

27 February 2004

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools
FE Colleges

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the
delivery of National Qualifications in Psychology**

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	None — update/information only

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Dear Colleague

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN PSYCHOLOGY

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Psychology.

Diet 2003

Centres are advised to access the Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports for Psychology for Diet 2003. These reports contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Psychology.

The following reports can be found on the Psychology pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk):

- ◆ Principal Assessor Report for Intermediate 1/Intermediate 2 Psychology
- ◆ Principal Assessor Report for Higher/Advanced Higher Psychology
- ◆ Senior Moderator Report for Psychology

Appeals

Stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed successfully. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* (A0992/2, February 2001)

NB Revised versions of both documents are due to be issued in March 2004. Copies of these documents can be downloaded from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for appeals this year were:

- ◆ Prelims not following the standard mark allocation as used in the question papers
- ◆ Evidence from NABs assuming that the cut-off score is 50% (NABs indicate that cut-off score is 60%). Good NAB evidence is considered to be a score above 60%.
- ◆ No/wrong/incomplete marking schemes accompanying 'prelim' evidence.

National Qualifications Review

General Update on the Review of Psychology

The work on the Review is now nearing completion. The revised Courses have successfully undergone subject validation by subject specialists not involved in the earlier stages of the review and operational validation which ensures it adheres to all SQA procedures. National Assessment Bank materials are currently being written and the question paper setting teams are currently working on Specimen Question Papers.

A short summary of the Courses at each level is attached to this letter as Appendix 1.

Launch Seminar

We intend to hold two seminars to launch the revised Courses at the end of May 2004. Please look out for further details of these events in the near future. Arrangement Documents and Specimen Question Papers will be available at these seminars. These documents will also be distributed on CD-ROM to centres in May, and available on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) from April 2004.

Higher Research Investigation

Please note that the arrangements for choosing the topic/concept on which to base your Research Investigation will be changing with effect from Session 2004/05. At present, centres base their Research Investigations on a concept within one of the optional Units they have delivered. From Session 2004/05, SQA will set a list of topics from which the Research Investigation **must** be based. This list will cover the constraints/choice within the new Course Arrangements and will be distributed to centres in the spring/summer of the year preceding the April submission.

Intermediate 1 Psychology

Entries for Intermediate 1 in Diet 2003 doubled from the previous year — from 20 to 40. Despite this increase, this number falls below the threshold set to meet our Low Uptake Policy. Early indications are that entries will exceed 100 in Diet 2004 but until entries from all centres are made, we cannot be certain. New Units have been developed at Intermediate 1 and permission has been granted to implement an Intermediate 1 Course assessment to fit with the revised structure at Intermediate 2. However, the question paper at Intermediate 1 will be for a trial period of two years only (ie diets 2005 and 2006) and will only continue after this period should entries remain above 100.

Approval Criteria

Under current regulations, the General Teaching Council have not set Registration criteria to be met to allow the teaching of Psychology in schools. It is important that all teachers teaching the subject are properly qualified to do so.

For all new centres wishing to offer National Qualifications in Psychology the following conditions for approval will apply:

- ◆ Members of staff teaching at Higher level should have completed a study of psychology at three different Higher Education levels including a study of Research Methods (SCQF levels 7, 8 and 9).
- ◆ Members of staff teaching at Intermediate 1 and 2 levels should have completed studies at two different Higher Education levels (SCQF levels 7 and 8).
- ◆ Where Intermediate 1 Units are delivered on a free-standing basis staff approval is not required.

(The above criteria also apply to internal assessors and moderators.)

Centres with devolved authority have already met approval conditions through their internal quality assurance procedures. Centres that are teaching the current Psychology Courses may continue to do so, however, staff are expected to improve their qualifications in psychology to meet the above criteria. For such staff, SQA intend to offer Professional Development sessions and Quality Network seminars which will focus on specific areas of the Psychology Courses. Overall monitoring of standards will be undertaken by SQA.

SQA will also set up Quality Network seminars for Psychology. These seminars are hosted by the Approval Section to improve the quality of SQA qualifications and will address known quality issues, or proactively where changes are to be introduced. Typically, a subject expert would cover topics like changes to qualifications, standards and internal assessments using a syndicate approach with feedback for development purposes.

Being an SQA Marker

To become a Marker, we normally ask that you have taught the Course for at least three years, preferably within the past three years. We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. If you are interested in becoming a Marker, an application form can be downloaded from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). Alternatively, please contact us on 0131-561 6825 and we will send a form to you.

Assessment Panel

The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet twice a year to look at issues arising in the assessment of Social Science Subjects. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers. The remit and make-up of Assessment Panels is currently being reviewed.

Reminder

Centres are reminded that all Higher and Advanced Higher Research Investigations must be submitted to SQA for external assessment. The date for submissions in Diet 2004 is **Monday, 26 April 2004**.

(The nominal date for submission is 30 April each year, however, centres are advised to refer to the 'Operational Guide for Centres' which specifies the actual date for submission.)

I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to telephone me on 0141-242 2343 or e-mail tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Stannage
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences

Appendix 1

Higher Psychology (revised)

Course Structure

This course has three 40-hour Units. All Units are mandatory:

Dxxx 12 Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

Dxxx 12 Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

Dxxx 12 Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

Summary of Course Content

There are **six** core Domains covered in the Higher Psychology Course. The six Domains are:

- (i) Cognitive Psychology
- (ii) Developmental Psychology
- (iii) Physiological Psychology
- (iv) Research Methods and Research Skills
- (v) Social Psychology
- (vi) The Psychology of Individual Differences

For full details of content, refer to the three Unit specifications.

Psychology: Understanding the Individual

Three of the six core Domains are addressed in this Unit: Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Physiological Psychology. The focus is on individual processes.

Three topics are studied, **one** specified topic from each Domain.

Candidates should be introduced briefly to each Domain in turn, before studying the specified topic.

Domain: **Cognitive psychology**

Topic: **Memory**

Domain: **Developmental psychology**

Topic: **Early socialisation**

Domain: **Physiological psychology**

Topic: **Stress**

Psychology: Investigating Behaviour

One of the six core Domains is addressed in this Unit: Research Methods and Research Skills. The nature of the research process is studied, several specific types of psychological research methodology and data analysis are considered, and ethical issues in research are examined.

Psychological research skills are developed by means of planning, implementing and reporting a research investigation.

Domain: **Research Methods and Research Skills**

- (a) The cyclical nature of the research process:
Experimental method; Non-experimental methods — Survey, Observation, Case study;
Research issues common to all methods
- (b) Data analysis: quantitative and qualitative data; Descriptive statistics; Correlational design and data analysis. (*Knowledge of inferential statistical tests is not required.*)
- (c) Ethical issues in research
- (d) Planning, implementing and reporting psychological research.

NB A template for planning and logging the implementation of the research will be provided.

Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context

Two of the six core Domains are addressed in this Unit: Social Psychology, The Psychology of Individual Differences. The focus is on psychological processes in the context of social interaction.

Three topics are studied: **one** from each of the two Domains, and **one** other from either Domain.

Candidates should be introduced briefly to each Domain in turn, before studying the specified topic(s).

Domain: **Social Psychology**

- Topics: (i) **Prejudice**
(ii) **Anti-social behaviour**
(iii) **Conformity and obedience**
(iv) **Social relationships**

Domain: **The Psychology of Individual Differences**

- Topics: (i) **Atypical behaviour — definitions and origins**
(ii) **Atypical behaviour — therapies**
(iii) **Intelligence**

Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2* Psychology (revised)

Course Structure

* Both Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 Psychology contain the same topics to facilitate bi-level teaching. These Courses are differentiated by the Performance Criteria specified in the Unit Specifications.

These Courses have three 40-hour Units. All Units are mandatory:

- Dxxx 11/10 *Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1/2)*
- Dxxx 11/10 *Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Intermediate 1/2)*
- Dxxx 11/10 *Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Intermediate 1/2)*

Summary of Course Content

There are **six** core Domains covered in the Intermediate 2 Psychology Course. The six Domains are:

- (i) Cognitive Psychology
- (ii) Developmental Psychology
- (iii) Physiological Psychology
- (iv) Research Methods and Research Skills
- (v) Social Psychology
- (vi) The Psychology of Individual Differences

For full details of content, refer to the three Unit specifications.

Psychology: Understanding the Individual

Three of the six core Domains are addressed: Developmental Psychology, Physiological Psychology and Cognitive Psychology; the focus is on understanding individual processes.

Three topics are studied, **one** from each Domain.

Candidates should be introduced briefly to each Domain in turn, before studying the specified topic.

Domain: Developmental psychology	Topic: Development of the self-concept
Domain: Cognitive psychology	Topic: Cognition and learning
Domain: Physiological psychology	Topic: Motivation

Psychology: Investigating Behaviour

One of the six core Domains is addressed in this Unit: Research Methods and Research Skills. The nature of the research process is studied, several specific types of psychological research methodology and data presentation are considered, and ethical issues in research are examined.

Psychological research skills are developed by means of planning and carrying out classroom-based research tasks, and reporting on these in a research portfolio.

Domain: **Research Methods and Research Skills**

- (a) Nature of the research process; Experimental method; Non-experimental methods — Survey, Case study; Research issues common to all methods.
- (b) Data presentation
- (c) Ethical issues in research
- (d) Planning, implementing and reporting practical research tasks in a practical portfolio.

NB Templates for planning and reporting documents will be provided.

Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context

Two of the six core Domains are addressed: Social Psychology, The Psychology of Individual Differences. The focus is on psychological processes in the context of social interaction.

Three topics are studied: **one** mandatory Topic from The Psychology of Individual Differences, and **two** Topics from Social Psychology.

Candidates should be introduced briefly to each Domain in turn, before studying the specified topic(s).

Domain: **The Psychology of Individual Differences** Topic: **Personality**

Domain: **Social Psychology**

Topics: **(i) Group processes**
 (ii) Non-verbal communication
 (iii) Pro-social behaviour
 (iv) Social perception