowledge of psychology by extending breadth, challenge and application.

The following skills are developed in this Course: analysing and evaluating psychological concepts and approaches used to explain human behaviour; analysing and evaluating psychological research evidence; practical research skills; writing psychological reports; and numeracy skills through the use and analysis of statistics.

Draft

Course summary

Course title: Higher Psychology

SCQF level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course outline

Mandatory Units

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Psychology: Research Methods (Higher) | (6 SCQF credit points) |
| Psychology: Mind and Behaviour (Higher) | (6 SCQF credit points) |
| Psychology: The Social Context (Higher) | (6 SCQF credit points) |

Course assessment

(6 SCQF credit points)

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for 40 additional programmed hours to allow preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

Course structure and conditions of award

This Course aims to develop the skills that will enable learners to analyse and develop understanding of psychological approaches to explaining the human mind and behaviour.

The central theme of the Course is to investigate psychological knowledge and research which promotes an understanding of the mind and behaviour. Learners will analyse and evaluate research evidence, drawing on the main approaches and research methods in psychology.

Options within Units offer personalisation and choice among the areas of psychology research and their applications. Classic and contemporary research studies and themes may provide crossover points with other Units and opportunities for integration of Units and assessment.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a variety of ways.

Psychology: Research Methods (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will analyse and evaluate a range of research methods used in psychology. Learners will develop practical research skills and report writing skills used in psychology. Learners will understand ethical guidelines and analyse numerical data promoting numeracy and communication skills.

Psychology: Mind and Behaviour (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will investigate psychological approaches and a range of topics to explain psychological evidence that contributes to our understanding of the human mind and behaviour. Learners will also explain how psychology can be applied to improve wellbeing.

Psychology: The Social Context (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will investigate how the social context shapes behaviour. Learners will investigate social behaviour and psychological explanations for influences on behaviour in a range of social contexts. Learners will analyse and evaluate evidence to explain how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals are developed through interaction.

This Course has been constructed to facilitate a hierarchical arrangement with Psychology (National 5) at SCQF level 5.

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Assessment

Information about assessment standards for the Course will be included in the *Course Assessment Specification* which will provide full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in Unit specifications.

They will be assessed pass/fail within centres.

SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units will be provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)². At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Higher Psychology Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

This is assessed by a [project](#)³ and a [question paper](#)⁴. The project gives learners the opportunity to apply psychological research techniques learned in the Course. Learners must carry out a practical research task and take ethical guidelines into account.

The question paper will require demonstration of retention and depth of knowledge and understanding and application of skills from across the Units.

² Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

³ See link above for definition.

⁴ See link above for definition.