



# Higher Psychology

<b>Course code:</b>	C863 76
<b>Course assessment code:</b>	X863 76
<b>SCQF:</b>	level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)
<b>Valid from:</b>	session 2023–24

This document 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.

The information in this publication may be reproduced in support of SQA qualifications only on a non-commercial basis. If it is reproduced, SQA must be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be reproduced for any other purpose, written permission must be obtained from [permissions@sqa.org.uk](mailto:permissions@sqa.org.uk).

This edition: May 2023 (version 3.0)

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2013, 2018, 2023

# Contents

<b>Course overview</b>	<b>1</b>
Course rationale	2
Purpose and aims	2
Who is this course for?	3
<b>Course content</b>	<b>4</b>
Skills, knowledge and understanding	4
Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work	13
<b>Course assessment</b>	<b>14</b>
Course assessment structure: question paper	14
Course assessment structure: assignment	15
Grading	18
<b>Equality and inclusion</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Further information</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix: course support notes</b>	<b>21</b>
Introduction	21
Developing skills, knowledge and understanding	21
Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment	21
Preparing for course assessment	51
Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work	52

# Course overview

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

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Scaled mark	Duration
Component 1: question paper	60	80	2 hours
Component 2: assignment	40	not applicable	see 'Course assessment' section

Recommended entry	Progression
Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.  Candidates should have achieved the National 5 Psychology course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ other qualifications in psychology, social studies, social sciences, or related areas</li><li>◆ further study, employment and/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 time for learning, focus on skills and applying learning, and provide 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.

This course develops candidates' ability to analyse psychological explanations for individual and social behaviour. Psychology provides candidates with opportunities to find out about some of the ways that thoughts and emotions can affect how we feel and behave.

Candidates use appropriate psychological concepts, theories, research methods and evidence to investigate and analyse internal and external influences on human behaviour in a range of contexts. Psychological knowledge of individual and social behaviour can support candidates in personal and professional relationships, and can 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, including analysis, evaluation, and application of knowledge and understanding. Candidates also develop numeracy skills, which are important in research.

## Purpose and aims

The course enables candidates to develop an understanding of the psychological study of the human mind and behaviour in a range of contexts, and enhances their ability to use evidence to explain behaviour.

The course develops candidates' 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, including working with human participants in accordance with ethical standards.

Candidates develop:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, 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

## **Who is this course for?**

The course is suitable for all candidates with an interest in finding out more about the human mind and behaviour. Candidates should be interested in developing their thinking, research and communication skills. They do not need to have prior experience of studying psychology.

The course provides candidates who progress from National 5 Psychology with the breadth, challenge and application required to develop their research and thinking skills, and their knowledge of psychology.

# Course content

The central theme of the course is to enable candidates to investigate psychological knowledge and research, which promotes their understanding of individual and social behaviour. Candidates analyse and evaluate concepts and theories, and draw on research evidence to explain human behaviour.

The course consists of three areas of study:

## **Individual behaviour**

Candidates analyse individual behaviour, investigate topics and learn how these topics can be explained using psychological theories and research evidence. Candidates evaluate and apply theories to show an understanding of individual human behaviour.

## **Social behaviour**

Candidates analyse how interaction with others shapes social behaviour. They investigate psychological explanations for social behaviour, and use research evidence to analyse how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals are influenced by their social environment. Candidates apply psychological knowledge and understanding to explain examples of everyday social behaviour.

## **Research**

Candidates understand and apply the research process and research methods used in psychology. They develop the skills required to conduct and evaluate psychological research. Candidates also develop numerical skills and an understanding of psychological terminology.

This area of study is not assessed in a separate section of the question paper, however questions relating to research can be asked in any of the sections of the question paper. In addition, candidates must carry out research for the assignment.

# 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:

- ◆ analysing and evaluating psychological concepts, theories, 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
- ◆ analysing 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 for the course assessment**

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

### **Question paper**

Candidates use the following skills when responding to questions in any section of the question paper:

- ◆ analyse and evaluate psychological concepts, theories, and evidence
- ◆ apply knowledge and understanding of psychology to analyse and explain human behaviour
- ◆ understand the research process in psychology, including the ability to evaluate methods and explain ethical and scientific standards
- ◆ use research evidence to explain human behaviour

## Individual behaviour

Candidates must be able to:

- ◆ explain, evaluate and analyse psychological theories, concepts, research evidence and terminology when explaining human behaviour
- ◆ give psychological explanations, evaluations and analysis of content from the mandatory topic of sleep and dreams

## Sleep and dreams

- ◆ biological processes relating to sleep and dreams, which must include:
  - the role of the brain in sleep
  - circadian rhythms
  - non-REM and REM sleep and dreaming
  - Oswald's (1966) Restoration theory of sleep
  - the aims, methods, results and conclusions of 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
- ◆ cognitive processes relating to sleep and dreams, which must include:
  - sleep to facilitate information processing
  - Crick and Mitchison's (1986) Reorganisational theory of dreaming
  - the aims, methods, results and conclusions of Czeisler, C. A., Johnson, M. P., Duffy, J. F., Brown, E. N., Ronda, J. M. and Kronauer, R. E. (1990). Exposure to bright light and darkness to treat physiologic maladaptation to night work. *New England Journal of Medicine* 322, 1253–59
- ◆ psychodynamic processes relating to sleep and dreams, which must include:
  - conscious and unconscious processes
  - manifest and latent content of dreams
  - defence mechanisms
- ◆ factors affecting sleep, which must include:
  - impact of drugs
  - impact of light



## Social behaviour

Candidates must be able to:

- ◆ explain, evaluate and analyse psychological theories, concepts, research evidence and terminology when explaining human behaviour
- ◆ give psychological explanations, evaluation and analysis of content from the mandatory topic of conformity and obedience

## Conformity and obedience

- ◆ types of conformity, which must include:
  - identification
  - compliance
  - internalisation
- ◆ factors affecting conformity, which must include:
  - normative influence
  - informational influence
  - individual factors: gender, self-esteem
  - situational factors: group size, group unanimity, task difficulty
  - cultural factors: collectivist and individualistic cultures
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of Mori, K., and Arai, M. (2010). No need to fake it: Reproduction of the Asch experiment without confederates. *International Journal of Psychology* 45 (5), 390–97
- ◆ factors affecting obedience, which must include:
  - perceived legitimate authority
  - socialisation
  - authoritarian parenting
  - autonomous and agentic levels of behaviour
  - situational factors: proximity, location, wearing a uniform
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioural study of obedience. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 67, 371–78, and relevant knowledge from Milgram's subsequent related studies

## Additional topic

Candidates must be able to:

- ◆ explain, evaluate and analyse psychological theories, concepts, research evidence and terminology when explaining human behaviour
- ◆ give psychological explanations, evaluations and analysis of content from **one** of the optional topics of either depression, memory, stress, prejudice, social relationships, or aggression

### Depression

- ◆ Major Depressive Disorder and Persistent Depressive Disorder (DSM-V — 2012 revision)
- ◆ biological causes for depression, which must include:
  - the role of neurochemistry
  - the role of hormones
  - the role of diathesis–stress
- ◆ biological treatments for depression, which must include:
  - SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor), tricyclics, SNRIs (Serotonin Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitor), MAOIs (Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitor), ECT (Electroconvulsive Therapy)
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation, and conclusions of one study into the biology of depression
- ◆ Beck's cognitive theory, which must include:
  - the cognitive triad
  - negative self-schema
  - faulty information processing
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation, and conclusions of one study into cognitive causes or treatment of depression

## Memory

- ◆ the multi-store model of memory, which must include:
  - sensory register, short-term memory and long-term memory
  - features and functions of each store in terms of coding, capacity and duration
  - the aims, method, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study relating to the multi-store model of memory
- ◆ the working memory model, which must include:
  - central executive
  - phonological loop
  - visuo-spatial sketchpad
  - episodic buffer
  - features and functions of each of the above in terms of coding and capacity
- ◆ the aims, method, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study relating to the working memory model
- ◆ explanations of forgetting, which must include:
  - trace decay
  - interference
  - forgetting due to the absence of cues (context and state)
  - forgetting due to brain damage

## **Stress**

- ◆ the physiology of stress, which must include:
  - the general adaptation syndrome
  - the sympathetic medullary system
  - the hypothalamic pituitary–adrenal system
  - the role of cortisol
  - the role of immunosuppression on physical health
  - the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into the physiology of stress
- ◆ sources of stress, which must include:
  - life changes and daily hassles
  - the effects of workload and control on workplace stress
- ◆ individual differences in the stress response, which must include:
  - Type A and Type B personality types
  - hardiness
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into individual differences in the stress response
- ◆ types of coping strategies, which must include:
  - drug therapy
  - stress inoculation therapy
  - social support, including instrumental and emotional

## **Prejudice**

- ◆ types of discrimination, which must include:
  - direct and indirect
  - racial
  - age
  - gender
- ◆ explanations of prejudice, which must include:
  - authoritarian personality
  - stereotyping
  - realistic conflict theory
  - scapegoat theory
  - social identity theory
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into an explanation of prejudice
- ◆ ways of reducing prejudice, which must include:
  - the jigsaw technique
  - media's ability to challenge stereotypes
  - education
  - affirmative action
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into ways of reducing prejudice

## **Social relationships**

- ◆ theories of romantic relationships, which must include:
  - evolutionary theory
  - filter theory
  - social exchange theory
  - Rusbult's investment theory
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into a theory of romantic relationships
- ◆ virtual relationships in social media, which must include:
  - gating
  - Sproull and Kiesler's reduced cues theory
  - Walther's hyperpersonal theory
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into virtual relationships in social media
- ◆ parasocial relationships, which must include:
  - levels of parasocial relationships
  - the absorption–addiction model
  - attachment theory

## **Aggression**

- ◆ biological influences on aggression, which must include:
  - neural and hormonal
  - genetic
  - evolutionary
  - ethological
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into biological influences on aggression
- ◆ social psychological explanations of aggression, which must include:
  - social learning theory
  - Sykes' deprivation model
  - dysfunctional institutions
  - the importation model
- ◆ media influences on aggression, which must include:
  - computer games
  - cognitive priming
  - disinhibition
- ◆ the aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into media influences on aggression

## Assignment

For the assignment, candidates are required to:

- ◆ interpret and evaluate descriptive statistics in psychological research
- ◆ use research skills to generate, select, organise, interpret, analyse and evaluate information in psychology
- ◆ use communication skills to present information, including a report on psychological research

Candidates must be able to:

- ◆ choose a topic for research from the areas they have studied
- ◆ carry out background research on the topic
- ◆ plan primary research according to the research plan and implement British Psychological Society (BPS) ethical guidelines
- ◆ carry out primary research according to the research plan and implement BPS ethical guidelines
- ◆ produce a report that conforms to the style and format of a psychology research report

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, and can be found on the SCQF website.

## 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

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Teachers and lecturers must build these skills into the course at an appropriate level, where there are suitable opportunities.

# 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.

## Course assessment structure: question paper

### Question paper

**60 marks**

The question paper has 60 marks out of a total of 120 marks for the course assessment. This is scaled by SQA to represent 66.6% of the overall marks for the course assessment. Scaling information can be found in the scaling calculator, found on the [‘Exam support and forms’](#) section of SQA’s website.

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

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

- ◆ analysing and evaluating psychological concepts, theories, and evidence
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of psychology to analyse and explain human behaviour
- ◆ analysing and 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

The question paper has three sections:

Section 1: individual behaviour (20 marks)

Section 2: social behaviour (20 marks)

Section 3: additional topics (20 marks)

In each section, candidates answer one question.

Candidates answer three questions in total: one on the mandatory topic of sleep and dreams from individual behaviour, one on the mandatory topic of conformity and obedience from social behaviour, and one on one additional topic from one area of study — so one option



from individual behaviour (depression, memory or stress), or one option from social behaviour (prejudice, social relationships or aggression).

Candidates learn to respond appropriately to the command word used in questions. The most likely command words are describe, explain, analyse and evaluate. Candidates use or apply their knowledge of psychology, particularly where questions require the response to be related to a given scenario.

### **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 have 2 hours to complete the question paper.

Specimen question papers for Higher 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**

**40 marks**

The assignment has 40 marks out of a total of 120 marks for the course assessment.

The assignment assesses candidates' use of research and communication skills appropriate to psychology. Candidates carry out their own primary research, based on a topic they have studied, and produce a psychological research report.

The assignment enables candidates to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ 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

### **Assignment overview**

Candidates demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding to meet the requirements of the task:

- ◆ the stages of the research process
- ◆ ethical issues in terms of current BPS guidelines
- ◆ research methods, including: field, laboratory and natural experiments; observation; case study; interview and questionnaire
- ◆ variables: independent, dependent, and extraneous
- ◆ sampling methods: opportunity, random, self-selection, systematic, quota and stratified

- ◆ descriptive statistics and their interpretation: mean, median, mode and range, and how to calculate them from a set of data

### **Setting, conducting and marking the assignment**

The assignment is set by centres within SQA guidelines. Evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking is quality assured by SQA.

Teachers and lecturers should support candidates to choose a topic to investigate, based on candidates' interests and available resources. Teachers and lecturers must ensure that whichever topic candidates choose, they are able to meet the requirements of the assignment, within the ethical standards set by SQA and the BPS.

In the assignment, candidates:

- ◆ choose a topic for research from the areas they have studied
- ◆ carry out background research on the topic
- ◆ plan primary research according to the research plan and implement British Psychological Society (BPS) ethical guidelines
- ◆ carry out primary research according to the research plan and implement BPS ethical guidelines
- ◆ produce a report that conforms to the style and format of a psychology research report

Examples of suitable topics are:

- ◆ sleep and the use of electronic devices in adolescence: survey study using questionnaire — based on the work of Hysing *et al.* (2015)
- ◆ the effect of music on the human stress response: experiment — based on the work of Thoma *et al.* (2013) (without the pre-test induction of the stress response)
- ◆ the serial position effect of free recall: experiment — based on the work of Murdock (1962)

### **Assessment conditions**

#### **Time**

The assessment is carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the course, normally when most of the course content has been delivered. The evidence must 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 and lecturers should put in place processes to monitor progress and ensure that the work is the candidate's own; that it complies with the ethical standards set by SQA and the BPS; and that 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

Teachers and lecturers must exercise their professional responsibility to ensure 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 and lecturers should ensure that candidates understand the requirement of each stage of the assignment. This should be done before they begin the task. Teachers and lecturers may provide a range of resources from which candidates can select information to use in their assignment. Once candidates start on the assignment they must work independently.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates understand the information needed to provide a reference. References do not need to be of an academic standard but must contain sufficient information to guide others towards resources used.

## **Resources**

There are no restrictions on the resources that candidates may access.

## **Reasonable assistance**

Candidates must undertake the assignment 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 what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment, or they may have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

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 a candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment, and teachers and 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 assignment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

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 evidence required for this assessment is the completed assignment report.

The report may be produced in written form or word-processed. Whichever form is used, it must be submitted on paper to SQA for marking. Candidates must submit their assignment on the SQA template provided on the Higher Psychology subject page under the 'Coursework' heading.

## **Volume**

The report should be approximately 2,000–2,500 words. A word count, excluding references, footnotes and appendices, must be stated.

If the word count exceeds the maximum of 2,500 by more than 10%, a penalty will be applied.

## **Grading**

Candidates' overall grades are 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.

- ◆ [Higher Psychology subject page](#)
- ◆ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)
- ◆ [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](#)

The SCQF framework, level descriptors and handbook are available on the SCQF website.

# Appendix: course support notes

## Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance to teachers and lecturers on approaches to delivering the course. Teachers and lecturers should read these in conjunction with this course specification and the specimen question paper and/or coursework.

## Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that teachers and lecturers could include in the course. Teachers and lecturers have considerable flexibility to select contexts that will stimulate and challenge candidates, offering both breadth and depth.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the 'Course assessment structure' section of this course specification for the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment.

Candidates need support and guidance to develop study skills and learning strategies. Teachers and lecturers should encourage them to participate in their own learning by finding information and to generally show initiative, wherever appropriate. The benefits of co-operative learning, peer-support and peer-feedback can be substantial and should be encouraged. This can be supported by using information and communication technology (ICT).

The 'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section provides suggested activities that teachers and lecturers can build into their delivery to develop these skills, knowledge and understanding.

## Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The skills, knowledge and understanding in this course relate to:

- ◆ analysing and evaluating psychological concepts, theories, 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
- ◆ analysing 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

Candidates learn best when they:

- ◆ understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them
- ◆ are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better
- ◆ are given advice about how to make improvements and are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next
- ◆ know who can help them if they need it

Teachers and lecturers should:

- ◆ encourage and support independent learning
- ◆ help candidates understand the requirements of the course by sharing learning and assessment criteria
- ◆ deliver effective feedback
- ◆ encourage candidates to set their own learning objectives
- ◆ encourage candidates to assess the extent of their existing knowledge
- ◆ encourage self- and peer-evaluation
- ◆ question effectively using higher order questioning where appropriate

Using assessment for formative purposes can help raise attainment by:

- ◆ giving feedback
- ◆ detailing progress
- ◆ identifying candidates' strengths and areas for development

The Higher Psychology course has three areas of study:

- ◆ Individual behaviour
- ◆ Social behaviour
- ◆ Research



## Activities for skills development

The tables on the following pages provide examples of teaching and learning activities for each topic, to enable candidates to 'describe' and 'explain'. Activities that can enhance candidates' ability to 'apply', 'evaluate' and 'analyse' (higher order skills) include:

### Apply

- ◆ Create an activity as follows:
  - Research has shown that REM sleep is for ... and non-REM sleep is for...  
This means that people should...
- ◆ Create a table with three columns with a relevant scenario in the middle, the left column titled 'relevant psychology', and the right column titled 'relevant parts of the scenario'. Candidates then create an exemplar response to a question that requires them to apply knowledge and understanding based on what they have put in the right and left columns.
- ◆ Use past paper application questions (Explain the scenario with reference to...) as formative assessment.

### Evaluate

- ◆ Prepare a list of criteria with which a theory, concept or study can be judged, then candidates say why this is a strength or weakness.
- ◆ Conduct a debate about a theory, concept or study (online, if the virtual learning environment has this capability, or mobile chat app or tool — this encourages contributions from less confident speakers).
- ◆ Candidates write a letter outlining changes that will need to be made to whichever theory, concept or study they wish to evaluate.
- ◆ Split candidates into pairs and give them evaluation cards, which describe an evaluation point. One candidate acts out the evaluation and the other guesses which evaluation point is being acted out.
- ◆ Candidates think of one criticism or strength of the theory or study and their task is to find three other people in the class with other criticisms or strengths and write them on a mind map.

### Analyse

- ◆ Ask candidates to write a commercial to sell a theory, concept or study, explaining how it is superior to others — what are its unique selling points (USPs)?
- ◆ Ask candidates to use Venn diagrams for comparing similarities and differences. They can then be encouraged to provide an exam question response using joining words and phrases.
- ◆ Add questions to activities that encourage candidates to think about the implications and applications of theories, concepts or studies — if the theory, concept or study is valid, what does this imply for real life, and what application can be made from this?  
For example:
  - If Milgram's results are valid, humans are dangerously prone to obey blindly (implication), so we need obedience training for the police and armed forces (application).

- If there is a 30-second limit to short-term memory (STM), information needs to be constantly rehearsed to remain in STM/transfer to long-term memory (implication), so train announcements will need to be given every 30 seconds or so (application).

### **Activities for learning research studies**

- ◆ Ask candidates to investigate the study and summarise the main features under the headings: aims, method/procedure, results and conclusions.
- ◆ Ask candidates to draw a storyboard of the procedure, for example:  
<https://elearningindustry.com/18-free-digital-storytelling-tools-for-teachers-and-candidates>

### **Activity for reflection**

- ◆ At the end of each topic, ask candidates to give their views on the following (could be an exit-slip activity):
  - I changed my mind about...
  - I became more aware of...
  - I was surprised about...
  - I felt...
  - I related to...
  - I empathised about...
  - This reminds me of...

The following tables provide activities that teachers and lecturers could use to support the development of skills, knowledge and understanding required for the Higher Psychology course. For the optional topics, suggestions of research studies which could be used are also provided.

The following table relates to the mandatory content for individual behaviour: sleep and dreams.

<b>Individual behaviour</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Mandatory content and skills</b>	<b>Suggested activities</b>
<b>Sleep and dreams</b>	Biological processes relating to sleep, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the role of the brain in sleep</li> <li>◆ circadian rhythms</li> <li>◆ non-REM and REM sleep and dreams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Give candidates an outline drawing of the brain, then candidates annotate with parts and functions relevant to sleep and dreams.</li> <li>◆ Create a diagram of the stages of sleep, showing where REM and non-REM sleep occur. Add drawings and colour to aid recall.</li> <li>◆ Create flashcards with features of REM and non-REM sleep.</li> <li>◆ Create charts with the headings REM and non-REM along with key features of each. Candidates place the correct feature under the correct heading.</li> <li>◆ Candidates complete exit-slips to show what they have learned.</li> </ul>
	Oswald's (1966) Restoration theory of sleep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Investigate the theory and describe its main features.</li> <li>◆ Create an advert for the theory, which includes its unique selling point.</li> <li>◆ Create a flowchart of the sleep process, according to the theory.</li> </ul>
	The aims, methods, results and conclusions of Dement and Kleitman's (1957) study into the relation of eye movements during sleep to dream activity.	See 'Activities for skills development' section.

Individual behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
	<p>Cognitive processes relating to sleep and dreams, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ sleep to facilitate information processing</li> <li>◆ Crick and Mitchison's (1986) Reorganisational theory of dreaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates sequence the information process as it relates to sleep and dreams. This could be added to with information about Crick and Mitchison's (1986) Reorganisational theory (see below).</li> </ul> <p>As above, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Investigate the theory and describe its main features.</li> <li>◆ Create an advert for the theory, which includes its USP.</li> <li>◆ Create a flowchart of the sleep process, according to the theory.</li> </ul>
	The aims, methods, results and conclusions of Czeisler <i>et al</i> 's (1990) study into shift work.	See 'Activities for skills development' section.
	<p>Psychoanalytic processes relating to sleep and dreams, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ conscious and unconscious processes in relation to dreams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates create a model or analogy that illustrates conscious and unconscious structures and processes. Ask them to think about an alternative to the iceberg analogy.</li> <li>◆ Create a Word document that has a range of conscious and unconscious behaviours — candidates highlight each in different colours.</li> </ul>
	Manifest and latent content of dreams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates write down a description of a dream they have had, then underline key words (this is the manifest content). They then go to a dream interpretation website (for example, <a href="http://www.dreammoods.com">www.dreammoods.com</a>) and provide an interpretation of the dream (this is the latent content). Make candidates aware that there is no validity in dream interpretations like this — this is simply an exercise to aid understanding of manifest and latent content.</li> </ul>

Individual behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
	Defence mechanisms in relation to dreams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Create scenarios illustrating behaviours associated with defence mechanisms relating to sleep and dreams. Candidates match the scenario to the appropriate defence mechanism, then write an example of the defence mechanism from their own experience, or create a new one.</li> </ul>
	Factors affecting sleep: the impact of drugs on sleep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates create a leaflet providing information about how to improve sleep based on what they know about the impact of drugs on sleep.</li> </ul>
	Factors affecting sleep: the impact of light on sleep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In groups, candidates use what they learned about light as an exogenous pacemaker to create a cartoon exploring how light affects sleep.</li> </ul>

The following tables relate to the optional content for individual behaviour, from which one topic should be chosen.

Individual behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
Depression	Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and Persistent Depressive Disorder (PDD) (DSM-V — 2012 revision)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Give candidates case studies of people living with MDD and PDD. They identify the key characteristics of each. Relevant case studies can be found, for example:                                MDD:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— <a href="http://bit.ly/2H7lghn">http://bit.ly/2H7lghn</a></li> <li>— <a href="http://bit.ly/2H7mf13">http://bit.ly/2H7mf13</a></li> </ul>                 PDD:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— <a href="http://bit.ly/2CYQqFa">http://bit.ly/2CYQqFa</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Ask candidates to think about the signs and symptoms of both disorders. Have them record on a T-chart what each disorder 'looks like' and 'feels like'.</li> </ul>
	Biological causes of depression, which must include the role of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ neurochemistry</li> <li>◆ hormones</li> <li>◆ diathesis–stress</li> </ul>	Using short video clips to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ introduce imbalance of neurotransmitters as an explanation for depression</li> <li>◆ introduce and explain neurons and synaptic transmission. Candidates draw their own diagrams of a neuron, a synapse and synaptic transmission, or, in groups, create 3D models</li> </ul> Suitable videos may be found through an internet search. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Use a Chinese checkers board to demonstrate synaptic transmission, with your arm being the axon, one hand acting as a selective reuptaker, and marbles playing the</li> </ul>

Individual behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
		<p>role of serotonin. This activity can be extended to link to the function of SSRIs (see below).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates illustrate diathesis–stress as a race, with one competitor with a high diathesis (who will be near the finishing line), and one with a low diathesis, and a diagnosis of depression is the finishing line. They can then try to fit in as many stressors as they can between the start and finishing line of each competitor.</li> </ul>
	<p>Biological treatments for depression, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)</li> <li>◆ tricyclics</li> <li>◆ Selective Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs)</li> <li>◆ Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs)</li> <li>◆ Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates create an information leaflet or video explaining each, including benefits and drawbacks.</li> </ul>
	<p>The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into the biology of depression.</p>	<p>See 'Activities for skills development' section.</p>
	<p>Beck's cognitive theory, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the cognitive triad</li> <li>◆ negative self-schema</li> <li>◆ faulty information processing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Mix-and-match exercise of cognitive biases and their explanations, then candidates illustrate each with an example from their own life, or create one.</li> <li>◆ Create (or find) interview excerpts which include examples of faulty thinking. Candidates identify these and what the consequences of this way of thinking may be for the person's mental health.</li> </ul>
	<p>The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into cognitive causes or treatment of depression.</p>	<p>See 'Activities for skills development' section.</p>

## **Suggested research**

An example of a study into cognitive influences on depression:

Alloy, L. B. & Abramson, L. Y. (1999) The Temple-Wisconsin Cognitive Vulnerability to Depression (CVD) Project: Conceptual background, design and methods. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly*, 13, 227–262.

<https://kicibpsychology.wikispaces.com/APFCC+-+Alloy+et+al>

An example of a study into biological influences on depression:

Sachs, B. D., Ni, J. R. & Caron, M. G. (2015) Brain 5-HT deficiency increases stress vulnerability and impairs antidepressant responses following psychosocial stress. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 112 (8), 2557–2562.

<http://europepmc.org/articles/PMC4345581>



Individual behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
Memory	<p>The multi-store model of memory (MSM), which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ sensory register, short-term memory and long-term memory</li> <li>◆ features and functions of each store in terms of encoding, capacity and duration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In groups, candidates draw an illustrated poster of the MSM, showing how the different stores differ in terms of encoding, capacity and duration.</li> <li>◆ Classroom replications of relevant studies, for example, primacy and recency effect; Peterson and Peterson trigram study; Miller's magic number (these can link to relevant theories of forgetting, see below).</li> </ul>
	<p>The aims, methods, results and conclusions of at least one study relating to the multi-store model.</p>	<p>See 'Activities for skills development' section.</p>
	<p>The working memory (WM) model, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ central executive</li> <li>◆ phonological loop</li> <li>◆ visuo-spatial sketchpad</li> <li>◆ episodic buffer</li> <li>◆ features and functions of each of the above in terms of coding and capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In groups, candidates draw an illustrated poster of the WM model, showing how the different components differ in terms of encoding and capacity.</li> <li>◆ Classroom replications of relevant studies such as dual task experiments, for example: <a href="http://bit.ly/2oKntZr">http://bit.ly/2oKntZr</a></li> </ul>
	<p>The aims, methods, results and conclusions of at least one study relating to the WM model.</p>	<p>See 'Activities for skills development' section.</p>
	<p>Explanations of forgetting, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ trace decay</li> <li>◆ interference</li> <li>◆ forgetting due to the absence of cues (context and state)</li> <li>◆ forgetting due to brain damage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Classroom replications conducted for the MSM (see above) can also inform the learning of trace decay and interference theories of forgetting.</li> <li>◆ Classroom demonstration of Tulving and Pearlstone's (1966) study into context-dependent learning, using candidates as participants in a repeated measures design. Condition 1: candidates learn list of words followed by a free recall test.</li> </ul>

<b>Individual behaviour</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Mandatory content and skills</b>	<b>Suggested activities</b>
		<p>Condition 2: candidates learn another list of words and are asked to recall using category headings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Video clips of Clive Wearing and HM can illustrate forgetting due to brain damage.</li> </ul>

## **Suggested research**

An example of a study into the multi-store model of memory:

Peterson, L. R. & Peterson, M. J. (1959) Short-term retention of individual verbal items. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 58, 193–198.

<https://simplypsychology.org/peterson-peterson.html>

An example of a study into the working memory model:

Hitch, G. J. & Baddeley, A. D. (1976) Verbal reasoning and working memory. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 18, 362–366.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14640747608400587>

Individual behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
Stress	<p>The physiology of stress, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the general adaptation syndrome (GAS)</li> <li>◆ the sympathetic medullary system (SMS)</li> <li>◆ the hypothalamic pituitary–adrenal system</li> <li>◆ the role of cortisol</li> <li>◆ the role of immunosuppression on physical health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Create questions based on a video clip about the GAS, SMS and hypothalamic pituitary-adrenal system. A suitable video may be found through an internet search.</li> <li>◆ Candidates create flowcharts illustrating the general adaptation syndrome, sympathetic medullary system and the hypothalamic pituitary–adrenal system.</li> <li>◆ Candidates produce a leaflet on how to reduce excess levels of cortisol.</li> </ul>
	<p>The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into the physiology of stress.</p>	<p>See ‘Activities for skills development’ section.</p>
	<p>Sources of stress, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ life changes and daily hassles</li> <li>◆ the effects of workload and control on workplace stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates view an example of the Holmes and Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) questionnaire (youth version: <a href="https://www.nchpad.org/362/2054/A~Primer~on~Stress~Management">https://www.nchpad.org/362/2054/A~Primer~on~Stress~Management</a>). This usually leads to candidates being able to discuss problems with the theory or questionnaire. It can lead to a discussion on the distinction between predictable and/or controllable stress.</li> <li>◆ Candidates can complete a hassles scale (<a href="http://www.yorku.ca/rokada/psycetest/">http://www.yorku.ca/rokada/psycetest/</a>) then compile a list of their own uplifts with which to counter these.</li> <li>◆ Candidates can complete a questionnaire based on Rotter’s Locus of Control theory (<a href="http://www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/LocusofControl-intro.html">http://www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/LocusofControl-intro.html</a>). In pairs, candidates then discuss whether or not their scores on the questionnaire accurately reflect their personality and their ability to withstand the negative effects of stress.</li> </ul>

Individual behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
	<p>Individual differences in the stress responses, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Type A and Type B personality types</li> <li>◆ Hardiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates can access a Type A/Type B quiz (<a href="http://www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/TypeAB.html">http://www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/TypeAB.html</a>)</li> </ul>
	<p>The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into individual differences in the stress interference.</p>	<p>See 'Activities for skills development' section.</p>
	<p>Types of coping strategies, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ drug therapy</li> <li>◆ stress inoculation therapy</li> <li>◆ social support, including instrumental and emotional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Stress therapy worksheets (some with audio for progressive muscle relaxation) are available (<a href="https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/progressive-muscle-relaxation-script/stress/none">https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/progressive-muscle-relaxation-script/stress/none</a>).</li> <li>◆ Candidates research effectiveness of stress inoculation therapy and social support, comparing outcomes, in terms of research findings. Provide a list of evaluative criteria, for example, risks, motivation of client, duration of treatment, whether they tackle symptom or cause, duration of improvement, biases and cost-effectiveness for each treatment. Candidates work through the criteria and select material from their preparation to address as many criteria as possible.</li> </ul>

## **Suggested research**

An example of a study into the physiology of stress:

Steptoe, A., Wardle, J. & Marmot, M. (2005) Positive affect and health-related neuroendocrine, cardiovascular and inflammatory processes. *PNAS*, 3 May, 102(18), 6508–6512.

<http://www.pnas.org/content/102/18/6508.long>

An example of a study into individual differences and stress:

Hasel, K. M., Abdolhoseini, A. & Ganji, P. (2011) Hardiness training and perceived stress among college students. *Procedia: Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 30, 1354–1358.

[https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042811020878/1-s2.0-S1877042811020878-main.pdf?\\_tid=0d2118ec-73ab-404a-a5ce-2eb3b100894a&acdnat=1520849517\\_1f1847e71e4b1d37ac4ad2d46ca22e1a](https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042811020878/1-s2.0-S1877042811020878-main.pdf?_tid=0d2118ec-73ab-404a-a5ce-2eb3b100894a&acdnat=1520849517_1f1847e71e4b1d37ac4ad2d46ca22e1a)

The following table relates to the mandatory content for social behaviour: conformity and obedience.

<b>Social behaviour</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Mandatory content and skills</b>	<b>Suggested activities</b>
<b>Conformity and obedience</b>	Types of conformity, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ identification</li> <li>◆ compliance</li> <li>◆ internalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates identify each type of conformity from examples given, then provide examples of each, either from their own experience or from their imagination, that exemplify each concept.</li> </ul>
	Factors affecting conformity, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ normative influence</li> <li>◆ informational influence</li> <li>◆ individual factors: gender, self-esteem</li> <li>◆ situational factors: group size, group unanimity, task difficulty</li> <li>◆ cultural factors: individualistic and collectivist cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates create flashcards for each concept, by hand or by using an online tool, for example, <a href="http://www.cambridgeenglishonline.com/Flashcard_maker/">http://www.cambridgeenglishonline.com/Flashcard_maker/</a></li> <li>◆ Candidates create a T-chart outlining the differences in obedience between collectivist and individualist cultures. Using the information from the T-chart and linking words and phrases, candidates translate the content to prose.</li> </ul>
	The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of Mori and Arai's (2010) study of conformity without the need for confederates.	See 'Activities for skills development' section.
	Factors affecting obedience, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ perceived legitimate authority</li> <li>◆ socialisation</li> <li>◆ authoritarian parenting</li> <li>◆ autonomous and agentic levels of behaviour</li> <li>◆ situational factors: proximity, location, wearing a uniform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates are given a factor in groups of two and asked to create a presentation that applies a concept in a new context.</li> </ul>
	The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of Milgram's (1963) behavioural study of obedience.	See 'Activities for skills development' section.

The following tables relate to the optional content for social behaviour, from which one topic should be chosen.

Social behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
Prejudice	Types of discrimination, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ direct and indirect</li> <li>◆ racial</li> <li>◆ age</li> <li>◆ gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Give candidates an article on different forms of discrimination — age, race, sex, sexual orientation. In groups, create a poster and a presentation on the form of discrimination in the article.</li> <li>◆ Candidates can find information about protected characteristics and direct and indirect discrimination for a mini-project, for example: <a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics</a></li> </ul>
	Explanations of prejudice, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ authoritarian personality</li> <li>◆ stereotyping</li> <li>◆ realistic conflict theory (RCT)</li> <li>◆ scapegoating theory</li> <li>◆ social identity theory (SIT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates complete the F-scale test, then discuss how this applies to World War II.</li> <li>◆ The link between perception and stereotypes can be made through showing visual illusions, such as Rubin’s vase and Penrose drawings.</li> <li>◆ For RCT, candidates create a storyboard of the Sherif study including an evaluation.</li> <li>◆ For SIT, candidates work in groups to explain how SIT could be used to manage the stress associated with public speaking. Candidates are then asked to reflect on their own response to public speaking.</li> </ul>
	The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one explanation of prejudice.	See ‘Activities for skills development’ section.
	Ways of reducing prejudice, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the jigsaw technique</li> <li>◆ media’s ability to challenge stereotypes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Demonstrate the jigsaw technique for this topic, by dividing the class into small groups and asking each group member to investigate a part (for example, of factors in obedience). After 20 minutes of learning their</li> </ul>



<b>Social behaviour</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Mandatory content and skills</b>	<b>Suggested activities</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ education</li> <li>◆ affirmative action</li> </ul>	part, each group member has to communicate what they have learned to the rest of the group. A test is then given to assess the knowledge of the whole topic.
	The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into ways of reducing prejudice.	See 'Activities for skills development' section.

## **Suggested research**

An example of a study into explanations of prejudice:

Tajfel, H. (1970) Experiments in intergroup discrimination. *Scientific American*, 223, 96–102.  
<http://www.holah.karoo.net/tajfestudy.htm>

An example of a study into ways of reducing prejudice:

Sherif, M., Harvey, O. J., White, B. J., Hood, W. R. & Sherif, C. (1961) Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment. In *Classics in the History of Psychology*, Green, C. D. (ed.), York University, Toronto, Ontario.  
<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Sherif/chap7.htm>

Social behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
<b>Social relationships</b>	Theories of romantic relationships, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ evolutionary theory</li> <li>◆ filter theory</li> <li>◆ social exchange theory</li> <li>◆ Rusbult's investment theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Create questions on the documentary on evolutionary mate preferences (<a href="https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/human-instinct/">https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/human-instinct/</a>)</li> <li>◆ Candidates explain filter theory, social exchange theory and Rusbult's theory. Then, working in groups, candidates investigate and create a presentation evaluating one theory, which includes a discussion of research that confirms or challenges the explanation.</li> </ul>
	The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into a theory of romantic relationships.	See 'Activities for skills development' section.
	Virtual relationships in social media, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ gating</li> <li>◆ Sproull and Kiesler's reduced cues theory</li> <li>◆ Walther's hyperpersonal theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Do a YouTube search for why Japanese men are falling for virtual girlfriends.</li> <li>◆ Article on girlfriends who are also video games: <a href="https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/21/loveplus-video-game_n_4588612.html">https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/21/loveplus-video-game_n_4588612.html</a></li> </ul>
	The aims, methods, results, evaluation and conclusions of one study into virtual relationships in social media.	See 'Activities for skills development' section.
	Parasocial relationships, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ levels of parasocial relationships</li> <li>◆ the absorption–addiction model</li> <li>◆ attachment theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Discussion of parasocial relationships, including the three levels.</li> <li>◆ Candidates are given examples to match to the three levels of parasocial relationships.</li> <li>◆ Candidates are given examples to match to features of the absorption–addiction model and attachment theory.</li> </ul>

## Suggested research

An example of a study into evolutionary theory:

Little, A. C, Jones, B. C., Burt, D. M. & Perrett, D. I. (2007) Preferences for symmetry in faces change across the menstrual cycle. *Biological Psychology*, 76, 209–216.

<http://adamoliverbrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/preference-for-symmetry-and-menstrual-cycle.pdf>

An example of a study into filter theory:

Tidwell, N. D., Eastwick, P. W. & Finkel, E. J. (2013) Perceived, not actual, similarity predicts initial attraction in a live romantic context: Evidence from the speed-dating paradigm.

*Personal Relationships*, 20 (2), 199–215.

[http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/eli-finkel/documents/InPress\\_TidwellEastwickFinkel\\_PersonalRelationships\\_000.pdf](http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/eli-finkel/documents/InPress_TidwellEastwickFinkel_PersonalRelationships_000.pdf)

An example of a study into social exchange theory:

Adam, A. & Sizemore, B. (2013) Parasocial romance: A social exchange perspective.

*Interpersona*, 7 (1).

<https://interpersona.psychopen.eu/article/view/106/133>

An example of a study into the investment model:

Rhatigan, D. L. & Axsom, D. K. (2006) Using the investment model to understand battered women's commitment to abusive relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 21 (2), 153–162.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226732455\\_Using\\_the\\_Investment\\_Model\\_to\\_Understand\\_Battered\\_Women%27s\\_Commitment\\_to\\_Abusive\\_Relationships](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226732455_Using_the_Investment_Model_to_Understand_Battered_Women%27s_Commitment_to_Abusive_Relationships)

Social behaviour		
Topic	Mandatory content and skills	Suggested activities
Aggression	<p>Biological influences on aggression, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ neural and hormonal</li> <li>◆ genetic</li> <li>◆ evolutionary</li> <li>◆ ethological</li> </ul>	<p>Use video clips to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Create questions based on a video clip of the brain and aggression (limbic system, amygdala) and also on the Warrior Gene video clips, parts 1 and 2. Candidates can then work in groups to create a quiz test on biological explanations for aggression to test the knowledge of other groups.</li> <li>◆ Show candidates a clip of Tinbergen’s experiment on sticklebacks (ethological explanation).</li> </ul> <p>Video clips can be found through an internet search.</p>
	<p>The aims, methods, results and conclusions of one study into biological influences on aggression.</p>	<p>See ‘Activities for skills development’ section.</p>
	<p>Social psychological influences on aggression, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ social learning theory (SLT)</li> <li>◆ Sykes’ deprivation model</li> <li>◆ dysfunctional institutions</li> <li>◆ the importation model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Candidates create flowcharts of process of SLT influence as they relate to aggression.</li> <li>◆ Candidates create mind map of Sykes’ five deprivations, with extensions that include the potential of each for aggressive outcomes.</li> <li>◆ Encourage students to make links between dysfunctional institutions and Milgram’s concept of the agentic state.</li> <li>◆ Zimbardo’s prison study can be used to illustrate how dysfunctional institutions operate.</li> </ul>
	<p>Media influences on aggression, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ computer games</li> <li>◆ cognitive priming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A video clip illustrating disinhibition. A suitable video clip may be found through an internet search.</li> <li>◆ Candidates build a mind map of media influences using key terms.</li> </ul>

<b>Social behaviour</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Mandatory content and skills</b>	<b>Suggested activities</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ disinhibition</li> </ul>	
	The aims, methods, results and conclusions of one study into media influences on aggression.	See 'Activities for skills development' section.

## **Suggested research**

An example of a study into biological influences on aggression:

Raine, A., Buchsbaum, M. & LaCasse, L. (1997) Brain abnormalities in murderers indicated by positron emission tomography. *Biological Psychiatry*, 42 (6), 495–508.

<http://www.holah.karoo.net/rainestudy.htm>

An example of a study into media influences on aggression:

Przybylski, A. K., Deci, E. L., Rigby, C. S. & Ryan, R. M. (2013) Competence-impeding electronic games and players' aggressive feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106 (3), 441–457.

[http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2014\\_PrzyDeciRigbyRyan\\_JPSP.pdf](http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2014_PrzyDeciRigbyRyan_JPSP.pdf)

## Research

This area of study supports candidates with both the question paper and the assignment. In addition to the skills required for the question paper, candidates develop the following skills which are required for the assignment:

- ◆ 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

The area of study provides opportunities for a variety of learning and teaching opportunities such as candidate-centred, problem-solving activities; pair and group discussion; consideration of research scenarios; experimental demonstrations; questionnaire design; games and quizzes; ICT or web-based activities; and formal presentations.

Discussion groups or personal investigation and research are excellent ways of promoting independence in learning.

Stimulus materials, visual aids and familiar situations may be used to stimulate candidates' interest. Relevant online video clips may be shown in a classroom situation followed by group discussion and analysis of the content.

Learning tasks should allow for personalisation and choice as well as enabling candidates to work at a suitable pace with appropriate support.

Approaches to teaching and learning can include small-scale or class-based research activities. With support from teachers and lecturers, candidates may collaborate to develop ideas and consider ethical and methodological issues for research proposals, including their own. A small piece of research focused on a feature of social behaviour such as conformity, or an aspect of individual behaviour such as memory, may be carried out.

## Research methods

In the assignment candidates are expected to describe, evaluate and analyse experimental methods, including: independent, dependent and extraneous variables; validity and reliability; field, laboratory and natural experiments; and to develop their understanding about the need for the experimental research method to show cause and effect.

Candidates are also expected to be able to describe, evaluate and analyse non-experimental methods, including:

- ◆ questionnaires and/or surveys
- ◆ interviews
- ◆ observation
- ◆ case studies



See the 'Activities for skills development' section for examples of how to develop the skills of evaluation and analysis.

This area of study also develops candidates' knowledge and understanding of research terminology. Teachers and lecturers should offer opportunities for candidates to practise using this terminology through discussion and activities.

Candidates should know how to structure a psychological research report using appropriate headings and terminology. They should know how to reference sources using a referencing system. At Higher level, candidates will have had some experience with referencing and should be encouraged to reference in a consistent way that enables them and others to find and verify resources used.

Candidates use research evidence to support explanations. They offer an explanation of how the evidence contributes to understanding behaviour in their research.

### **Sampling**

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to investigate how participants in research are obtained. A group exercise could be used to allow candidates to find out about sampling, or candidates could find out about a method and report back to the class.

Sampling methods that should be described, explained, evaluated and analysed can include:

- ◆ opportunity sampling
- ◆ stratified sampling
- ◆ random sampling
- ◆ self-selection
- ◆ systematic sampling
- ◆ quota sampling

### **Calculating and presenting data**

Candidates should develop their knowledge and understanding of the use of descriptive statistics and demonstrate their ability to calculate measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) as well as the range — a measure of dispersion.

Teachers and lecturers could present candidates with simple number sets to practise calculations and follow with a discussion of the merits and disadvantages of mean, median, mode and range.

As a way of consolidating the knowledge and understanding of the research process, candidates could be given a variety of research scenarios and, working either in groups, in pairs, or individually, could plan their research study using appropriate methods, sampling and data collection, and justifying their choices.

## Higher Psychology: ethical practice in student research

Ethical practice is essential when teaching psychology. Some topics may be sensitive for individual candidates, based on stage of development or personal experiences, and discretion should be used. Teachers and lecturers should ensure that care is taken in learning and teaching, and sensitivity should be shown, for example, in discussions which may relate to health, relationships or emotions.

Teachers and lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress. Such concerns are particularly relevant to delivery methods involving classroom research demonstrations, and teachers or lecturers should be familiar with two sources of ethical guidance: the *BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct* ([www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)); and the *ATP Guide to Ethics for Teachers and Candidates of Psychology at Pre-Degree Level* ([www.theatp.org](http://www.theatp.org)).

These guidelines are designed to ensure ethical research in psychology. When candidates undertake research, their teacher or lecturer takes responsibility for ensuring the ethical nature of the research. The document gives brief guidance for teachers and lecturers on ethical practice in psychology and suggestions for supervising candidates. More in-depth information can be found on the British Psychological Society's (BPS) website.

When planning and carrying out research for the assignment, ethics must be at the forefront of the teacher or lecturer and candidate's practice. Examples of unethical research include:

- ◆ using discussion as a means to test majority influence, for example, in replications of the Jenness (1932) study:
  - reason: the discussion may impact on the self-esteem of those whose initial estimate deviates significantly from that of others (protection from harm — research procedures must not embarrass, frighten, offend or harm participants)
- ◆ replicating the Asch (1951) procedure, which uses confederates:
  - reason: naïve participants will feel very uncomfortable when faced with the false responses regarding line length (protection from harm); furthermore, participants cannot provide informed consent — they are being deceived

The rights and dignity of participants must always take precedence over researchers'/candidates' wishes to conduct interesting yet potentially unethical research. The added value of boundary setting by teachers and lecturers on the choice of research procedure in such instances enables candidates to develop into empathic, responsible citizens (as well as allowing them to access the full marks available for ethics).

### Information for teachers and lecturers

- ◆ Teachers and lecturers are required to supervise candidates' work and make certain that it does not contravene the ethical guidelines of the BPS.
- ◆ The wellbeing of both candidates and research participants must be protected at all times.

**Note: no participants under the age of 16 must be used in candidate research.**

## **Brief outline of BPS ethical guidelines**

### **Consent**

Participants should give informed consent to take part in any study. If possible, participants should be informed about the objectives of the research. If giving this information would have an impact on the study (through demand characteristics) then the participant should be advised of the objectives of the study at the earliest opportunity and additional safeguards should be put in place to maintain the participant's welfare and dignity.

Informing participants means that participants must know:

- ◆ the aim of the project
- ◆ the type of data being collected
- ◆ the method
- ◆ the time commitment expected
- ◆ that they have the right to decline or withdraw at any point
- ◆ that they have an opportunity to see the final report and results

### **Deception**

Participants should not be deceived. If any information is kept from the participant in order to avoid demand characteristics in the research, they should be given this information at the earliest opportunity.

### **Withdrawal**

Participants should be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. This includes the participant being able to withdraw their data after the research has been completed.

### **Protection**

Participants have the right to be safe and free from physical and mental harm and thus should not be endangered or harmed in any way, including psychological harm such as stress, self-doubt, embarrassment, humiliation or avoidable anxiety during the course of the research. The risk of harm should be no greater than encountered in their normal daily lives. Researchers should respect individual, cultural and role differences. Sensitive topics, for example, illegal activities, violence, sexual behaviour, and abuse must be avoided.

### **Confidentiality**

All information about participants obtained during the course of the research is strictly confidential unless written permission is obtained from the participant in advance, and with their full understanding. The use of any information obtained must comply with the Data Protection Act (2018). The anonymity of participants should be ensured whenever possible. If this is not possible for any reason, participants should be advised before they agree to participate in the research.

## **Debriefing**

Participants should be provided with full information about the research as soon as possible and the researchers should discuss the participant's experience of the research to ensure that there are no negative effects.

### **Suggested guidelines for good practice**

- ◆ Discuss ethics and the need for ethical good practice before work begins. Some good and bad examples can be helpful.
- ◆ Check research plans before candidates start implementation of these plans.
- ◆ Create a checklist for candidates' research. This has the added benefit of training candidates in proper research protocol.
- ◆ Review candidates' work regularly.
- ◆ Encourage discussion of ethical issues in the write-up.

Suggested learning and teaching activities:

- ◆ mind mapping of prior knowledge of ethics
- ◆ devising various scenarios, particularly those with the potential to cause psychological distress or discomfort, for groups to discuss in terms of the BPS' code of conduct. Encourage empathy by stressing the importance of 'putting themselves in the shoes of...' participants in each scenario
- ◆ candidates research the main ethical guidelines in psychology (protection of participants; consent; right to withdraw; deception; debrief; competence; confidentiality) and create a resource with the information, for example, a poster or leaflet. Candidates can then apply the ethical guidelines to past studies, for example, Zimbardo's prison experiment, or Anderson and Dill's studies on violent video games, and create an ethical plan for their own study. They could also consider the complications involved in planning and conducting ethical research

## Preparing for course assessment

Each course has additional time which may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable candidates to prepare for course assessment. This time may be used near the start of the course and at various points throughout the course for consolidation and support, and towards the end of the course, for further integration, revision and preparation and/or gathering evidence for course assessment.

The course assessment has two components: a question paper and an assignment. Teachers and lecturers should refer to this course specification for details of mandatory course content and assessment arrangements. Information on mandatory content should be shared with candidates to prepare them for course assessment.

The question paper is carried out under controlled conditions within set time limits. Teachers and lecturers should provide opportunities for candidates to practise writing responses to questions within time constraints so that they understand the requirements of assessment.

The following skills are required for the question paper:

- ◆ Analysing: candidates develop the skill of analysis when they compare and contrast theories, concepts and studies, and when they provide implications, applications and conclusions based on their understanding of psychological topics and studies.
- ◆ Evaluating: candidates develop the skill of evaluation when they identify and explain strengths and weaknesses of theories, concepts and studies based on valid criteria.
- ◆ Applying: candidates develop the skill of applying when they use information in a new way.
- ◆ Understanding (explain): candidates develop understanding when they explain ideas or concepts.
- ◆ Describing: can the candidate recall or remember the information?

The following command terms are frequently used in the question paper:

- ◆ Describe: a statement of the main features of the concept, topic or issue.
- ◆ Explain: demonstrate understanding of the concept using appropriate psychological terminology. Examples may be helpful to explain points.
- ◆ Evaluate: make a judgement based on an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of theories, concepts and studies.
- ◆ Analyse: make points based on analysis of theories, concepts, studies and data.

For the assignment, candidates investigate and report on a topic in psychology. Topics can be chosen from either the individual behaviour or the social behaviour areas of study.

The assignment may be introduced at any time during the course; however, teachers and lecturers should give candidates time, guidance and support to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required, before they carry out the assignment and write their report.

Detailed information on course assessment is given in this course specification.

In some circumstances it is possible for candidates to work co-operatively with others to share experiences and information. This may be done using ICT and may be particularly useful in supporting candidates to participate in planning and discussion.

## **Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work**

Teachers and lecturers should identify opportunities throughout the course for candidates to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates should be aware of the skills they are developing and teachers and lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

SQA does not formally assess skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

There may also be opportunities to develop additional skills depending on approaches being used to deliver the course in each centre. This is for individual teachers and lecturers to manage.

Candidates are expected to develop broad generic skills as an integral part of their learning experience. This course specification lists the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that candidates should develop through this course. These are based on [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#) and must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the course.

### **1 Literacy**

#### **1.2 Writing**

Candidates develop communication skills throughout the course and writing has been identified as an important communication skill to be developed within psychology. Teachers and lecturers should provide candidates with opportunities to develop writing skills in the course.

For example, candidates may develop a blog or use a wiki, or contribute to a discussion forum to analyse a video clip of human behaviour for the social behaviour area of study. For the individual behaviour area of study, candidates may develop their ability to select important information and write this in a concise way to compile an academic poster, or use electronic media to present information.

### **2 Numeracy**

#### **2.3 Information handling**

Candidates develop numeracy skills throughout the course, for example, when they calculate, explain and analyse measures of central tendency and dispersion, create tables, graphs and charts of numerical information, and explain and analyse information from graphs and charts.

### **3 Health and wellbeing**

#### **3.1 Personal learning**

As candidates reflect on their own learning, and through their discussions with others, their health and wellbeing is enhanced.

### **5 Thinking skills**

#### **5.3 Applying**

Candidates develop thinking skills when they are involved in planning research, based on information they have gathered.

#### **5.4 Analysing and evaluating**

Candidates develop the skill of evaluation as they identify and explain strengths and weaknesses of theories, concepts and studies based on valid criteria. Candidates develop the skill of analysis when they compare and contrast theories, concepts and studies, and when they provide implications, applications and conclusions based on their understanding of psychological topics.

# Administrative information

---

**Published:** May 2023 (version 3.0)

---

## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Course support notes added an appendix.	July 2018
3.0	<p>Amended to reflect updated question paper structure as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ first table in the 'Course overview' section updated to show the number of marks, scaled marks and duration of the question paper</li><li>◆ presentation of the table in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section amended to reflect the updated question paper</li><li>◆ information on scaling added to the 'Course assessment structure: question paper' section, and clarification given about the three sections of the question paper</li></ul> <p>Additionally, updated 'Evidence to be gathered' in the 'Course assessment structure — assignment' section to reflect requirement to use SQA template.</p>	May 2023

Note: you are advised to check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2013, 2018, 2023