

NQ
NATIONAL
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National Qualifications Review Investigation Report

***Psychology
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Contents

Executive summary	1
1 Terms of reference	3
2 Methodology	4
3 Findings	6
4 Conclusions	7
5 Recommendations	13
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Agreed actions from the Subject Review Report	14
Appendix 2: Course structure models presented in the questionnaire	15
Appendix 3: Summary of responses to questionnaire	18
Appendix 4: Responses from other stakeholders, comparison with other specifications and review of research literature	20
Appendix 5: Existing and proposed Course structures	28
Appendix 6: Summary of proposed internal and external assessment	31
Appendix 7: Uptake figures for the last three years (Units and Courses)	32
Appendix 8: Bibliography	33

Executive summary

This report is the outcome of an investigation into how to implement the agreed actions which were detailed in the Psychology Subject Review Report, published in May 2002.

The main concerns identified in the Review of Psychology were:

- ◆ The current structure has only one mandatory Unit at Intermediate 1 to Higher, and has five optional Units at each of these levels.
- ◆ There is currently an over-emphasis on knowledge and understanding at the expense of skills of evaluation and analysis.
- ◆ The existing mandatory Units at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher are content-heavy and difficult to deliver in 40 hours.
- ◆ The added value of the Courses is not clear.
- ◆ The volume of assessment needs to be reduced.

The consultation process, carried out between January and March 2003, involved:

- ◆ A questionnaire sent to all presenting centres.
- ◆ A range of interviews with individuals, both within centres and in a number of organisations.
- ◆ Feedback from a meeting of the Subject Advisory Group.

The responses to the consultation process indicated substantial support for a revised Course structure at each of the levels along the lines of one of the models proposed in the questionnaire. This model would meet some of the major concerns outlined above, would enable the other concerns to be addressed at the next stage, and would meet the design rules for National Qualifications.

The following specific recommendations are made in this report:

- ◆ Course structures should be developed with three mandatory Units at Intermediate 2 and Higher.
- ◆ At these levels the Units should be based on the following areas of study:
 - The Psychology of Individual Processes
 - Psychology: Research Methods and Research Skills
 - Psychological Processes in the Social Context
- ◆ The external assessment should consist of a question paper at Intermediate 2. The external assessment at Higher should consist of a Research Investigation Report and a question paper.
- ◆ The external assessment at Intermediate 2 should be increased from 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours to give sufficient time to adequately assess the content of the revised course and to bring it into line with the other social sciences.
- ◆ No change should be made to the Intermediate 1 or Advanced Higher Courses for 2004–05. Instead, the Courses should be monitored in the light of the emerging policy on low uptake and the impact of changes at Intermediate 2 and Higher. A business case should be made for the retention and revision of the Intermediate 1 and Advanced Higher Courses — if this business case can be made, then the Intermediate 1 and Advanced Higher may be revised in line with Intermediate 2 and Higher for 2005–06. Alternatively, the Courses may be withdrawn, leaving free-standing Units.

Note: SQA is currently developing policy and procedures for dealing with Courses with very low uptake. The Advanced Higher in Psychology had a maximum of four candidates in its first two years of implementation (see Appendix 7). It is therefore

proposed that no changes should be made to the Advanced Higher for 2004–05. Instead, the Course should be monitored in the light of the emerging policy on low uptake and the impact of changes at Higher. A business case should be made for the retention and revision of the Advanced Higher. If this business case can be made, the Advanced Higher may be revised in line with Higher for 2005–06. Alternatively, the Course may be withdrawn, leaving free-standing Units. There are no progression issues in taking this action as very few candidates progress from Higher to Advanced Higher. It is also proposed that no development work takes place on Intermediate 1 until a business case can be made for its retention and revision.

1 Terms of reference

The Scottish Executive initiated a review of all National Courses in June 2001 with the purpose of considering how best to reduce the complexity, variety and total volume of assessment in each subject. Following the review process, Subject Review Reports were published between February and June 2002. The reports identified a number of actions to be taken forward for each subject. These agreed actions received Ministerial approval.

This report is the result of an investigation into the best ways of addressing issues and implementing agreed actions specified in the Psychology Subject Review Report.

1.1 Implementing the actions from the Review

The recommendations in this report provide a framework for implementing all of the agreed actions from the Psychology Subject Review Report. The full list of agreed actions are listed in Appendix 1.

Some of the agreed actions will be addressed directly, in whole or in part, at this stage of the process. These are to:

- ◆ Revise the balance between knowledge/content on the one hand and the skills of analysis and evaluation on the other. This will result in changes to both internal and external assessment.
- ◆ Establish relevant and coherent mandatory Units for each course, which reflect the title, rationale and purpose of the course. Mandatory Units should make up at least two thirds of each Course.
- ◆ Establish whether all optional Units are required and viable in terms of uptake.
- ◆ Clarify the ‘added value’ of the Courses, ensure that this is clear in the Arrangements document and is addressed in the external assessment of the Courses.
- ◆ Review the external assessment arrangements at Higher, including clarifying the purpose of the Investigation.
- ◆ Investigate the discontinuity in volume of external assessment between Intermediate 2 and Higher.
- ◆ Review the external assessment at Advanced Higher to ensure it is addressing the ‘added value’ of the Course, and not simply repeating internal assessment approaches.

2 Methodology

Overview of consultation methodology

Consultation with stakeholders:

- ◆ questionnaire to presenting centres
- ◆ focus groups of college lecturers at an SFEU staff development event in February 2003
- ◆ interviews with individuals with experience, expertise and/or interest in the pre-degree Psychology curriculum, face-to-face, by e-mail, and by post
- ◆ questionnaire to ex-Higher Psychology students who are now studying Psychology in Higher Education, by e-mail
- ◆ a meeting of the Subject Advisory Group in March 2003

Other research:

- ◆ overview of specifications at comparable levels, in Psychology and other subjects, in Scotland and other countries
- ◆ review of research literature on the pre-degree Psychology curriculum

An initial meeting of a small group composed of members of the examining team, veters and moderators was held in November 2002. This group discussed the NQ Subject Review Report on Psychology and started to formulate some possible questions for consultation.

A second meeting of this group was held in November 2002. A number of possible Course models were discussed. These were used to draw up a draft questionnaire. This was further developed after discussion. The questionnaire was distributed to centres in January 2003. In order to maximise the return rate, centres and individuals who had not responded were prompted by telephone and by e-mail after the deadline. The Association for the Teaching of Psychology (Scotland) assisted in this process by circulating a reminder to its membership.

A meeting of Psychology lecturers from further education had been organised by the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU). The opportunity was taken, in co-operation with SFEU, to discuss the issues arising from the consultation questionnaire and gather initial feedback from discussion groups. Delegates were encouraged to complete and return their questionnaires.

A number of face-to-face or e-mail interviews were conducted with representatives from the British Psychological Society, Association for the Teaching of Psychology, Association for the Teaching of Psychology (Scotland), and four universities. Interviews focused on obtaining their views on what would be appropriate aims, content and assessment of a pre-degree Psychology course.

Psychology Departments in Scottish universities were asked to forward an e-mail questionnaire to undergraduates who had studied Higher Psychology.

A Subject Advisory Group was set up to advise the development team at key stages of the review. The findings from all elements of the consultation were analysed and a summary of the initial feedback was made available at a meeting of the Subject Advisory Group held on 12 March 2003. Results from the questionnaire to centres had favoured one of the models, with some reservations about specific aspects of that model, and on the basis of this and the other findings, revised models were proposed for

discussion. The views of the group were then noted and fed into the consultation process.

A comparison was made between existing specifications for National Courses in Psychology and those for:

- ◆ Psychology courses at comparable levels, in England (AS/A2) and other countries (USA, Sweden, Finland)
- ◆ other SQA National Courses at Higher, in social and natural sciences

A review of the research literature on the pre-degree Psychology curriculum was carried out.

3 Findings

On a number of issues relating to the aims, content, structure and assessment of the pre-degree Psychology curriculum in Scotland, there was substantial agreement between stakeholder groups. For example, teachers' concerns that current assessments do not effectively test knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation, were reflected in ex-Higher students' low ratings for the 'intellectual demands' of the Course. Similarly, the views of higher education heads of department, and of professional organisations, on the need for practical research skills, were in tune with those of teachers and lecturers.

3.1 Course structure

- ◆ The majority of respondents favoured having three mandatory Units.
- ◆ There was almost unanimous support for the proposal to have a specific Unit which dealt with research methods and research skills (Unit 2 in all Models).
- ◆ From the questionnaire to centres, there was majority support for Model 1 to be developed further.
- ◆ There were some reservations and suggestions about the composition of Unit 3 (common to Models 1 and 3). These were mainly to do with the range of topics proposed rather than any great concern about the structure and purpose of the Unit.
- ◆ The preferred Model (Model 1) was therefore revised, so that Units 1 and 3 corresponded more closely to teachers' views on appropriate content. Revised Models, 1a and 1b, were devised and presented to the Advisory Group, where there was majority support for Model 1a (see Appendix 4).

3.2 External assessment

- ◆ There was strong support from almost all stakeholder groups for the continuation of an investigation report contributing to the external assessment at Higher and Advanced Higher, and for this to be externally assessed.
- ◆ There was a strong majority view that the examination placed too much emphasis on the assessment of knowledge and that sampling of knowledge should be used more effectively.
- ◆ There was a strong majority view that the examination questions should be relatively unpredictable, to improve the validity and reliability of assessment.
- ◆ There was a strong majority view that the examination questions should more effectively test knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation skills.

3.3 Key qualitative findings

Former Higher students rated the Higher highly for interest, enjoyment and preparation for higher education, but rated it lower on intellectual demands. The content covering research methods was perceived as tedious.

4 Conclusions

While all the models proposed in the consultation process would have met the design criteria, consultation identified the structure described below (Model 1a in the consultation) as the best way forward. See Appendix 5 for full details of existing and proposed Unit and Course structures at all levels.

4.1 Proposed Course structure

At Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher, the proposed structure is based on seven 'key domains', which derive from a merging of the areas of study previously termed 'Approaches' (in the existing *Approaches and Methods* Unit), the existing five optional Unit areas, plus research methods and skills. The seven key domains are:

- ◆ Cognitive Psychology
- ◆ Social Psychology
- ◆ Physiological Psychology
- ◆ Developmental Psychology
- ◆ the Psychology of Learning
- ◆ the Psychology of Individual Differences
- ◆ Research Methods and Research Skills

The Courses should consist of three mandatory Units:

- ◆ Unit 1, covering four of the seven key domains: Cognitive Psychology, Physiological Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and the Psychology of Learning. The focus is on the psychological processes of individuals. Each domain is delivered via one specified topic, to be studied in depth.
- ◆ Unit 2 covers Research Methods and Research Skills, to include the study and application of research methods and the implementation and reporting of a research task or investigation. The investigation report would be externally marked at Higher and Advanced Higher.
- ◆ Unit 3, covering the remaining two of the seven key domains: Social Psychology and Individual Differences. The focus is on psychological processes in a social context. Each domain is delivered via two topics, chosen from 3 - 5, to be studied in depth.

This outline describes the proposed Higher Model. For Intermediate 2, the structure is similar, but with some merging or splitting of domains, in recognition of the fact that some domains/topics within them are not appropriate at all levels.

Note: SQA is currently developing policy and procedures for dealing with Courses with very low uptake. The Advanced Higher in Psychology had a maximum of four candidates in its first two years of implementation (see Appendix 7). It is therefore proposed that no changes should be made to the Advanced Higher for 2004–05. Instead, the Course should be monitored in the light of the emerging policy on low uptake and the impact of changes at Higher. A business case should be made for the retention and revision of the Advanced Higher. If this business case can be made, the Advanced Higher may be revised in line with Higher for 2005–06. Alternatively, the Course may be withdrawn, leaving free-standing Units. There are no progression issues in taking this action as very few candidates progress from Higher to Advanced Higher. It is also proposed that no development work takes place on Intermediate 1 until a business case can be made for its retention and revision. In its first three years of implementation, the Intermediate 1 Course had a maximum of 20 candidates. This year, there are 42 entries

for the Course. Its uptake will be monitored in the light of policy on low uptake Courses.

Advantages of the proposed Course structure

This approach immediately meets a number of the actions from the review and the related design criteria, and addresses stakeholder concerns arising from the consultation:

- ◆ The Model has a mandatory section of three Units at all levels, and therefore no optional Units.
- ◆ It separates ‘Approaches’ and ‘Methods’. These were originally covered in a single Unit, which was recognised as being grossly overloaded in terms of content. This also enables a reduction in the volume of assessment since the content is now spread across the Units.
- ◆ It merges ‘Approaches’ and ‘Options’ into ‘domains’, providing a logical framework, and genuine breadth and relevance.
- ◆ It addresses the question of revising the balance between knowledge/content on the one hand and the skills of analysis and evaluation on the other, since the structure proposed for Units 1 and 3 will be based on a topics approach. Topics will be studied in depth, in the context of various psychological approaches. This will require both knowledge and understanding and the skills of analysis and evaluation.
- ◆ It allows time for research skills to be developed and applied, given that a 40-hour Unit is now available for this.
- ◆ It allows preliminary work on the Investigation Report (a component of the external assessment) to be developed as part of the *Research* Unit. This reduces pressure on candidates who previously had to carry out all the tasks for this Report in the ‘additional’ 40 hours.
- ◆ Suitable topics for the Investigation in Unit 2 will arise from Unit 1, ie the structure offers a logical sequence. However, Units 1 and 3 may be delivered in reverse order if desired, without losing this logical sequence, since Unit 3 can also provide suitable topics.
- ◆ The structure allows for more interesting delivery of research methods, so students will enjoy the learning process more.
- ◆ At each level there is a limited element of choice within the third Unit, which addresses stakeholders’ desire for choice without reducing reliability of assessment.
- ◆ The common structure, with differentiated content, will facilitate progression between levels; breadth of content at all levels will accommodate a variety of possible progression routes.
- ◆ Specified content in each Course and Unit will require contemporary research and theory to be covered, as well as classic research where appropriate.
- ◆ At both levels, Units 1 and 3 allow reference to important underlying themes of the discipline: relationship between theory and research, ethics, social and cultural diversity.
- ◆ A substantial proportion of proposed content is similar to that in the current specifications, so existing support materials can be used, with some adaptation.
- ◆ The proposed structure has been benchmarked against other pre-degree Psychology specifications, notably: AQA and OCR GCSE AS and A2 levels, and the American High School Psychology curriculum; as well as existing Psychology NQs. The proposals will also give Psychology a similar volume of assessment to other NQ subjects.
- ◆ The proposed structure is informed by recent research into the pre-degree Psychology curriculum, in the UK, USA and Europe.

4.2 Course design

Aims and rationale of the Courses: general

Each Arrangements document will provide a level-specific rationale.

The proposed Psychology Courses and Units aim to stimulate students' initial interest, providing a broad overview of the discipline, as well as the opportunity to study some topics in some depth. Candidates will develop an understanding of psychological theories, concepts, research studies, research methods, terminology, and applications. The Courses promote the discipline as a science, emphasising empirical methodology, evidence-based theory and applications, continual updating of knowledge, and the importance of an ethical approach.

As well as developing knowledge and understanding of a range of 'key domains' (and topics and approaches within those) in contemporary Psychology, students have the opportunity to develop practical research skills, an essential feature of the discipline.

It is intended that students will engage with the complex nature of psychological processes; they should be encouraged to reflect on the notion that, far from offering simple answers, psychologists may interpret any given aspect of human behaviour in a variety of ways. Thus, students will be encouraged to develop critical thinking skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation. Although the structure of Courses of necessity divides content rather artificially into 'compartments', certain common themes pervade topic areas, and students will be encouraged to identify these, along with relationships between specific topic areas.

Candidates will develop an appreciation of the links and distinctions between Psychology and other sciences, social and natural, and an understanding of the discipline within its social, cultural, ethical and philosophical contexts, both historical and contemporary.

The study of Psychology has unique potential to promote the development of cognitive, emotional and social skills which will enhance study activity, self-awareness, and understanding of issues of personal relevance. These are transferable skills that are valuable in both personal and professional contexts.

Purpose of the Courses

The purpose of the Courses varies depending on level, and according to needs of the target student groups. For students at all levels, the Courses can make a significant contribution to a broad general education and can provide opportunities for self-development. At Higher, the Course provides suitable preparation for entry to higher education courses in Psychology or other academic or vocational subjects, for both 16+ and mature students. The Course offers preparation for employment (for 16+ students) or career advancement (for mature students).

Focus of the Courses

At all levels, the Courses are based on knowledge/understanding and the skills of analysis and evaluation, but with a strong element of practical psychological research skills.

Uptake of the Courses and Units

Uptake of Courses and Units has increased substantially year-on-year for Intermediate 2 and Higher, and for this reason continued future demand is anticipated. At Intermediate 1, uptake for the Course has been low, but it may well increase, as a number of schools plan to offer the Course to S4 students. The existing Unit 1 is popular as a freestanding Unit in colleges, and it is anticipated that there will be continuing, increasing demand for the proposed Units. Uptake of Advanced Higher is very low, although there is an indication that uptake in colleges will increase this session. The uptake of Intermediate

1 and Advanced Higher will be monitored. Decisions on the future of these two Courses will be taken when policy on low uptake Courses has been agreed.

Course progression

The common structure facilitates progression between levels. The proposal is that Units should have similar titles across the levels. All seven 'key domains' are addressed, in a similar pattern across the levels, so that if a candidate transfers from one level to another, there will be some familiarity with topic areas. Whilst Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher contain four topics in both Unit 1 and Unit 3, the proposal is that Advanced Higher contains only three in each Unit, to reflect the more in-depth understanding and analysis required at this level. The nature of practical research tasks proposed for coursework is similar across levels, but with the required skills progressing from basic skills at Intermediate 1 to complex skills at Advanced Higher. The impact on progression will be considered when deciding on the future of the Intermediate 1 and Advanced Higher Courses.

4.3 Assessment

Proposals for external assessment

Following the Design Criteria and consultation findings, proposed models for external assessment will:

- ◆ Reduce the volume of the external assessment at Higher by reducing the length and duration of the question paper.
- ◆ Rationalise progression between levels, in terms of duration of assessments at Intermediate 2 and Higher.

Proposals for internal assessment

Proposed models for internal assessment will reduce the volume of internal assessment.

See Appendix 6 for full details of proposed models of internal and external assessment at all levels.

Assessment objectives

The purpose of the Courses is to develop knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation, and skills in practical application of research methods. These, therefore, represent the key objectives for the assessment of the Courses, as indicated in the rationale for the Courses above. These objectives will be assessed in both the internal assessment of the Units and in the external assessment of the Course, but the balance will be slightly different in these two forms of assessment.

- ◆ In the internal assessment, knowledge and understanding will be a major element of the tasks required of candidates, but the skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation will also be assessed to a lesser extent and applied to familiar contexts which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process. In the Course assessment, the balance of assessment will be towards a more equal spread across the assessment objectives for the Course and will include the opportunity to apply analysis, interpretation and evaluation skills in less familiar contexts.
- ◆ In internal and external assessments, a mixture of assessment items will allow achievement of the different assessment objectives: short-answer items will primarily allow demonstration of knowledge and understanding, whilst more extended answers, and stimulus items, will allow demonstration of both knowledge/understanding and skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation. The practical research tasks proposed for Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2, and the Research Investigation proposed for Higher and Advanced Higher, will allow

demonstration of practical research skills. The Higher and Advanced Higher Research Investigation also allows demonstration of knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation.

- ◆ Consultation findings suggested that assessments should more effectively test the key objectives of assessment, by sampling knowledge rather than testing ‘everything’. This will be made possible partly by Unit and Course structure and content, but will also necessitate careful wording of Course Content, and Unit Outcomes, Performance Criteria and Evidence Requirements.
- ◆ Effective assessment will also be promoted by a move away from the current generic (and therefore predictable) NABs and exam questions. Questions which sample knowledge will be less predictable - this will ensure that candidates are required to demonstrate the intellectual skills of knowledge, understanding, analysis and evaluation, rather than the skill of reproducing a memorised answer.
- ◆ To ensure effective assessment of attainment, it is intended that the key assessment objectives will be more clearly reflected in Outcomes, Performance Criteria and Grade Descriptions. Test item command words (eg ‘describe’, ‘explain’, ‘discuss’, ‘evaluate’) will be in line with these Outcomes, and will clearly indicate the nature of the performance required. The meanings of these command words will be made explicit.

Assessment rationale

The proposed structure provides an even gradient of progression in the external assessment, from Intermediate 1 to Advanced Higher. Previously there had been a major discontinuity between Intermediate 2 and Higher. The new structure reduces the volume of assessment overall, and rationalises the balance between skills of knowledge and understanding, and analysis and evaluation. At Higher, exam duration will be reduced by 30 minutes in recognition of the second component of external assessment, the Research Investigation Report.

The rationale for having two components in the external assessment at Higher and Advanced Higher, ie retaining an externally-assessed Research Investigation Report, is that practical research investigation skills, including designing, planning, implementing and reporting, are essential to, and reflect the scientific nature of, the discipline. Research skills are a requirement for any career in Psychology, and they are expected of entrants to higher education Psychology programmes. Practical research skills are, therefore, as important as knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation, and so they merit external assessment at Higher and Advanced Higher. Practical research skills cannot be assessed by means of a written exam, and this means that external assessment of a Research Investigation Report is necessary at these levels. This also has the advantage of ‘adding value’ to the external assessment, since the ‘Discussion’ section of the report, in particular, will require independent critical thinking to demonstrate analysis, interpretation and evaluation. External assessment of practical research skills is the norm in all other UK pre-degree specifications, from GCSE to A2.

At Advanced Higher, it is proposed that research skills should go beyond those required at Higher by demanding an element of research design, in addition to planning, implementing and reporting. At Intermediate 2, practical research tasks are included in Unit 2. These constitute a basic introduction to research skills, so internal assessment is therefore appropriate.

‘Added value’ of the Course

Unit and Course assessments are intended to complement each other. Unit assessment provides evidence of a specific level of achievement in separate sections of the Course. The Course assessment confirms this achievement, by sampling, but also provides evidence of a range of skills which are in addition to those required for Unit success:

- ◆ The ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in response to questions from across all the Units of the Course, on a single occasion.
- ◆ The ability to respond to a single task which requires the candidate to apply knowledge and understanding from more than one Unit.
- ◆ The ability to demonstrate the skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation, in familiar and less familiar contexts, from across all the Units of the Course, on a single occasion.
- ◆ The application of more complex skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation than those demanded in the Unit assessment.

Avoiding unnecessary duplication in assessment

The combination of internal and external assessment designed for this Course ensures that there is no unnecessary duplication of assessment, by ensuring that the external assessment only samples from across the Outcomes and Performance Criteria of the course, and that there is a reasonable balance between ‘sampling’ type questions and those which address the ‘added value’ areas described above.

Estimates and appeals

The section on the ‘Added value of the Course’ describes, in general terms, the nature of the evidence which is required for arriving at estimates and for submission in support of appeals. The intention is to design NABs with maximum ‘headroom’ so as to enable candidates to provide as much of the evidence as is feasible for estimates and appeals. The nature of some test questions will be open-ended to allow candidates to demonstrate achievement beyond that required for Unit success.

5 Recommendations

It is therefore proposed that:

- 5.1 Course structures should be developed which have three mandatory Units at Intermediate 2 and Higher.
- 5.2 At these levels the Units should be based on the following areas of study:
 - ◆ The Psychology of Individual Processes
 - ◆ Psychology: Research Methods and Research Skills
 - ◆ Psychological Processes in the Social Context
- 5.3 The external assessment should consist of a question paper at Intermediate 2. The external assessment at Higher should consist of an investigation report and a question paper.
- 5.4 The external assessment at Intermediate 2 should be increased from 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours to give sufficient time to adequately assess the content of the revised course, and to bring it into line with the other social sciences.
- 5.5 No change should be made to the Intermediate 1 or Advanced Higher Courses for 2004–05. Instead, the Courses should be monitored in the light of the emerging policy on low uptake and the impact of changes at Intermediate 2 and Higher. A business case should be made for the retention and revision of the Intermediate 1 and Advanced Higher Courses — if this business case can be made, then the Intermediate 1 and Advanced Higher may be revised in line with Intermediate 2 and Higher for 2005–06. Alternatively, the Courses may be withdrawn, leaving free-standing Units.

Appendix 1: Agreed actions from the Subject Review Report

Revision of Psychology Courses

Revise the content, structure and assessment of Psychology courses as soon as possible in order to:

- ◆ revise the balance between knowledge/content on the one hand and the skills of analysis and evaluation on the other. This will result in changes to both internal and external assessment
- ◆ establish relevant and coherent mandatory Units for each Course, which reflect the title, rationale and purpose of the Course. Mandatory Units should make up at least two thirds of each Course
- ◆ establish whether all optional Units are required and viable in terms of uptake
- ◆ revise the specifications of the Units *Approaches and Methods in Psychology* at Higher, and *Psychology: An Introduction* at Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2, to ensure that they can be delivered in the time allocated
- ◆ clarify the ‘added value’ of the Courses, ensure that this is clear in the Arrangements document and is addressed in the external assessment of the Courses
- ◆ revise internal assessment to reduce the volume to meet the agreed parameters of 1 hour per 40-hour Unit, including taking a more holistic approach in a number of Units
- ◆ review the external assessment arrangements at Higher, including clarifying the purpose of the Investigation
- ◆ investigate the discontinuity in volume of external assessment between Intermediate 2 and Higher
- ◆ review the external assessment at Advanced Higher to ensure it is addressing the ‘added value’ of the Course, and not simply repeating internal assessment approaches

Appendix 2: Course structure models presented in the questionnaire

Model 1

The three mandatory Units would be:

- ◆ a topics-based Unit ‘Explaining Behaviour’
- ◆ a research/investigation Unit leading to a research investigation report which would be externally marked
- ◆ a Unit on ‘The Psychology of Wellbeing’

The main approaches would be covered in the first and third Units, while research methods would be covered in the second Unit.

The first Unit would be based on the idea of explaining behaviour, and would cover a number of topics, one of which could provide the basis for the research activity in Unit 2. There could be some choice of topic within this Unit. A possible structure could be:

- ◆ mandatory: focused in-depth studies of topics drawn from areas such as Social Influence, Psychodynamic Theory of Personality, Developmental
- ◆ optional topics: one focused in-depth study drawn from areas such as Intelligence, Memory, Pro-social, Anti-social

The ‘Research’ Unit would address the methods used in Psychology and would have a strong practical aspect. This would lead to a research investigation report which would be a contributory element of the Course assessment.

The third Unit would be based on the concept of ‘The Psychology of Wellbeing’ and could also include some choice of contemporary themes within it. Possible themes could be:

Ethics, Good Mental Health, Addiction, Atypical Behaviour, Therapies.

Possible advantages

- ◆ reflects approaches taken in higher education and addresses issues which the British Psychology Society (BPS) consider are appropriate for study
- ◆ provides a more topical approach than the current Course
- ◆ would allow a reduction in assessment
- ◆ would allow a more manageable question paper
- ◆ meets the requirements for the mandatory section

Possible disadvantages

This is the model which would require most development work.

Model 2

The three Units would be:

- ◆ ‘Approaches in Psychology’
- ◆ a methods/research Unit leading to a research investigation report which would be externally marked
- ◆ a choice from some of the existing optional Units

The five approaches would be covered in the first Unit, as at present.

The second Unit ‘Research’ would address the methods used in Psychology, and would have a strong practical aspect. This would lead to a research investigation report which would be a contributory element of the Course assessment.

The third Unit would be a choice from among the current optional Units, but would have to be restricted compared to the current range.

Possible advantages

- ◆ would require least change from current structure
- ◆ would allow a reduction in assessment
- ◆ meets the requirements for the mandatory section

Possible disadvantages

- ◆ not likely to reflect the approaches taken in higher education and is less likely to address issues which the BPS consider are appropriate for study
- ◆ would not necessarily redress the balance between knowledge/understanding and the skills of analysis, evaluation and interpretation
- ◆ historical rather than contemporary

Model 3

This is an amalgam of the first two models. The three mandatory Units would be:

- ◆ ‘Approaches in Psychology’
- ◆ a research/investigation Unit leading to a research investigation report which would be externally marked
- ◆ a Unit on ‘The Psychology of Wellbeing’

The five approaches would be covered in the first Unit, as at present.

The ‘Research’ Unit would address the methods used in Psychology and would have a strong practical aspect. This would lead to a research investigation report which would be a contributory element of the Course assessment.

The third Unit would be based on the concept of ‘The Psychology of Wellbeing’ and could also include some choice of contemporary themes, eg Ethics, Good Mental Health, Addiction, Atypical Behaviour, Therapies.

Possible advantages

- ◆ limited amount of change
- ◆ meets the requirements for the mandatory section

- ◆ would allow a reduction in assessment
- ◆ introduces some contemporary themes

Possible disadvantages

- ◆ less likely to reflect the approaches taken in higher education and is less likely to address some of the issues which the BPS consider are appropriate for study
- ◆ would not necessarily redress the balance between knowledge/understanding and the skills of analysis, evaluation and interpretation
- ◆ is a mixture of old approach and new approach

Appendix 3: Summary of responses to questionnaire

	Number
Total centres with psychology entries:	86 (current entries Psychology Higher, Feb 2003)
Total responses from centres:	43
Number of centres responding:	34 (40% of centres with entries as at Feb. 2003)

Note: individuals from three centres responded only in qualitative terms, therefore, these are absent from the figures below.

10 responses were from schools and 33 were from FE colleges.

(In addition, 22 previous candidates and 11 other stakeholders were consulted – see Appendix 4.)

Model preference

The questionnaire presented three possible Course models (see Appendix 2) and asked respondents to indicate which of these they preferred.

50% of respondents preferred Model 1.
36% of respondents preferred Model 2
14% of respondents preferred Model 3.

Respondents were also asked to rate each model for suitability on a scale of 1 (unsuitable for further development) to 5 (highly suitable for further development). Ratings reflected the preferences above, and Model 1 came out as most suitable, followed by Model 2, then Model 3.

Summary of comments made in response to questionnaire, including SFEU focus groups' responses

Questionnaire to centres

Teachers and lecturers want a Psychology Higher that:

- ◆ Covers the broad range of areas of the discipline, but also focuses on topics in depth, and in the context of various approaches.
- ◆ Includes research methods and research skills.
- ◆ Is contemporary, up-to-date; not historical, sterile.
- ◆ Is scientific.
- ◆ Is relevant to student experience — interesting, motivating, kindles enthusiasm.
- ◆ Provides some choice of topics/Units.
- ◆ Promotes and assesses transferable skills.
- ◆ Is pervaded by certain themes: the relationship between theory and research, and the importance of evidence; ethics; social and cultural diversity.
- ◆ Is not determined by higher education approaches or British Psychological Society constraints.
- ◆ Is cautious in applying sensitive issues to individual personal and social life.
- ◆ Specifies clearly in Arrangements exactly what is to be taught, and exactly how learning is to be assessed.

Concerns:

- ◆ NQ Psychology content should not be ‘watered down’, nor resemble ‘pop psychology’.
- ◆ It should be relevant to students’ experience, but not at the cost of neglecting the ‘hard stuff’.
- ◆ If certain options are dropped, risk of narrowing of content.
- ◆ Resourcing, especially if revised Courses are very different.

Assessments (internal and external) must:

- ◆ Be reduced in volume (internal/external), and complexity (exam).
- ◆ Be less predictable, by means of sampling of knowledge.
- ◆ Give students opportunity to show real conceptual understanding, not memory skills.
- ◆ Be designed to promote good quality learning and thinking.
- ◆ Comprise a variety of modes/items: short answers, essays, stimulus material, multiple choice questions, research report, presentation.
- ◆ Promote and assess writing skills, including quality of expression, use of psychological terminology etc.

Findings from focus groups at SFEU event

Fourteen college lecturers attended a Staff Development event at the Scottish Further Education Unit. Feedback was gathered from discussion groups:

- ◆ Virtual unanimity that a Unit on research methods is a good idea (Unit 2 in all models).
- ◆ Approval of reduction of volume of assessment and content.
- ◆ Courses should be contemporary, topical, up-to-date, interesting.
- ◆ Need for coherence, logical sequence, and integration.
- ◆ Some support for the topics-based approach.
- ◆ Doubts over the ‘wellbeing’ Unit.
- ◆ Concern re overlap with Social Care.
- ◆ Concern over loss of choice.
- ◆ Concern over amount of change proposed.
- ◆ Model 2 was most favoured overall, because:
 - it requires least change
 - negative response to Models 1 and 3 ‘wellbeing’ Unit.

Appendix 4: Responses from other stakeholders, comparison with other specifications and review of research literature

1 Subject Advisory Group

A Subject Advisory Group was set up to advise the development team at key stages of the review. The findings from all elements of the consultation were analysed and a summary of the initial feedback was made available at a meeting of the Subject Advisory Group held on 12 March 2003. Results from the questionnaire to centres had favoured one of the models, with some reservations about specific aspects of that model, and on the basis of this and the other findings, revised models were proposed for discussion.

Advisory Group members

Marie Morrison	Falkirk College
Jason Bryce	James Watt College
Carolyn Laird	SFEU Representative
Phyllis Copeland	Cardonald College
Dorothy Graham	Borders College
Zainab Abadi	Aberdeen College
June Smith	Glenrothes College
Jonathan Firth	Hutchesons GS
Marj Adams	Forres Academy
Don Macintyre	Ardrossan Academy

Preferred revised model presented to the Subject Advisory Group

Model 1a: Higher

Unit 1: *The Psychology of the Individual* — four sections, all content mandatory

Cognitive	Biological	Developmental	Learning (mainly Behaviourist)
<u>Topic: Memory</u>	<u>Topic: Stress</u>	<u>Topic: Early socialisation</u>	<u>Topic: Learning</u>

Unit 2: *Methods of Investigation*

<u>Research methods</u>	<u>Research Investigation</u>
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Unit 3: *Individual in the Social Context* — two sections, both mandatory, but choice of topics within each section (two from four, one mandatory and one optional in each section):

Social Psychology	Individual Differences
Mandatory: Prejudice	Mandatory: Atypical behaviour – definitions/origins
Anti-social behaviour	Atypical behaviour – therapies
Obedience	Intelligence
Social relationships	Personality

Summary of Subject Advisory Group discussion on revised models

- ◆ Topics approach was welcomed; agreement that approaches would be better understood as context for specific topics. Outline of each approach could be provided as background/introduction to each topic. Current support notes might be used. In-depth learning and assessment would be possible.
- ◆ Avoids repetition of same topics at various levels. Progression: Int 2 – H – HN would be more logical than at present, avoiding repetition.
- ◆ There was a general preference for Model 1a, because it provides greater breadth (Model 1b requires choice between Social and Individual Differences for Unit 3); shorter, simpler exam. Members were happy with three mandatory Units. It was felt that Model 1a offered adequate choice within Unit 3.
- ◆ There was disagreement over the number of topics per Unit, assuming each topic has several aspects. Proposed models feature four topics in Units 1 and 3, but it was suggested that three topics would be more realistic, given the time available. There was discussion as to how the six areas ('domains') could be juggled to allow this, whilst still avoiding complexity in structure and assessment.
- ◆ Each Unit could be free-standing.
- ◆ Unit 3 could be taught first, if preferred, and could still provide topics as basis for Research Investigation in Unit 2.
- ◆ Unit 2 was welcomed, and suggestions were made for avoiding 'tedious' delivery of research methods: problem-solving tasks using research questions, or outlines of studies, for which alternative methods, and their advantages and disadvantages, could be considered. Current support notes on major studies might be used. This approach would be the basis of assessment items too. The use of research examples already studied in Unit 1 (or Unit 3) would be logical and would facilitate integration of learning, linking the understanding of research methodology to knowledge of concepts and theories.
- ◆ Choice of Research Investigation topic: a list of suggested topics should be provided. Higher Research Investigation topic would need to be different from suggested Intermediate 2 tasks.
- ◆ External assessment: extended essay was proposed for Unit 3. Marking instructions for this would include integration with content of other Units, and this would need to be made clear in Arrangements (for example, an essay on atypical behaviour might make reference to stress, early socialisation). However, the potential for demonstrating integration of knowledge varies between topics/approaches.
- ◆ There was extended discussion of suitable specific topics at the various levels.

Intermediate 2:

- ◆ The proposed research tasks for Unit 2 – preferable for internal rather than external assessment. Concerns over attendance for assessment; however, the tasks would take several lessons to complete. Two tasks suggested rather than three, one experimental, one non-experimental. Research reports would consist of a structured template form for completion with basic details of research procedure. These tasks would facilitate progression to/continuity with Higher.
- ◆ Unit 3: drop the Intelligence topic, make the Personality topic mandatory, plus another two topics (Social). (Drop Personality topic from Higher).
- ◆ External assessment: disagreement whether 'mini-essays' (exam) were appropriate at this level.

Intermediate 1:

- ◆ Despite low uptake, essential for students struggling with Intermediate 2; adult returners (social inclusion aspect).

Advanced Higher:

- ◆ General agreement on structure.
- ◆ Unit 3: 'topical issue' should be an option rather than the mandatory topic. Instead, make Ethics the mandatory topic. Or, state that each topic must be discussed 'with reference to a topical issue.'

2 Interviews: list of contributors, interview schedule, summary of responses

Individuals interviewed

SQA Principal Assessor for Higher and AH

SQA Principal Assessor for Int 1 and Int 2

SQA Senior Moderator

Chair, British Psychological Society (BPS) Psychology Education Board

Chair, Association for the Teaching of Psychology (ATP)

Convenor, Association for the Teaching of Psychology Scotland (ATPS)

Former Head of Department, Strathclyde University

Head of Department, Glasgow Caledonian University

Head of Department, Queen Margaret University College

Psychology Lecturer, Queen Margaret University College

Former Chief Examiner at the Associated Examinations Board

Summary of interview responses

Questions varied slightly depending on background of interviewee: some items were not used with contributors outwith the Scottish system.

In your view, what should be the aims of a pre-university academic Psychology curriculum for students in Scotland, at Higher level?

- ◆ Psychology as a science
- ◆ provide a broad overview, with a selection of topics
- ◆ stimulate initial interest in the subject
- ◆ applications
- ◆ awareness of self, awareness of own consciousness; accurate perception of others
- ◆ promote practical thinking skills; multi-dimensional thinking, to address complexity and social/cultural contexts of behaviour; introduce students to uncertainty and ambiguity

Should such a curriculum prepare students for degree-level study? If so, how?

- ◆ yes, but pre-degree Course has integrity and purpose in its own right
- ◆ general, not specific; in terms of preparedness rather than content, though skills learned should be consistent with HE norms (eg report-writing)
- ◆ should help student make transition to HE: more independent learning, and critical thinking
- ◆ may de-motivate in first year

Should such a curriculum prepare students for other study and career routes, including non-Psychology degree courses, training or employment? If so, how?

- ◆ yes, it should, and does, via generic/transferable skills

Should such a curriculum prepare students for 'life', by emphasising topics, issues and practical applications that are directly relevant to everyday personal and

social experience (eg stress, parenting styles, gender issues, prejudice and discrimination, aggression and violence, effects of the media, relationships etc)?

- ◆ topics of relevance to students stimulate engagement and motivation, but this should not be at the cost of the scientific element
- ◆ encourages student discussion, and confidence
- ◆ should address interests of various types of students, not just teenagers
- ◆ risk of misrepresenting the discipline, slipping into ‘pop’ psychology
- ◆ can prepare people for employment, relationships and parenthood, coping strategies in difficult times, voting, leisure interests etc

In your view, what should be included in the content of a pre-university academic Psychology curriculum for students in Scotland? Assuming that most of the generally-agreed key areas of the discipline will be addressed in some form (ie cognitive, physiological, developmental, social, individual differences, research methods), which specific topics or themes do you feel should be included?

- ◆ broad, but focus on topics in depth, and in context; each topic should draw on a range of approaches
- ◆ must be contemporary, use up-to-date texts and studies
- ◆ research methods should be both taught directly and integrated throughout content
- ◆ research investigation essential
- ◆ students should be introduced to the importance of working within ethical guidelines
- ◆ content should not be fractionated, but integrated as far as possible
- ◆ the ‘Scottish dimension’: there was disagreement on whether the role of Scottish psychologists and institutions should be highlighted in the Course content
- ◆ impossible to define ‘essential nature’ of Psychology – if we could, it would be boring!

Focusing on Psychology Higher, what forms of assessment are most suitable, for:

- a internal Unit assessments**
- b exam**
- c coursework**

Eg essays, short questions/answers, stimulus material/problem-solving items, multiple choice items, investigation report(s), etc?

How can assessments be designed so as to enhance quality of learning?

What kind of balance should exist at this level, between knowledge and understanding, skills of analysis and evaluation, and practical research skills?

- ◆ variety of modes/items
- ◆ knowledge/learning must be sampled, test items should be unpredictable
- ◆ test items must be capable of assessing what the arrangements claim they will assess
- ◆ important to assess analysis and evaluation, and knowledge
- ◆ practical research activity is invaluable
- ◆ coursework research should be assessed externally, for standardisation and to avoid bias
- ◆ must reward achievement of higher-order intellectual skills
- ◆ graduated response items
- ◆ some disagreement on appropriate balance of skills

Do you have views on the Psychology curriculum at levels lower than Higher, ie Int 1 and Int 2, aimed mainly at 14 - 16-year-olds? Advanced Higher level, ie for 17 - 18-year-olds?

- ◆ Advanced Higher: more independent learning, more higher-order thinking skills, topical issues for debate, more involvement in research design, inferential statistics

What might be your major concerns, relating to the development of the pre-degree Psychology curriculum?

- ◆ need to recognise diversity in student population
- ◆ articulation presents difficulties for designers of higher education first year programmes
- ◆ possibility of direct entry into second year with Advanced Higher
- ◆ most commonly-expressed concern was over teachers' qualifications, ie teachers should possess degree-level qualification in Psychology

3 Responses to e-mail questionnaire to ex-Higher candidates

22 previous candidates returned the questionnaire:

55% had studied Higher Psychology in an FE college

36% had studied Higher Psychology in school

9% had studied Higher Psychology by open learning

Candidates were asked to rate Higher Psychology, on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), for its interest, enjoyment, intellectual demands, relevance for life, and relevance as preparation for higher education. Their answers showed satisfaction with all of these aspects of the Course, although they were least satisfied with the intellectual demand and most satisfied with how interesting the Course was.

Summary of comments from candidates

- ◆ 'Most liked' aspects were Social Psychology, Individual Differences, and Research Investigation.
- ◆ 'Most disliked' were research methods (tedious, boring) and Biological Psychology; complaints re getting Research Investigation at last minute, and lack of guidance.
- ◆ Wide range of suggestions for improvement.
- ◆ Commonest suggestions were for less content, less assessment, less complex exam.
- ◆ Studying Higher Psychology had helped several in their decision to progress to a Psychology degree (or not).

4

Overview of comparable specifications

Extracts from selected course documents

AQA A–AS level

Units	1 2 3		
Content	<u>Section A:</u> Cognitive – Memory <u>Section B:</u> Development – Attachments	<u>Section A:</u> Physiological – Stress <u>Section B:</u> Individual differences – Abnormality	<u>Section A:</u> Social – social influences <u>Section B:</u> Research Methods
Assessment	1 hr exam 33.33% of marks	1 hr exam 33.33% of marks	1 hr exam 33.33% of marks

AQA A–A2 level

Units	4 5 6		
Content	<u>Section A: Social</u> <u>Section B: Physiological</u> <u>Section C: Cognitive</u> <u>Section D: Developmental</u> <u>Section E: Comparative</u>	<u>Section A: Individual differences</u> <u>Section B: Perspectives</u> <u>Section C: Approaches</u>	Coursework investigation report
Assessment	1hr 30 min exam 15% ('30%')	2 hr exam 20% ('40%') Synoptic assessment	Coursework 2,000 words 15% ('30%')

Aims & assessment objectives: AQA A–AS and A level

Aims
<p>This specification in Psychology encourages candidates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a study Psychology theories, research, terminology, concepts, studies and methods b develop skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation c develop an understanding of different areas of Psychology, including the core areas of Cognitive, Social, Developmental, Physiological Psychology and Individual Differences and Research Methods d design and report psychological investigations, and analyse and interpret data e develop an understanding of ethical issues in Psychology, including the ethical implications of psychological research <p>In addition the A level specification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a includes the study of psychological principles, perspectives and applications b enables candidates to explore and understand the relationship between psychological knowledge, theories and methodology and their relationship to social, cultural, scientific and contemporary issues c enables the development of critical and evaluative skills in relation to theory, empirical studies and methods of research in Psychology d enables candidates to have an understanding and critical appreciation of the breadth of theoretical and methodological approaches in Psychology
Assessment objectives [weighted differently at AS/ A2]
AO1 (AS)/(A2) Knowledge and understanding AO2 (AS)/(A2) Analyse and evaluate AO3 (AS & A2) Design, conduct and report psychological investigation(s) Quality of written communication

Aims & assessment objectives: OCR-AS and A level

Aims and assessment objectives are very similar to AQA specifications, but there are additional features:	
Other features	<p>Spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues: ... encourage students to: consider the nature of humanity consider human behaviour and experience in a reflective way that enhances understanding of their own behaviour and experience be aware of diversity, and need for tolerance and sensitivity consider whether outcome of studies can justify the methods used, in ethical terms consider how Psychology can enhance human welfare be aware of cultural issues, and ethnocentrism of western Psychology</p> <p>Environmental education</p> <p>Health and safety issues ... encourage students to consider implications of lifestyle choices, eg diet, smoking, drugs</p> <p>European dimension</p>

An international perspective: USA

<p>The American Psychological Association, in its document 'The Teaching of High School Psychology' (2003), recommends that the high school Psychology curriculum comprises five 'domains'. This is not a syllabus, but a guide for schools and education authorities.</p> <p>Content: Methods Biopsychological domain Developmental domain Cognitive domain Sociocultural domain (includes social psychology and individual differences)</p> <p>Course objectives: Overall content goal Scientific reasoning People skills Values of Psychology</p> <p>Assessment: 'Should include numerous, valid and varied measures of student learning. These will address not just content of Psychology courses but relevant skills, including skilled use of technology.'</p>
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Comparison with other SQA NQ social science and natural science qualifications and HN social science qualifications

NQ Highers - Summary of external assessments in other subjects:

History		
Exam: Paper I	1 hour 20 minutes	2 essay questions (50 marks)
Paper II	1 hour 30 minutes	open response items (30 marks)
Coursework: extended essay (30 marks)		

Sociology	
Exam: one paper 3 hrs	set of short-answer questions (4 - 8 marks each), 45 marks three essays (90 marks)

Biology		
Exam: one paper	2 hours 30 minutes	30 multiple choice questions (30 marks) structured qs and data handling qs (80 marks) one structured and one open extended response question (20 marks)

SQA HNC/HND:

Social Science (pilot)

HNC: 15 credits

HND: 30 credits

assessment components and weighting emphasises coursework, rather than examination content and standards of Psychology Units will be compared with proposed content and standards of revised NQs in Psychology

5 Summary review of research literature on pre-degree Psychology curriculum

A selection of research literature was read and reviewed. Some of the most useful sources were those which allowed comparison with pre-degree Psychology courses in the rest of the UK, USA, Finland, and Sweden.

Much of the research literature confirmed the findings from consultation with Scottish practitioners, emphasising the importance of:

- ◆ transferable skills: critical thinking, scientific research skills, problem-solving, memory strategies, essay and report-writing
- ◆ integrating cognitive skills into course content
- ◆ skills/knowledge applicable to life experiences: self-insight, interpersonal communication, and relationships

A bibliography, listing some of the key sources consulted, can be found in Appendix 8.

Appendix 5: Existing and proposed Course structures

1a Existing Advanced Higher structure

Two mandatory Units:
*Perspectives in Psychology*¹
*Psychology: Research*²

Optional Units (choose one from five):
*Cognitive Psychology*³
*Social Psychology*³
*Biological Psychology*³
*Developmental Psychology*³
*The Psychology of Individual Differences*³

¹ Content covers two theoretical perspectives (chosen from five), two key debates and three types of qualitative research methods.
² Content covers study of the research process (four key principles) and development of research skills by means of implementation of a research investigation which is externally assessed.
³ For each option, content covers two ‘concepts’ (chosen from three-six), and one ‘issue’ (chosen from five-six).

1b Proposed Advanced Higher

(To be implemented if a business case can be made – for 2005-6 at the earliest.)

Three mandatory Units:
Individual Processes
Methods of Investigation
Perspectives in Psychology

Individual Processes - three topics, all content mandatory

Cognitive Language	Physiological Sleep & dreams	Developmental Lifespan development
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Methods of investigation - two sections, all content mandatory

<u>Research methods:</u> <i>The range of research methods used in Psychology</i>	<u>Research Investigation:</u> <i>Contribute to design, implement and report on a psychological investigation</i>
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Perspectives in Psychology three topics: one mandatory topic (Ethical issues) and two other topics, one from each of the other two sections. All topics should make reference to alternative theoretical perspectives and contemporary issue(s)

Ethics <u>Mandatory topic:</u> Ethical issues in research and therapy	Issues & Debates 1 Nature, nurture and interactionism 2 Reductionism/holism 3 Psychology as a science 4 Freedom/determinism	Sociocultural issues 1 Social identity 2 Cultural diversity and cultural bias in Psychology 3 Humanistic and positive Psychology
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2a Existing Higher structure

One mandatory Unit:

*Approaches and methods in Psychology*¹

Optional Units (choose two from five):

*Cognitive Psychology*²

*Social Psychology*²

*Biological Psychology*²

*Developmental Psychology*²

*The Psychology of Individual Differences*²

¹ Content covers five theoretical approaches, and six types of research method.

² For each option, content covers two ‘concepts’ (chosen from three-six); each concept includes several theoretical areas, applications and two ‘major studies’ (ie research studies).

2b Proposed Higher

Three mandatory Units:

The Psychology of the Individual

Methods of Investigation

The Individual in the Social Context

The Psychology of the Individual - four sections, all content mandatory

Cognitive Memory	Physiological Stress	Developmental Early socialisation	Learning Learning
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Methods of Investigation

<u>Research methods:</u> <i>The range of research methods used in Psychology</i>	<u>Research Investigation:</u> <i>Contribute to design, implement and report on a psychological investigation</i>
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The Individual in the Social Context - two sections, both mandatory, but choice of topics within each section (two from four, one mandatory and one option in each section):

Social Psychology <u>1 Mandatory topic:</u> Prejudice 2 Anti-social behaviour 3 Conformity and obedience 4 Social relationships	Individual Differences <u>1 Mandatory topic:</u> Atypical behaviour – definitions/origins 2 Atypical behaviour – therapies 3 Intelligence
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3a Existing Intermediate 1 and 2 structure

[structure is identical at both levels]

One mandatory Unit:

*Psychology: an Introduction*¹

Optional Units (choose two from five):

*Cognitive Psychology*²

*Social Psychology*²

*Biological Psychology*²

*Developmental Psychology*²

*The Psychology of Individual Differences*²

¹ Content covers five theoretical approaches, and five types of research method.

² For each option, content covers three ‘concepts’ (chosen from five or six) and two associated research methods.

3b Proposed Intermediate 2

(To be implemented at Intermediate 1 if a business case can be made – for 2005-06 at the earliest.)

Three mandatory Units:
Understanding the Individual
Investigating Behaviour
The Individual Amongst Others

Understanding the individual four sections, all content mandatory

Cognitive Perception	Physiological Motivation	Developmental Development of the self-concept	Learning Social learning theory
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Investigating behaviour

<u>Research methods</u> <i>Methods of psychological research</i>	<u>Practical research task(s)</u> <i>Research tasks to be carried out in class; students record these in a practical folder</i>
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The Individual Amongst Others - a mixture of social Psychology and individual differences topics: one topic, Personality, is mandatory, with a choice of any three other topics, from five

<u>Mandatory topic:</u> Personality	... + three of the following:				
	Group processes	Conformity	Pro-social behaviour	Non-verbal communication	Social perception

It is envisaged that, as at present, the structure and content of Intermediate 1 will be identical to that of Intermediate 2; differentiation will be by means of assessment approach.

Appendix 6: Summary of proposed internal and external assessment

1 External assessment – proposals

Level	Component Number	Type	Duration	Change to existing components
Intermediate 1*	1	Question paper	1.5 hours	No change
Intermediate 2	1	Question paper	2 hours	This is an increase from 1.5 hours
Higher	1	Question paper	2.5 hours	This is a reduction from 3 hours
	2	Research Investigation Report	1,500 – 2,000 words	No change
Advanced Higher*	1	Question paper	3 hours	No change
	2	Research Investigation Report	2,000 - 2,500 words	This is a reduction from 3,000 words

2 Internal assessment – proposals

Level	Unit	Type	Duration	Change to existing assessments
Intermediate 1*	Units 1 and 3	Written test	1 hour	Reduction from total 6 hours to 2.5 hrs + evidence of practical aspect
	Unit 2	Written test on research methods	30 mins	
		Practical research tasks		
Intermediate 2	Units 1 and 3	Written test	1 hour	Reduction from total 6 hours to 2.5 hrs + evidence of practical aspect
	Unit 2	Written test on research methods	30 mins	
		Practical research tasks		
Higher	Units 1 and 3	Written test	1 hour	Reduction from total 5.5 hours to 2.5 hrs + evidence of practical aspect
	Unit 2	Written test on research methods	30 mins	
		Research plan & log		
Advanced Higher*	Units 1 and 3	Written test	1 hour	Reduction from total 5.5 hours to 2.5 hrs + evidence of practical aspect
	Unit 2	Written test on research methods	30 mins	
		Research plan & log		

(*To be implemented if a business case can be made – for 2005-06 at the earliest.)

Appendix 7: Uptake figures for the last three years (Units and Courses)

Course	2000	2001	2002	2003
Intermediate 1	14	6	20	42
Intermediate 2	118	243	395	478
Higher	426	1,186	1,951	3,062
Advanced Higher	-	0	4	16

	Unit	2000	2001	2002
Intermediate 1	Psychology – an Introduction	41	85	152
	Cognitive	4	1	24
	Social	39	42	89
	Biological	0	0	10
	Developmental	3	3	39
	Individual Differences	8	3	20
Intermediate 2	Psychology – an Introduction	193	534	902
	Cognitive	51	69	184
	Social	66	203	477
	Biological	0	26	32
	Developmental	117	219	415
	Individual Differences	48	192	254
Higher	Apps & Methods in Psych	513	1,194	2,275
	Cognitive	59	138	133
	Social	438	1,127	2,012
	Biological	0	60	41
	Developmental	343	347	490
	Individual Differences	107	594	1,312
Advanced Higher	Perspectives in Psychology	-	0	4
	Psychology - Research	-	0	4
	Cognitive	-	0	0
	Social	-	0	0
	Biological	-	0	0
	Developmental	-	0	0
	Individual Differences	-	0	4

Sources: SQA Annual Statistical Report 2000
 SQA Annual Statistical Report 2001
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Appendix 8: Bibliography

A selection of research literature was read and reviewed. This bibliography lists the key sources consulted

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