National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Psychology: Theory and Methods (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: H1WJ 11

Superclass:	PK
Publication date:	July 2012
Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	01

Summary

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce candidates to the theories in psychology which have contributed to psychological knowledge. Candidates will learn about important theories in psychology and include applications of the theories covered. Candidates will also be introduced to research methods used in psychology and the terminology employed. The Unit will also enable them to undertake further study in this area.

The target candidate group is 16+ and adult returners.

Progression opportunities on successful completion of this Unit include possible entry to SCQF level 6 programmes in Social Sciences or Psychology. This Unit is part of the NC in Social Science at SCQF level 5 and level 6 but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

Outcomes

1   Explain theories from major figures in psychology and their application.
2   Describe the main types of research methods used by psychologists.

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 social subject or an English Unit or Communication at SCQF level 4 *or* Intermediate 1 Psychology Course.

General information (cont)

Unit title: Psychology: Theory and Methods (SCQF level 5)

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 5: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*)

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 develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Psychology: Theory and Methods (SCQF level 5)

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

Explain theories from major figures in psychology and their application.

Performance Criteria

(a) Explain theories from major figures in psychology.
(b) Provide examples of how these theories are applied in everyday life.

Outcome 2

Describe the main types of research methods used by psychologists.

Performance Criteria

(a) Describe the main research methods used in psychology.
(b) Describe research studies which use these methods.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Written and/or oral evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

The Evidence Requirements will be met either holistically with one open-book assessment across both Outcomes or it is equally acceptable to assess each Outcome separately.

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to explain three theories that have contributed to psychological knowledge and describe three major methods of research used in psychology. Further information on the types of theory and appropriate research methods is given in the support notes of this Unit Specification. Evidence should be presented using appropriate psychological terminology and must cover:

For Outcome 1

An explanation of three theories which have contributed to psychological knowledge.

One example of how each of the three theories is applied in everyday life.

For Outcome 2

A description of three of the main research methods used in psychology.

A description of a research study for each of the three methods.

Satisfactory performance will be that the candidate achieves all Performance Criteria in terms of the three theories and three research methods.

National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Psychology: Theory and Methods (SCQF level 5)

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 Unit is an optional Unit in the National Certificates in Social Sciences at level 5 and level 6, but could also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

The Unit is designed to develop candidates' knowledge and understanding of major theories in psychology. Candidates will describe the application of the theories covered to everyday life to understand what impact they have in our understanding of human or animal behaviour. Candidates will also be introduced to research methods used in psychology, emphasising the importance of the role of research in giving a sound basis to the theories. It is recommended that the theories and research methods are linked. Candidates will be introduced to psychological terminology. It is suggested that assessment is carried out or towards the end of the programme.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

For Outcome 1 candidates should be introduced to psychology as essential to our understanding of human and animal behaviour. The idea of theories of behaviour should be introduced; ensuring candidates are made aware of the idea of conflicting theories and ideas, as well as the major milestones of theoretical knowledge in psychology, such as the beginning of psychology in 1879, the advent of major theories, such as Psychoanalysis (Freud or Horney), Behaviourism (Watson or Skinner), or more recent Positive Psychology (Seligman). The overview would not be assessed but three of the major theories mentioned in any overview would be covered in some detail during the learning and teaching of Outcome 1 and these would be used to meet the Performance Criteria.

There is a wide range of theories and theorists that would be useful to include depending on the interests and background of the candidates. These can cover broad approaches, such as Behaviourism, Humanistic or Cognitive Psychology, or could be more specific, such as operant conditioning (Skinner), memory (Ebbinghaus) or Stereotyping (Fiske). It would be useful to include both genders in the theorists chosen for delivery to make candidates aware that, although psychology is male dominated, females have made major impacts on psychological knowledge also.

Applications of theories could cover specific examples of research (this could be combined with Outcome 2 research methods), therapy linked with specific theories (such as systematic desensitisation or CBT), educational aspects of theories (such as memory techniques for exam preparation) or the use in employment settings (such as interview techniques, personality testing or training), or real life experience.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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For Outcome 2 research methods could include Experiments, Case Studies, Surveys, Clinical Interviews or Observation. Three methods should be chosen to show a range of ways psychology theories can be tested. A specific example of research for the three methods chosen should be given (name and date, aim, results, conclusion). This can be independent of Outcome 1 theories but it may help if there is a link for some of the methods being covered. Again, the interests of the candidates should help to inform the appropriate research methods or examples to be chosen.

Candidates could be involved in discussion of theories, research of specific theorists via the Internet or the use of text books. They may also be involved in giving small presentations to peers of the product of research, group work or individual tasks. The subject lends itself to the use of DVDs or other visual stimuli to encourage discussion and understanding of concepts and application of theories. Tasks can be set involving answering questions, posing scenarios to discuss behaviour or suggestions for applying the theories covered.

Essential skills

By adopting the above learning and teaching approaches and/or through the Outcomes and corresponding Evidence Requirements, the Unit should provide candidates with an opportunity to develop the following essential skills for life, learning and work:

Employability — through working on time limited tasks individually or in a small group. Time management may be developed in planning and organising presentations or carrying out specific tasks related to the topics covered. Literacy skills are developed in answering questions (orally or in writing), preparing written materials for presentation or in discussions. Basic ICT skills can be developed if tasks are required to be word processed. Arithmetical skills can be developed in interpreting results of specific research.

Citizenship — the Unit may provide opportunities to demonstrate citizenship skills, eg the rights of people with mental ill health could be discussed, including aspects of equity and justice in labelling people with difficulties in living. Creating awareness of the role of women in psychology will be important in developing appropriate citizenship skills. The ability to make decisions as an area of citizenship can be fostered if choice of topic or area to develop in learning can be offered.

Enterprise — careers in psychology could be mentioned in the introduction to the Unit, as this may be the first introduction to psychology that candidates have. Topics and theories in psychology can emphasise self-development and self-awareness. Both are key parts of enterprise.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Likely evidence types for this Unit could include: open-book written essays or structured questions or individual oral presentation or poster exhibition including oral explanation of poster. Candidates could also provide the Evidence Requirements in the form of an individual Blog or creation of a website. Evidence can be provided in one form or in a combination of the suggested forms. Other methods may be equally valid.

Formative and diagnostic assessment in the form of candidate/lecturer reviews may be used to assist candidates with the development of their work and to inform future learning opportunities. A variety of approaches could be used, for example:

♦   On-going questions and answer sessions
♦   Class discussion of major theoretical aspects
♦   Mini presentation of theories or work of specific theorists or a piece of research
♦   Use of a journal where candidates make points about their learning

Formative assessment opportunities can occur throughout the Unit. Summative assessment is open-book, and the assessor must ensure that candidates are aware of the need to produce their own work. Techniques to authenticate individual candidate's work should be used when necessary.

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for assessment 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 that 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

In this Unit candidates will develop knowledge of theories in psychology and their applications. Candidates will also be introduced to research methods used in psychology and the terminology employed.

Candidates will:

♦   Explain theories from major figures in psychology which have contributed to the development of psychological knowledge and provide examples of how these theories are applied in everyday life
♦   Describe the main types of research methods used by psychologists and describe research studies which use these methods.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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This means that as candidates are doing this Unit they will be developing aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT).*

In developing *Communication* skills activities may be written, such as short essays or reports. They could also be developed orally, such as a presentation for a theory or specific research or taking part in a group discussion. Oral skills could also be developed in a question and answer session.

Information and Communication Technology skills can be developed by giving specific tasks to research information from Internet sites (ensuring that judicious selection from academic sources is emphasised) or from the use of e-books. Word processed work or PowerPoint presentations could develop specific ICT skills. The use of a Blog or personal online journal could be developed for formative or summative assessment purposes.

In addition, candidates may develop aspects of the Core Skill *Working with Others* through class discussion, peer review activities and working together to carry out research.

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**

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date