



Internal Assessment Report: Psychology

Sector Panel or SSC: Social Sciences

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in this subject.

Higher National Units

General comments

Psychology A	DP43 34
Psychology B	DP44 34
Psychology C	DP45 35

All centres were delivering the correct version of the Units from the most recent qualification. Centres were comfortable with the aims of the Units and had adopted teaching and learning practices that were well suited to the knowledge and skills being developed for the Units. This includes essay writing tasks, discussion, PowerPoint presentation and textbook activities.

Generally candidate answers were good and showed a variety of input across the centres verified. All such input appeared to be relevant and challenging. Clear records of work were presented in one centre, which helped to show what was being covered weekly.

Generally, it was easy to work through materials presented for external verification, as centres presented materials in a well organised manner.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development

There was evidence of internal verification taking place in centres (via sampling or other internal verification forms presented). Some centres also provided paperwork that related to fair access to assessment (college guidelines and procedures), which helped to show that candidates did have this access. That was helpful and saved time in questioning. This is good practice.

Good feedback was evident in most cases, with informative comments and suggestions for improvements, as well as comments on strengths identified. Further development of feedback would help to ensure candidates were fully aware of suggestions for improvement. This could take the form of either written, or recorded via dictaphone, information rather than verbal with no record.

Using word processing for the open book report in Psychology B helps to develop the Core Skill of ICT. This good practice was seen in all centres.

Many centres are now developing use of VLEs to further support teaching and learning in this subject. However, the style of assessment mainly requires lengthy written closed-book tests, which do not lend themselves as well to ICT-based working.

One area still causing concern is the remediation/reassessment procedure. This is still creating minor difficulties in a few centres, as it was last year. This relates to knowing when to reassess with full new assessment instruments, and when oral remediation or addition is appropriate. External Verifiers gave advice on what amount of remediation would be acceptable and on when a full reassessment is required. Centres were also advised that if a

candidate can meet the requirements for one Outcome then only the Outcome(s) not yet achieved need be reassessed.

Centres were also advised to make a note of oral clarification. Good practice was shown where a minor addition to an assessment response, of approx 100 words, was allowed to achieve an Outcome. This removed the need for a complete second assessment. Where a more substantial response is required, a new assessment instrument should be used. This should also be the case where the candidate does not show understanding across a whole topic/approach. This applies to Psychology A, B and C Units. Centres are all clear about reassessment in the report in B and D Units and in the open-book essay in Psychology C (by revising original work).

It seemed that, in most centres, many candidates required reassessment or remediation in the closed-book assessments (particularly in the Psychology A Unit). Staff expressed concern about how difficult the closed-book assessment is for new entrants (based on detail required and amount of content to be recalled). The Qualification Support Team will take this on board in rewriting the Units for the update to the HN Social Sciences qualifications.