



Psychology (National 5)

Draft National Course Specification



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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

Contents

Course outline	1
Mandatory Units	1
Recommended entry	1
Progression	2
Equality and inclusion	2
Rationale	3
Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles	3
Purpose and aims of the Course	4
Information about typical learners who might do the Course	4
Course structure and conditions of award	5
Course structure	5
Conditions of award	5
Skills and knowledge	6
Assessment	7
Unit assessment	7
Course assessment	7
Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work	9
Administrative information	10

Course outline

Course title:	Psychology (National 5)
SCQF:	level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
Course code:	to be advised

Mandatory Units

Psychology: Research Methods (National 5) **6 SCQF credit points**

Psychology: Mind and Behaviour (National 5) **6 SCQF credit points**

Psychology: The Social Context (National 5) **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.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ People and Society¹ (National 4) Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ Biology (National 4) Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ social studies or science Courses or relevant component Units at SCQF level 4

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes will be given in the *Course Support Notes*.

¹ This is a new development. The Course title is being discussed.

Progression

This Course or its components may provide progression to:

- ◆ other SQA qualifications in social studies, social science or related areas
- ◆ further study, training or employment

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information please refer to the *Course Support Notes* and the *Course Assessment Specification*.

Rationale

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 wellbeing² as well as learning in the social studies and science curriculum areas.

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.³

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.

² Health and wellbeing principles and practice paper
www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/healthandwellbeing/principlesandpractice/index.asp

³ Overview of qualifications in the health and wellbeing curriculum area (BE5544 July 2010) 'Broad aims of learning in health and wellbeing' page 2
www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42549.2794.html

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 for researching human behaviour

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

The Psychology Course is suitable for all learners with an interest in finding out more about the human mind and behaviour. Generally learners will have little or no prior experience of studying psychology but experiences and outcomes from the broad general education and/or life experience provide a good foundation for learners to progress into this qualification.

Learners should be interested in developing their thinking, research and communication skills, either to pursue study and career options related to psychology or to broaden their learning experience.

The following skills are developed in this Course: using psychological concepts and approaches to explain human behaviour; analysing psychological research evidence; writing psychological reports; numeracy through the use and interpretation of simple statistics; and communicating and applying psychological knowledge and understanding.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

The central theme of the Course is to investigate psychological research methods and evidence to promote an understanding of the mind and behaviour. Learners will investigate, discuss and analyse human behaviour and draw on evidence from the main approaches and research methods in psychology.

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

The Units are designed to stand alone or be taught in any sequence. Options within Units offer personalisation and choice among the areas of psychology research and their applications.

Psychology: Research Methods (National 5)

In this Unit, learners will be introduced to a range of research methods used in psychology. Learners will develop practical research skills and report writing skills used in psychology. Learners will gain an awareness of ethical guidelines and work with numerical data promoting numeracy and communication skills.

Psychology: Mind and Behaviour (National 5)

In this Unit, learners will investigate psychological approaches and topics to develop knowledge and understanding of the human mind and behaviour. Learners will also find out about how psychology can be applied to improve wellbeing.

Psychology: The Social Context (National 5)

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 social context. Learners will collect and analyse 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 Higher Psychology (SCQF level 6).

Conditions of award

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.

Skills and knowledge

Full skills and knowledge for the Course will be given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course includes:

- ◆ describe and use psychological concepts, theories and approaches to explain the human mind and behaviour
- ◆ describe the main research methods used in psychology
- ◆ explain the role of evidence in explaining human behaviour
- ◆ analyse psychological research evidence
- ◆ use research skills
- ◆ identify and describe ethical guidelines for psychological research
- ◆ interpret simple statistics used in psychological research
- ◆ use psychological report writing skills
- ◆ communicate and apply psychological knowledge and understanding of human social behaviour

Assessment

Information about assessment 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 the Unit Specification.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

Psychology: Research Methods (National 5)

For this Unit, the learner will plan a research study and justify the choice of methods. Learners will also address ethical issues and be required to interpret basic statistics.

Psychology: Mind and Behaviour (National 5)

For this Unit, the learner will provide evidence of using basic concepts and evidence from research to communicate theoretical views to explain specified topics from the mind and human behaviour.

Psychology: The Social Context (National 5)

For this Unit, the learner will provide evidence of using basic concepts, theories and research evidence to carry out a simple analysis of human social behaviour.

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](#)⁴. 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 this Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ application

⁴ Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

This is assessed through a [project](#)⁵ and [question paper](#)⁶. The project gives learners the opportunity to apply psychological research techniques learned in the Course to carry out a practical research task, taking ethical guidelines into account. The question paper will require demonstration of depth of knowledge and understanding and application of skills from across the Units.

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⁵ Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

⁶ See link above for definition.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

(Note: The information given below reflects the initial thinking on significant opportunities for development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. These may be subject to change as the development process progresses.)

It is expected that learners will also develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that are likely to be appropriate for this Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

1.2 Writing

2 Numeracy

2.3 Information handling

3 Health and wellbeing

3.5 Relationships

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

Published: April 2011 (version 1.0)

Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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