

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)
NUMBER	DF5K 10
COURSE	Psychology (Intermediate 1)

SUMMARY

This Unit will enable candidates to gain an understanding of a number of psychological processes which individuals experience, by studying selected topics from the key Domains of Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology. Candidates have the opportunity to develop an understanding of the following key psychological processes: self-concept; cognition and learning; motivation. Different ways of explaining these behaviours are considered, as well as the ways in which psychological knowledge is used in practice in everyday life.

For those new to the subject the Unit should stimulate interest and enjoyment, and may serve as an introduction to further study within the discipline.

As part of Intermediate 1 Psychology, the Unit provides suitable preparation for subsequent Units and for progression to Intermediate 2 Psychology. Whether as part of a Course or on a free-standing basis, the Unit may offer preparation for employment or career advancement; alternatively, it may be studied simply for interest. The topics selected for study are likely to be of relevance to candidates personally, socially and professionally.

OUTCOME

Describe specified topics from developmental, cognitive and physiological psychology.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

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 Standard Grade Social Subject at Foundation level or relevant Access Units

and Standard Grade English at Foundation level or Communication at Access 3

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF Level 4*).

**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

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

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Describe specified topics from developmental, cognitive and physiological psychology.

Performance Criteria

- a) State key features of psychological theories, concepts and research evidence relevant to the specified topics.
- b) Describe the application of psychological knowledge from the specified topics.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

Appendix One details the content and context for this Unit.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole, and therefore, apply holistically to all Performance Criteria of the Unit.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of the Unit, candidates must produce written or recorded oral responses to items that cover both Performance Criteria (PCs) of Outcome 1. These will typically be produced in response to specific questions in a question paper comprising a mixture of short-answer, structured and close questions, and may be based on stimulus material. This will take the form of a closed-book, supervised test, with a time limit of one hour and will be holistic, covering both Performance Criteria.

The instrument of assessment will provide opportunities for both Performance Criteria to be fulfilled, by means of sampling across the range of content of the Unit. For example, if knowledge and understanding of an application of psychological knowledge (PC 1b) are demonstrated in relation to one of the three topic areas, eg *cognition and learning*, it may be inferred that the candidate can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of application of psychological concepts in relation to other topics also, ie *self-concept* and *motivation*. The pattern of sampling of content will vary from one instrument to the next, and each instrument will sample from **two** of the three topics. Thus, sampling of content for assessment should be relatively unpredictable, and candidates must, therefore, learn all of the Unit content in order to be able to answer questions on any part of it.

Each assessment item may correspond to a single PC, or to both PCs.

If a re-assessment is required, it should contain a different sample from the range of content.

Achievement can be decided by the use of a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

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. It is suggested that approximately 10–12 hours be allocated to each of the three topics.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

See Appendix One.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

An ethical approach to learning and teaching

Teachers/lecturers should be aware that some topics may be sensitive for individual candidates, based on stages of development or personal experiences, and discretion should be used. To this end, care should be taken in the delivery of material and sensitivity should be shown. Candidates should not be made to feel pressurised to disclose personal information, for example in discussions which may relate to health, relationships, emotions and teachers/lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress. The power relationship that, of necessity, prevails in the classroom, should be recognised and handled with care.

Such concerns are particularly relevant to delivery methods involving classroom research demonstrations, and teachers/lecturers should be familiar with two sources of ethical guidance: the BPS *Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines* (2000), at www.bps.org.uk; and the ATP *Guide to Ethics for Teachers and Students of Psychology at Pre-Degree Level* (2003), the latter being included in the SQA document *Research Investigation Guidance for Higher Psychology* (2004).

Resources for learning and teaching

A wide range of good quality resources for studying psychology is readily available, including textbooks, candidate journals, videos, CD-ROMs, commercially-produced resource packs, websites and online materials. A number of published introductory textbooks are at a suitable level for this Unit and Course, and teachers/lecturers may wish to recommend one of these as a set text, or to obtain a set, either to issue to candidates or for use in class. However, it is unlikely that any single book will fully cover all content for the Unit or Course, therefore, teachers/lecturers should ensure that additional resources are available for candidates, eg a number of single copies of different texts, copies of handouts/worksheets from journals or resource packs (ie those that are designated photocopyable in the copyright information), centre-produced learning packs, teachers'/lecturers' own handouts. Some materials for other Units/Courses may be adapted to support this Unit, at the teacher's/lecturer's discretion. Detailed Unit-specific resources guidance and learning materials may also be available through SFEU.

As well as these resources for classroom/homework learning, teachers/lecturers may enhance the variety of their delivery by means of, for example, a visit to a science museum, a nursery/crèche/primary school, or to a university psychology department, attending a revision or coursework conference, use of invited speakers.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

Delivery of the Unit

In this Unit three topics will be taught: self-concept; cognition and learning; and motivation. To help candidates achieve the Unit Outcomes/Performance Criteria (PCs), and the Course assessment objectives, where relevant, it is suggested that teachers'/lecturers' delivery of content address the activities below, for every topic. As Intermediate 1 and 2 Units are sometimes delivered in bi-level classes, this guidance is identical to that provided for this Unit at Intermediate 1, however, teachers/lecturers should adjust learning activities to suit the needs of learners at both levels, where applicable.

- ◆ Introduction to the **Domain** within which the topic is located.
For example, briefly introduce key features of **physiological psychology**, as a starting point for studying **motivation**, eg, the role of the brain, nervous system and endocrine system in influencing thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and the influence of evolutionary and genetic factors on behaviour.
- ◆ Start with **definitions** of key terms relevant to the topic, and use the terminology throughout the delivery of the topic, including ensuring that candidates adopt these terms in their own work.
- ◆ Explain relevant **theories/models/concepts**. These should normally be presented in chronological order, ie following historical development of evidence and theory, and for most topics should refer to both **classic** and **contemporary** literature. For example, in the **self-concept** topic, candidates should be familiar with Cooley's (1902) idea of the looking-glass self, through to recent research and theory (as well as, of course, the key developments in between).
- ◆ For many topics, a variety of psychological explanations will be relevant. For example, in studying **cognition and learning**, candidates will encounter elements of behaviourist theory and these will crop up again under, say, development of self concept and the influence of parents and peers or in motivation when considering incentives for employees at work. The teacher/lecturer should identify the strengths and weaknesses of each explanation rather than presenting one single explanation as being correct in relation to each given topic.
- ◆ Refer to a number of relevant **research studies**; study **some** of these in more detail, such that candidates can describe aims, methods, and conclusions, and can evaluate the research.
To **describe**: Who did the research? When? What was done? Who were the participants? What were the results?
To **interpret**: What conclusions can be drawn?
To **evaluate**: Strengths and weaknesses of the study, both methodological and ethical.
Research studies can thus provide an ideal problem-solving activity: candidates are given a brief description of research (eg from a textbook, or learning pack), and, in groups, identify aims, methods, and conclusions, plus various other elements of the research. This can be done regularly, perhaps one or two examples for each topic, so that candidates develop a systematic approach to understanding the role of research in psychology. For candidates taking the Course, relevance to the Unit *Investigating Behaviour* should be made clear.

Topic areas vary in the amount of research that has actually been conducted, however, the teaching of each topic should be supported with reference to a number of research studies.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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- ◆ Conduct **classroom experimental demonstrations**, wherever the subject matter lends itself to this: eg self concept can be demonstrated using the ‘Who am I?’ test, illustrating the components of the concept of self. Rating scales and questionnaires may be used in class. Such activities not only bring topics ‘alive’, but also support learning of research methods; they may also contribute to the teaching and learning of the Unit *Psychology: Investigating Behaviour (Intermediate 1)*. They also provide opportunities for the teacher/lecturer to model research procedures, including the consideration of ethical principles; for example, when introducing any classroom research demonstration, the teacher/lecturer (in the role of *researcher*) should obtain informed consent of candidates (in the role of *participants*); another illustration of ethical issues would occur with the use of a self-concept or self-esteem rating scale, which would need to be treated sensitively.
- ◆ Class and homework tasks may be set, to incorporate structured answers for each topic, reflecting the types of answers required in internal and external assessments.
- ◆ Psychological principles could also be applied to assist candidates with **revision strategies and examination techniques**. For example, candidates may be encouraged to use memory aids to learn material for the Unit (and Course) assessment, and to apply principles of:
 - self- and time-management to reduce anxiety (cognitive approach)
 - self-reinforcement (behaviourist approach)
 - peer-collaborative strategies (social approach) to increase motivation for revision
 - relaxation and physical exercise to reduce stress (biological approach)If this Unit is studied first as part of the Intermediate 1 Course, then, having learned such strategies in this Unit, candidates taking the Course will also enjoy the benefit of practising these strategies for every Unit assessment, thus establishing good study habits.
- ◆ Newspaper articles or website news articles on **topical issues** may be used to stimulate discussion. For example, items on parents’ influences on their children often appear in the media; such issues might be discussed in relation to the development of the self-concept. Such activities will need to be dealt with sensitively by teachers/lecturers.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Instruments of assessment

Teachers/lecturers may devise their own assessment tasks and the National Assessment Bank will provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The most appropriate means of obtaining evidence of attainment of the Outcome of this Unit will be a question paper comprising a mixture of short-answer, structured and close questions, and may be based on stimulus material.

Timing

Where assessment evidence is gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the Unit, care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and re-assessment if required.

Weighting of Outcomes

Candidates' performance in this Unit is assessed holistically, ie fulfilment of Unit requirements is assessed by means of a single percentage score for the Unit.

At Intermediate 2 level, skills of analysis and evaluation are required, whereas at Intermediate 1 level only knowledge and understanding are required. Knowledge and understanding can be applied to familiar contexts, which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process. Instruments of assessment should, therefore, comprise questions/items that demand knowledge and understanding.

In the Course assessment a greater depth of knowledge and understanding is required.

Added value

The Unit assessment provides evidence of the specific level of achievement demanded by the Unit. However, the Unit assessment may allow candidates to demonstrate *added value*, ie performance beyond the minimum standard required for achievement of the Unit. Therefore, evidence gathered for internal Unit assessment may, along with other evidence, be used for Course grade estimates and for appeals for external Course assessment. For details of the Grade Descriptions for external assessment, and further information on *added value*, please refer to the Intermediate 1 Psychology Course Arrangements documentation, including the Course Assessment Specification.

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, September, 2003).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

APPENDIX ONE: Content and context

NB This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

This Unit has the same content as *Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 2)*; however, the Units are differentiated by Outcomes, Performance Criteria and Evidence Requirements. It follows that in a bi-level class, while candidates will cover the same content, Intermediate 1 candidates will not be expected to master it to the same depth of knowledge and understanding as Intermediate 2 candidates. Analytical and evaluative skills are **not** required at Intermediate 1 level.

Three of the core Domains are covered: Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Physiological Psychology; the focus is on understanding individual processes. **Three** topics are studied: each Domain is delivered via **one** specified topic, and each topic has several specified areas, at least one of which is an applied aspect of the topic. All areas of each topic include theory, concepts, and research evidence. The amount of content in each area of the topic will vary.

1. Domain: Developmental Psychology

Candidates should be briefly introduced to the Domain of **developmental psychology**: definition of development; types of psychological development (physical-motor, cognitive, emotional, social, etc); traditional emphasis on child development has given way to the contemporary lifespan approach.

This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.

Topic: development of the self-concept

- ◆ The nature and components of the self-concept: descriptive/evaluative; self-image/self-esteem/idea self; research studies of self-concept development in childhood, such as the rouge test, and egocentrism studies demonstrating decentring.
- ◆ Factors affecting development of the self-concept: influences of parents and others on self-esteem/self-regard in childhood (including Coopersmith, Rogers); search for identity in adolescence (including Erikson's stage 'identity v role confusion').
- ◆ Person centred therapies: importance of empathy, positive regard and congruence in the therapeutic setting; use of testing, including Q-Sort, 20 Statements test, in measuring and changing self-concept/self acceptance.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Psychology: Understanding the Individual (Intermediate 1)

APPENDIX ONE: Content and context (cont)

2. Domain: Cognitive Psychology

Candidates should be briefly introduced to the Domain of **cognitive psychology**: definition of cognition; the scope of cognitive psychology (ie attention, perception, memory, language, problem-solving, etc); its importance for learning processes (especially memory and problem-solving), the current information-processing approach.

Both cognitive and behavioural aspects of learning are considered. Themes to be highlighted are: the contrast between the behaviourist emphasis on observable behaviour and cognitive emphasis on internal mental processes; ‘nature’ influences in cognitive-developmental approach, ‘nurture’ influences in cognitive and behaviourist approaches.

This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.

Topic: cognition and learning

- ◆ Classical and Operant conditioning: the work of Pavlov and Watson; classical conditioning process of learning by association, the work of Skinner; process of learning through consequences of actions, ie reinforcement or punishment; the effectiveness of reinforcement and punishment; illustrations of reinforcement and punishment from everyday life.
- ◆ Social learning theory (SLT): the research studies of Bandura; processes of observational learning imitation and identification, role of cognition in these processes; SLT as an explanation of aggression and cultural gender roles; illustrations of SLT processes from everyday life.
- ◆ Application of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development, in education, discovery learning; maturational ‘readiness’, role of teacher/lecturer

3. Domain: Physiological Psychology

Candidates should be briefly introduced to the Domain of **physiological (or biological) psychology**: the role of the brain, nervous system and endocrine system in influencing thoughts, feelings and behaviour, the influence of evolutionary and genetic factors on behaviour. Examples of processes studied in physiological psychology, such as emotion, motivation, sleep and dreams, and some forms of atypical behaviour.

This introduction to the Domain will not feature in assessments.

Topic: Motivation

- ◆ Definitions of motivation, as a concept that applies to all behaviours; homeostatic explanations of motivation in relation to basic biological needs such as hunger* and thirst.
- ◆ Non-physiological explanations of motivation: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs; reinforcement; individual differences in need for achievement (nAch); effects of self efficacy beliefs on motivation.
- ◆ Employee motivation at work: the use of goal setting, rewards and incentives, to increase employee motivation and productivity.

**Theory and research findings in this area are extensive, but here the emphasis should be on basic explanations of homeostatic mechanisms as they apply to eating (and drinking). Reference to other factors (social, cultural, etc) may be included briefly.*