

# N5

National 5  
Course  
Specification



## National 5 Psychology

<b>Course code:</b>	C863 75
<b>Course assessment code:</b>	X863 75
<b>SCQF:</b>	level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
<b>Valid from:</b>	session 2017–18

The course specification provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

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# Course overview

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for a candidate to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	70	2 hours
Component 2: assignment	30	See course assessment section

Recommended entry	Progression
<p>Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.</p> <p>Candidates should have achieved the fourth curriculum level or the National 4 People and Society course, the National 4 Biology course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Higher Psychology course</li><li>◆ other qualifications in social studies, social sciences or related areas</li><li>◆ further study, employment or training</li></ul>

## Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

## Course rationale

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.

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

That National 5 Psychology course develops candidates' knowledge and understanding of psychological explanations for individual and social behaviour. Studying psychology enables them to find out some of the ways that thoughts and the environment can affect how we feel and behave.

Candidates use appropriate psychological concepts, theories, research methods and evidence to investigate and explain human behaviour in a range of contexts. Psychological knowledge of individual and social behaviour can support candidates in personal and professional relationships and enable them to understand some of the factors that influence behaviour.

As candidates develop research skills in psychology, they learn about the ethical implications of research. Explanations for behaviour promote thinking, reasoning and communication skills. Candidates also develop numeracy skills, which are important to research.

## Purpose and aims

Psychology is a research-based subject, and it provides the opportunity for candidates to develop an understanding of the research process and how it is used.

Candidates develop:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories and terminology
- ◆ the ability to use thinking skills when explaining and applying knowledge and understanding of psychology
- ◆ awareness of the role of research evidence in explaining human behaviour
- ◆ basic investigation skills to select, organise and interpret information
- ◆ awareness of ethical and scientific standards in psychological research
- ◆ basic communication and numeracy skills in psychology

## Who is this course for?

The course is suitable for all learners with an interest in developing their knowledge and understanding of human behaviour, either to pursue study and career options related to psychology or to broaden their learning experience. Learners will probably have little or no prior experience of studying psychology, but an interest in human behaviour and life experience provides a good foundation to progress to this qualification.

# Course content

The National 5 Psychology course has three areas of study. Options within each area offer personalisation and choice of topics in psychology, psychological research and their applications. Classic and contemporary research studies and themes can provide crossover points between areas of study. The areas of study are designed to stand alone or be taught in any sequence.

The areas of study are:

## **Research**

This introduces candidates to the research process, research methods and ethics used in psychology. Candidates develop knowledge and understanding of factors to consider when planning and carrying out psychological research. They also develop numerical skills and an understanding of psychological terminology.

## **Individual Behaviour**

This enables candidates to use psychology to explain individual behaviour. They investigate topics and learn how these topics can be explained using psychological theories. They also consider the strengths and weaknesses of different theories investigated.

## **Social Behaviour**

This explains how interaction with others shapes social behaviour. Candidates investigate social psychological topics and use relevant concepts and research evidence to explain how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals are developed through interaction within the social environment. Candidates use psychological knowledge and understanding to explain examples of everyday behaviour.

# Skills, knowledge and understanding

## **Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course**

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- ◆ explaining psychological concepts, theories, and terminology
- ◆ using basic investigation skills to select, organise and interpret information in psychology
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of psychology to explain human behaviour
- ◆ 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 research evidence to explain human behaviour
- ◆ interpreting basic descriptive statistics in psychological research
- ◆ using communication skills appropriate to psychology

## **Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment**

The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment.

### **Skills which will be sampled across the question paper**

Candidates must be able to:

- ◆ apply knowledge and understanding of psychology to explain human behaviour
- ◆ explain psychological concepts, theories and terminology
- ◆ use research evidence to explain human behaviour
- ◆ interpret basic descriptive statistics in psychological research

**Candidates must be prepared to use all the skills stated above when responding to questions throughout the question paper.**

### **Individual behaviour**

Candidates must be able to:

- ◆ explain and use psychological theories, concepts, research evidence and terminology when explaining human behaviour
- ◆ give a psychological explanation of two topics relating to individual behaviour, including the topic of sleep and dreams, and one other from the topics of either personality or phobias

For the topic of sleep and dreams, candidates must be able to:

- ◆ describe and explain REM and non-REM sleep
- ◆ describe and explain the Restoration Theory of Sleep (Oswald 1966)
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of the Restoration Theory of Sleep
- ◆ describe the main aims, method/procedure and results of Dement and Kleitman's study (1957)
- ◆ describe and explain the psychoanalytic (Freudian) theory of dreams, which must include:
  - conscious
  - pre-conscious
  - unconscious
  - manifest content of dreams
  - latent content of dreams
- ◆ describe the aims, method/procedure and results of Freud's (1909) study of Little Hans
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of the studies used

Candidates will also be assessed on one other topic relating to individual behaviour, chosen from personality or phobias.

For the topic of personality, candidates must be able to:

- ◆ describe what is meant by personality in psychology
- ◆ describe and explain Eysenck's type theory of personality, which must include:
  - introversion/extraversion
  - neuroticism/stability
  - psychoticism/sociability
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of Eysenck's type theory of personality
- ◆ describe personality scales, which must include:
  - EPQ-r (Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-revised)
  - Big 5
- ◆ describe the characteristics of anti-social personality disorder (APD) (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V) — 2012 revision)
- ◆ describe and explain the causes of APD, which must include:
  - biological
  - situational
- ◆ describe the main aims, method/procedure and results of a research study into:
  - the situational causes of APD
  - the biological causes of APD
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of the research studies used

For the topic of phobias, candidates must be able to:

- ◆ describe what is meant by phobias
- ◆ describe the characteristics of agoraphobia, specific phobia, and social anxiety disorder (DSM-V — 2012 revision)
- ◆ describe and explain the role of genetic inheritance, and the two-process model (classical conditioning and operant conditioning, Mowrer, 1947) in the creation of phobias
- ◆ describe and explain therapies for phobias, which must include:
  - systematic desensitisation
  - social skills training
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of systematic desensitisation
- ◆ describe the main aims, method/procedure and results of a study into:
  - the two-process model of phobias (classical or operant conditioning)
  - the genetic inheritance of phobias
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of the studies used

## **Social behaviour**

Candidates must be able to:

- ◆ explain and use psychological theories, concepts, research evidence and terminology when explaining human behaviour
- ◆ give a psychological explanation of two topics relating to social behaviour, including the topic of conformity, and one other from the topics of either altruism or non-verbal communication (NVC)

For the topic of conformity, candidates must be able to:

- ◆ describe what is meant by conformity
- ◆ describe and explain the concepts of:
  - informational and normative social influence
  - compliance and internalisation
  - individual, situational and cultural factors
  - minority and majority influence
- ◆ describe the main aims, method/procedure and results of Asch's (1951), and Mori and Arai's (2010) studies
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of the studies used

Candidates will also be assessed on one other topic relating to Social Behaviour, chosen from either altruism or non-verbal communication (NVC).

For the topic of altruism, candidates must be able to:

- ◆ describe what is meant by altruism
- ◆ describe and explain the concepts of bystander apathy, diffusion of responsibility and pluralistic ignorance
- ◆ describe and explain:
  - the kin-selection theory of altruism
  - the empathy-altruism theory
  - cultural differences in altruism
- ◆ describe the main aims, method/procedure and results of a study relating to the kin-selection theory of altruism
- ◆ describe the main aims, method/procedure and results of a study relating to the empathy-altruism theory
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of the studies used

For the topic of non-verbal communication (NVC), candidates must be able to:

- ◆ describe types of NVC, which must include the functions of:
  - eye contact
  - facial expression
  - body language
- ◆ describe and explain the contribution of nature and nurture to NVC, which must include:
  - personal space
  - cultural differences



- universal types of NVC
- gender differences
- status differences
- ◆ describe the main aims, method/procedure and results of a study relating to:
  - nature in NVC
  - nurture in NVC
- ◆ explain one strength and one weakness of the studies used

### **Skills, knowledge and understanding for the assignment**

The following skills, knowledge and understanding are assessed in the assignment:

- ◆ interpreting basic descriptive statistics in psychological research, including the ability to calculate and explain mean, median and mode
- ◆ using basic investigation skills to select, organise and interpret information in psychology
- ◆ understanding of the basic research process in psychology, including an ability to explain strengths and weaknesses of methods and to describe ethical and scientific standards

Candidates must be able to:

- ◆ describe behaviour associated with a chosen psychological topic
- ◆ explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence
- ◆ describe an aim for research on this topic
- ◆ give an experimental/alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study
- ◆ describe a suitable research plan including method, sampling, variables and procedure
- ◆ describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these in the research plan
- ◆ use appropriate terminology and provide basic references

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are 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.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)).

# Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#) and draw from the following main skills areas:

## 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

These skills must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities and the level should be appropriate to the level of the course.

Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the course support notes.

# Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the course, assessed by a question paper and an assignment.

## Course assessment structure: question paper

### Question paper

**70 marks**

The question paper assesses candidates' use of skills and their knowledge and understanding of psychological theories, concepts and topics. Candidates are required to use psychological explanations and research evidence to respond to questions.

The question paper allows candidates to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ explaining psychological concepts, theories and terminology
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of psychology to explain human behaviour
- ◆ using research evidence to explain human behaviour
- ◆ interpreting basic descriptive statistics in psychological research

The question paper has four sections: two have 20 marks and two have 15 marks. The question paper therefore has 70 marks out of a total of 100 marks for course assessment and constitutes 70% of the course assessment.

### Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

The question paper is set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Candidates complete the question paper in 2 hours.

Specimen question papers for National 5 courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

# Course assessment structure: assignment

## Assignment

**30 marks**

The assignment requires candidates to produce a report based on the background research of a topic in psychology, and a research plan for further research on this topic. They choose a topic, conduct a literature review of other research into this topic, then plan a piece of research of their own. Candidates are **not required** to carry out the research for this assignment.

The assignment assesses candidates' use of investigation and communication skills appropriate to psychology. It allows candidates to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

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

The assignment has 30 marks out of a total of 100 marks for course assessment and therefore constitutes 30% of the course assessment.

## Setting, conducting and marking the assignment

The assignment is set by centres within SQA guidelines. SQA provides a brief for the generation of evidence to be assessed. Evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking is quality assured by SQA.

Teachers or lecturers should help candidates to choose a topic to investigate, ensuring that the topic chosen allows the requirements for successful completion of the assignment report to be met. Candidates have an open choice of topic within those studied as part of the course. The choice of topic should be based on an individual candidate's interest and the availability of suitable resources.

Examples of suitable topics are:

- ◆ stability of personality from late adolescence to age 70+ longitudinal study using personality test — based on work of Harris *et al* (2016)
- ◆ the effect of learning on sleep quantity in adolescents: questionnaire — based on work of Bennington and Frank (2003)
- ◆ gender differences in recognition of facial expression: experiment — based on work of Ekman (eg 1973)

Candidates are required to:

- ◆ describe behaviour associated with their chosen psychological topic
- ◆ explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence
- ◆ describe an aim for research on this topic

- ◆ give an experimental/alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study
- ◆ describe a suitable research plan, including method, sampling, variables and procedure
- ◆ describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these in the research plan
- ◆ use appropriate terminology and provide basic references

### **Assessment conditions**

Teachers/lecturers and candidates must uphold ethical standards when choosing a topic and conducting the assignment. Adherence to ethical standards set by the British Psychological Society is essential.

Teachers/lecturers must tell candidates how the assessment will be carried out and any required conditions.

### **Time**

The assessment is 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 of the course. The evidence should be completed in time to meet submission dates set by SQA.

### **Supervision, control and authentication**

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

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

### **Resources**

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

### **Reasonable assistance**

Candidates must undertake the assessment 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 a candidate requires 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, eg 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 teachers/lecturers need to be aware that this may be

going beyond reasonable assistance. Candidates may seek clarification 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.

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

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.

Teachers/lecturers should ensure that candidates understand the requirements of each stage of the task. This should be done before they begin the task. Teachers/lecturers may provide a range of resources from which the candidate can select information to use in their assignment. Once the candidate starts on the task they must work independently.

Teachers/lecturers should ensure that candidates understand 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.

Reasonable assistance does not include:

- ◆ providing the topic
- ◆ directing candidates to specific resources to be used
- ◆ providing model answers
- ◆ providing detailed feedback on drafts, including suggesting a possible mark

## **Evidence to be gathered**

The candidate evidence required for this assessment is 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.

## **Volume**

The assignment report should be between 800 and 1,200 words long excluding references, footnotes and appendices. Candidates 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 is applied.

# Grading

A candidate's overall grade is determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

## **Grade description for C**

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

## **Grade description for A**

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

# Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

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/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).



# Further information

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

- ◆ [National 5 Psychology subject page](#)
- ◆ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Framework and SCQF level descriptors](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
- ◆ [Educational Research Reports](#)
- ◆ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
- ◆ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)

# Administrative information

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## History of changes to course specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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