



PSYCHOLOGY
Higher level

Second edition — published August 2010

NOTE OF CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS SECOND EDITION PUBLISHED AUGUST 2010

COURSE TITLE: Psychology (Higher)

COURSE NUMBER: C263 12

National Course Specification

Course Details: No amendments

National Unit Specification

F5B4 12 Psychology: Understanding the Individual

Changes to Statement of Standards Appendix.

Topic: early socialisation
clarification on Daycare: factors affecting cognitive and social development of young children in daycare.

F5B5 12 Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context

Additional information in Evidence Requirements regarding sampling of topics. Removal of reference to 'relationship and self rating scales' in the Guidance on Learning and Teaching approaches within the Support Notes.

Changes to Statement of Standards Appendix:

Topic: social relationships –
Removal of 'Learning Theory' from theories of social relationships

Topic: atypical behaviour -
therapeutic approaches changed to 'Therapies for' and psychodynamic or humanistic 'therapies'.

Topic: intelligence – Nature of intelligence changed to theories of intelligence

Minor amendments have been made to references to BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (August 2009) and Higher Psychology Research Investigation Guidelines (revised August 2010) as both these documents have now been revised.

National Course Specification



Psychology (Higher)

COURSE CODE C263 12

COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course has three mandatory Units. The mandatory Units are:

F5B4 12	<i>Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)</i>	1 credit (40 hours)
DF5L 12	<i>Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)</i>	1 credit (40 hours)
F5B5 12	<i>Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)</i>	1 credit (40 hours)

All Courses include 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for the Units. This may be used for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for Course assessment.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates will normally be expected to have attained one of the following or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade in a social subject at Credit level or an equivalent Intermediate 2 Course or Units
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Psychology
- ◆ **and** Standard Grade English at Credit level or Communication at Intermediate 2

PROGRESSION

This Course or its component Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ a Higher National programme in Social Sciences
- ◆ a higher education course
- ◆ training or employment

Administrative Information

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National Course Specification: (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

The Higher Course in Psychology is allocated 24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*.

**SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

This Course gives automatic certification of the following:

Core Skills components for the Course:	Critical Thinking	Higher
	Planning and Organising	Higher
	Reviewing and Evaluating	Intermediate 2
	Using Graphical Information	Higher

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

RATIONALE

Psychology is a popular subject: school and college candidates and the wider public wish to further their understanding of human behaviour. The Higher Psychology Course aims to meet this demand for, in some cases, an introduction to the subject and in others progression to a deeper understanding of the subject.

Five key topics are studied from a choice of six core Domains:

- ◆ Developmental Psychology
- ◆ Cognitive Psychology
- ◆ Physiological Psychology
- ◆ Social Psychology
- ◆ Psychology of Individual Differences
- ◆ Research Methods

Candidates will develop **knowledge and understanding** of these substantive topics in contemporary psychology. One of the three Units combines the Domain of Research Methods with **practical research skills**, an essential feature of the discipline, thus research skills are developed in the context of an understanding of research methodology. Although each Unit may be taken on a freestanding basis, the Course promotes integration of knowledge across the Units, to provide a broad and coherent introduction to the discipline.

It is intended that candidates engage with the complex nature of psychological processes; they will be encouraged to reflect on the notion that, far from offering simple answers, psychologists may interpret any given aspect of human behaviour in a variety of ways. Thus candidates will develop skills of **analysis, interpretation and evaluation**, adopting a questioning approach and challenging assumptions. Although the structure of the Course, of necessity, divides content into ‘compartments’, certain common themes pervade topic areas, such as nature-nurture interaction, or cross-cultural comparisons. Candidates are encouraged to consider these, along with relationships between specific topic areas.

The Higher Psychology Course is designed to address the needs and interests of various candidate groups. It provides suitable preparation for entry to higher education courses in psychology or other academic or vocational subjects. The Higher Psychology Course may offer preparation for employment or career advancement. NQ Psychology Courses at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher share a common structure based on six core Domains, therefore progression to the Higher Course is facilitated. For those new to the subject at Higher level, the Course serves as an introduction to the discipline of psychology, whilst for those who have already studied the subject, for example, at Intermediate 1 or Intermediate 2 levels, the Higher level Course encourages development of more in-depth knowledge and understanding, and more advanced research skills. Although the common core Domains and structure are similar, the content in the Psychology Course at Higher level is different from that of the Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 levels, in order to maintain interest and motivation whilst progressing.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

AIMS

The aims of Higher Psychology are to:

- ◆ stimulate candidates' initial interest in psychology, by providing both a broad overview of the discipline, and the opportunity to study a selection of topics in some depth
- ◆ develop an understanding of psychological theories, concepts, research studies, research methods, terminology and applications
- ◆ develop knowledge of psychology within its historical context, and thus develop an appreciation of the dynamic nature of the discipline, including the importance of both classic and contemporary research and theory
- ◆ promote a critical approach to the discipline as a science, emphasising empirical methodology, evidence-based theory and applications, continual updating of knowledge and the importance of ethical considerations

For all candidate groups, the Higher Psychology Course is designed to stimulate curiosity, enjoyment and opportunities for self-development. The study of psychology has unique potential to promote the development of cognitive, emotional and social skills which will enhance study activity, self-awareness, and conceptual understanding of issues of personal relevance. These are transferable skills of value in both personal and professional contexts, and it is intended that the Higher Course promotes these skills.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

COURSE CONTENT

A summary of Course content is provided here, comprising a combination of the content of the three component Units. **Five** Domains are studied from a choice of six in the Higher Psychology Course:

- ◆ Developmental Psychology
- ◆ Cognitive Psychology
- ◆ Physiological Psychology
- ◆ Social Psychology
- ◆ Psychology of Individual Differences
- ◆ Research Methods, (along with practical research skills)

For full details of content, refer to the relevant Unit Specifications.

Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

Two of the six core Domains are studied from a choice of three: Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology. The focus is on individual processes.

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

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

Domain: Developmental Psychology	Topic: early socialisation
Domain: Cognitive Psychology	Topic: memory
Domain: Physiological Psychology	Topic: stress

Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

One of the six core Domains, Research Methods, is addressed in this Unit, along with practical 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:

- ◆ the cyclical nature of the research process
- ◆ experimental method
- ◆ non-experimental methods — survey, observation, case study
- ◆ research issues common to all methods
- ◆ data analysis: quantitative and qualitative data
- ◆ descriptive statistics (*knowledge of inferential statistics is not required*)
- ◆ correlational design and data analysis
- ◆ ethical issues in research

Research skills

Planning, implementing and reporting psychological research.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

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

Two topics are studied: a choice of **one** from **each** of the two Domains. Candidates should be introduced to each Domain in turn, before studying the specified topic(s).

Domain: Social Psychology

Topics: prejudice
conformity and obedience
social relationships

Domain: Psychology of Individual Differences

Topics: atypical behaviour
intelligence

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

ASSESSMENT

To achieve the Course award the candidate must achieve the Units as well as pass the Course assessment. The candidate's grade is based on the Course assessment.

The overall Course assessment objectives are:

- 1 Knowledge and understanding.
- 2 Analysis and evaluation.
- 3 Practical research skills.

These objectives will be assessed in both the internal assessment of the Units and in the external assessment of the Course, but the balance of skills will be slightly different in these two types of assessment. Further details about internal assessments of the Units for this Course can be found in the NAB materials and in the individual Unit Specifications.

1 Knowledge and understanding.

Candidates will develop knowledge of:

- ◆ psychological theories and concepts
- ◆ research evidence
- ◆ psychological research methods, including ethical concerns in research
- ◆ applications of psychological theory and concepts in everyday situations

It is intended that candidates' psychological knowledge will have breadth, as Course content is drawn from five of the six core Domains of the discipline, as well as depth, as each selected topic is studied in detail. Candidates will develop understanding, which can be defined as grasping the meaning of their knowledge. In order to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, candidates must be able to communicate these effectively, including the use of psychological terminology, appropriate style of writing, and clarity of meaning.

2 Analysis and evaluation.

Candidates will develop the skills of analysing and providing commentary on psychological theories, concepts, research evidence, research methods, and applications. Analysis will involve, for example:

- ◆ explanation of components of a behaviour or mental process and the relationship between these
- ◆ description of factors affecting behaviours and mental processes
- ◆ discussion of origins and development of behaviours and mental processes
- ◆ interpretation of research findings and conclusions in relation to relevant theory
- ◆ the ability to discuss psychological phenomena from alternative theoretical perspectives
- ◆ comparison of evidence from different cultural contexts
- ◆ integration of knowledge from different psychological areas, and of new information with already-existing knowledge
- ◆ identification of common underlying themes, such as nature/nurture interaction; application of knowledge in a new context, or in a situation in everyday life

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

Evaluation may include aspects of analysis as well as the ability:

- ◆ to weigh up the strengths and weaknesses of psychological theories, concepts, research evidence, research methodology, and psychological applications
- ◆ to compare and contrast theories
- ◆ to discuss ethical issues in psychological research and applications

3 Practical research skills.

Candidates will acquire practical research skills of planning, implementing and reporting on research. They will develop the ability to:

- ◆ manage the various elements of a research project within a schedule
- ◆ devise ethical standard procedures
- ◆ obtain a sample of participants and collect data from them
- ◆ analyse the data
- ◆ draw conclusions and write a formal research report

A template for planning and logging the implementation of the research is provided in the National Assessment Bank items (NABs).

Summary of Unit assessment

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all Outcomes, candidates must produce written or recorded oral responses to items that cover Performance Criteria from all Outcomes.

For both Units, *Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)* and *Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)* evidence will typically be produced in response to specific questions in a question paper. The question paper may comprise of short-answer, restricted response or extended response items; questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material. This will take the form of a closed-book, supervised test, with a time limit of 30 minutes.

For Unit *Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)*, evidence will typically be produced by means of two instruments of assessment, each worth 50% of the marks for the Unit: a supervised test for assessment of Outcomes 1 and 2, and practical work in the form of a research investigation project plan and log, for assessment of Outcome 3.

Components of Course assessment

The Course assessment at Higher consists of a question paper and a research investigation. The question paper will last 2 hours 30 minutes, and is divided into three sections with a total mark of 100. The research investigation is conducted internally, over a period of time and submitted to SQA for external marking and has a total mark of 50.

Further details on the structure of the Course assessment are given in the Course Assessment Specification.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

Relationship between Unit and Course assessment

While the Units are valuable in their own right, candidates will gain additional benefit from completing the whole Course. There will be opportunities for the integration of skills and understanding developed through the Units, and for tackling problem solving of a more complex nature than that required for attainment of Units.

In the internal Unit assessment, knowledge and understanding will constitute a major element of the tasks required of candidates, but the skills of analysis and evaluation will also be assessed to a lesser extent and applied to familiar contexts which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process.

The practical application of research skills is addressed by assessing the research *process* in the Unit assessment, and assessing the *product*, in the form of the research investigation report, as a component of the Course assessment.

The added value of the Course

Unit and Course assessments are intended to complement each other. The Unit assessment provides evidence of a specific level of achievement in separate sections of the Course. The Course assessment confirms this achievement, by sampling, but in addition provides evidence of a range of skills beyond those required for Unit success. In Higher Psychology this added value consists of the following:

- ◆ retention and recall: the ability to respond to knowledge and understanding questions from across all the Units of the Course on a single occasion
- ◆ the ability to demonstrate the skills of analysis and evaluation, in familiar and less familiar contexts, from across all the Units of the Course on a single occasion
- ◆ the ability to respond to a task which requires the candidate to integrate their knowledge, ie to draw on and apply knowledge and understanding from more than one Unit
- ◆ the application of analysis and evaluation in more complex situations than those addressed in the Unit assessment
- ◆ the completion of a detailed research investigation report

Further details about assessments for this Course can be found in NAB materials, the Course Assessment Specification and the Specimen Question Paper.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS AT A AND C

The candidate's grade will be based on the total score obtained from the Course assessment — that is the question paper and research investigation. The descriptions below indicate the nature of achievement required for an award at Grade C and A in the Course.

To achieve an award at Grade C, candidates should be able to demonstrate achievement in relation to *knowledge and understanding*, and *analysis and evaluation*.

Knowledge and understanding	The candidate will demonstrate knowledge and understanding by providing adequate, though somewhat limited, description and explanation of psychological theories, concepts, research evidence, research methods and applications. Both breadth and depth of knowledge will be evident to some extent. There will be some evidence of appropriate application of knowledge of research methods and data analysis. Presentation of responses is reasonably coherent, and content expresses concepts and arguments effectively, with use of specialist terminology that is accurate in the main, following conventions of the discipline.
Analysis and evaluation	The candidate will demonstrate sound analysis of psychological processes, including reasonably accurate interpretation of research findings, and comparison of alternative theoretical approaches to a limited extent. Adequate evaluation of theories, methods, evidence and applications is demonstrated, including some awareness of ethical issues.

To achieve an award at Grade A, candidates should be able to demonstrate achievement in relation to *knowledge and understanding* and *analysis and evaluation*.

Knowledge and understanding	The candidate will demonstrate knowledge and understanding by providing accurate, up-to-date and detailed description and explanation of psychological theories, concepts, research evidence, research methods and applications. Some breadth of knowledge and substantial depth of understanding will be shown, within the required content. Knowledge of research methods and data analysis is applied appropriately. Presentation of responses is coherent and logically structured, and content expresses concepts and arguments effectively, with extensive and accurate use of specialist terminology, following conventions of the discipline.
Analysis and evaluation	The candidate will demonstrate thorough analysis of psychological processes, including accurate interpretation of research findings and comparison of alternative theoretical approaches. Arguments are supported by evidence. Evaluation of theories, methods, evidence and applications is balanced and informed, showing a high level of awareness of ethical issues.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence of performance should be considered across the breadth of coverage of the content of the Course and must take account of performance in the whole Course. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Appeals

Although a prelim examination is not mandatory, it can give a good indication of how a candidate will perform with the addition of time pressure and the need to apply knowledge and skills in new contexts in the external examination. Any prelim should replicate the style, level of demand and mark allocation of the Specimen Question Paper. Questions from previous SQA question papers may be selected and adapted for use in a prelim exam, which may provide appropriate evidence. Where this is used, centres ought to ensure that the questions used do not all come from the same question paper and that minor adjustments are made to a number of the questions so that candidates will not have had a previous opportunity to see the questions.

Whatever approach is taken to the creation of prelim papers or other assessment items, centres must be certain that the material has not been seen previously by the candidates.

As candidates are required to have a sound knowledge of all the chosen topics from the specified Domains in the question paper, the best evidence for appeals should demonstrate this knowledge. Centres should consider whether the evidence to be submitted meets the following criteria:

- ◆ there should be evidence of retained and integrated knowledge
- ◆ there should be evidence from five of the six psychological Domains
- ◆ there should be evidence from the selected topics within those Domains

The document *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals* clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper based Courses and states:

The evidence for the Question Paper could include:

- ◆ a prelim which covers all Units and replicates the standard, format, duration and security of SQA's question paper. This could support an Appeal for Grades A, B and C and would be the most convincing evidence for an appeal for Grade A.
- ◆ a prelim which covers all Units and is split into parts and the two parts have been separated by a period of time rather than being taken on one occasion. Centres should be aware that the level of demand is less than the Course assessment. The level of demand can be increased in a number of ways such as by raising the cut-off scores or by increasing the level of challenge of the prelim. This could support an Appeal for Grades A, B and C.
- ◆ a prelim which covers a minimum of two Units of the Course plus supporting evidence, such as a high scoring NAB, for the third Unit would support an Appeal for a Grade C (and possibly Grade B), but not for a Grade A.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

Evidence used to support appeals for the Course must show a sufficient breadth of coverage of content and must relate to the Course Grade Descriptions.

In preparing estimates, evidence must take account of performance across the Course and must be judged against the Grade Descriptions. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or verification. External markers and verifiers are trained by SQA to apply national standards.

The Units of all Courses are subject to internal verification and may also be chosen for external verification. This is to ensure that national standards are applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods. Where marking is undertaken by a trained Marker in their own time, Markers meetings are held to ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all Markers is subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor and the Examining Team.

Annual reports on both Internal Assessment and External Assessment are published for all subjects and are available on the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS COURSE

This section offers guidance and advice on delivery of the Course, rather than being mandatory.

Mode of delivery

The guidance provided below refers primarily to classroom delivery in centres, comprising weekly class contact hours. Other modes, including flexible and online delivery, may be effective, if learning activities are adapted. However, opportunities for group discussion with peers and the teacher/lecturer should be provided wherever possible, to facilitate learning. This is particularly important in the development of practical research skills and implementation of the research investigation.

Sequence and timing of delivery

- (a) Tackling the Units in the following order provides a coherent approach to delivering the Course:

1	<i>Psychology: Understanding the Individual</i>	<i>(Higher)</i>
2	<i>Psychology: Investigating Behaviour</i>	<i>(Higher)</i>
3	<i>Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context</i>	<i>(Higher)</i>

The first Unit addresses two Domains, with topics and perspectives that provide a broad introduction to the discipline. It also contains topics that will be suitable for the practical research which is tackled in the subsequent Unit, and for completion of the research investigation report which is submitted to SQA.

- (b) An alternative approach might be to deliver the Units in the reverse order to (a). The social and individual differences topics in *Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context* might be regarded as more immediately appealing to candidates and this Unit would also offer suitable topics for the practical research which is tackled in the subsequent Unit and for completion of the research investigation report which is submitted to SQA.

Assuming the Course is delivered over one academic year, the number of weeks spent on each Unit should be roughly one third of the total weeks in the academic year, minus one or two weeks for revision and assessment. Delivery time for the *Psychology: Investigating Behaviour* Unit may vary, more than the other Units, according to candidate needs, as this Domain tends to show greater variation in candidate aptitude than other Domains. Available time should be divided roughly equally between research methods and research skills.

Whatever the model of delivery selected, at induction candidates should be provided with full information on the sequence and timing of Units, assessment objectives and Outcomes, content to be studied, nature and timing of assessments, recommended resources, etc.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

Sources of detailed guidance on learning and teaching

- ◆ the SQA document, *Higher Psychology Research Investigation Guidelines* (revised August 2010), is an essential guide to delivering the practical research skills and for completion of the research investigation report
- ◆ Unit-specific, detailed guidance and suggestions are provided in each Unit Specification

An ethical approach to learning and teaching

Teacher/lecturers should be aware that some topics may be sensitive for individual candidates based on stages of development or personal experiences, and discretion should be used. To this end, care should be taken in delivery of material and sensitivity should be shown. Candidates should not be made to feel pressurised to disclose personal information. For example, in classroom discussions which may relate to health, relationships, emotions, etc, teacher/lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress. The power relationship that, of necessity, prevails in the classroom should be recognised and handled with care.

Such concerns are particularly relevant to delivery methods involving classroom research demonstrations, and teacher/lecturers should be familiar with two sources of ethical guidance: the BPS *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (August 2009), at www.bps.org.uk; and the ATP *Guide to Ethics for Teachers and Students of Psychology at Pre-Degree Level* (2003).

Resources for learning and teaching

A wide range of good quality resources for studying psychology is readily available, including textbooks, candidate journals, videos, CD-ROMs, commercially-produced resource packs, websites and online materials. A number of published introductory textbooks are at a suitable level for this Course, and teacher/lecturers may wish to recommend one of these as a set text, or obtain a set, either to issue to candidates or for use in class. However, it is unlikely that any single book will fully cover all content for the Unit or Course, and indeed candidates should be encouraged to read more widely. Therefore, teacher/lecturers should ensure that additional resources are available for candidates, eg a number of single copies of different texts, copies of handouts/worksheets from journals or resource packs (ie resources that are designated suitable for photocopying in the copyright information), centre-produced learning packs, teacher/lecturers' own handouts etc.

As well as these resources for classroom/homework learning, teacher/lecturers may enhance the variety of their delivery by means of, for example, a visit to a science museum, a nursery/crèche/primary school, or to a university psychology department, attending a revision or coursework conference, use of invited speakers.

Teaching strategies

Variety is key to maintaining motivation and interest, and the subject matter of psychology readily lends itself to a variety of delivery methods, including candidate-centred problem-solving activities, pair and group discussion, analysis of research scenarios, analysis of real-life applications of theory, experimental demonstrations, questionnaire design, games and quizzes, IT/web-based activities (see below) etc, as well as formal presentation. Stimulus materials, visual aids and simple everyday objects may be used to good effect, as well as videos, audio tapes, etc.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

Use of information and learning technology

Many learning activities may usefully exploit the extensive web resources that exist for psychology. Candidates may be set tasks such as researching a particular topic, reviewing and evaluating a number of sources and selecting the most relevant/useful material. Such activities may have many benefits, including increased motivation and development of: web research skills, evaluative skills, independent learning, specific areas of knowledge (especially where interactive sources are used) and general IT skills. Regular formative assessments by means of computer assisted assessment (CAA) software can be motivating, through facilitating self-monitoring of progress, and taking account of individual differences in pace of progress and learning style. Whether integrated into class time, or set as homework tasks, IT-based activities work best when structured and with clear learning objectives.

Encouraging independent and collaborative learning

We are all '*life-long learners*'. Whatever their future career path, candidates need to develop skills of independent learning, whether progressing to further or higher education, where they will be expected to adopt an independent learning approach very rapidly, or entering training or employment. Therefore, candidates on this Course should be gradually encouraged, as far as possible, to research topics themselves in the library, online, in newspapers, magazines and journals, etc, and to generally show initiative, wherever appropriate. The benefits of collaborative learning, peer support and peer feedback can be substantial, therefore, group work, both in class and for homework tasks, is to be encouraged.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Teacher/lecturers strive to both promote good quality learning for their candidates and prepare them thoroughly for assessment, to maximise achievement. These aims are not incompatible. Whilst delivery of the Course should not be driven purely by assessment demands, delivery should nevertheless incorporate regular formative tasks and tests that reflect, to some extent, the demands of internal and external assessments. It is intended that the design of assessments is such that the experience of preparing for them does promote good quality learning.

Putting psychology to work in the classroom

Psychological principles underpin educational approaches to learning and teaching. Psychology teacher/lecturers are thus well-placed to encourage the development of effective study skills and learning strategies, revision and examination techniques, to help candidates maximise their achievement and wellbeing as learners. Candidates should be encouraged to apply a range of principles, for example:

- ◆ use of memory aids to learn material
- ◆ principles of self- and time-management to reduce anxiety (cognitive approach)
- ◆ self-reinforcement (behaviourist approach)
- ◆ peer-collaborative strategies (social approach) to increase motivation
- ◆ relaxation and physical exercise to reduce stress (biological approach)

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Psychology (Higher)

Candidates could be asked to reflect on their experiences, by keeping a learning log; metacognition/self-insight into their own learning might thus be developed. In planning activities, teacher/lecturers should bear in mind cognitive-developmental principles such as schemas, discovery learning, scaffolding, formal operational thinking, etc. Working in pairs may promote the co-action effect, as each candidate has the maximum opportunity (and indeed is obliged) to participate. Brief, informal presentations can exploit the motivational aspects of audience effects; activities that promote varied interpersonal contact within the class can facilitate peer feedback and support in learning.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for this Course. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

PSYCHOLOGY IN A BROADER CONTEXT

A number of national activities and programmes have been designed to promote themes that are important to contemporary society such as citizenship and enterprise. These themes contribute to individual subjects and Courses by making connections beyond the subject boundaries and enrich the learning experience. Similarly, specialist knowledge and skills developed through the study of a particular subject contribute to the understanding of these themes.

The study of psychology, with its opportunities for both individual learning and for work in groups, and development of research skills equip candidates with skills which are clearly valuable in this broader context. Psychology allows candidates to develop a greater understanding of the society in which they live.



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

CODE F5B4 12

COURSE: Psychology (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit will enable candidates to gain an understanding of a number of psychological processes which individuals experience, by studying two specified topics from a choice of the three key Domains of Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology. Candidates have the opportunity to develop an understanding of two of the three following key psychological processes: early socialisation; memory and stress. Different ways of explaining these behaviours are considered, as well as the ways in which psychological knowledge is used in practice, in everyday life.

For those new to the subject, the Unit should stimulate interest and enjoyment, and may serve as an introduction to the discipline. For candidates progressing from Intermediate 2 the Unit provides the opportunity to study different topics within familiar domains of psychology, and will promote development of more in-depth knowledge and understanding.

As part of Higher Psychology, the Unit provides suitable preparation for entry to higher education courses in Psychology or further study in other social and vocational subjects. Whether as part of a Course or on a free-standing basis, the Unit may offer preparation for employment or career advancement. The topics selected for study are likely to be of relevance to candidates personally, socially and professionally.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified topics from developmental, cognitive and physiological psychology.
- 2 Analyse and evaluate specified topics from developmental, cognitive and physiological psychology.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. There are no formal entry requirements, however, it would be beneficial if candidates had achieved the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ a Standard Grade Social Subject at Credit level or an equivalent Intermediate 2 Course or Units
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Psychology
- ◆ **and** Standard Grade English at Credit level or Communication at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher level (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

Opportunities to deliver aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified topics from developmental, cognitive and physiological psychology.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe psychological theories, concepts and research evidence relevant to the specified topics.
- (b) Explain how psychological knowledge is applied, from the specified topics.
- (c) Communicate psychological knowledge effectively, using accurate terminology and formal style following conventions of the discipline.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse and evaluate specified topics from developmental, cognitive and physiological psychology.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Analyse psychological theories and concepts relevant to the specified topics.
- (b) Analyse the specified topics using alternative theoretical explanations.
- (c) Evaluate research evidence in relation to theories, concepts and applications, from the specified topics.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the appendix to the statement of standards.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole, and therefore, apply holistically to all Performance Criteria of the Unit.

Written and /or oral evidence is required to demonstrate the achievement of the Outcome and Performance Criteria for the Unit. The evidence must be produced under closed-book, supervised conditions within a time limit of **30 minutes**. Approximately 60% of the total marks available must be allocated for knowledge and understanding with the remaining 40% of the marks being awarded for analysis, application and evaluation.

As candidates will increase their knowledge, understanding and skills throughout their study, assessment should take place towards the end of the Unit. The use of a cut-off score may be appropriate for this assessment.

The instrument of assessment will provide opportunities for all Outcomes and Performance Criteria to be fulfilled, by means of sampling across the range of content of the Unit. Each instrument will provide a sample from all three topics. Thus, providing sampling of all three topics covered, this will allow teachers/lecturers to select the topic to be assessed. The content for assessment should be relatively unpredictable, and candidates must, therefore, learn all aspects of the chosen topic in order to be able to answer questions on any part of it.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

Each assessment will allow candidates to generate evidence which covers:

- ◆ **one** domain
- ◆ **one** topic from the chosen domain
- ◆ analysis and evaluation of relevant research for the chosen topic
- ◆ application of research for the chosen topic
- ◆ accurate use of psychological terminology

If a re-assessment is required, it should contain a different sample from the range of content.

The standard to be applied, breadth of coverage and an appropriate cut-off score are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the Centre, the notional design length is 40 hours. It is suggested that approximately 16–20 hours be allocated to each of the two topics.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Content and context for this Unit can be found in the appendix to the statement of standards.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

An ethical approach to learning and teaching

Teacher/lecturers should be aware that some topics may be sensitive for individual candidates based on stages of development or personal experiences, and discretion should be used. To this end, care should be taken in delivery of material and sensitivity should be shown. Candidates should not be made to feel pressurised to disclose personal information, for example in discussions which may relate to health, relationships, emotions, and teachers/lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress. The power relationship that, of necessity, prevails in the classroom should be recognised and handled with care.

Such concerns are particularly relevant to delivery methods involving classroom research demonstrations, and teachers/lecturers should be familiar with two sources of ethical guidance: the *BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct* (August 2009), at www.bps.org.uk; and the *ATP Guide to Ethics for Teachers and Students of Psychology at Pre-Degree Level* (2003).

Resources for learning and teaching

A wide range of good quality resources for studying psychology is readily available, including textbooks, candidate journals, videos, CD-ROMs, commercially-produced resource packs, websites and online materials. A number of published introductory textbooks are at a suitable level for this Unit and Course, and teachers/lecturers may wish to recommend one of these as a set text, or to obtain a set, either to issue to candidates or for use in class. However, it is unlikely that any single book will fully cover all content for the Unit or Course, and indeed candidates should be encouraged to read more widely, therefore, teachers/lecturers should ensure that additional resources are available for candidates, eg a number of single copies of different texts, copies of handouts/worksheets from journals or resource packs (ie resources that are designated suitable for photocopying in the copyright information), centre-produced learning packs, teachers'/lecturers' own handouts, etc. Some materials for other Units/Courses may be adapted to support this Unit at the teacher's/lecturer's discretion.

As well as these resources for classroom/homework learning, teacher/lecturers may enhance the variety of their delivery by means of, for example, a visit to a science museum, a nursery/crèche/primary school, or to a university psychology department, attending a revision or coursework conference, use of invited speakers.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

Delivery of the Unit

In this Unit two topics will be taught from a choice of three: early socialisation; memory; and stress. To help candidates achieve the Unit Outcomes/Performance Criteria, and the Course assessment objectives, where relevant, it is suggested that teachers'/lecturers' delivery of content address the following, for every topic:

- ◆ To set the topic in context an introduction to the **Domain** within which the topic is located should be produced. For example, briefly introduce key features of **physiological psychology**, as a starting point for studying *stress*, the role of the brain and nervous system in influencing thoughts, feelings and behaviour, the influence of genetic factors on behaviour, and the origins of adaptive behaviours in the evolutionary development of species. The nature/nurture debate should underpin teaching throughout the Unit. **These introductions will not be assessed.**
- ◆ Explain relevant **theories/models/concepts and key terms**. These should normally be presented in chronological order, ie following historical development of evidence and theory, and for most topics should include both **classic** and **contemporary** studies. For example, in the *memory* topic, candidates should be familiar with early experiments, through to recent research and theory, as well as the key developments in between.
- ◆ For virtually every topic, **alternative theories** from a variety of psychological approaches will be relevant. These approaches should be highlighted by the teacher/lecturer, who, in subsequent topics or Units, may make reference to these approaches again. For example, in studying *early socialisation*, candidates will encounter elements of psychoanalytic theory, behaviourist theory and possibly individual differences; these will crop up again under, say, *stress* and *memory*, and teachers/lecturers should emphasise these inter-relationships. Thus, candidates will be encouraged to develop, in the meaningful context of the topics rather than in a 'vacuum', an understanding of the various perspectives that underpin the discipline.
- ◆ Teachers/Lecturers should use a number of relevant **research studies**, so that candidates can describe aims, methods and design, sample, procedure, results and conclusions, and can interpret and evaluate the research. The number of research studies may vary from topic to topic.
 - to **describe**: Who did the research? When? What was done? Who were the participants? What were the results?
 - to **interpret**: What do the results mean? ie in relation to existing theory(ies).
 - to **evaluate**: Strengths and weaknesses of the study, both methodological and ethical.

Topic areas vary in the amount of research that has actually been conducted, however, in writing an essay on any of the topics, candidates should be able to support their arguments by referring to a number of studies.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

- ◆ Conduct **classroom experimental demonstrations**, wherever the subject matter lends itself to this: eg memory demonstrations are possible, such as the serial position effect, curve of forgetting. Rating scales and questionnaires may be used in class. Such activities not only bring topics ‘alive’, but also support learning of research methods. Activities may also assist candidates in conducting their research investigation, as they provide opportunities for the teacher/lecturer to model research procedures, including the consideration of ethical principles. For example, when introducing any classroom research demonstrations, the teacher/lecturer (in the role of *researcher*) should obtain informed consent of candidates (in the role of *participants*).
- ◆ Newspaper articles or website news articles on **topical issues** may be used to stimulate discussion. For example, the role of parenting in behavioural difficulties of children, or in relation to later anti-social behaviour, often features in the media. Candidates can be encouraged to apply their knowledge (of *early socialisation*, in this case) to such real-life situations. Once again, such activities will need to be dealt with sensitively by teachers/lecturers.
- ◆ In addition, candidates will need help to develop other aspects of study skills, particularly **essay-writing**. Unit and Course assessments will demand essay-type extended answers, in response to relatively unpredictable questions. Therefore, candidates will need to develop skills such as:
 - structuring an essay
 - organising material logically
 - using an appropriate, formal writing style
 - using psychological terminology
 - demonstrating knowledge and understanding as well as analysis and evaluation
 - putting forward arguments based on evidence rather than unsupported assertions
 - ensuring that they answer the question set

Class and homework tasks may be set to incorporate essay skills development.

- ◆ Psychological principles should also be applied to assist candidates with revision strategies and examination techniques. For example, in addition to using memory aids to learn material for the Unit (and Course) assessment, candidates may be encouraged to apply principles of:
 - self- and time-management to reduce anxiety (cognitive approach)
 - self-reinforcement (behaviourist approach)
 - peer-collaborative strategies (social approach) to increase motivation for revision
 - relaxation and physical exercise to reduce stress (biological approach)

If this is the first Unit studied as part of the Higher Course, then, having learned such strategies in this Unit, candidates taking the Course will also enjoy the benefit of practising these strategies for every Unit assessment, thus establishing good study habits.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Through Unit and Course assessments candidates will be required to answer written and oral questions. This will give the opportunity to develop Written and Oral Communication.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Instruments of assessment

Teachers/lecturers may devise their own assessment tasks and the National Assessment Bank will provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The most appropriate means of obtaining evidence of attainment of the Outcomes of this Unit will be a question paper comprising a mixture of short-answer, restricted response and extended response items, where questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material.

Timing

Where assessment evidence is gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the Unit, care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and re-assessment if required.

Weighting of Outcomes

Candidates' performance in this Unit is assessed holistically, ie fulfilment of Unit requirements is assessed by means of a single percentage cut-off score for the Unit.

In the Unit assessment, knowledge and understanding and the skills of analysis and evaluation will be assessed and applied to familiar contexts which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process. Instruments of assessment should, therefore, comprise questions/items that reflect weightings of the Outcomes as follows:

Outcome 1: Knowledge and understanding — approximately 60% of marks.

Outcome 2: Analysis and evaluation — approximately 40% of marks.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

Added value

The Unit assessment provides evidence of the specific level of achievement demanded by the Unit. However, the Unit assessment may allow candidates to demonstrate *added value*, ie performance beyond the minimum standard required for achievement of the Unit. Therefore, evidence gathered for internal Unit assessment may, along with other evidence, be used for Course grade estimates. For details of the Grade Descriptions for external assessment, and further information on appeals and *added value*, please refer to the Higher Psychology Course Arrangements documentation, including the Course Assessment Specification.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

APPENDIX: Content and context

This appendix is within the statement of standards, and demonstrates the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Two of the six core Domains are covered from a choice of three: Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology; the focus is on individual processes. **Two** topics are studied in depth; **one** specified topic from **each** chosen Domain. Each topic has several specified areas, at least one of which is an applied aspect of the topic. All areas of each topic include theory, concepts and research evidence. The amount of content in each area of the topic will vary. The nature/nurture debate should underpin the teaching of this Unit.

Domain: Developmental Psychology

Candidates should be introduced to the Domain of **developmental psychology**: definition of development; types of psychological development (ie physical-motor, cognitive, emotional, social, etc); traditional emphasis on child development has given way to the contemporary lifespan approach; an area of psychology where a wide range of explanations from different theoretical perspectives are offered. **This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.**

Topic: early socialisation

- ◆ Nature of attachment and its role in early socialisation: behaviourist and psychoanalytic explanations of attachment, the Bowlby-Ainsworth paradigm, stages and types of attachment, multiple attachments
- ◆ The nature of separation, deprivation, privation; evidence from studies with animals and humans, long term implications for adjustment and mental health
- ◆ Day Care: factors affecting cognitive and social development of young children in daycare.

Domain: Cognitive Psychology

Candidates should be introduced to the Domain of **cognitive psychology**: definition of cognition, the scope of cognitive psychology (ie attention, perception, memory, language, problem-solving, etc.), its place in the historical development of psychology, the current, dominant, information-processing approach. **This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.**

Topic: memory

- ◆ The nature of memory, including its stages, capacity, duration, encoding
- ◆ Models of memory, including the multi-store model and working memory
- ◆ Theories of forgetting, including trace decay, displacement, interference, cue-dependent forgetting
- ◆ Eyewitness testimony; applications, eg crime and accidents, factors affecting eye witness testimony. Loftus and Palmer (1974) study.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)

APPENDIX: Content and context (cont)

Domain: Physiological Psychology

Candidates should be introduced to the Domain of **physiological psychology**: the role of the brain and nervous system in influencing thoughts, feelings and behaviour, the influence of genetic factors on behaviour, and the origins of adaptive behaviours in the evolutionary development of species; emphasis on ‘nature’ influences, in the context of the nature/nurture issue; area of psychology most closely related to the natural sciences (biology, chemistry). **This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.**

Topic: stress

- ◆ Biological processes in stress, including General Adaptation Syndrome; sympathetic/parasympathetic arousal of the autonomic nervous system, and fight-or-flight response
- ◆ Origins and sources of stress: transactional nature of stress; environmental sources of stress; individual differences in stress susceptibility
- ◆ Short and long term effects of stress on physical and mental health
- ◆ Stress management strategies and their effectiveness, physiological techniques, individual coping strategies, social support and time management



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

CODE DF5L 12

COURSE: Psychology (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit will enable candidates to gain an understanding of a range of research methods used in the investigation of psychological processes, and to acquire practical psychological research skills. As well as studying experimental and non-experimental methods, research designs and data analysis techniques, candidates plan their own investigation, collect data, and report their findings.

For those new to the subject, the Unit should stimulate interest and enjoyment, and may serve as an introduction to the discipline of psychology, or as an introduction to research methods of the social sciences. For candidates progressing from Intermediate 2 Psychology, the Unit provides the opportunity to extend their knowledge of research methods and skills, and will promote a more evaluative consideration of methodology.

As part of Higher Psychology, the Unit provides suitable preparation for entry to higher education courses in Psychology or further study in other social and vocational subjects. Whether as part of a Course or on a free-standing basis, the Unit may offer preparation for employment or career advancement. As an understanding of research methodology is increasingly demanded in professional contexts, the knowledge and skills gained in this Unit are likely to be of relevance to candidates in their future careers.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of psychological research methods.
- 2 Analyse and evaluate psychological research methods.
- 3 Demonstrate practical research skills in the implementation of a psychological research investigation.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. There are no formal entry requirements, however, it would be beneficial if candidates had achieved the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade in a social subject at Credit level or an equivalent Intermediate 2 Course or Units
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Psychology
- ◆ **and** Standard Grade English at Credit level or Communication at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher level (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

This Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Core components for the Unit:	Critical Thinking	Higher
	Planning and Organising	Higher
	Reviewing and Evaluating	Intermediate 2
	Using Graphical Information	Higher

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of psychological research methods.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the features of the experimental method.
- (b) Describe a range of non-experimental methods of investigation.
- (c) Describe a range of data analysis techniques.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse and evaluate psychological research methods.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Evaluate comparative strengths and weaknesses of different research methods.
- (b) Apply knowledge of research methods and data analysis techniques to given research scenarios.
- (c) Interpret and draw conclusions from data in given research scenarios.
- (d) Discuss ethical issues in conducting research.

OUTCOME 3

Demonstrate practical research skills in the implementation of a psychological research investigation.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Plan and manage a research project.
- (b) Collect data, following standardised and ethical procedures.
- (c) Apply appropriate data analysis techniques to the collected data.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the appendix to the statement of standards.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all Outcomes of the Unit, candidates must produce written or recorded oral responses to items that cover Performance Criteria from all Outcomes. These will typically be produced by means of two instruments of assessment, each worth 50% of marks for the Unit: a supervised test for assessment of Outcomes 1 and 2, and practical work in the form of a research investigation project plan and log, for assessment of Outcome 3.

The test will take place under closed-book, supervised conditions, with a time limit of 30 minutes, and should comprise responses to specific questions in a question paper or other instrument of assessment containing a mixture of short-answer and restricted response items; questions may be structured, and some will be based on stimulus material. This instrument of assessment will provide opportunities for Outcomes 1 and 2 to be fulfilled, by means of sampling across the range of research methods content of the Unit. For example, if knowledge and understanding of the survey method are demonstrated (Performance Criterion 1b), it may be inferred that the candidate can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of other research methods also. Outcomes 1 and 2 are thus assessed holistically. The pattern of sampling of content will vary from one instrument of assessment to the next. Thus, sampling of content for assessment should be relatively unpredictable, and candidates must, therefore, learn all of the Unit content, in order to be able to answer questions on any part of it. Short-answer items may correspond to a single Performance Criterion, however, a restricted or extended response may fulfil a number of Performance Criteria, from one or both of the Outcomes. For Outcomes 1 and 2, candidates will be required to provide responses on methods both in general, and in relation to specific, given research scenarios.

Assessment of Outcome 3 is by means of a practical portfolio demonstrating the process of research. To provide evidence for Outcome 3, candidates produce a research investigation project plan and log, which will comprise:

- ◆ a detailed research plan completed by the candidate before conducting research, and showing the research question
- ◆ hypotheses
- ◆ related theory and research
- ◆ method
- ◆ design
- ◆ variables to be operationalised
- ◆ sample
- ◆ description of procedure and materials
- ◆ choice of data analysis techniques
- ◆ schedule for implementation and progress log
- ◆ collected raw data and data analysis calculations

A template for the research investigation project plan and log is provided in the National Assessment Bank items (NABs).

Candidates taking this Unit as part of the Higher Course may use the same research question for the Unit assessment as for their research investigation external assessment; thus they may use the project plan and log as a framework for managing their research investigation.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

If a re-assessment is required, it should contain a different sample from the range of content.

Achievement can be decided by the use of a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours. It is suggested that approximately 20 hours be allocated to each of the two parts of this Unit, ie Research Methods and Research Skills.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Content and context for this Unit can be found in the appendix to the statement of standards.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

NOTE: This guidance deals mainly with the Research Methods part of the Unit, as full guidance on practical research skills is provided in the SQA document *Higher Psychology Research Investigation Guidelines* (revised August 2010). Although that document is in support of external assessment for Course requirements, its contents are also relevant for internal assessment of research skills (where this Unit is taken on a stand-alone basis), and will provide useful additional information for the research methods part of this Unit, on methods and data analysis, including the use of descriptive statistics, and ethical issues.

An ethical approach to learning and teaching

Teachers/lecturers should be aware that some topics may be sensitive for individual candidates, based on stages of development or personal experiences, and discretion should be used. To this end, care should be taken in delivery of material and sensitivity should be shown. Candidates should not be made to feel pressurised to disclose personal information, for example in classroom discussions which may relate to health, relationships, emotions etc, and teachers/lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress. The power relationship that, of necessity, prevails in the classroom should be recognised and handled with care.

Such concerns are particularly relevant to delivery methods involving classroom research demonstrations, and teachers/lecturers should be familiar with two sources of ethical guidance: the BPS *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (August 2009), at www.bps.org.uk; and the ATP *Guide to Ethics for Teachers and Students of Psychology at Pre-Degree Level* (2003).

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

Resources for learning and teaching

A wide range of good quality resources for studying psychology is readily available, including textbooks, student journals, videos, CD-ROMs, commercially-produced resource packs, websites and online materials. A number of published introductory text books are at a suitable level for this Unit and Course, and teachers/lecturers may wish to recommend one of these as a set text, or obtain a set, either to issue to candidates or for use in class. Introductory textbooks often contain chapters on research methods, and, in addition, there are more specialised texts on methods and data analysis, sometimes including learning activities for candidates. Additional resources may aid understanding, particularly those providing candidate-centred learning activities, eg copies of handouts/worksheets from journals or resource packs (ie resources that are designated suitable for photocopying in the copyright information), centre-produced learning packs, teachers/lecturers' own handouts etc. Some materials for other Units/Courses may be adapted to support this Unit, at the teachers/lecturers discretion.

Delivery of the Unit

In this Unit research methods and research skills will be taught. To help candidates achieve the Unit Outcomes/Performance Criteria, and the Course assessment objectives where relevant, it is suggested that teachers/lecturers delivery of content address the activities below. As in other areas of the subject, there is no universally agreed method for delivery of research methods, therefore, the guidance below is not intended to be prescriptive; rather, it offers suggestions for learning activities, which reflect the demands of Unit Outcomes/Performance Criteria and Evidence Requirements. The underlying rationale of the suggested approach is that principles of research methodology are most readily grasped if (a) they are initially tackled in the context of actual research studies/scenarios, and (b) problem-solving tasks are set which require candidates to apply their knowledge of methodology principles.

Research methods

- ◆ Introduction to the **Domain** of research methods in psychology: the scientific nature of psychology, contrasted with common sense; importance of sound research methodology in producing evidence, upon which theory is constructed, and/or which form the basis of applications of the discipline in everyday life; the cyclical nature, and stages, of the research process, from theory to hypothesis, etc, to conclusions and modification of theory, new hypotheses etc.
- ◆ Teachers/lecturers vary in their approach to delivering research methods, possibly more so than in other areas of psychology. For example, some start by emphasising the scientific nature of the discipline, and exemplify this by teaching the experimental method first, before moving on to non-experimental methods; others feel that non-experimental approaches are somewhat easier for novices to grasp, so deliver these first, followed by the experimental method. Either way, experimental and non-experimental methods can be compared/contrasted in terms of, eg control, cause-and-effect, replicability, ecological validity, and ethics.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

- ◆ To teach a particular method, it is often useful to present simple examples for discussion, based on actual research. For example, for the experimental method, small groups of candidates can be set a research problem, such as how they would, scientifically, discover whether coffee keeps you awake, whether people are more likely to be aggressive after watching a violent film, whether talking on a mobile phone reduces ability to drive safely, whether brain damage affects memory, whether people under stress at work make more errors, etc. Often, after some discussion, supported by questions and prompts from the teacher, key research principles will emerge (without the proper terminology) — IV and conditions, DV, controls, types of experiment (lab/field/natural), experimental designs, sampling, validity, ethics, etc.
- ◆ The same, or similar, examples can be used to introduce non-experimental methods, by asking candidates to discuss how these questions could be investigated by other means.

Where candidates are taking the Unit as part of the Higher Psychology Course, examples of research from the other two Psychology Units which are part of this Course, which are already familiar to candidates, will provide a rich source of material for discussion of methods. The basic underlying framework common to all research, ie aim/method/results/conclusions, will have been grasped already, and candidates will now be encouraged to further study the methodologies of particular studies.

- ◆ Once the main principles of research methods have been elicited, the details of each methodology can be presented more formally, with explanations illustrated by the examples used in discussion, and others. In this way research methods can be grasped in a meaningful context, rather than in the abstract. It should also be pointed out that, in real-life research, a multi-method approach is often the norm, largely because it is recognised that a single method rarely provides a full answer to a research question.
- ◆ Similar examples can also be used to discuss strengths and weaknesses of (a) different types of experiment, eg pros and cons of a lab or field experiment to investigate effects of TV violence on aggression; (b) different experimental designs; (c) experimental and non-experimental methodologies, etc. Such discussions may also focus on issues such as hypotheses, sampling, ecological validity, and ethics.
- ◆ Surveys: examples of real questionnaires (eg market research, course evaluation) and interview schedules (from books or learning pack) can be provided for candidates to examine, identifying types of items, spotting weaknesses in wording, etc; simple design exercises on questionnaire items and interview schedules can be set, preferably on areas of behaviour which previously studied, if possible.
- ◆ Observation: examples of actual observation schedules may be examined, and groups of candidates can be asked to create an observation schedule for specified areas of behaviour, preferably those which they have previously studied, if possible.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

- ◆ Case studies: these do not lend themselves quite so readily to the problem-solving tasks suggested for experiments and surveys, however, candidates could be presented with an outline of the background of a number of actual case studies (eg Genie, SB, Clive Wearing, etc), and asked to suggest methods of study. It should be pointed out that a case study usually involves a range of methods, such as interview, observation, psychometric testing, health records, etc. Teachers/lecturers should use the term *case study* in a precise way, ie to denote the well-defined specific methodology of in-depth study of an individual or small number of individuals; the term should not be used to refer to any research example, in general, as this may confuse candidates. Where a piece of research, of whatever method, is studied in depth, or given as an illustrative example, teachers/lecturers should refer to this as a *study*, or *scenario*.
- ◆ Having learned the features of the different research methods, candidates can be presented with descriptions of actual research, eg the ‘*Major Studies*’, or those they have encountered in a previous Unit (if taking the Course), and asked to identify all key details of the method and design. As well as promoting understanding of content, this kind of activity will provide practice for assessment items based on research scenarios.
- ◆ Data analysis: like research methods, data analysis knowledge and skills can be effectively delivered through extensive use of examples, to illustrate quantitative/qualitative distinction, measures of central tendency and dispersion, types of charts and graphs, and features of correlational analysis. Examples of graphical results of actual studies, from books and learning materials, can be used to give practice in interpreting data, and to highlight the close link between the method/design of the study and the choice of data analysis techniques.

For example, in most experimental studies, a difference between conditions is predicted, therefore, results are often presented as a simple bar chart of mean scores. In many non-experimental studies, a relationship between variables is predicted, therefore results may be presented as a scattergram (where data are quantitative). A carefully-chosen example of a scattergram for a particular study can be extensively exploited, eg: is the relationship positive or negative? How strong? Does this mean that variable x causes variable y ? Sets of fictitious data can be provided, and candidates asked to construct (and possibly select) suitable graphs. Delivery of this part of the Unit should provide a strong basis for practical application of data analysis in the candidates’ own research investigations.

- ◆ Ethical issues: once again, these may be introduced by means of discussion of illustrative research scenarios, including the influence of ethical considerations on choice of research method. Where candidates are studying for the Higher Psychology Course, they are likely to already have some familiarity with ethical issues that have arisen in relation to research studies dealt with in the other Unit(s). Once these issues have been grasped in the concrete context of research examples, the formal ethical principles can be presented.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

Practical research skills

- ◆ Full guidance on practical research skills is provided in the SQA document *Higher Psychology Research Investigation Guidelines* (revised August 2010). Although that document is in support of external assessment for Course requirements, its contents are also relevant for internal assessment of research skills (where this Unit is taken on a stand-alone basis), and will provide useful additional information for the research methods part of this Unit, on methods and data analysis, including the use of descriptive statistics, and ethical issues.
- ◆ Research skills are delivered by means of the development of a practical portfolio by the candidate, comprising a research investigation project plan and log, on which internal assessment of research skills is based. A template for the research investigation project plan and log is provided in the National Assessment Bank items (NABs).
- ◆ Depending on the delivery time available, the research investigation may be introduced initially in outline, and discussion prompted as to how the research might best be conducted. Thus candidates may be involved in basic aspects of the design process (however, note that the Unit Outcomes/Performance Criteria do not demand design skills); it demands application of knowledge of research methods, from earlier in the Unit, and thus integrates the two sections. If the Unit is being taken as part of the Higher Psychology Course, teachers/lecturers may have already conducted research demonstrations in class as part of the learning and teaching process, thus candidates will be familiar with this format. Classroom research demonstrations provide opportunities for the teacher/lecturer to model research procedures, including the consideration of ethical principles; for example, when introducing any classroom research demonstration, the teacher/lecturer (in the role of *researcher*) should obtain informed consent.
- ◆ Of candidates (in the role of *participants*); certain procedures might involve ethical issues, and would need to be treated sensitively.

Planning:

- time schedule for the various tasks
- allocation of tasks to group members (if applicable)
- all aspects of method, design and procedure of investigation, and choice of data analysis techniques

Implementation:

- carry out procedure with participants
- collect data
- apply data analysis techniques
- maintenance of research log

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the Core Skill components listed through Unit and Course assessments, candidates will be required to answer written and oral questions. This will give the opportunity to develop Written and Oral Communication.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Instruments of assessment

Teachers/lecturers may devise their own assessment tasks and the National Assessment Bank item (NAB) will provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The most appropriate means of obtaining evidence of attainment of the Outcomes of this Unit will be:

Outcomes 1 and 2: a 30-minute question paper comprising a mixture of short-answer and restricted response items, where questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material; to be conducted under supervised test conditions.

Outcome 3: a research investigation project plan and log (practical portfolio).

Information given below applies to both components of assessment, unless otherwise stated.

Timing

Where assessment evidence is gathered towards the end of the Unit, care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and re-assessment if required.

Weighting of Outcomes

Candidates' performance in this Unit is assessed by means of two instruments of assessment.

In the question paper, knowledge and understanding will constitute a major element of the tasks required of candidates; the skills of analysis and evaluation will be assessed to a lesser extent, and applied to familiar contexts which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process. Instruments of assessment should, therefore, comprise questions/items that reflect weightings of the Outcomes as follows:

Outcome 1: Knowledge and understanding — approximately 60% of marks.

Outcome 2: Analysis and evaluation — approximately 40% of marks.

In the research investigation project plan and log (Outcome 3), practical research skills are assessed. In the Course assessment the balance of assessment will reflect a stronger emphasis on the higher cognitive skills of analysis and evaluation.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

Added value

The Unit assessment provides evidence of the specific level of achievement demanded by the Unit. However, the Unit assessment may allow candidates to demonstrate *added value*, ie performance beyond the minimum standard required for achievement of the Unit. Therefore, evidence gathered for internal Unit assessment may, along with other evidence, be used for Course grade estimates and for appeals for external Course assessment. For details of the Grade Descriptions for external assessment, and further information on *added value*, please refer to the Higher Psychology Course Arrangements documentation, including the Course Assessment Specification.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for this Course. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

APPENDIX: Content and context

This appendix is within the statement of standards, and demonstrates the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

One of the six core Domains, Research Methods, is addressed in this Unit along with practical 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

Candidates should be introduced to the cyclical nature of the research process:

Theory about human behaviour — Hypothesis — Design/conduct research and collect data — support/reject hypothesis + confirm/adjust theory — New hypothesis, etc.

Experimental method:

- ◆ types of experiment — laboratory, field, natural/quasi-experiments
- ◆ features of the experiment: allows cause-and-effect conclusions, replicability
- ◆ strengths and weaknesses of experimental methods
- ◆ operationalisation of variables: independent variable and its conditions; dependent variable; control of extraneous and confounding variables
- ◆ experimental designs: independent measures/groups, repeated measures, matched pairs; comparative advantages and disadvantages of each

Non-experimental methods:

- ◆ survey, including questionnaires and interviews; questionnaire/interview construction
- ◆ observation: naturalistic, participant/non-participant; use of observation schedule
- ◆ case study
- ◆ strengths and weaknesses of non-experimental methods
- ◆ comparative strengths and weaknesses of experimental and non-experimental methods
- ◆ multi-method approaches in practice, including case studies involving several methods and use of observation experiments

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

APPENDIX: Content and context (cont)

Research issues common to all methods:

Hypotheses — experimental/alternative hypothesis and null hypothesis; one — and two-tailed hypotheses; correlational hypotheses.

Sampling: definitions of sample and population; features of a good sample — sample size, representativeness, avoidance of bias, generalisability; principles and practice of random sampling; opportunity/convenience sampling; self-selecting samples.

Realism/ecological validity.

Data analysis:

Definitions and distinctions between quantitative and qualitative data.

Descriptive statistics:

- ◆ measures of central tendency — mean, median, mode
- ◆ measure of dispersion — range
- ◆ bar-charts
- ◆ percentages and pie-charts
- ◆ scattergrams

Correlational design and data analysis: use and interpretation of scattergrams, positive and negative correlations, interpretation of strength of correlation; limitations of correlation.

Knowledge of inferential statistics is not required.

Ethical issues in research:

Ethical principles in psychological research with humans, including the role of studies such as those by Milgram and Piliavin, in the development of ethical codes.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Higher)

APPENDIX: Content and context (cont)

Research skills

Planning and implementing psychological research.

A research investigation is conducted by the candidate, and may be based on a psychological topic selected by the teacher/lecturer, from a list of recommended studies. Either the experimental method or a non-experimental method should be used.

This Unit requires that candidates put into practice the following skills:

- ◆ establish the research question, related theory/research and aims/hypotheses
- ◆ plan the investigation schedule
- ◆ monitor and log progress
- ◆ establish details of method, design and procedure, including ethical aspects
- ◆ produce/obtain materials
- ◆ obtain a sample of participants
- ◆ collect data and apply suitable data analysis techniques

A template for planning and logging the implementation of the research (ie the research investigation project plan and log) is provided in the National Assessment Bank items (NABs).



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

CODE F5B5 12

COURSE: Psychology (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit will enable candidates to gain an understanding of a number of psychological processes which individuals experience, by studying two specified topics from the two key Domains of Social Psychology and Psychology of Individual Differences. Within the Domain of Social Psychology, candidates have the opportunity to develop an understanding of one from a choice of three key Social Psychological processes: prejudice; conformity and obedience; social relationships. Within the Domain of Psychology of Individual Differences, candidates have the opportunity to develop an understanding of one from a choice of two of the following key psychological processes: atypical behaviour; intelligence. Different ways of explaining these behaviours are considered, as well as the ways in which psychological knowledge is used in practice, in everyday life.

For those new to the subject the Unit should stimulate interest and enjoyment, and may serve as an introduction to the discipline; for candidates progressing from Intermediate 2 the Unit provides the opportunity to study different topics within familiar domains of psychology, and will promote development of more in-depth knowledge and understanding.

As part of Higher Psychology, the Unit provides suitable preparation for entry to higher education courses in Psychology or further study in other social and vocational subjects. Whether as part of a Course, or on a free-standing basis, the Unit may offer preparation for employment or career advancement. The topics selected for study are likely to be of relevance to candidates personally, socially and professionally.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of selected topics from social psychology and the psychology of individual differences.
- 2 Analyse and evaluate selected topics from social psychology and the psychology of individual differences.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre; however, it would be beneficial if candidates had achieved the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ a Standard Grade Social Subject at Credit level or an equivalent Intermediate 2 Course or Units
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Psychology
- ◆ **and** Standard Grade English at Credit level or Communication at Intermediate 2

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher level (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

Opportunities to deliver aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of selected topics from social psychology and the psychology of individual differences.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe psychological theories, concepts and research evidence relevant to the selected topics.
- (b) Explain how psychological knowledge is applied, from the selected topics.
- (c) Communicate psychological knowledge effectively, using accurate terminology and formal style following conventions of the discipline.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse and evaluate selected topics from social psychology and the psychology of individual differences.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Analyse psychological theories and concepts relevant to the selected topics.
- (b) Analyse the selected topics using alternative theoretical explanations.
- (c) Evaluate research evidence in relation to theories, concepts and applications, from the selected topics.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole, and therefore, apply holistically to all Performance Criteria of the Unit.

Written and /or oral evidence is required to demonstrate the achievement of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria for the Unit. The evidence must be produced under closed-book, supervised conditions within a time limit of **30 minutes**. 60% of the total marks available must be allocated for knowledge and understanding with the remaining 40% of the marks being awarded for analysis, application and evaluation.

As candidates will increase their knowledge, understanding and skills throughout their study, assessment should take place towards the end of the Unit. The use of a cut-off score may be appropriate for this assessment.

The instrument of assessment will provide opportunities for all Outcomes and Performance Criteria to be fulfilled, by means of sampling across the range of content of the Unit. Each instrument will provide a sample from all five topics. Thus, providing sampling of all five topics covered, this will allow teachers/lecturers to select the topic to be assessed. The context for assessment should be relatively unpredictable, and candidates must, therefore, learn all aspects of the chosen topic in order to be able to answer questions on any part of it.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

Each assessment will allow candidates to generate evidence which covers:

- ◆ one domain
- ◆ one topic from the chosen domain
- ◆ relevant research for the chosen topic
- ◆ analysis and evaluation of relevant research for the chosen topic
- ◆ application of research for the chosen topic
- ◆ accurate use of psychological terminology

If a re-assessment is required, it should contain a different sample from the range of content.

The standard to be applied, breadth of coverage and an appropriate cut-off score are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items (NABs) available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory. While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours. It is suggested that approximately 10–12 hours be allocated to each of the two topics.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Content and context for this Unit can be found in the appendix to the statement of standards.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

An ethical approach to learning and teaching

Teachers/lecturers should be aware that some topics may be sensitive for individual candidates, based on stages of development or personal experiences, and discretion should be used. To this end, care should be taken in the delivery of material and sensitivity should be shown. Candidates should not be made to feel pressurised to disclose personal information, for example in classroom discussions which may relate to health, relationships, emotions, and teachers/lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress. The power relationship that, of necessity, prevails in the classroom should be recognised and handled with care.

Such concerns are particularly relevant to delivery methods involving classroom research demonstrations, and teachers/lecturers should be familiar with two sources of ethical guidance: the BPS *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (August 2009), at www.bps.org.uk; and the ATP *Guide to Ethics for Teachers and Students of Psychology at Pre-Degree Level* (2003).

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

Resources for learning and teaching

A wide range of good quality resources for studying psychology is readily available, including textbooks, candidate journals, videos, CD-ROMs, commercially-produced resource packs, websites and online materials. A number of published introductory textbooks are at a suitable level for this Unit and Course, and teachers/lecturers may wish to recommend one of these as a set text, or to obtain a set, either to issue to candidates or for use in class. However, it is unlikely that any single book will fully cover all content for the Unit or Course, and indeed candidates should be encouraged to read more widely, therefore, teachers/lecturers should ensure that additional resources are available for candidates, eg a number of single copies of different texts, copies of handouts/worksheets from journals or resource packs (ie resources that are designated suitable for photocopying in the copyright information), centre-produced learning packs, teachers'/lecturers' own handouts. Some materials for other Units/Courses may be adapted to support this Unit, at the teacher's/lecturer's discretion.

As well as these resources for classroom/homework learning, teachers/lecturers may enhance the variety of their delivery by means of, for example, a visit to a science museum, a nursery/crèche/primary school, or to a university psychology department, attending a revision or coursework conference, use of invited speakers.

Delivery of the Unit

In this Unit **two** topics will be taught; one from the Domain of Social Psychology, and one from the Domain of the Psychology of Individual Differences.

To help candidates achieve the Unit Outcomes/Performance Criteria, and the Course assessment objectives, where relevant, it is suggested that teachers'/lecturers' delivery of content address the following, for every topic:

- ◆ To set the topic in context an introduction to the **Domain** within which the topic is located should be produced. For example briefly introduce key features of **social psychology**, as a starting point for studying the chosen topic(s): **social psychology** involves the study of the factors which influence individuals' behaviours and thoughts in social situations. The scope of the Domain may be described (ie the topic areas covered here, plus group processes, leadership, etc); it draws on developmental and cognitive approaches; area of psychology that is most closely related to sociology; an approach that has immediate relevance to major societal problems (eg discrimination, relationship breakdown) and numerous applications in these areas, as well as in organisational behaviour. A similar introduction should be provided to the psychology of **individual differences**. The nature/nurture debate should underpin teaching throughout the Unit. These introductions will **not** be assessed.
- ◆ Explain relevant **theories/models/concepts and key terms**. These should normally be presented in chronological order, ie following historical development of evidence and theory, and for most topics should include both **classic** and **contemporary** studies. For example, in the *prejudice* topic, candidates should be familiar with the early studies, through to recent research and theory, as well as key developments in between.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

- ◆ For virtually every topic, **alternative theories** from a variety of psychological approaches will be relevant. These approaches should be highlighted by the teacher/lecturer, who, in subsequent topics or Units, may make reference to these approaches again. For example, in studying *atypical behaviour*, candidates will encounter elements of psychoanalytic theory, behaviourist theory and cognitive theory; these will crop up again under, say, prejudice, and teachers/lecturers should emphasise these inter-relationships. Thus candidates will be encouraged to develop, in the meaningful context of the topics rather than in a ‘vacuum’, an understanding of the various perspectives that underpin the discipline.
- ◆ For each topic, refer to a number of relevant **research studies**, so that candidates can describe aims, methods and design, sample, procedure, results and conclusions, and can interpret and evaluate the research.
 - to **describe**: Who did the research? When? What was done? Who were the participants? What were the results?
 - to **interpret**: What do the results mean? ie in relation to existing theory(ies).
 - to **evaluate**: Strengths and weaknesses of the study, both methodological and ethical.

Topic areas vary in the amount of research that has actually been conducted, however, in writing an essay on any of the topics, candidates should be able to support their arguments by referring to a number of studies.

- ◆ Conduct **classroom demonstrations and activities**, wherever the subject matter lends itself to this; rating scales and questionnaires might be appropriate. Such activities not only bring topics ‘alive’, but also support learning of research methods; they may assist candidates in conducting their research investigation, as they provide opportunities for the teacher/lecturer to model research procedures, including the consideration of ethical principles; for example, when introducing any classroom research demonstration, the teacher/lecturer (in the role of *researcher*) should obtain the informed consent of candidates (in the role of *participants*).
- ◆ Newspaper articles or website news articles on **topical issues** may be used to stimulate discussion; for example, though there is little research information on attitudes to asylum-seekers, or sectarianism in Scotland, candidates can be encouraged to apply their knowledge (of prejudice, in this case) to such real-life situations. Once again, such activities will need to be dealt with sensitively by teachers/lecturers.
- ◆ Candidates will need help to develop study skills, particularly **essay-writing**. Course and Unit assessments will demand essay-type extended answers, in response to relatively unpredictable questions. Therefore, candidates will need to develop skills such as:
 - structuring an essay
 - organising material logically
 - using an appropriate, formal writing style
 - using psychological terminology
 - demonstrating knowledge and understanding as well as analysis and evaluation
 - putting forward arguments based on evidence rather than unsupported assertions
 - ensuring that they answer the question set

Class and homework tasks may be set, to incorporate essay skills development.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

- ◆ Psychological principles should also be applied to assist candidates with **revision strategies and examination techniques**. For example, candidates may be encouraged to apply principles of:
 - self- and time-management to reduce anxiety (cognitive approach)
 - self-reinforcement (behaviourist approach)
 - peer-collaborative strategies (social approach) to increase motivation for revision
 - relaxation and physical exercise to reduce stress (biological approach)

If this Unit is studied first as part of the Higher Course, then, having learned such strategies in this Unit, candidates taking the Course will also enjoy the benefit of practising these strategies for every Unit assessment, thus establishing good study habits. If the Unit *Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Higher)* has already been studied, candidates will be familiar with the use of memory aids to learn material for assessment.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Through Unit and Course assessments, candidates will be required to answer written and oral questions. This will give the opportunity to develop Written and Oral Communication.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Instruments of assessment

Teachers/lecturers may devise their own assessment tasks and the National Assessment Bank will provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The most appropriate means of obtaining evidence of attainment of the Outcomes of this Unit will be a question paper comprising a mixture of short-answer, restricted response and extended response items, where questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material.

Timing

Where assessment evidence is gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the Unit, care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and re-assessment if required.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

Weighting of Outcomes

Candidates' performance in this Unit is assessed holistically, ie fulfilment of Unit requirements is assessed by means of a single percentage score for the Unit.

In the Unit assessment, knowledge and understanding will constitute a major element of the tasks required of candidates; the skills of analysis and evaluation will be assessed to a lesser extent, and applied to familiar contexts which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process. Instruments of assessment should, therefore, comprise questions/items that reflect weightings of the Outcomes as follows:

Outcome 1: Knowledge and understanding — approximately 60% of marks.

Outcome 2: Analysis and evaluation — approximately 40% of marks.

Added value

The Unit assessment provides evidence of the specific level of achievement demanded by the Unit. However, the Unit assessment may allow candidates to demonstrate *added value*, ie performance beyond the minimum standard required for achievement of the Unit. Therefore, evidence gathered for internal Unit assessment may, along with other evidence, be used for Course grade estimates and for appeals for external Course assessment. For details of the Grade Descriptions for external assessment, and further information on *added value*, please refer to the Higher Psychology Course Arrangements documentation, including the Course Assessment Specification.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for this Course. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

APPENDIX: Content and context

This appendix is within the statement of standards, and demonstrates the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Two of the six core Domains are covered: Social Psychology and the Psychology of Individual Differences. The focus is on psychological processes in the context of social interaction. **Two** topics are studied: **one** topic from **each** of the Domains. Each topic will be studied in depth, and has several specified areas, at least one of which is an applied aspect of the topic. All areas of each topic include theory, concepts, and research evidence. The amount of content in each area of the topic will vary.

Domain: Social Psychology

Candidates should be introduced to the Domain of social psychology: definition of social psychology; scope of the Domain (ie the topic areas covered here, plus group processes, leadership etc; draws on developmental and cognitive approaches; area of psychology that is most closely related to sociology; an approach that has immediate relevance to major societal issues and problems (eg discrimination and relationship breakdown) and numerous applications in these areas, as well as extensive research and applications in organisational behaviour. **This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.**

Topic: prejudice

- ◆ Nature of prejudice including stereotyping and discrimination; cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects
- ◆ Theories of prejudice, including authoritarian personality, and social identity theory
- ◆ Prejudice reduction: education/socialisation, contact and equal status contact, and super-ordinate goals

Topic: conformity and obedience

- ◆ Nature of conformity; normative and informational social influence, compliance and internalisation, individual and situational factors in conformity
- ◆ Nature of obedience: factors in obedience behaviour, including: perceived legitimate authority, socialisation, autonomous and agentic levels of behaviour
- ◆ Strategies for resisting social pressure/coercion: responsibility for own actions, moral reasoning and awareness of own values, questioning motives of others including advertisers and peer groups, disobedient models

Topic: social relationships

- ◆ Nature of affiliation and attraction; familiarity, similarity, proximity, matching hypothesis
- ◆ Theories of social relationships: economic theories, evolutionary/sociobiological theories
- ◆ Individual, social and cultural variations in contemporary relationships, cross cultural differences, same sex relationships, mediated relationships (eg. relationships formed from the internet)

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) — Appendix

UNIT Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context (Higher)

APPENDIX: Content and context (cont)

Domain: Psychology of Individual Differences

Candidates should be introduced to the Domain of the psychology of individual differences: Definitions and examples of individual differences; scope of the Domain; dominance of psychometric approach in the fields of personality and intelligence, and its applications (eg in education and the workplace); contrast between idiographic and nomothetic approaches; the area of psychology within which the study of atypical/abnormal behaviour and psychological disorder is located, and which, therefore, gives rise to wide application in therapy; influence of individual differences in virtually every other area of psychology, eg developmental, physiological, cognitive processes. **This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.**

Topic: atypical behaviour

- ◆ Range of definitions of atypical behaviour
- ◆ Range of approaches to explaining disorders including the medical model, cognitive and behaviourist explanations, and one from psychodynamic or humanistic approaches
- ◆ Therapies for depression or eating disorders including medical therapies, cognitive-behavioural therapy, and one from psychodynamic or humanistic therapies

Topic: intelligence

- ◆ Nature-nurture debate in intelligence; genetic relatedness and IQ, twins and adoption studies, effects of early deprivation and environmental enrichment, interactionist approaches
- ◆ Theories of intelligence including factor and information processing approaches
- ◆ Uses of IQ testing; educational selection, recruitment in employment and military organisations, effect of cultural biases on validity/reliability of IQ tests