

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Psychology of Sports Performance

Unit code: DD2N 35

Unit purpose: This Unit aims to ensure that candidates can identify the key mental factors which relate to sports training and performance, can analyse an individual's strengths and weaknesses in relation to mental skills, and can design an appropriate mental training programme for an individual.

On completion of this Unit the candidate will be able to:

1. Identify and describe theories of Achievement Motivation and their applications.
2. Analyse key factors in Sport Psychology.
3. Describe and apply a range of mental training methods.

Credit value: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCOTCAT credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCOTCAT 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 SCOTCAT points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should possess good written and oral communication skills and have completed the Unit "Psychology of Sports Coaching". Ultimately, entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence toward core skills within this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this Unit.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes. This Unit is included in the framework for HNC/D Sports Coaching with Development of Sport.

Assessment: Outcome 1 is assessed by a series of restricted response questions. It is important that candidates can apply knowledge of the psychology of sporting performance in practical situations. Integrating the assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 would be appropriate. This could involve students analysing the psychological components of peak performance for a given sport/event in detail, constructing a psychological profile for an individual athlete and designing a psychological skills training programme for the athlete based on this profile.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Identify and describe theories of Achievement Motivation and their applications.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Definition of Achievement Motivation.
- Knowledge and applications of Attribution Theory.
- Knowledge and applications of Task Goals Theory.
- Knowledge and applications of Need Achievement Theory.
- Evidence of effectiveness of goal setting in sport.
- Goal setting guidelines.

Evidence requirements

To achieve this outcome candidates will require to provide written evidence to demonstrate their understanding of all aspects of the knowledge and skills section. The candidate will be required to identify and describe theories of Achievement Motivation and describe practical implications and applications of these theories in sports coaching. The application of goal setting in relation to enhancing Achievement Motivation in sport must also be fully discussed.

The assessment instrument will be a restricted response question paper. The assessment will be conducted under supervised conditions.

Assessment guidelines

Candidates must provide written evidence that they can evaluate theories of Achievement Motivation and their implications and applications to sports performance.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Psychology of Sports Performance

Outcome 2

Analyse key factors in sport psychology.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Anxiety – definition; factors influencing; relationship between anxiety and performance; assessing levels of anxiety in performers.
- Confidence – definition; factors influencing; relationship to sports performance; assessing confidence in performers.
- Concentration – definition; categories of attention; common attention problems; assessing levels of concentration in performers.

Evidence requirements

To achieve this outcome candidates will be required to produce written evidence in the region of 1500-2500 words to demonstrate their understanding of all aspects of the knowledge and / or skills section. The candidate will be required to:-

- (i) analyse the concept of anxiety and its relationship to sports performance,
- (ii) explain the relationship between confidence and sports performance,
- (iii) explain the role of effective concentration in sports performance.

Assessment guidelines

Written evidence the candidate can analyse the key psychological factors related to optimal sports performance. This could be a project where the candidate analyses the role of the key psychological factors in relation to scenarios in a given sport.

Outcome 3

Describe and apply a range of mental training methods.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Anxiety management techniques.
- Attention control strategies.
- Confidence enhancement techniques.
- Knowledge and application of imagery techniques.
- Analysis of individual athlete's strengths and weaknesses in relation to anxiety, confidence and concentration.
- Selection of appropriate mental training methods for a given individual

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Psychology of Sports Performance

Evidence requirements

Candidates will be required to produce written evidence in the region of 1500-2500 words to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills showing that they can identify and describe the most appropriate mental training methods for a given individual by:

- (i) Preparing a psychological profile for an individual performer;
- (ii) Designing an appropriate Mental Training Programme for an individual performer.

Assessment guidelines

Written evidence the candidate can evaluate and apply a range of psychological intervention strategies used in contemporary Sport Psychology. This could involve producing a project where the candidate works with a performer in a specific sport to design a mental training plan.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DD2N 35

Unit title: Psychology of Sports Performance

Superclass category: PK

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Psychology of Sports Performance

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.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Although this subject requires considerable theoretical input, this should always be related to practical situations in sport, specifically to working with individual performance athletes. Moreover, sports specific research relating to theoretical concepts should be emphasised rather than concepts from basic Psychology. An overview of suggested content is outlined below:

Outcome 1:

Underpinning Knowledge: Definitions; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; the interactional view of motivation; Achievement Motivation definition.

Theories of Motivation: Need Achievement Theory; Attribution Theory; Task Goals Approach; Cognitive Evaluation Theory; Practical Applications of Each Theory.

Enhancing Motivation: Goal setting – Evidence of effectiveness; goal setting guidelines; common problems in goal setting.

Outcome 2:

Anxiety and Sports Performance: Trait and State anxiety; Multidimensional anxiety theory; Anxiety Symptoms; The stress process; Inverted U Theory; Hannin's Zones of Optimal Functioning; Catastrophe theory; Influence of Perception of anxiety symptoms;

Confidence & Sports Performance: Self-efficacy theory; Sport Confidence Theory; Relationship between confidence and sports Performance.

Concentration and Sports Performance: Components of attention; Categories of attentional focus; Shifting attentional focus; Characteristics of effective concentration; Common attentional problems and distractions.

Outcome 3:

Anxiety Management Techniques: The Matching Hypothesis; Progressive muscular Relaxation; Meditative relaxation; Cognitive-Affective stress management training; Systematic Desensitisation; Biofeedback; Simulation Training; Cognitive re-structuring; imagery.

Attentional Control Methods: Self-talk; Imagery; performance routines; attentional training.

Motivational Factors: Goal setting; the success cycle; Feedback and Reinforcement.

Enhancing Confidence: Imagery; performance accomplishments; self talk; verbal persuasion.

Psychological Profile: Performance Profiling; Anxiety & confidence assessment using CSAI II/ Modified CSAI II (After Jones, 1993). Assessing attention/concentration style (e.g. Niddiffers' TAIS).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Psychology of Sports Performance

Designing Psychological Skills Training Programmes: Related to subjects psychological profile; choice of interventions justified.

It will be noted that the suggested word counts for O2 and O3 have a wide margin. This is to reflect that candidates may use tables, charts, lists and bullet points to present information in a more concise format.

This approach should be encouraged to reflect the demands of report writing.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit would be best delivered during the second year of the HND programme, and should ideally be sequenced after candidates have completed the Unit “Psychology of Sports Coaching”.

Open learning

Open learning implies that, while candidates study out with the centres using materials provided, it would be necessary to attend the centre for assessment purposes. For further information on Open and Distance learning please refer to the SQA publication, Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning (SQA2000).

Special needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Psychology of Sports Performance

In Sport, psychological factors are of critical importance to performance. Just like individual skills and components of physical fitness, psychological skills can be assessed and improved in individual performers with appropriate training methods. For these methods to be effective, they must be based on current research in Sport Psychology.

Achievement Motivation is a critical factor, which has a major impact on the effort athletes put into training, practice, and competition. It is essential that you understand the theories of achievement motivation, and their implications for enhancing motivation in performers.

Different sports have different requirements in terms of mental skills. You will need to be able to describe the key psychological factors, and show that you understand how they apply to different sports.

Also, athletes have different strengths and weaknesses in relation to psychological skills. Therefore, you will learn how to assess athletes and develop a performance profile, which will allow you to design a psychological training programme for an individual performer.

This unit will be assessed by (i): A closed book test lasting 60 minutes covering the subject of achievement motivation and (ii) A combined assessment where you discuss each of the key psychological factors; prepare a performance profile for a performer in a given sport, and design an appropriate psychological training programme based on this profile.

Bibliography:

- Bull SJ (Ed.) (1991) Sport Psychology - A Self Help Guide. Crowood Press, Wiltshire.
- Cox R.H. (1998) Sport Psychology – Concepts and Applications McGraw-Hill, Boston, Mass.
- Hardy L, Jones G & Gould D (1996) Understanding Psychological Preparation for Sport - Theory and Practice of Elite Performers. Wiley, Chichester.
- Weinberg RS & Gould D (1999) Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology. Human Kinetics, Ch. III.
- Wesson et. al. (2000) Sport & PE – A Complete Guide to Advanced level Study. Hodder & Stoughton, London.