
Psychology: Individual Behaviour

SCQF: level 5 (6 SCQF credit points)

Unit code: J2D1 75

Unit outline

The general aim of this Unit is to enable learners to use psychology to explain individual behaviour. Learners will investigate topics and learn how these topics can be explained using psychological approaches and theories. Learners will also consider the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches and theories investigated.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- 1 Explain topics relating to individual behaviour

This Unit is available as a free-standing Unit. The Unit Specification should be read in conjunction with the *Unit Support Notes*, which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Exemplification of the standards in this Unit is given in *Unit Assessment Support*.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 4 People and Society Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 4 Biology Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ Social studies or social sciences Courses at SCQF level 4 or relevant component Units

Equality and inclusion

This Unit Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Unit Support Notes*.

Standards

Outcomes and assessment standards

Outcome 1

The learner will:

1 Explain topics relating to individual behaviour by:

- 1.1 Describing a topic relevant to individual behaviour
- 1.2 Explaining the behaviour using psychological approaches and theories
- 1.3 Explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the psychological approaches and theories used to explain the behaviour

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Exemplification of assessment is provided in *Unit Assessment Support*. Advice and guidance on possible approaches to assessment is provided in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Assessment standard thresholds

If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of Assessment Standards they will be judged to have passed the Unit overall and no further re-assessment will be required.

The specific requirements for this Unit is as follows:

- ◆ only one approach is required for assessment standard 1.2 and this also reduces the demands for 1.3

It should be noted that there will still be the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all Assessment Standards. The above threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of re-assessment where that is required.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Unit. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Unit are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and are drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Unit where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

1.2 Writing

3 Health and wellbeing

3.1 Personal learning

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and Evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level as the Unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Appendix: Unit support notes

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing this Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Unit Assessment Support packs*

Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

Teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Approaches to learning and teaching

This Unit is designed to provide flexibility and choice for both the learner and delivering centre. Approaches to learning and teaching should enhance opportunities for all learners to achieve their full potential, whether working in a whole-class, small group or supported self-study situation.

It is good practice to use a variety of learning and teaching methods so that learners' interest and motivation are maintained and individual preferences for different learning styles are promoted. Throughout learning and teaching activities account should be taken of the prior knowledge that learners may have.

Tasks should be open to allow for personalisation and choice as well as enabling learners to work at a suitable pace with appropriate support. Discussion groups or personal investigation and research are excellent ways of promoting some independence in learning. Learners have the opportunity to study social behaviour topics in this Unit, with scope for personalisation in the choice of topics.

At this level, secondary sources such as textbooks will be more suitable than original research articles. Many learners will be new to the terminology used in psychology, and should be guided towards suitable sources of information; they may not be aware that general-interest articles and websites are often biased, inaccurate or incomplete. As a general guideline, it should be possible to obtain a full research citation from the sources used. Learners should be encouraged to contribute to their own learning and to present their work using a range of sources of evidence. There are many possible sources that can be referred to, including: textbooks, published articles and research-based web articles.

Learning and Teaching approaches should support [Curriculum for Excellence's four capacities](#) to enable each learner to develop as a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.

Suggested learning and teaching activities could include learners:

- ◆ mind mapping of prior knowledge of the topic
- ◆ holding a group or class debate based on which approach is best at explaining a particular topic
- ◆ using Venn diagrams on paper to note down similarities/overlaps and differences between approaches
- ◆ undertaking a 'taboo' activity where approaches/topics must be explained without using certain key words
- ◆ being involved in role-play activities where learners play the role of a major theorist from an approach, and discuss current news issues
- ◆ creating a set of cards with approaches and behaviours which learners can pick from, and attempting to explain the behaviour/topic from the approach
- ◆ watching videos/documentaries on the origins of the approaches
- ◆ completing worksheets with gap-fills on the approaches/topics

- ◆ creating visual displays, eg academic posters or 3D displays on one or more approaches, showing the main researchers
- ◆ using textbooks or internet to find evidence for/against the approaches
- ◆ comparing the relative merits of the approaches in a presentation or essay
- ◆ maintaining a sleep and dream diary for discussion and possible linkages with known facts about sleep and dreams

Knowledge and understanding

This Unit develops an understanding of the different approaches to Psychology, two of which should be studied.

Suitable approaches may include: behaviourist; biological; cognitive; developmental or humanistic. It may also be appropriate to explain to learners that approaches may complement one another and so a combination of approaches may be used, as in cognitive behaviour therapy. Explanations of approaches should be appropriate to SCQF level 5.

For the biological approach, learners need to know:

- ◆ the role of brain in behaviour
- ◆ factors that affect brain function, eg stimulants, depressants, or environmental factors such as noise
- ◆ examples of biological approaches to understanding a topic

For the psychoanalytic approach, learners need to know:

- ◆ the structure of the mind: id, ego and superego
- ◆ the use of case studies to investigate unconscious processes in behaviour
- ◆ defence mechanisms including repression
- ◆ examples of psychoanalytic approaches to understanding a topic

Other approaches studied in the Unit should include an overview as follows:

- ◆ basic principles of the approach
- ◆ terminology associated with the approach

Topics

When choosing a topic relevant to the *Individual Behaviour* Unit, teachers/lecturers should check that the topic can meet all of the requirements of the Unit. Therefore, does the topic?

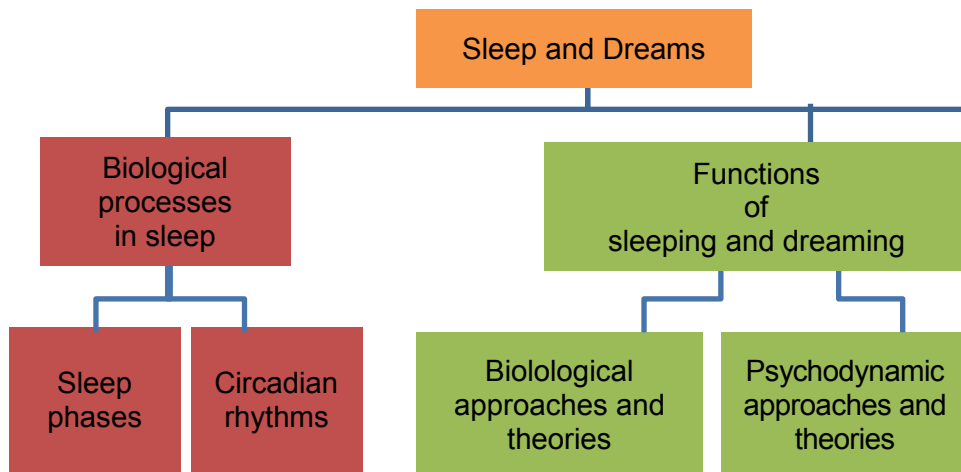
- ◆ provide scope for learners to achieve the Unit Outcome, ie 'explain topics relating to individual behaviour'
- ◆ link to two or more approaches
- ◆ have a real-world application relevant to wellbeing that is supported by research evidence

Topic suggestions:

- ◆ sleep and dreams
- ◆ happiness
- ◆ fixed/growth mind sets
- ◆ memory
- ◆ stress
- ◆ personality
- ◆ psychopathology
- ◆ intelligence
- ◆ addiction
- ◆ creativity

The following diagrams illustrate possible learning for some of the topic suggestions.

Sleep and Dreams

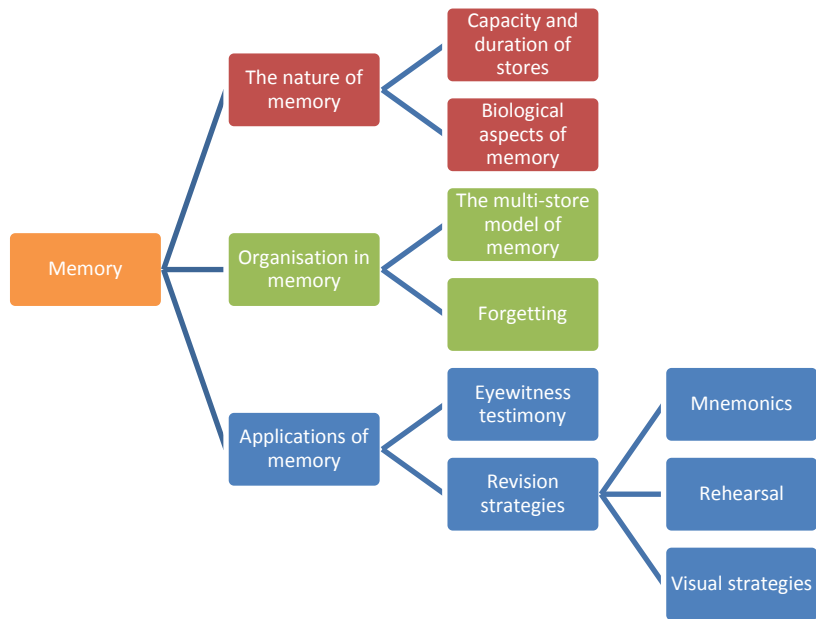


Learning for the topic of sleep and dreams includes:

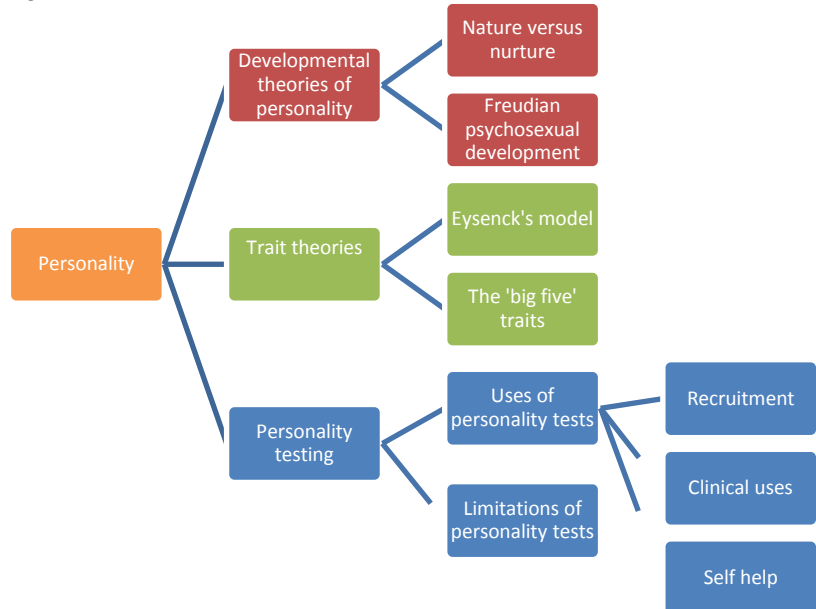
- ◆ processes in sleep and dreams — REM and sleep phases
- ◆ biological functions of sleep
- ◆ psychoanalytic explanations of sleep and dreams
- ◆ the purpose and significance of dreams
- ◆ research study: Dement & Kleitman (1957)¹

¹ Dement, W. and Kleitman, N. (1957). The relation of eye movements during sleep to dream activity: an objective method for the study of dreaming. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 53, 339-46.

Memory



Personality



Research studies used in topics should include a mixture of contemporary and classic research.

Approaches to assessment

There are a number of ways in which evidence for Unit assessment could be generated. **This Unit has one Outcome with a set of coherent Assessment Standards designed to promote holistic assessment.**

Approaches to the assessment of Units when they form part of a Course may differ from approach to assessing the same Unit when delivered free standing. Where Units are delivered on a stand-alone basis, teachers or lecturers will have more flexibility to develop approaches to delivering and assessing Units which are not related to Course assessment.

Evidence may be gathered in a variety of forms that best suit the needs of the learner and individual centres. Ideas for generating assessment evidence are recorded/oral responses; electronic blogs; digital images; observational checklists and presentations.

All learners must have evidence that they have individually met the Assessment Standards to gain this Unit.

Example:

A learner may choose to do a presentation which could draw on one or more topics studied, and may include:

- ◆ a straightforward academic poster, slideshow, or a short video.

The teacher or lecturer may wish to ask the learner some questions to check the learner's understanding.

The presentation could include:

- ◆ reference to one or more psychological approaches
- ◆ an explanation of the topic using psychological approaches and theories
- ◆ an explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of the psychological approaches and theories used to explain the behaviour
- ◆ reference to research evidence

Alternative assessment approaches include:

- ◆ open-book tests, eg providing a stimulus piece with associated questions

Evidence could be able to be generated and held in a variety of formats that best suits the needs of the learner and centre. Assessors must choose an assessment format which takes into account the needs of all learners and implement the assessment at an appropriate stage in the Unit.

Combining assessment within Units

Assessment could be combined in this Unit by holistically assessing all the Outcomes of the Unit in a single assessment. When assessment within the Unit is holistic, teachers and lecturers should take particular care to track the evidence for each individual Outcome.

Authenticity

When the teacher/lecturer does not have this *direct evidence*, they will need to take steps to confirm that the learner's evidence was genuinely produced by them.

There are a number of techniques and strategies for ensuring that learners present work which is their own. For more guidance, please refer to SQA's [Guide to Assessment](#).

Guidance on assessment and re-assessment is also available in SQA's Guide to Assessment available on SQA's website.

Administrative information

Published: July 2019 (version 2.0)

Superclass: PK

History of changes to National Unit Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Unit Support Notes added. Assessment standard threshold added.	Qualifications Manager	September 2018
2.0	Unit code updated	Qualifications Manager	July 2019

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