



National
Qualifications

Psychology

Assignment

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the assignment Component of National 5 Psychology Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) for this Component of Course assessment, which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

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Introduction

This is the general assessment information for National 5 Psychology assignment.

This assignment is worth 30 marks out of the total of 80 marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the assignment Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

The assessment task will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA.

Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 30 of the total 80 marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the assignment in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

- ◆ using basic investigation skills to select, organise and interpret information in psychology
- ◆ understanding the basic research process in psychology, including the ability to explain strengths and weaknesses of methods and to describe ethical and scientific standards
- ◆ using communication skills appropriate to psychology

The purpose of the Course assessment is to assess added value of the Course as well as confirming attainment in the Course and providing a grade. The added value for the Course will address the key purposes and aims of the Course, as defined in the *Course Rationale*.

In the National 5 Psychology Course assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ breadth – drawing on knowledge and skills from across the Course
- ◆ application – requiring application of knowledge and skills to carry out background research and plan research for a topic in psychology

The Course develops an understanding of psychology as the study of the mind and behaviour. Psychology is a research-based subject, and this assignment requires the candidate to produce a report based on the investigation of a topic in psychology and their plan for further research on this topic.

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the added value of this Course by means of an **assignment**.

This assignment requires the candidate to report on their investigation of a topic in psychology and their plan for research into this topic.

Assessment overview

The assignment task is to produce a report based on the background research of a topic in psychology and a research plan for further research on this topic.

Candidates are however, **not required** to carry out the research for this assignment.

The assignment report will be between 800 and 1,200 words long, excluding references, footnotes and appendices. The report will be marked by SQA. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied.

The assessor should help candidates to choose a topic to investigate. The choice should be based on the interest of the candidate and the availability of suitable resources. There is a free choice of which topic may be investigated.

Assessors and candidates **are required** to uphold ethical standards when choosing a topic and conducting this assignment. Adherence to ethical standards set by the British Psychological Society is essential.

Some examples of suitable topics are:

- ◆ Happiness: questionnaire – based on the work of Martin Seligman (Authentic Happiness)
- ◆ Mental imagery: laboratory experiment – based on the work of Bower, 1972
- ◆ The Stroop Effect – based on the work of John Ridley Stroop, 1935

Assessors must ensure that whatever choice candidates make, they will be able to meet the requirements given for successful completion of the assignment report.

The candidate is required to:

- A. Describe behaviour associated with a chosen psychological topic
- B. Explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence
- C. Describe an aim for research on this topic
- D. Give an experimental/alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study

- E. Describe a suitable research plan, including method, sampling, variables and procedure
- F. Describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these in the research plan
- G. Use appropriate terminology and provide basic references

The assessor will inform the candidate how the assessment will be carried out and any required conditions.

Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

- ◆ The assessor should approve the candidate's selection of a topic before the candidate starts the task.
- ◆ The assessor should ensure that the candidate understands the requirements of each stage of the task. This should be done before the candidate embarks on the task. Once the candidate starts on the task they will be working independently.
- ◆ The assessor should ensure that the candidate understands the information needed to provide a basic reference. There is no expectation that references are of an academic standard but basic information should be provided to guide others towards resources used.
- ◆ This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be when they have completed most of the work on the Units in the Course.
- ◆ Group work approaches as part of the preparation for assessment can be helpful however group work is not appropriate once formal work on recording assessment evidence has started.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access. Assessors may provide a range of resources from which the candidate can select information that they wish to use in their assignment.

Candidates must undertake the assessment, whatever the nature, independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than that which is deemed 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates, for example, advice on how to develop a project plan. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has

already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment, and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance. Clarification may be sought by candidates regarding the wording of a task, prompt or instructions for the assessment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

Once work on producing the assignment report has begun, the candidate should be working independently.

Reasonable assistance **does not** include providing detailed feedback on drafts, including suggesting a possible mark.

The assignment will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and plagiarism has not taken place.

Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence. For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ photographs, film or audio evidence

Evidence which meets the requirements of this Component of Course assessment will be between 800 and 1,200 words long, excluding references, footnotes and appendices. The candidate must provide the word count for the completed report, excluding appendices, footnotes and references. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ The completed National 5 Psychology assignment report

The assignment may be produced in written form or word-processed. Whichever is used, the evidence must be able to be submitted on paper to SQA for marking.

Marking Instructions

General Marking Principles for National 5 Psychology

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles that will be applied when assessing candidate responses.

These principles are reflected in the specific Marking Instructions used to mark the assignment.

- ◆ Marks for each candidate response will always be assigned in line with these general marking principles and any specific Marking Instructions for the relevant assessment requirements.
- ◆ Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- ◆ Principal Assessors will provide guidance on marking specific candidate responses which do not appear to be covered by either the general or specific Marking Instructions.
- ◆ Where candidates are asked to 'describe' they should provide a statement or structure, characteristics and/or features. This is more than an outline or a list, and may refer to, for instance, a concept, process, experiment, situation, or facts.
- ◆ Where candidates are asked to 'explain', they must make points that relate cause and effect and/or make the relationships between things clear, for example making links between psychological theory and observed behaviour.
- ◆ The following points reflect the skills, knowledge and understanding that candidates require to demonstrate when investigating a topic and producing their plan for further psychological research on this topic:
 - A. Describe behaviour associated with a chosen psychological topic
 - B. Explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence
 - C. Describe an aim for research on this topic
 - D. Give an experimental/alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study
 - E. Describe a suitable research plan, including method, sampling, variables and procedure
 - F. Describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these
 - G. Use appropriate terminology and provide basic references

Detailed Marking Instructions

These detailed marking instructions provide the basis on which the Marking Principles will be applied. These have also been presented in tabular form to assist markers to develop an overview of how the Marking Principles will be applied.

Detailed Marking Instructions table

Assignment task	Max mark	Detailed Marking Instructions
A Describe behaviour associated with a chosen psychological topic	2	Up to 2 marks can be awarded for describing behaviour associated with the chosen psychological topic. The topic must be clearly defined with accurate information given about features of human behaviour that fully illustrate the topic. Candidates should outline why this area of study is of psychological importance.
B & G Explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence Use appropriate terminology and provide basic references	9	Up to 8 marks can be awarded for explanations of behaviour using a minimum of two relevant research studies. Each relevant point of explanation should make a clear link between appropriate psychological concepts / approaches / theories and research evidence to explain the topic. If only one research study is used up to a maximum of 4 marks can be awarded. Candidates can be awarded 1 mark for using accurate terminology and giving basic references.
C Describe an aim for research on this topic	2	Candidates can be awarded up to a maximum of 2 marks for describing an aim that is relevant to the information given on the topic and background research. 2 marks The aim is clearly described and is relevant to the topic and background research.

<p>D Give an experimental/ alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>1 mark The hypothesis/alternative hypothesis is accurate and clearly relevant to the aim of the study. Marks can also be awarded for a null hypothesis.</p>
<p>E Describe a suitable research plan, including method, sampling, variables and procedures</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 12 marks for giving information about their research plan.</p> <p>Method Up to 4 marks are available for describing the chosen research method, explaining the potential strength(s) or weakness(es) of the selected method and justifying the choice of method with regard to its suitability.</p> <p>Sampling Up to 3 marks are available for describing the sampling method for the study which must include information justifying the suitability of this sampling method.</p> <p>Variables Up to 3 marks are available for describing the appropriate variables for the study. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Experimental: independent, dependent and controlled variables must be described ◆ Correlation: co-variables and controlled variables must be described <p>Procedures Up to 2 marks are available for describing the procedures. Information should be provided on the procedure to be used in the study including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Type of data to be collected ◆ Steps to be followed when conducting the research (these may be listed)

<p>F Describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Assessors and candidates are required to uphold ethical standards set by the British Psychological Society (BPS).</p> <p>Candidates should identify a minimum of two ethical issues relevant to their study and describe how they will avoid breaching BPS ethical guidelines.</p> <p>Candidates can be awarded up to a maximum of 4 marks. Up to 2 marks can awarded for each ethical issue.</p> <p>No marks will be awarded in this section for general comments about ethics.</p> <p>No marks will be awarded in this section for unethical plans which breach the BPS ethical standards.</p> <p>Debriefs and parental/informed consent do not excuse psychological or physical harm to participants.</p> <p>No participants under the age of 16 should be used in the plan.</p>
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Marking Instructions summary table

Task	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks	7 marks	8 marks
A Describe behaviour associated with a chosen psychological topic	The topic is clearly defined and associated behaviour is described.	The topic is clearly defined and associated behaviour is described. Candidate outlines why this area is of psychological importance.						
B & G Explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence	Basic information is drawn from one or more research studies to explain the topic. No reference to psychological concepts/ approaches/ theories.	Some information is drawn from one or more research studies to explain the topic. No reference to psychological concepts/ approaches/ theories.	Accurate information is drawn from one or more research studies to explain the topic. No reference to psychological concepts/ approaches/ theories.	Detailed and accurate information is drawn from a minimum of two research studies. References made to psychological concepts/ approaches/ theories but no links made.	Basic information is drawn from a minimum of two research studies. Basic links between psychological concepts/ approaches/ theories and research evidence.	Some information is drawn from a minimum of two research studies. Some links between psychological concepts/ approaches/ theories and research evidence.	Accurate information is drawn from a minimum of two research studies. Accurate links between psychological concepts/ approaches/ theories and research evidence.	Detailed and accurate information is drawn from a minimum of two research studies. Detailed and accurate links between psychological concepts/ approaches/ theories and research evidence.

Task	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks	7 marks	8 marks
Use accurate terminology and provide basic references	Uses accurate terminology and gives basic references.							
C Describe an aim for further research on this topic	The aim is described and is relevant to the topic but lacks clarity.	The aim is clearly described and is relevant to the topic and background research.						
D Give an experimental / alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study	The hypothesis/ alternative hypothesis is clearly connected to the topic and the stated aim of the research study.							

Task	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks	7 marks	8 marks
E Describe a suitable research plan, including method, sampling, variables and procedure	Method Describes a suitable research method for this study.	Method Describes a suitable research method for this study and explains a potential strength or weakness of this method.	Method Describes a suitable research method for this study and explains a potential strength and weakness of this method.	Method Describes a suitable research method for this study and explains a potential strength and weakness of this method and justifies this choice.				
	Sampling Describes chosen sampling method.	Sampling Describes chosen sampling method, giving information about suitability of sampling decisions for the study.	Sampling Describes chosen sampling method, giving information about suitability of sampling decisions for the study, including a justification of the chosen sampling method.					
	Variables Describes one appropriate variable for the study.	Variables Describes two appropriate variables for the study.	Variables Describes three appropriate variables for the study.					

	<p>Procedures Gives information on procedure relevant to their own research study, including one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ type of data to be collected ◆ steps to be followed when conducting the research (these may be listed) 	<p>Procedures Gives information on procedure relevant to their own research study, including two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ type of data to be collected ◆ steps to be followed when conducting the research (these may be listed) 						
<p>F Describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these</p>	<p>Study is ethical. Candidate provides basic information about avoiding ethical issue(s) that is relevant to their own study.</p>	<p>Study is ethical. Candidate provides some information about avoiding ethical issue(s) that is relevant to their own study.</p>	<p>Study is ethical. Candidate provides accurate information about avoiding at least two ethical issues that are relevant to their own study.</p>	<p>Study is ethical. Candidate provides detailed and accurate information about avoiding at least two ethical issues that are relevant to their own study.</p>				

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Detailed marking instructions amended to clarify requirements of the task. Changes made to mark allocation for some sections of the task. Overall mark allocation for task remains unchanged.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014
2.0	Detailed marking instructions amended, marking summary table amended. Changes made to mark allocation for some sections. Overall mark allocation unchanged. Example studies amended and text regarding exceeding word count amended.	Qualifications Manager	September 2015

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