Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Psychology A: The Shaping of Modern Psychology (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J6ET 47

SCQF level: 7 (8 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: session 2024–25

Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 3.0) August 2024

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.

Unit purpose

This unit develops learners' knowledge and understanding of the historical development of psychology. The unit examines schools of thought in psychology, explaining how they each developed, as well as the key features that differentiate them. It develops learners' skills in analysis as they analyse the impact of the major schools in terms of how they shaped what psychology is today.

The unit is aimed at learners who have a general interest in psychology, as well as those who want to use it as the basis for further study.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. However, we recommend that learners have one or more of the following:

♦ good communication skills

♦ previous study of psychology, for example National Qualifications (NQ) at SCQF levels 5 or 6, or similar qualifications

♦ other knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the unit

Learners normally study the unit as part of HNC Social Sciences. They can also study it on a stand-alone basis.

If learners study the unit as part of HNC Social Sciences, they may be able to progress to the HND Social Sciences or a degree programme in a related subject.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1 explain the development of psychology since the 19th century
2 analyse the impact of major schools on the development of modern psychology

Evidence requirements

Learners should provide written or oral evidence covering all outcomes, produced under open-book conditions. You should give learners the assessment task at an appropriate point in the unit. Learners should submit their work for marking on a date that you have provided or agreed with them.

Learners must produce a written response of approximately 1,500 words, or an oral presentation of 10 to 12 minutes in duration.

Learners' responses must include:

♦ a description of the development of at least two major schools of thought
♦ an explanation of the key features that characterise at least two different schools of thought
♦ a description of the historical context or influences in the development of at least two schools of thought
♦ an explanation of how the major schools of thought differ from each other
♦ an analysis of how research evidence strengthens and challenges these schools of thought
♦ an analysis of the weaknesses in these schools of thought that enabled subsequent development

Major schools of thought could include psychoanalytic, behaviourist, humanistic, cognitive and biological.

You can choose to use a mix of assessment methods across a cohort, depending on what is most suitable for each learner; for example, some could give a written response, others could give an oral response and others could respond in the form of a blog.

Learners must fully reference their assessment, using reliable sources appropriate for SCQF level 7. They must list all sources in a bibliography or reference list, in a recognised standard format such as Harvard or APA.

The SCQF level of the unit provides additional context relating to the quality of evidence. Learners should:

♦ contribute information that is complex, accurate and relevant to its purpose and audience
♦ present ideas clearly and coherently
♦ use a structure that is appropriate to the purpose
♦ provide evidence or references to support their points

Knowledge and skills

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

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: ♦ how psychology started as a separate discipline from the 19th century ♦ how psychology has developed over time ♦ what the key features are of the major schools of psychology ♦ how the major schools differ from each other	**Outcome 1** Learners can: ♦ explain the key features that characterise the development of psychology
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: ♦ research evidence that supports different schools of thought in psychology ♦ the weaknesses in schools that provide a catalyst for development	**Outcome 2** Learners can: ♦ analyse the role of research evidence in strengthening schools of thought ♦ analyse the implications of weaknesses enabling the development of alternative schools of thought within psychology

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the social sciences sector.

The unit helps learners develop the meta-skills of self-management, social intelligence and innovation. Learners should develop meta-skills naturally throughout the unit. You should encourage learners to develop a minimum of one area in each of the three categories, but they do not need to cover all suggested subsections. The following suggestions may help shape delivery and assessment, and vary depending on the chosen topics and assessment method.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

♦ focusing: sorting information into a coherent narrative; decision making; developing motivation; reading and considering theories and research evidence; using sources to make decisions about what is valuable information and what is misinformation; completing assessments to clear deadlines

♦ integrity: developing an understanding of ethical issues in early research in psychology, and how these issues led to the development of a Code of Practice; producing their own, original work for the assessment

♦ adapting: using digital library tools and other digital platforms to access reliable sources of information

♦ initiative: deciding which schools of thought to include and gauging their importance; self-motivation

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

♦ communicating: reading and listening to information; participating in discussions; giving appropriate information in the assessment

♦ feeling: discussing theories and expressing opinions; understanding and respecting other perspectives

♦ collaborating: working with other learners, for example on formative presentations and research tasks; taking account of others in planning and carrying out tasks

♦ leading: taking account of others in formative tasks; sharing information, for example using jigsaw-technique learning, where each learner leads on an aspect of knowledge and brings this to the group

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

♦ curiosity: questioning evidence, lecturers and other learners to increase understanding; sourcing and filtering information; using library resources

♦ creativity: producing an assessment that reflects their interests while meeting the unit's requirements; using illustrations to enhance explanations and analysis points

♦ sense-making: classifying schools of thought; considering the overall development of the discipline alongside developments within individual schools; analysis

♦ critical thinking: making logical connections and reasoned judgements; evaluating research evidence; comparing and contrasting different approaches

Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

Communication

Learners develop communication skills in formative and summative assessment. It is part of the evidence requirements for this unit to ensure learners convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent way, with references where appropriate. You can give learners opportunities to carry out oral presentations and engage in discussions.

Digital

Learners can develop digital skills by producing digital presentations for summative assessment; doing online research tasks; formatting written tasks as word-processed documents; participating in digital learning and teaching, and online enhancement activities; and using a virtual learning environment (VLE).

Learning for Sustainability

Learning for Sustainability aims to build the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence needed to develop practices and make decisions that are compatible with a sustainable and equitable society. In this unit, there are opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of social sustainability while studying theories of key psychologists and their work to understand human behaviour in relation to mental ill health, with links to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The unit fits with the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:

3   Good health and well-being: through exploring how different schools explain the mind and behaviour, which can include different modes of treatment for disorders.

4   Quality education: through using a range of sources to explore, explain and analyse.

Delivery of unit

This unit is in the 'named social sciences' section of HNC Social Sciences. You can deliver it as part of the group award or as a stand-alone unit.

It is one of two units that cover psychology in HNC Social Sciences. The unit is best delivered as a foundation for Psychology B: Applied Psychology at SCQF level 7, which explores different topics within the different schools, but can also be taught as a freestanding unit.

The overall unit delivery time is a notional 40 hours contact time for delivery and assessment, and we expect learners to commit a further 40 hours of self-directed study.

The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your centre's discretion, however, you should consider both outcomes together as you deliver the unit.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

Learners can articulate to the second year of a Psychology degree in some universities if they complete Psychology A: The Shaping of Modern Psychology at SCQF level 7 and Psychology B: Applied Psychology at SCQF level 7 together. This allows learners to access degrees approved by the British Psychological Society.

Although a chronological approach can be helpful, considering each school separately and noting its development over time allows learners to explore the breadth and depth of psychology. There is flexibility in the range of schools discussed in modern times, and you should refer to what is currently being offered in degree courses, as well as career options for psychologists.

You should cover an explanation of psychology from its starting point, establishing itself as a separate discipline in the late 19th century, through the development of the early major schools of thought in the 20th century, through to the expansion of different schools of thought, to the modern day. This includes the impact of weaknesses in schools of thought becoming catalysts for the development of further schools of thought.

You should deliver both outcomes simultaneously, and the explanations of key features should include discussion about the impetus points for development.

Evaluating each school and its place in the shaping of modern psychology should allow outcome 2 discussions to arise naturally. You should split delivery time across different schools of thought, and different approaches within a school of thought — for example, classical and operant conditioning within behaviourism, or Freudian and neo-Freudian approaches within psychoanalysis — to better explain different shaping factors within and between schools of thought.

You should introduce learners to the conditions around the start of psychology, including the influence of medicine and philosophy, and the need to reconcile them into a unitary understanding of mind and body. You can decide whether earlier influences are included in the summative assessment, however, they should not form a significant part of the overall assessment. The starting point should be taken from contributions such as Wundt's first psychology laboratory in 1879 or James' first psychology textbook in 1890.

Early influences should include the behaviourist and psychodynamic schools of thought, although there is a significant degree of flexibility in the development of psychology after this. The biological school of thought has been consistent since the start of psychology, maintaining its connection to its medical roots, and now growing in dominance again through branches such as neuropsychology and its growing interrelationship with the cognitive school of thought. The cognitive school had its roots in early memory research by psychologists such as Ebbinghaus in 1885, but came to prominence with the 'cognitive revolution' in the 1950s and 1960s when the understanding of human brain processes was sought for replication in computer programming.

The humanistic school of thought formed the so-called Third Force in psychology in reaction to the then dominant schools of thought of behaviourism and psychodynamic. The catalyst for its development was in opposing explanations of mind and behaviour based on reductionist principles, such as behaviourists viewing human behaviour as the same as animals, and the psychodynamic school of thought deriving theories of everyone from studying ill patients and selfish, unconscious drives. Including the works of Carl Rogers and Viktor Frankl can contribute to discussions around health and well-being, along with current applications of psychology.

You can include the rise of sub-fields such as social psychology, individual differences, forensic psychology and neuropsychology in preparation for Psychology B: Applied Psychology at SCQF level 7. You should also consider the role of under-represented groups in science, for example:

♦ Margaret Washburn, the first female psychology doctorate, who published a comparative psychology textbook in 1908 (note: not the A L Washburn who collaborated with Cannon in the 'hunger pangs' study within biological/motivation psychology)
♦ Rosalie Rayner, who collaborated with Watson on the 'Little Albert' behaviourism study (1920)
♦ Mary Cover Jones, who developed behaviourist principles into systematic desensitisation with 'Little Peter' (1924)
♦ Francis Sumner, the first African American to receive a doctorate in psychology (1920), who studied racial bias
♦ Inez Prosser, the first African American woman to receive a doctorate (1933), whose educational psychology work was used in Brown v. Board of Education, although she supported the benefits of segregated schooling

Approaches to delivery

You should structure the learning and teaching programme to allow time for learners to develop meta-skills, and academic and other transferable skills. You should also allow for assessment practice within the notional hours suggested.

You can shape delivery and assessment to support learners to develop their academic skills such as time management, multi-tasking ability, digital skills, essay writing skills and questioning ability. You can design formative and summative activities and assessments that encourage learners to practise the skills that they need to progress to the next level of study.

Where possible, you should encourage learners to use original research papers to develop their critical thinking and communication skills. You can explain terminology and language as you deliver. There are many general textbooks suitable for researching and sourcing key features. You should take care to ensure that all resources learners use are at an appropriate level for SCQF level 7 study.

Learners develop skills including the ability to clearly differentiate explanations of schools of thought and analyse their weaknesses. They also demonstrate skills in sourcing and referencing content.

A varied and active learning approach would be beneficial, whereby supported, independent, and collaborative learning takes place, and you encourage learners to take a participative and practical approach. You can use a range of delivery methods to enable learners to gain knowledge, understanding and meta-skills, such as:

- demonstration
- tutorial question and answer sessions
- debate
- individual and group research tasks
- presenting findings
- VLE
- digital tools and social media
- film and visual images
- close reading of sources

You must cover three schools of thought in detail (although only a minimum of two are assessed). To show the breadth of psychology, you should also cover a range of further schools of thought in less depth. You should not consider the starting point of psychology with the early structuralist and functionalist schools in as much depth as, for example, behaviourism or the cognitive school of thought. You could choose to cover the schools of thought related to the topics chosen in Psychology B: Applied Psychology at SCQF level 7 if you are delivering both units.

Delivery can either follow a structured chronology or an examination of different schools of thought with an exploration of their key dates. There may be significant overlap between the explanations, replicating the waxing and waning influences of the dominant schools of thought over time.

Approaches to assessment

You can generate evidence using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable for learners.

We recommend that you assess the unit holistically, as that is best to reduce the learners' assessment burden. You can decide to use a portfolio approach with two or more assessment tasks issued at different times in the unit delivery, if that is better for your learners. Learners can choose the format of their submission, as long as it allows them to address each element of the outcomes. You should encourage learners to explore areas of development that interest them.

There is flexibility regarding the number of schools of thought learners can cover in their summative assessment, although learners must be assessed on a minimum of two. However, you should take care to ensure breadth and depth. The early schools of thought of functionalism and structuralism can be considered in very little depth, however, behaviourism, psychoanalysis, humanistic, cognitive and biological should have more detailed explanations and evaluations in terms of shaping modern psychology. There is a significant amount of flexibility in considering, for example, biological and cognitive schools of

thought, and their modern interrelationship can consider the relative shaping influence of each. Learners can start with modern schools of thought and trace back to their origins, or they can start with the early history and trace the development of the modern science.

You could use:

♦ a written essay
♦ an oral presentation
♦ a visual presentation using learners' choice of media format
♦ a quiz with open text responses
♦ an academic poster supported by an oral presentation
♦ a storyboard
♦ a blog
♦ an audiovisual presentation
♦ a podcast

Written responses should consist of approximately 1,500 words. If learners choose an oral method, we recommend that you record this in some form or provide assessor notes on the presentation for external verification purposes. Oral presentations or poster exhibitions should be 10 to 12 minutes in duration. Each learner must show evidence of meeting all evidence requirements. This can be done best by completing oral presentations or poster exhibitions individually. If a group presentation is used, each individual must show coverage of all evidence requirements, so may need additional responses from, for example, structured questions or an essay. Learners should submit their work for marking on a date that you have provided or agreed with them.

One useful idea is for learners to produce an annotated timeline showing the linear development of psychology, with colour outlines identifying the development of different schools. This could be a handwritten or digitally created double A3-sized infographic. Learners should explain the key features and supporting research evidence sufficiently to meet the evidence requirements. Analytical points can be presented to introduce new schools of thought, different branches of early schools of thought (for example, operant after classical conditioning in behaviourism; neo-Freudians after Freud within psychoanalysis), or to explain the role of research evidence presented in supporting or challenging schools of thought at that time.

You should make learners aware of the importance of good judgement when selecting appropriate academic sources. Encourage them to choose academic sources rather than generic search engines, to enable them to be more confident of information and better equipped to progress to SCQF level 8 units.

If you are using a blog or creation of a website as the way of gathering evidence, it should not be in the public domain. Rather, it should be on an intranet or private area of your VLE to reduce the likelihood of plagiarism.

Authenticating learners' work is essential. It would be helpful to collect notes or visual presentation materials from learners as further evidence of meeting SCQF level 7 in the

presentation. You should monitor learners' progress throughout to authenticate submitted work. Where possible, you should use plagiarism detection software.

It is important that learners' responses to the assessment instrument are at SCQF level 7.

Opportunities for e-assessment

Assessment that is supported by information and communication technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software, may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit.

If your centre wants to use e-assessment, you must ensure that you apply the national standard to all evidence and that conditions of assessment (as specified in the evidence requirements) are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence.

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 A: The Shaping of Modern Psychology (SCQF level 7)

This information 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 looks at the history and development of different schools of thought that have shaped modern psychology. You explore their key features, alongside the role of research evidence in supporting and challenging existing schools of thought, often providing the catalyst for development.

You should have good communication skills and an interest in psychology. It would also be helpful to have some basic digital skills before you begin.

The unit involves looking back to the starting point of psychology in the 19th century and following the dominant schools of thought throughout psychology's history. You consider how these have contributed to modern psychological applications.

You learn to explain the key features of a range of schools of thought and analyse the research evidence that strengthened them, along with the weaknesses that challenged their explanations of mind and behaviour.

On completing the unit, you can:

1 explain the development of psychology since the 19th century

2 analyse the impact of major schools on the development of modern psychology

You are assessed using an open-book assessment covering both unit outcomes. This means that you are allowed access to materials such as textbooks, notes and your virtual learning environment (VLE). You can give your assessment response in writing or orally. If your assessment response is written, it must be approximately 1,500 words, and if it is oral, it must be between 10 and 12 minutes long.

During the unit, you develop academic skills such as time management, multi-tasking ability, digital skills, essay writing skills and questioning ability based on the formative and summative activities and assessments.

You also develop key literacies such as communication, developed in formative and summative assessment. You learn to convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent way, with references where appropriate. Oral presentations and discussions may also be used to help you improve your communication skills. You develop digital skills and

computer literacy by using digital packages to produce assessments, and internet sources to research information on theorists, psychological concepts and other psychological ideas.

During the unit, you are introduced to Learning for Sustainability ideas, with links made to UN Sustainable Development Goals. These are particularly relevant when you study theories of key psychologists and their work to understand human behaviour in relation to mental ill health.

The unit can support learning in other related units, such as Psychology B: Applied Psychology at SCQF level 7. You may be able to study HND Social Sciences or a degree programme in a related subject if you study the unit as part of the HNC Social Sciences.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills to enhance your employability in the social sciences sector.

Meta-skills include self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

You develop these naturally as you take part in the range of learning and teaching activities and produce assessment responses. Improving meta-skills such as organising your time (self-management) and communicating ideas clearly (social intelligence) is useful for future study and employment, as well as during the unit.

Administrative information

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Superclass: PK

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	♦ In 'Evidence requirements', assessment has been reduced from three to at least two schools of thought. Changes made to 'Approaches to delivery' and 'Approaches to assessment' to reflect this. ♦ In 'Knowledge and skills', 'the 19th century' was added to 'knowledge' in outcome 1 for clarity. ♦ In 'Approaches to assessment', additional information allowing group presentations was added. ♦ Rewording or additional sentences to standardise statements across HNC Social Sciences units in 'Evidence requirements', 'Meta-skills' and 'Information for learners'.	June 2023
3.0	♦ Removed reference to the requirement to use holistic assessment in 'Evidence Requirements' and 'Information for learners'. ♦ In 'Evidence Requirements' changed 'a minimum of 1,500 words' to 'approximately' 1,500 words', for consistency with other named social sciences units. ♦ In 'Approaches to assessment' additional words that a holistic or a portfolio approach can be used. Also, added additional guidance on word length and duration of oral presentation.	April 2024

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