



Higher
Course
Specification



Higher Psychology Course Specification (C763 76)

Valid from August 2014

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title: Higher Psychology

SCQF: level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C763 76

Mandatory Units

H260 76 Psychology: Research (Higher) 6 SCQF credit points

H261 76 Psychology: Individual Behaviour (Higher) 6 SCQF credit points

H262 76 Psychology: Social Behaviour (Higher) 6 SCQF credit points

Course assessment 6 SCQF credit points

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

Recommended entry

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

- ◆ National 5 Psychology Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 5 Biology Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ Social studies or social sciences Courses at SCQF level 5 or relevant component Units

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ other qualifications in psychology, social sciences, social studies or related areas
- ◆ further study, training or employment

Other progression pathways are also possible including progression to other qualifications at the same or different levels.

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

This Course 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 *Course Support Notes*.

Rationale

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities, as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

Learning in Psychology draws on the principles and practice paper for health and wellbeing¹, as well as on learning in the social studies and science curriculum areas.

This Course develops learners' ability to analyse psychological explanations for individual and social behaviour. Psychology provides learners with opportunities to find out about some of the ways that thoughts and emotions can affect how we feel and behave. Psychological knowledge of individual and social behaviour can support learners in personal and professional relationships, and can enable them to understand some of the factors that influence behaviour. Learning in psychology therefore offers a suitable context for finding out about factors that are important to being a confident individual and a successful learner.

There is personalisation and choice in selecting the topics and approaches to investigate and analyse human behaviour. As learners develop research skills in psychology, they will learn about the ethical implications of research and what this means for them as responsible citizens.²

Explanations for behaviour will promote thinking, reasoning and communication skills, including analysis, evaluation and application of knowledge and understanding. Learners will also develop numeracy skills, which are important in research. Developing these skills will enhance learners' confidence in their ability to consider issues objectively.

¹ Health and wellbeing principles and practice paper
www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/healthandwellbeing/principlesandpractice/index.asp

² *Overview of qualifications in the health and wellbeing curriculum area* (BE5544 July 2010) 'Broad aims of learning in health and wellbeing' page 2
www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42549.2794.html

The Course will enable learners to make effective contributions to their learning and to their social interactions. It will also help to prepare them for life and work.

Purpose and aims of the Course

The main purposes of the Course are to enable learners to develop an understanding of the psychological study of the human mind and behaviour in a range of contexts, and to enhance their ability to use evidence to explain behaviour.

The Course develops learners' understanding of psychology as the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. Psychology is a research-based subject, and it provides the opportunity to conduct practical research. This includes working with human participants in accordance with ethical standards.

The aims of the Course are to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, approaches and terminology
- ◆ the ability to use thinking skills when analysing, evaluating and applying knowledge and understanding of psychology
- ◆ understanding of the role of research evidence in explaining human behaviour
- ◆ research skills to select, organise, interpret and evaluate information
- ◆ the ability to plan and carry out psychological research, using appropriate methods and according to ethical and scientific standards
- ◆ communication and numeracy skills used in psychology

Learners will use appropriate psychological concepts, theories, research methods and evidence to investigate and analyse internal and external influences on human behaviour in a range of different contexts.

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

The Course is suitable for all learners with an interest in finding out more about the human mind and behaviour. Learners will probably have little or no prior experience of studying psychology, but an interest in human behaviour and life experience will provide a good foundation for learners to progress to this qualification. Learners progressing from National 5 Psychology will find that the Course provides the breadth, challenge and application they require to further develop their research and thinking skills, and their knowledge and understanding of psychology.

Learners should be interested in developing their thinking, research and communication skills, either to pursue study and career options related to psychology, or to broaden their learning experience.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

This Course sits within a hierarchical structure, progressing from the National 5 Psychology Course to Higher Psychology.

This Course aims to develop skills that will enable learners to gain and develop understanding of psychological approaches to analysing the human mind and behaviour.

The central theme of the Course is to enable learners to investigate psychological knowledge and research, which will promote their understanding of individual and social behaviour. Learners will analyse and evaluate concepts, theories and approaches, and will draw on research evidence to explain human behaviour.

Options within Units offer personalisation and choice of approaches and topics in psychology, psychological research and their applications. Classic and contemporary research studies and themes can provide crossover points with other Units, and opportunities for integration of Units and assessment.

The Units are designed to stand alone or be taught in any sequence.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

The Course consists of three mandatory Units:

Psychology: Research (Higher)

The general aim of this Unit is to enable learners to understand the research process and research methods used in psychology. Learners will develop the skills required to conduct and evaluate psychological research. They will also develop numerical skills and an understanding of psychological terminology.

Psychology: Individual Behaviour (Higher)

The general aim of this Unit is to enable learners to analyse individual behaviour. Learners will investigate topics and learn how these topics can be explained, using psychological approaches and theories. Learners will evaluate approaches and theories and apply psychological knowledge to show how an understanding of psychology can be applied.

Psychology: Social Behaviour (Higher)

The general aim of this Unit is to enable learners to analyse how interaction with others shapes social behaviour. Learners will investigate psychological explanations for social behaviour, and will use research evidence to analyse how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals are influenced by their social environment. Learners will apply psychological knowledge and understanding to explain examples of everyday social behaviour.

Conditions of award

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on the assessment of the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section. This covers:

- ◆ analysing and evaluating psychological concepts, theories, approaches and evidence
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of psychology to analyse and explain human behaviour
- ◆ understanding the research process in psychology, including the ability to evaluate methods and explain ethical and scientific standards
- ◆ using research evidence to explain human behaviour
- ◆ interpreting and evaluating descriptive statistics in psychological research
- ◆ using research skills to generate, select, organise, interpret, analyse and evaluate information in psychology
- ◆ using communication skills to present information, including a report on psychological research

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which provides full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

Psychology: Research (Higher)

The learner will evaluate the research process in psychology. This will involve explaining the stages of the research process, evaluating experimental and non-experimental research methods, explaining ethical guidelines and evaluating and sampling methods. The learner will be able to calculate and present data using descriptive statistics, and to apply and justify choice of method to research scenarios.

Psychology: Individual Behaviour (Higher)

The learner will analyse topics relating to individual behaviour, and will be able to explain how psychological knowledge and understanding can be applied to support individual wellbeing. This will involve explaining a topic relevant to individual behaviour, and include evaluating psychological approaches and theories used in explaining individual behaviour.

Psychology: Social Behaviour (Higher)

The learner will analyse topics relating to human social behaviour and apply understanding of social psychology to everyday behaviour. This will involve explaining concepts or theories associated with a topic in social psychology, and evaluating psychological research evidence relevant to the topic.

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)³. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In this Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ application

³ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

The learner will be assessed through a [question paper](#)⁴ and an [assignment](#).

The question paper will sample psychological knowledge and understanding from Course Units. The learner will also be required to apply knowledge and understanding to explain human behaviour.

The assignment will require learners to plan, carry out and report on their own psychological research investigation.

⁴ See link above for definition.

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

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course 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 Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

1.2 Writing

2 Numeracy

2.3 Information handling

3 Health and wellbeing

3.1 Personal learning

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	2.0	<p>Page 5 — Purpose and aims of the Course section: 'investigation skills' changed to 'research skills'.</p> <p>Page 6 — Course structure and conditions of award section: requirements of the Psychology: Individual Behaviour (Higher) Unit clarified — 'support individual wellbeing' changed to 'be applied'.</p> <p>Page 7 — List of skills, knowledge and understanding reordered; 'evaluating' added to bullet point five; 'generate' added to bullet point six.</p>	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014

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