



Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

Unit code: F509 35

Unit purpose: This Unit aims to review the psychological aspects that affect sports performance and introduce methods of psychological skills training that attempt to maximise performance. Once the relationship between psychological components and methods to alleviate/enhance such components are understood, the candidate will be in a position to propose appropriate skills training that aims to enhance performance. Included within this principle is the area of exercise addiction and over-training.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Explain psychological components and their influence on sports performance.
- 2 Explain the psychological skills training that aims to maximise sports performance.
- 3 Highlight symptoms of exercise addiction and over-training and develop an appropriate intervention strategy.

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

**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.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates will be expected to have achieved the Unit *Psychology of Exercise* or relevant work experience. Ultimately entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the SCQF level 6 Core Skills of *Communication, Information Technology, Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: Assessment (1): **It is recommended that the entire content of Outcome 1 be assessed by a supervised, closed-book, restricted response question paper.** The nature of this paper therefore should contain questions that allow the candidate to demonstrate their knowledge of the various psychological components and their impact on sports performance. The candidate may be asked specifically about the components and their impact on sports performance or be asked to discuss the possible limitations in research regarding such components.

Assessment (2): Outcome 2 introduces various psychological skills strategies that aim to enhance/reduce specific psychological components. The initial key assessable area is likely to be that candidates are able to appreciate how a psychological component should be controlled in order to enhance performance, ie motivation may need to be increased while anxiety should be reduced. **A possible assessment method for Outcome 2 could be by setting a case study** where candidates are provided with a scenario, expected to recognise the effect of key psychological components and invited to propose and discuss an appropriate skills training method that aims to control such components in an attempt to increase performance. It may be appropriate to employ the use of psychometric data collection to facilitate this process.

Assessment (3): Outcome 3 lends itself to candidate lead research. **It is possible that candidates could be required to submit an extended response assignment to cover the assessment requirements for Outcome 3.** It is recommended that this discusses recognisable symptoms of over-training, its psychological antecedents, psychological (and physiological) effects, its relationship with exercise addiction and appropriate intervention strategies for such a condition.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

Unit code: F509 35

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

Explain psychological components and their influence on sports performance

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Motivation theories
- ◆ Theories of Arousal
- ◆ State and Trait Anxiety in competitive and non-competitive situations
- ◆ Focus and Concentration

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain at least three Theories of Motivation (including Attribution Theory) and how they affect sports performance
- ◆ analyse at least three Theories of Arousal and comment on the limitations of each
- ◆ explain how State and Trait Anxiety is measured and their impact in competitive and non-competitive situations
- ◆ explain Focus and Concentration and their importance to sporting competition

Assessment Guidelines

Due to the specific nature of the Evidence Requirements for this Outcome it is advisable that this is assessed by a supervised, closed-book, restricted response question paper. Throughout the content of the question paper the candidate should be given the opportunity to display knowledge of psychological components and comment on their impact on sporting performance, giving examples where appropriate.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

Outcome 2

Explain the psychological skills training that aims to maximise sports performance

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Psychological skills training
- ◆ Imagery
- ◆ Self talk
- ◆ Relaxation techniques

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the role that psychological skills training has in competitive sports performance
- ◆ explain methods of psychological skills training including Goal Setting, Visualisation, Focus and Relaxation
- ◆ evaluate when the use of such methods would be appropriate
- ◆ explain the intended objectives of using such methods

Assessment Guidelines

By setting a case study or studies that detail the nature of performer and symptoms experienced that apparently lead to diminished sports performance, the candidate will be invited to discuss the likely psychological concerns encountered by the performer and a possible intervention strategy.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

Outcome 3

Highlight symptoms of exercise addiction and over-training and develop an appropriate intervention strategy

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Psychological causes of exercise addiction
- ◆ Relationship between exercise addiction and overtraining
- ◆ Intervention strategies

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain which psychological antecedents need to be in place for exercise addiction to result
- ◆ explain the psychological and physical relationship between exercise addiction and overtraining
- ◆ develop a detailed intervention strategy that aims to allow a performer to recover from symptoms of overtraining and return to competitive level sports

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 3 lends itself to candidate-based research. It is possible that candidates could be required to submit an extended response assignment to cover the assessment requirements for Outcome 3. It is recommended that this discusses recognisable symptoms of over-training, its psychological antecedents, psychological (and physiological) effects, its relationship with exercise addiction and appropriate intervention strategies for such a condition.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F509 35
Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport
Superclass category: PK
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

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

With the completion of both the *Psychology of Exercise* and this Unit it would be the aim to give the candidate a complete appreciation of psychology within the fields of both sport and exercise. The Unit will therefore focus largely on sports competition and athletic training; exercise psychology having already been covered in the previous Unit. In general terms it considers the various psychological components that affect sports performance either positively or adversely. Once these are understood each will be considered with an associated method of controlling such components in an attempt to improve sports performance. The candidate therefore will be able to appreciate each psychological component that requires attention and an appropriate skills training method that can be employed in a 'problem: solution' fashion.

It is expected that on completion of the Unit that the candidate will have developed their knowledge of how certain psychological components may affect sports performance, recognise the symptoms and apply their skills within the industry by offering guidance to athletes that they may be working with.

Outcome 1 may consider psychological components such as motivation, arousal, anxiety, focus and concentration. If the delivering centre feels it appropriate to do so they may further introduce other areas such as team work, leadership styles, recovery from injury etc. if it is especially relevant to the class. Throughout this Outcome, it is advised that any teaching material will be enhanced by inclusion of high profile examples and discussion within the class from personal experiences.

Outcome 2 introduces the methods that may be employed to enhance or reduce the psychological components depending on their overall effect on the sports performer. This may involve an appreciation of a multi-dimensional scenario that has led to diminished sports performance and correct nomination of a method to reduce or remove such psychological antecedents. It is advised that the key here is to successfully match a psychological component with an appropriate skills training method and have an appreciation of the intended effect of skills training on performance. This section may be delivered by more practical means and would be particularly effective if candidates were to experience the skills training method for themselves. These may include imagery (visualisation and mental rehearsal), self talk, relaxation techniques and methods to improve concentration. Group discussion will likely play a role at this juncture in considering the effectiveness of such methods.

Outcome 3 considers the issue of overtraining and exercise addiction. It is vital during this Unit that while an appreciation of the *physical* effect of this condition is expected, the objective is to consider the *psychological* causes and implications associated with overtraining and exercise addiction. It is advisable that this is approached by firstly looking at the psychological factors that may lead to exercise addiction and its relationship with overtraining and burnout before considering the psychological concerns that may affect an athlete with this condition. Lastly, the candidate should develop the skills required to help an athlete/coach recover this situation and assist a return to full competition.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

It is recommended that this Unit is delivered sequentially from Outcome 1 to Outcome 3. Assessment should follow in a similar fashion to allow the candidate to properly relate the influence of a particular psychological component to an appropriate strategy that aims to reduce or increase that influence positively.

Outcome 3 may be considered somewhat separately, however, knowledge gained from Outcome 1 may help the candidate appreciate the influence of anxiety experienced by athletes suffering from burnout. Similarly, awareness of psychological skills learned in Outcome 2 may be referred to when proposing an intervention programme to an athlete experiencing such a condition.

It may be appropriate for candidates to be required to set a theoretical situation for themselves to work with. They could therefore comment on background information such as the level of performer, typical training habits and/or the effect of relevant psychological components. Also included should be a detailed plan regarding training habits, goals and psychological approach to training / competition that aims to help in order that the performer can return to competition level.

It should be emphasised that although *physical* status and *physiological* fitness are integral to the concept of overtraining, the entire submission should focus on *psychological* implication and modification.

Knowledge and Skills from this Unit may be useful in contributing towards other Units and the Graded Unit.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills at SCQF level 6 Higher

In order to develop the Core Skills mentioned early in the Unit specification the following opportunities could be taken.

Written Communication — candidates will have the opportunity to develop written communication through the answers within the suggested assessment guidelines. This may be in the form of restricted response or a justification for a detailed recommendation.

Oral Communication — opportunity for oral communication arises from class discussion regarding each of the issues covered in all Outcomes.

Information Technology — candidates are encouraged to conduct background reading regarding the general subject or investigate alternative profiling techniques. This may involve CD-ROM or internet based activities.

Problem Solving — candidates may be shown how to, and be invited to interpret results from profiling activities and recommend suitable interventions based on such data.

Working with Others — group work will form the basis of class discussions and allow examples from personal experiences to be shared amongst the group.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

Open learning

It is possible that this Unit may lend itself to an open learning style of delivery. It would be recommended that candidates could be directed to relevant areas of study to prepare them for the initial assessment. For the latter assessments a case study or essay question could be set or candidates may be able to secure a client to work with in an applied context. It would be emphasised however that this would require a mature and independent approach from the candidate who would otherwise suffer from reduced contact time.

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).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

This Unit focuses on the role that psychology has in preparing the performer for sports competition and athletic training. In contrast to the Unit *Psychology of Exercise*, which concentrated mainly on exercise and fitness, this Unit applies mainly to the *sports* industry. By the end of the Unit you should be equipped with the Knowledge and Skills to understand why sports performance is affected by various psychological components and be able to offer advice regarding how to control such factors and optimise sports performance.

The Outcomes that you cover are:

- 1 Explain psychological components and their influence on sports performance.
- 2 Explain the psychological skills training that aims to maximise sports performance.
- 3 Highlight symptoms of exercise addiction and over-training and develop an appropriate intervention strategy.

During Outcome 1 you will be introduced to the psychological components that affect sports performance. You will learn whether these will improve or deteriorate sports performance and how the influence of such factors will vary between individual athletes. The psychological components that may be covered include motivation, anxiety, arousal and concentration and you may be invited to contribute to class discussion by offering real-life examples of how such components has had a profound effect on a sports event that you have witnessed.

Outcome 2 involves the practices that can be employed to overcome adverse psychological influences whilst harnessing those that have a constructive effect on sports performance. The key to this Outcome is the appreciation that each scenario where a psychological component is allowed to affect sports performance has its own appropriate method to control the extent of such influences.

Outcome 3 introduces the area of exercise addiction and overtraining. Whilst these issues may seem very physical in nature, they are in fact of great interest to the psychologist, both in terms of causes, symptoms and treatment. It is expected that you will develop greater understanding of the relationship between exercise addiction and overtraining — a combination that often leads to ‘burnout’ in athletes. In doing so you will be able to offer advice and monitor progress of athletes who are in danger of experiencing this condition or who already suffer from burnout.

It is possible across all Outcomes that you will be able to refer to Knowledge and Skills gained from other Units that you have studied thus far.

Outcome 1 is likely to be assessed by a **supervised, closed-book, restricted response** question paper. The content of the question paper will give you the opportunity to display knowledge of psychological components and comment on their impact on sporting performance, giving examples where appropriate.

For Outcome 2 you will consider a **case study** or studies that detail a performer and symptoms experienced that apparently lead to diminished sports performance. You will be invited to discuss the likely psychological concerns encountered by the performer and a possible intervention strategy.

General information for candidates (cont)

Unit title: Psychological Skills Training in Sport

Outcome 3 may well involve candidate-based research and you may be required to submit an **extended response assignment** to cover the assessment requirements this Outcome. It is recommended that this discusses recognisable symptoms of over-training, its psychological antecedents, psychological (and physiological) effects, its relationship with exercise addiction and appropriate intervention strategies for such a condition.

There are opportunities to develop the SCQF level 6 Core Skills of *Communication, Information Technology, Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.