



Higher  
Course Assessment  
Specification



---

# Higher Psychology Course Assessment Specification (C763 76)

**Valid from August 2014**

This edition: April 2016, version 3.0

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this Course Assessment Specification can be downloaded from SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2016

## Course outline

<b>Course title:</b>	Higher Psychology
<b>SCQF level:</b>	6 (24 SCQF credit points)
<b>Course code:</b>	C763 76
<b>Course assessment code:</b>	X763 76

The purpose of the Course Assessment Specification is to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the Course assessment and the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed.

### Course assessment structure

Component 1 — question paper	60 marks
Component 2 — assignment	40 marks
<b>Total marks</b>	<b>100 marks</b>

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course.

### Equality and inclusion

This Course Assessment Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment of this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

# Assessment

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

## Course assessment

SQA will produce and give instructions for the production and conduct of Course assessments based on the information provided in this document.

## Added value

The key purpose of the Course assessment is to assess added value of the Course as well as confirming attainment in the Course and providing a grade. The added value for the Course will 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 assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the Course
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills

This added value consists of a [question paper](#)<sup>1</sup> and an [assignment](#).

The question paper will sample psychological knowledge and understanding from Course Units. Learners will also be required to apply knowledge and understanding to explain human behaviour.

The assignment will require learners to plan, carry out and report on their own psychological research investigation.

## Grading

Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

The Course assessment is graded A–D. The grade is determined on the basis of the total mark for all Course assessments together.

A learner's overall grade will be determined by their performance across the Course assessment.

### Grade description for C

For the award of Grade C, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have

---

<sup>1</sup> Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

demonstrated successful performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

**Grade description for A**

For the award of Grade A, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

**Credit**

To take account of the extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning and integration needed for preparation for external assessment, six SCQF credit points are available in Courses at National 5 and Higher, and eight SCQF credit points in Courses at Advanced Higher. These points will be awarded when a Grade D or better is achieved.

## Structure and coverage of the Course assessment

The Course assessment will consist of two Components: a question paper and an assignment.

### Component 1 — question paper

The purpose of this question paper is to assess learners' use of skills, and their knowledge and understanding of psychological approaches, theories, concepts and topics. Learners are required to use psychological explanations and research evidence to respond to questions.

This question paper will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ analysing and evaluating psychological concepts, theories, approaches and evidence
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of psychology to analyse and explain human behaviour
- ◆ understanding the research process in psychology, including the ability to evaluate methods and explain ethical and scientific standards
- ◆ using research evidence to explain human behaviour
- ◆ interpreting and evaluating descriptive statistics in psychological research

This Component will have 60% of the total marks.

The question paper will have three Sections:

Section 1: Research

Section 2: Individual behaviour

Section 3: Social behaviour

Each section of the question paper will be made up of questions that will sample from the skills, knowledge and understanding described in the 'Further mandatory information on Course coverage' at the end of this document.

Learners must understand what is required in their response to questions that ask them to describe, explain, analyse or evaluate. Learners will need to use or apply their knowledge of psychology, particularly where questions require the response to be related to a given scenario.

There are a total of 20 marks available in each of the three Sections.

- ◆ The mark range for questions within each section will be between 2 and 20 marks.
  - There can be up to five questions within a Section.
  - Questions can have more than one Part.
- ◆ A stimulus may be used with any question.
  - A stimulus can include text, graphs or other information.

## **Component 2 — assignment**

The purpose of this assignment is to assess learners' use of research and communication skills appropriate to psychology. This assignment requires learners to carry out their own primary research, based on a topic they have studied and produce a psychological research report. SQA will provide psychology research briefs, which candidates should review to guide them towards selection of a research topic.

This assignment will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ using research skills to generate, select, organise, interpret, analyse and evaluate information in psychology
- ◆ using communication skills to present information, including a report on psychological research

This assignment will have 40% of the total marks.

## **Setting, conducting and marking of assessment**

### **Question paper**

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Learners will complete this in 2 hours.

### **Controlled assessment — assignment**

This assignment is:

- ◆ Set by SQA.
- ◆ Conducted under some supervision and control.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

### **Setting the assessment**

This assignment is set by SQA.

- ◆ SQA will provide psychology research briefs, which candidates should review to guide them towards selection of a research topic.
- ◆ A word count will be provided.

### **Conducting the assessment**

This assignment is conducted under some supervision and control.

The production of evidence for assessment will be conducted:

- ◆ independently by the learner
- ◆ over a period of time
- ◆ in time to meet a submission date set by SQA

## Further mandatory information on Course coverage

The following gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Higher Psychology Course. Course assessment will involve sampling the skills, knowledge and understanding. This list of skills, knowledge and understanding also provides the basis for the assessment of Units of the Course.

Learners will explain, analyse, evaluate and apply knowledge of psychology.

### Research

- ◆ the stages of the research process
- ◆ ethical issues in terms of current British Psychological Society guidance
- ◆ research methods which must include: field experiment, laboratory experiment, natural experiment, participant and non-participant observation, case study, interview, questionnaire
- ◆ variables: dependent, independent and extraneous
- ◆ sampling methods which must include: opportunity, random, self-selection, systematic, quota and stratified
- ◆ descriptive statistics and their interpretation:
  - mean, median, mode and range and their calculation from a set of data

### Individual behaviour

Learners will cover two topics: one mandatory and one other individual behaviour topic of choice. The mandatory topic is *sleep, dreams and sleep disorders*.

Learners will cover at least three psychological approaches to demonstrate understanding of topics from different psychological points of view.

For the topic of sleep, dreams and sleep disorders, two of the three approaches (the biological and cognitive), are mandatory. The third approach is a matter of choice. For the second Individual behaviour topic, *any* three approaches can be chosen — these may be the same approaches as covered in topic 1, or different approaches.

At least two theories and two studies should be covered for each topic.

### Topic 1: Sleep, dreams and sleep disorders

#### Sleep disorders

- ◆ Explain two sleep disorders and their treatment.

#### Psychological approaches

- ◆ **biological** approach which must include: the role of the brain in sleep; circadian rhythms; non-REM and REM sleep and dreaming
- ◆ **cognitive** approach which must include: sleep to facilitate information processing; sleep schemas; thought processes including irrational thoughts or beliefs in relation



to sleep and dreams

- ◆ one additional approach of choice that explains sleep and dreams using a minimum of three key concepts/features

### **Factors affecting sleep**

- ◆ impact of drugs
- ◆ impact of light

### **Theories**

At least two relevant psychological theories must be covered. These must include:

- ◆ Oswald (1966) Restoration theory of sleep
- ◆ Crick and Mitchison (1986) Reorganisational theory of dreaming

### **Studies**

The aims, methods, results and conclusions of at least two relevant psychological studies must be covered. These must include:

- ◆ Dement, W. and Kleitman, N. (1957). The relation of eye movements during sleep to dream activity: an objective method for the study of dreaming. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 53, 339–46.
- ◆ Czeisler, C. A., Johnson, M. P., Duffy, J. F., Brown, E. N., Ronda, J. M. and Kronauer, R. E. (1990). Exposure to bright light and darkness to treat physiologic maladaptation to night work. *New England Journal of Medicine* 322, 1253–1259.

## **Topic 2: A topic of choice relating to individual behaviour**

### **Psychological approaches**

- ◆ three approaches of choice which can be applied to show psychological understanding of the chosen topic using a minimum of three key concepts/features for each approach

### **Theories**

- ◆ at least two theories relevant to psychological understanding of the chosen topic

### **Studies**

- ◆ the aims, methods, results and conclusions of at least two research studies relevant to psychological understanding of the chosen topic

## **Social behaviour**

Learners will cover two topics: one mandatory and one other social behaviour topic of choice. The mandatory topic is conformity and obedience. Learners will cover psychological concepts and/or theories relevant to the topic. For each topic the concepts and/or theories chosen must enable the learner to show their detailed psychological understanding of the topic.

### **Topic 1: Conformity and obedience**

#### **Psychological concepts and/or theories which must include:**

- ◆ types of conformity which must include: identification; compliance; internalisation
- ◆ factors affecting conformity which must include: normative influence; informational influence; social influence; individual factors; situational factors; cultural factors
- ◆ factors affecting obedience which must include: types of authority; perceived legitimate authority; socialisation; authoritarian parenting; autonomous and agentic levels of behaviour; situational factors
- ◆ strategies for resisting social pressure/coercion which must include: responsibility for own actions; moral reasoning and awareness of own values; questioning motives of others including advertisers and peer groups; disobedient models

#### **Studies**

The aims, methods, results and conclusions of at least two relevant psychological studies which must include:

- ◆ Mori, K, and Arai, M (2010) *No need to fake it: Reproduction of the Asch experiment without confederates*. *International Journal of Psychology*, 45 (5), 390–397.
- ◆ Milgram, S (1963) *Behavioural Study of Obedience*. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67, 371–78 and relevant knowledge from Milgram's subsequent related studies.

### **Topic 2: A topic of choice relating to social behaviour**

#### **Psychological concepts and/or theories**

- ◆ at least four concepts and/or theories of choice relevant to the chosen topic

#### **Studies**

- ◆ the aims, methods, results and conclusions of at least two psychological research studies relevant to the chosen topic

## Administrative information

---

**Published:** April 2016 (version 3.0)

---

## History of changes to Course Assessment Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	<p>Page 2 — Change from 70 marks to 60 marks for the question paper.</p> <p>Page 3 — Added value section: description amended to remove practical and theoretical contexts.</p> <p>Page 5 — ‘Interpreting and evaluating descriptive statistics in psychological research’ moved from assignment to question paper.</p> <p>Pages 5–6 — Structure of question paper and assignment clarified. Marks for the assignment changed from 30 marks to 40 marks.</p> <p>Page 7 — Setting, conducting and marking of assessment section: clarification of content; time allowed for question paper changed from 1 hour 30 to 2 hours.</p> <p>Pages 8–10 — Further mandatory information on Course coverage section: amendments to content and format; multiple clarifications of content.</p>	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014
2.1	Change made to ‘Component 2 — assignment’ and ‘Setting the assessment’ sections to clarify provision of research briefs.	Qualifications Manager	August 2015
3.0	<p>Page 8: Within the Research Unit section the word ‘questionnaire’ has replaced ‘survey’. The number of sleep disorders to be studied have been specified. The word ‘homeostasis’ has been removed from the Biological Approach section.</p> <p>Page 9: Cognitive approach section has been clarified, content has not changed. Factors affecting sleep have been clarified to specify that the impact of drugs and the impact of light should be studied.</p> <p>Additional approach of choice — number of key concepts/features to be studied have been specified.</p>	Qualifications Manager	April 2016

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this Course Assessment Specification can be downloaded from SQA's website at [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

Note: You are advised to check SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Assessment Specification.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2016