

-SQA- SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

**Hanover House
24 Douglas Street
GLASGOW G2 7NQ**

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE DESCRIPTOR

-Module Number- 7177071
-Superclass- PK

-Session-1991-92

-Title- PRACTICAL INVESTIGATION IN PSYCHOLOGY

-DESCRIPTION-

Purpose A student completing this module will have been introduced to the types of skills required for a practical investigation in Psychology. The module will equip students with the type of skills and knowledge likely to be required at a basic level of Higher Education.

This module has been designed as part of a series of modules at different levels of demand which accredit competence in Psychology. The series was designed to facilitate entry to Higher Education. However, the modules in the series may be used in their own right with senior school pupils, adult returners and those whose employment requires them to develop a psychological perspective.

**Preferred
Entry Level**

Students should have studied the module 7177021:
Cognitive Psychology: The Individual and Thinking plus
one other intermediate level module from the Psychology
Series of modules:

7177061: Social Psychology: The Individual and
Groups;

7177031: Occupational Psychology: The Individual and
Work;

7177051: Developmental Psychology: The individual
and Development.

7177041: Clinical Psychology: The Individual and
Mental Health.

A level of communication skills such as is required by
Communication 3 is also desirable.
Skills in numeracy are also desirable.

Outcomes	The student should: 1. plan a practical investigation in psychology; 2. apply a research design; 3. apply statistical methods to analyse data; 4. present a structured report supported by the evidence gathered in the investigation.
Assessment Procedures	Acceptable performance in this module will be satisfactory achievement of all the Performance Criteria specified for each Outcome. The following abbreviations are used below: PC Performance Criteria IA Instrument of Assessment Note: The Outcomes and PCs are mandatory and cannot be altered. The IA may be altered by arrangement with SQA. (Where a range of performance is indicated, this should be regarded as an extension of the PCs and is therefore mandatory.)
OUTCOME 1	PLAN A PRACTICAL INVESTIGATION IN PSYCHOLOGY
PCs	(a) The plan is clearly based on an understanding of the principles of data gathering. (b) The plan includes objectives, identification of sources of information, and identification of methods of gathering information. (c) The objectives are relevant to the aims of the investigation. (d) The sources of information are relevant to the investigation. (e) The identified methods of gathering information are appropriate to the study. IA Personal Interview The student will be tested on his/her ability to plan a practical investigation in Psychology. The Personal Interview will focus on the above Performance Criteria. Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all Performance Criteria in respect of the studied topic.

OUTCOME 2**APPLY A RESEARCH DESIGN**

PCs

- (a) The research design selected is appropriate to the research project.
- (b) In the selection of the research design, consideration is given to the strengths and weaknesses of different research designs.
- (c) An accurate distinction is made between dependent, independent, controlled and uncontrolled variables, in conducting the research project.

IA Practical Exercise

The student should devise and conduct a research project on a topic of his/her choice, showing consideration of practical and ethical restraints.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all Performance Criteria correctly in terms of the studied topic.

OUTCOME 3**APPLY STATISTICAL METHODS TO ANALYSE DATA**

PCs

- (a) A distinction, which is clearly based on an understanding of the concept of sampling, is made between different sampling methods.
- (b) The distinction is made between nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio scales of measurement.
- (c) The choice of statistical analysis used is appropriate to the data collected.
- (d) The statistical analysis of data collected is accurate and clearly presented.

IA Practical Exercise

The student will be required to apply statistical methods of analysing data to a research project. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics should be included in the analysis where both are applicable.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all Performance Criteria correctly in terms of the studied topic.

**OUTCOME 4 PRESENT A STRUCTURED REPORT SUPPORTED BY
THE EVIDENCE GATHERED IN THE INVESTIGATION**

PCs

- (a) The interpretation and presentation of the information is valid and justified and conforms to the practices of the discipline.
- (b) The evaluation of the information is valid in terms of the aims of the investigation.
- (c) Conclusions drawn are relevant to the aims of the investigation.

IA Project

The student will be tested on his/her ability to present a report on a practical investigation in Psychology.

The length of the report should be approximately 2,000 words of text and not exceed 30 sides of A4 paper. In addition the report should contain appropriate illustrations, graphics and statistics.

The report should include valid interpretation of the information gathered in the investigation, evaluation of the information and conclusions relevant to the aims of the investigation and should take consideration of the problems encountered.

The introduction to the report should include previous research, aims and hypothesis. The report should also contain information regarding design, subjects, apparatus, procedures, results, discussion and conclusion. It should include discussion of problems encountered and suggested changes to overcome these problems for future research.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all Performance Criteria correctly in terms of the studied topic.

**The following sections of the descriptor are offered as guidance.
They are not mandatory.**

CONTENT/CONTEXT

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-4:

In this module, practical investigation methods will be used to produce individual projects relating to the Psychology series of modules. The content of this module will be negotiated with the student. Each student will have an individual investigation to undertake relating to the Psychology series of modules. Each student will also apply a research design to a project and apply a range of methods to analyse data. In the selection of the research project, tutors should provide close supervision and detailed guidance, ensuring that the research design chosen provides sufficient scope to ensure that all the Performance Criteria relating to the Practical Exercise can be achieved. In considering research design, the notion of variables and ideas of control should be related to the following research methods:

Experimentation;
Questionnaire/Survey;
Case Study;
Observation.

The statistics applied should be both descriptive and inferential, where both are applicable to the selected research topic and the student should, therefore, possess a level of numerical skills to enable him/her to calculate statistics such as a 't' test and chi-square.

The student will be able to demonstrate practical investigation skills of a high order by the application of previous learning to an actual project. Skills developed in the investigation are those recognised as preparing students for entry to modes of study used in Higher Education.

Topics for study could include:

(a) further investigation of topics already studied in the Psychology series of modules

OR

(b) new topics appropriate to the Psychology series of modules.

The topic selected should be manageable in scale. Consideration should be given to the availability of an appropriate sample, research resources, ethical issues, time and financial constraints. The topic should provide opportunities to identify issues and problems and should offer findings which can be justified within the limits of the module.

In the investigation, the student will be applying a research design and applying a range of methods to analyse data and preparing a report with conclusions on his/her investigation, the specific content of which will be dictated by the topic.

SUGGESTED LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

This module is student-centred with students carrying out their own individual practical investigation. The student should select the topic he/she wishes to investigate in consultation with the tutor. Individual plans for action should be discussed with the student. The role of the tutor should be seen in a support capacity. Individual interviews/tutorials should feature in this module. These would allow progress to be checked and new plans of action discussed. In the Practical Exercise for Outcome 2, tutors should provide close supervision and guidance.

At a later stage in the module, students will have to devote time to the presentation of their project. The student should consult the tutor at this stage though the project should be written and presented by the student alone.

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