

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Psychology of Physical Activity (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J6EE 47
SCQF level: 7 (8 SCQF credit points)
Valid from: session 2022–23

Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 1.0) August 2022

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

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This edition: August 2022 (version 1.0)

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Unit purpose

This unit introduces learners to the main psychological components of physical activity. Learners develop an understanding of the importance of exercise psychology in relation to key factors such as motivation and adherence. They learn about the relationships between physical activity and the main psychological components of anxiety, confidence, stress and mood. They apply this knowledge practically by working with a client to encourage exercise adherence.

Entry requirements and progression routes

Entry to this unit is at your centre's discretion. However, we recommend learners have some experience in a gym and/or fitness environment and have communication skills equivalent to at least SCQF level 5.

The unit is suitable for learners who have:

- ◆ some education or industry-based experience of physical activity, sport or health and/or fitness
- ◆ a background in psychology and want to apply it to physical activity
- ◆ studied another relevant qualification

The unit is a part of the Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Physical Activity and Health. Learners can progress from this group award to:

- ◆ Higher National Diploma (HND) Physical Activity and Health at SCQF level 8
- ◆ local agreements for advanced entry into university degree programmes

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 define the main psychological components that relate to physical activity
- 2 explain the relationships between the main psychological components and physical activity
- 3 explain the importance of motivation for physical activity
- 4 utilise and evaluate methods to encourage adherence in physical activity

Evidence requirements

We recommend you:

- ◆ assess outcomes in numerical order
- ◆ assess the unit using stand-alone assignments, oral questioning or a project
- ◆ use a range of assessment methods
- ◆ assess outcome 1 holistically with outcome 2

Learners must provide evidence to show they can complete the following outcomes.

Define the main psychological components that relate to physical activity (outcome 1)

Learners must clearly define the main psychological components of anxiety, confidence, stress and low mood in relation to physical activity.

Explain the relationships between the main psychological components and physical activity (outcome 2)

Learners must explain the two-way relationship occurring between each of the psychological components and physical activity.

Explain the importance of motivation for physical activity (outcome 3)

Through professional discussion learners:

- ◆ discuss a minimum of three motivations causing participants to begin physical activity
- ◆ discuss a minimum of three motivations causing participants to continue physical activity
- ◆ show a clear understanding of these motivations

We recommend the professional discussion takes place between you and a small group of between three and five learners. You must measure and record the contribution of individual learners. You must complete an assessor checklist. You can digitally record the discussion.

**Utilise and evaluate methods to encourage adherence in physical activity
(outcome 4)**

Learners utilise a minimum of two methods to encourage exercise adherence. They apply these practically with a client then report on and evaluate the success of the selected methods.

You must complete an assessor checklist to record learners applying adherence methods.

Learners evaluate the two methods they used in an extended response. Learners must cover:

- ◆ client adherence level after using the selected methods
- ◆ client feedback on the sessions delivered (that included adherence methods)
- ◆ suggestions on positive methods in the future

Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ the definitions of the main psychological components that relate to physical activity	<p>Outcome 1 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ define anxiety◆ define confidence◆ define stress◆ define low mood
<p>Outcome 2 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ the relationship between the main psychological components and physical activity◆ that the psychological components can impact on physical activity levels◆ that physical activity levels can impact on the psychological components	<p>Outcome 2 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ explain the relationship between anxiety and physical activity◆ explain the relationship between confidence and physical activity◆ explain the relationship between stress and physical activity◆ explain the relationship between low mood and physical activity

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 3 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ what motivates participants to decide to begin their journey of physical activity ◆ the motivations of participants who successfully continue with physical activity in the long-term ◆ how barriers to exercise can affect motivation 	<p>Outcome 3 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ discuss reasons why participants are motivated to start physical activity, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — weight loss — body image — health — significant life events — medical advice — social reasons ◆ discuss reasons why participants are motivated to continue physical activity in the long-term, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — improved self-confidence — improved fitness or event performance — continued progress towards set goals — support systems — social reasons ◆ discuss barriers that can prevent participants from beginning or continuing physical activity

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 4 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ methods that encourage adherence to physical activity ◆ how methods that are successful in encouraging exercise adherence may vary from client to client ◆ how support systems can impact on exercise adherence 	<p>Outcome 4 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ research methods to encourage exercise adherence, including the impact of support systems such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — peers — friends — family — fitness or health professionals — education, information and resources ◆ apply appropriate methods to encourage exercise adherence with a client utilising a client-centred approach ◆ report on and evaluate the success of methods used to encourage exercise adherence ◆ suggest positive methods allowing the client to continue to adhere to exercise in the future

Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the physical activity and health sector.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focus: collating information, researching exercise adherence methods, carrying out professional discussions surrounding motivations for exercise
- ◆ integrity: being open and honest with their exercise client and offering sound advice based on reliable research
- ◆ adapting: applying adherence techniques to suit their client and/or based on changing client needs in line with reliable research
- ◆ initiative: seeking out reliable adherence techniques to suit their client's needs

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communication: working with their client to successfully support exercise adherence, contributing to professional discussion around motivations for exercise
- ◆ feeling: understanding the motivations of their client and using this to support their exercise journey
- ◆ collaborating: working with their client towards exercise success, working with colleagues during professional discussion around exercise motivation
- ◆ leading: guiding their client toward suitable approaches to ensure adherence and continued motivation for exercise

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: researching methods to encourage exercise adherence
- ◆ creativity: successfully combining methods and approaches to suit their client, putting forward engaging contribution to professional discussions
- ◆ sense-making: using information gathered to support their client, making sense of the contribution of others during professional discussions and responding appropriately
- ◆ critical thinking: considering what motivates their client and how motivation can affect exercise, evaluating the success of adherence methods used with their client

Delivery of unit

This is an optional unit in the HNC Physical Activity and Health and in Year 1 of the HND.

The notional design length is 40 hours. However, the amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your centre's discretion.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

The unit allows learners to understand how exercise psychology can relate to, and assist them in, how they support their exercise clients.

Define the main psychological components that relate to physical activity (outcome 1)

This outcome introduces the main common components of exercise psychology and their meanings and definitions.

Explain the relationships between the main psychological components and physical activity (outcome 2)

Learners explore the relationships between the previously defined components of exercise psychology and physical activity to further develop their understanding.

Explain the importance of motivation for physical activity (outcome 3)

This outcome looks at motivation and its relationship with physical activity. Learners must understand the key differences between motivations that encourage a client to begin exercise, and motivations that allow them to continue in the long-term and adhere to any exercise plan. A motivation can apply to a client in both settings. Learners can explore how these motivations often adjust to be specific to that participant's situation. Learners can apply this understanding when working with clients for other units and into the industry setting.

Learners also discuss barriers to physical activity that affect motivation.

Learners can begin to consider the idea of self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their capacity to execute certain behaviours, for example carrying out and maintaining regular exercise.

Utilise and evaluate methods to encourage adherence in physical activity (outcome 4)

Learners consider adherence and the evaluation methods they can apply when working with a client to encourage adherence in physical activity. There are many methods learners can use. They should consider their client's situation and apply relevant methods. Common considerations include SMART goal setting or progression monitoring, for example mood questionnaires, body measurements and fitness tests.

As part of their research and approach, learners should include using support systems, such as:

- ◆ peers
- ◆ friends
- ◆ family
- ◆ fitness or health professionals
- ◆ education, information and resource

Learners should try and use a client-centred approach when offering this support.

Approaches to delivery

We recommend you deliver the outcomes in numerical order. This allows a natural introduction to the topic areas for those with limited previous experience.

In outcomes 1 and 2, learners establish a base of understanding of the aspects of psychology that relate to physical activity. In outcomes 3 and 4, they further develop their understanding and apply it to industry like settings. In outcome 4, the natural journey of being introduced to, and working with a client, could certainly be covered in what is approaching a real-life working situation.

You can integrate:

- ◆ parts of outcome 3 with other HNC Physical Activity and Health units
- ◆ most of outcome 4 with the mandatory HNC Physical Activity and Health units
- ◆ the parts of outcome 4 that involves working with a client with other units that also require client engagement

Approaches to assessment

We recommend you assess outcomes 1 and 2 holistically.

You can use a range of assessment methods to gather evidence. Using a variety of assessment approaches allows learners to develop different skills that are transferable to work or further and higher education.

To authenticate learners work, we recommend:

- ◆ learners use centre-controlled communication methods, for example email addresses, as using these secure accounts helps make sure they send and respond to communications personally
- ◆ you, or the learners, use plagiarism software to authenticate the learners' submitted written work and check it against other submissions and sources

Define the main psychological components that relate to physical activity (outcome 1) and explain the relationships between the main psychological components and physical activity (outcome 2)

Assessing outcomes 1 and 2 together works well because learners can define and then explain the relationships using the same psychological components. You can ask learners to present the information relating to the evidence requirements in a format that is useful to a client, for example:

- ◆ a hyperlinked electronic document
- ◆ an info graphic
- ◆ an instructional video
- ◆ a social media post

Explain the importance of motivation for physical activity (outcome 3)

Using professional discussions focused on the main areas of motivation for exercise creates realistic, real-life type assessment, similar to what learners need to do when working with a client. This assessment approach helps learners further develop meta-skills in all three areas of self-management, social intelligence, and innovation.

Professional discussion can take place between just you and an individual learner. However, it is more natural and real-life to assess a small group of between three and five learners together, perhaps with you leading or facilitating it.

You can digitally record the discussion. You must complete an assessor checklist. To meet the evidence requirements, you must make sure the recording method reliably shows the contribution of each learner.

Utilise and evaluate methods to encourage adherence in physical activity (outcome 4)

Learners carry out research and then apply the findings of that research practically with their chosen client.

You must observe learners and complete an assessor checklist.

You can integrate:

- ◆ this with other units where learners work with a specific client
- ◆ the learner report and evaluation on how well these methods worked with other units, for example by adding sections in a client report or logbook

Equality and inclusion

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

You should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Information for learners

Psychology of Physical Activity (SCQF level 7)

This section explains:

- ◆ what the unit is about
- ◆ what you should know or be able to do before you start
- ◆ what you need to do during the unit
- ◆ opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

This unit allows you to investigate and more fully understand the psychology of physical activity. The previous experience and motivations of a participant can impact hugely on their approach to exercise. We must, as physical activity professionals, understand how to manage and encourage each participant based on their current relationship with physical activity and the goals they wish to achieve.

Before starting the unit, you should:

- ◆ understand the general benefits of exercise
- ◆ have begun to understand the various types of physical activity that participants use
- ◆ have begun to develop your knowledge of how the body reacts to and adapts to exercise

During the unit you:

- ◆ define the main psychological components related to physical activity (outcome 1)
- ◆ explain the relationships between the main psychological components and physical activity (outcome 2)
- ◆ explain the importance of motivation for physical activity (outcome 3)
- ◆ utilise and evaluate methods to encourage adherence in physical activity (outcome 4)

You can learn and develop further by applying the content of the unit to other circumstances. For example, if you are doing the Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Physical Activity and Health, you can use the knowledge and skills you develop in this unit to improve your performance in other units.

The unit is a part of the Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Physical Activity and Health. You can progress from this group award to:

- ◆ Higher National Diploma (HND) Physical Activity and Health at SCQF level 8
- ◆ local agreements for advanced entry into university degree programmes

You are assessed using various different methods:

- ◆ Outcomes 1 and 2: your assessor may ask you to provide extended response or essay style responses, as the topic is discussive in nature.
- ◆ Outcome 3: can involve being part of a professional discussion. Your assessor records the discussion using a checklist. They may also digitally record it.
- ◆ Outcome 4: your assessor can combine outcome 4 with other practical client sessions and/or assessments to make efficient use of your assessment time.

Meta-skills

Meta-skills enhance your employability in the health and physical activity health sector. As you progress through the unit, you develop meta-skills in self-management, social intelligence, and innovation. You develop these meta-skills naturally in all outcomes as you learn and create assessment responses.

Self-management

You develop focus and ability to adapt when working with current research when working with your client.

Social intelligence

You develop your ability to communicate and being empathic when working with your client. You must understand how they are approaching their physical activity routine.

Innovation

You develop critical thinking when evaluating the success of your adherence methods.

Administrative information

Published: August 2022 (version 1.0)

Superclass: HJ

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Note: please check [SQA's website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.