

The logo consists of the letters 'N5' in a large, bold, white font, set against a solid purple square background.

National 5
Coursework
Assessment Task



National 5 Psychology Assignment Assessment task

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Introduction

This document contains marking instructions and instructions for candidates for the National 5 Psychology assignment. It must be read in conjunction with the course specification.

This assignment has 30 marks out of a total of 100 marks available for the course assessment.

This is one of two course assessment components. The other component is a question paper.

Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Candidate evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

General marking principles

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles that must be applied when marking candidate responses in this assignment. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

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

Detailed marking instructions

Skills	Max mark	Marking instructions
<p>A Describe behaviour associated with a chosen psychological topic.</p>	2	Award a maximum of 2 marks for descriptions of behaviour associated with the chosen psychological topic. The topic must be clearly defined with accurate information given about features of human behaviour that fully illustrate the topic. Candidates should outline why this area of study is of psychological importance.
<p>B and G Explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence.</p> <p>Use appropriate terminology and provide basic references.</p>	9	<p>Award a maximum of 8 marks for explanations of behaviour using a minimum of two relevant research studies. Each relevant point of explanation should make a clear link between appropriate psychological concepts/theories and research evidence to explain the topic.</p> <p>Award up to a maximum of 4 marks if only one research study is used.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for use of accurate terminology and provision of basic references.</p>
<p>C Describe an aim for research on this topic.</p>	1	<p>Award a maximum of 1 mark for description of an aim that is relevant to the information given on the topic and background research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1 mark: the aim is clearly described and is relevant to the topic and background research.
<p>D Give an experimental/alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study.</p>	2	<p>Award a maximum of 2 marks for an experimental/alternative hypothesis for the proposed study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1 mark: the experimental/alternative hypothesis is accurate and relevant to the aim of the study. ◆ 2 marks: the experimental/alternative hypothesis is accurate, clearly relevant to the aim of the study and clearly expressed. <p>Award marks also for a null hypothesis.</p>

Skills	Max mark	Marking instructions
<p>E Describe a suitable research plan, including method, sampling, variables and procedures.</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>Marks may be awarded in a number of ways for descriptions of the research plan, up to a maximum of 12 marks.</p> <p>Method Award a maximum of 4 marks for description of the chosen research method, explanation of a potential strength or weakness of the selected method, and justification of the choice of method with regard to its suitability.</p> <p>Sampling Award a maximum of 3 marks for description of the sampling method for the study, which must include information about the suitability, including a justification of the chosen sampling method.</p> <p>Variables Award a maximum of 3 marks for description of the appropriate variables for the study. These should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ research variables ◆ extraneous and/or controlled variables <p>Procedures Award a maximum of 2 marks for description of the procedures. Candidates should provide information on the procedure to be used in the study including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ type of data to be collected ◆ steps to be followed when conducting the research (these may be listed) <p>Plans which have an unethical procedure can only be awarded a maximum of 1 mark, for data.</p>

Skills	Max mark	Marking instructions
<p>F Describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these in the research plan.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Teachers and lecturers, and candidates are required to uphold ethical standards set by the British Psychological Society (BPS).</p> <p>Candidates should identify a minimum of two ethical issues relevant to their study and describe how they will avoid breaching BPS ethical guidelines.</p> <p>Award a maximum of 4 marks. Award up to 2 marks for each ethical issue.</p> <p>Award 0 marks for general comments in this section about ethical guidelines.</p> <p>Debriefs and parental/informed consent do not excuse psychological or physical harm to participants.</p> <p>The plan must not include participants under the age of 16.</p>

Marking instructions: summary table

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

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

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

Task	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks	7 marks	8 marks
	<p>Variables Describes one variable for the study.</p>	<p>Variables Describes two variables for the study.</p>	<p>Variables Describes three variables for the study.</p>					
	<p>Procedures Gives information on an ethical procedure relevant to their own research study, including one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ type of data to be collected ◆ steps to be followed when conducting the research (these may be listed) 	<p>Procedures Gives information on an ethical procedure relevant to their own research study, including two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ type of data to be collected ◆ steps to be followed when conducting the research (these may be listed) 						

Task	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks	7 marks	8 marks
F Describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these in the research plan.	Candidate provides basic information about avoiding ethical issue(s) that is relevant to their own study.	Candidate provides some information about avoiding ethical issue(s) that is relevant to their own study.	Candidate provides accurate information about avoiding at least two ethical issues that are relevant to their own study.	Candidate provides detailed and accurate information about avoiding at least two ethical issues that are relevant to their own study.				

Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the assignment for National 5 Psychology.

This assignment has 30 marks out of a total of 100 marks available for the course assessment.

The purpose of the assignment is to carry out background research on a chosen psychological topic and plan further research for this topic. You must complete a report on this task. You do not have to carry out the research study for this assignment.

The task assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

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

You must produce a report, either in written form or word-processed. The evidence must be submitted on paper to SQA for marking.

Your report should be between 800 and 1,200 words, excluding references, footnotes and appendices.

You must provide the word count of your completed report, excluding appendices, footnotes and references. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied.

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know how the assessment will be carried out and any required conditions for doing it.

Choosing a psychological topic

Your teacher or lecturer will help you to choose a topic. Your choice should be based on your interest in the topic, and the availability of suitable resources to enable you to complete this task.

You must remember your obligation to uphold ethical standards when choosing your topic and completing this assignment. You must comply with the ethical standards set by the British Psychological Society.

In this assessment, you have to:

- A Describe behaviour associated with a chosen psychological topic
- B Explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence
- C Describe an aim for research on this topic
- D Give an experimental/alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study
- E Describe a suitable research plan, including method, sampling, variables and procedure
- F Describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these in the research plan
- G Use appropriate terminology and provide basic references

Note: as you work through the assignment you should make sure that you use the language of psychology. You should also keep a note of sources that you use for information.

A Describe behaviour associated with a chosen psychological topic

- ◆ Your teacher or lecturer will support you by commenting upon the suitability of the topic, and advise on the likely availability of resources.
- ◆ You should clearly define your chosen psychological topic.
- ◆ You should outline why your chosen area of study is of psychological importance.

B Explain features of the topic with reference to psychological research evidence

- ◆ Your teacher or lecturer will support you by providing a range of resources or guiding you to resources, from which you will select relevant information to use.
- ◆ Remember to use evidence from a minimum of two research studies to explain behaviour for your chosen topic.
- ◆ Make clear links between psychological concepts, theories and evidence from research to explain your chosen topic.
- ◆ Check your work to make sure you have used psychological language appropriately.
- ◆ Reference your sources of information and research studies in a way that would allow others to find them.

C Describe an aim for research on this topic

- ◆ Now that you have done some background research, you should design an ethical research study that will build upon your background research. You will not carry out the research study, but you should design it in such a way that the research could be done.
- ◆ The aim should state exactly what this research study is about, with clear and accurate links to your chosen topic and background research.

D Give an experimental/alternative hypothesis for the proposed research study

- ◆ Make sure that your experimental/alternative hypothesis is accurate, clear, and has an obvious link to the aim of the research.

E Describe a suitable research plan, including method, sampling, variables and procedure

- ◆ Describe and justify the suitability of the research method you have selected in your plan.
- ◆ Explain a potential strength and a potential weakness of the method in your plan.
- ◆ Describe and justify the suitability of the sampling method you have selected in your plan.
- ◆ Describe the appropriate variables to consider in your research plan.
- ◆ Give some information about the data to be collected and the steps to be followed when conducting the research.

F Describe ethical issues and ways of addressing these in the research plan

Your proposed research study must comply with ethical standards set by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

- ◆ Identify a minimum of two ethical issues relevant to your study.
- ◆ Describe how you will avoid breaching the BPS ethical guidelines within your research plan.
- ◆ Consider how you will avoid psychological harm or physical harm which could be caused to you or your participants.
- ◆ Note that debriefs and parental/informed consent do not excuse psychological or physical harm to participants.
- ◆ Do not include participants under the age of 16 in your plan.

G Use appropriate terminology and provide basic references

- ◆ Check your work to make sure you have used psychological language appropriately.
- ◆ Check your work to make sure you have included basic references.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.0	This document replaces the previous version dated September 2015. Document formatted to match latest template and writing style. Marks for aim reduced from 2 marks to 1 mark. Marks for hypothesis increased from 1 mark to 2 marks. Marking instructions and marking grid updated to reflect this.	September 2017
1.1	Updated marking information in procedures and ethics section and clarified information on variables on pages 4-5 and 9-10.	September 2023

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