



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Psychology of Sports Performance

**Unit code:** FX9V 35

**Superclass:** PK

**Publication date:** October 2011

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### Unit purpose

This Unit aims to ensure that candidates can identify and discuss the key psychological factors which relate to sports training and performance, can analyse an individual's strengths and weaknesses in relation to psychological skills, and can design an appropriate psychological skills training (PST) 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 psychological skill training methods.

### 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.

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit 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.*

## **General information (cont)**

### **Core Skills**

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Problem Solving* 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.

This Unit is included in the framework for HNC/HND Coaching and Developing Sport.

### **Assessment**

Candidates must demonstrate a clear understanding of the theoretical knowledge of the Unit and apply this knowledge in practical situations. Outcomes 1 and 2 are each assessed by extended response questions which may take the form of an assignment(s) completed by the candidate. Outcome 3 is assessed by a project which may be a case study.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Psychology of Sports Performance

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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 evidence which demonstrates 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 will be through extended response in the region of 800 words.

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Candidates must provide evidence that they can evaluate the theories of Achievement Motivation 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

Candidates will be required to produce evidence in the region of 1,500 words to demonstrate their understanding of all aspects of the Knowledge and/or Skills section.

The candidate will be required to:

- ◆ analyse the concept of anxiety and its relationship to sports performance
- ◆ explain the relationship between confidence and sports performance
- ◆ explain the role of effective concentration in sports performance

#### Assessment Guidelines

Written evidence that demonstrates that 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 components in relation to sporting contexts.

### Outcome 3

Describe and apply a range of psychological skills training methods.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Anxiety management techniques.
- ◆ Attention control strategies.
- ◆ Confidence enhancement techniques.
- ◆ Knowledge and application of imagery techniques.
- ◆ Analysis of individual performer's strengths and weaknesses in relation to psychological components.
- ◆ Selection of appropriate psychological skills training methods for a performer.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Psychology of Sports Performance

### **Evidence Requirements**

Candidates will be required to produce evidence in the region of 1,500 words to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills showing that they can identify and describe the most appropriate psychological skills training methods for a performer by:

- ◆ preparing a psychological profile for an individual performer
- ◆ designing an appropriate psychological skills training programme for an individual performer.

### **Assessment Guidelines**

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

## 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

This subject requires considerable theoretical input, this should always be related to practical contexts in sport, specifically to working with individual performance athletes. In addition, 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

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Psychology of Sports Performance

- ◆ Confidence & Sports Performance:
  - self-efficacy theory
  - sport confidence theory
  - relationship between confidence and sports performance
  
- ◆ Concentration and Sports Performance:
  - components of attention
  - Niddiffers' 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

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Psychology of Sports Performance

- ◆ Psychological Profile:
  - performance profiling
  - anxiety and confidence assessment using CSAIII/Modified CSAI II (After Jones, 1993)
  - assessing attention/concentration style (eg Niddiffers' TAIS)

Note that other theorists' views and research may be considered appropriate and that those given are not to be considered as an exhaustive list.

### 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*.

Assessments may take the form of work completed outwith the centre and submitted for assessment, although other forms may also be appropriate.

The Unit goes into theories to some greater depth than other Units and candidates are likely to need some support while they assimilate this new knowledge and discuss current ideas and concepts. The area is one of constant development and centres should allow candidates to express a variety of ideas as long as they can support their view with relevant references.

### Open learning

Centres offering this route to achievement will consider the level of support that candidates may need in order for them to understand the current theories that may apply. Centres will need to ensure the authenticity of assessments if this is also to be used.

### 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 Communication 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)*.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Candidates may develop skills in *Communication* as they will be required to read and consider various concepts about the application of Psychology for Sport. This may lead to the development of skills in *ICT* as well. The skill of *Problem Solving* will be developed as these concepts are put into practice.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Psychology of Sports Performance

### **Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## 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:

- 1 Submission of an assignment in the region of 800 words on the subject of achievement motivation.
- 2 An analysis in the region of 1,500 words to cover the key factors in Sport Psychology.
- 3 The preparation of a performance profile for a performer in a given sport, and the design an appropriate psychological training programme based on this profile.

It may be possible to combine Outcomes 2 and 3 although this decision will rest with the delivering centre.