



## Qualification Specification

### GA Level 7 Diploma in Psychology (610/7550/4)

This qualification is subject to the GA Centre Assessment and Standards Scrutiny and General Moderation policy.

This GA qualification is delivered under an exclusivity agreement.

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## Section 1: Qualification Overview

### 1.1 Introduction: About this Qualification

Gatehouse Awards (GA) qualifications are designed to give learners the skills to be active in the modern labour market and progress in their career and/or into higher level study.

This Qualification Specification covers the GA Level 7 Diploma in Psychology (610/7550/4).

This document provides centre staff, learners and employers with an overview of the qualification content as well as the assessment and quality assurance requirements for this qualification.

This qualification is regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations (Ofqual) in England and are part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

All versions of this qualification are listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications which is operated by Ofqual at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>.

This qualification is not designed to replace any existing qualifications.

### 1.2 Qualification Titles, Qualification Numbers and Important Dates

Qualification Title and Level	Qualification Number	Operational Start Date	Operational Review Date
GA Level 7 Diploma in Psychology	610/7550/4	01/06/2026	June 2031

### 1.3 Qualification Aims and Objectives

This qualification is designed to enhance learners' academic and professional prospects by developing advanced knowledge, critical understanding and analytical capability across core areas of psychology.

The qualification provides a broad and integrated foundation in psychological theory, research and analysis, enabling learners to engage critically with complex psychological concepts, evidence and contemporary issues.

The aim of the GA Level 7 Diploma in Psychology is to prepare learners to demonstrate advanced critical thinking, theoretical understanding, analytical judgement and psychologically informed reasoning across a range of psychological contexts.

Learners will engage with philosophical and theoretical foundations of psychology, biological, cognitive and affective processes, social, cultural and developmental influences, psychopathology and mental health, individual differences and psychometrics, and research methods. Understanding is underpinned by contemporary theory, evidence-informed enquiry and contextual analysis.

The qualification develops the ability to analyse and interpret complex psychological issues, evaluate competing explanations of behaviour and mental processes, synthesise perspectives across psychological domains, and apply integrated understanding to real world contexts. Learners will also develop the capability to critically evaluate research and design robust, ethically informed research proposals appropriate to postgraduate level study.

This qualification is designed as a broad bridging award for learners from psychology and non-psychology backgrounds who require a comprehensive academic foundation across core areas of psychology in preparation for MSc-level study.

This qualification provides academic preparation for postgraduate study in psychology. It does not confer eligibility to practise as a psychologist or deliver psychological interventions.

### 1.4 Qualification Structure and Overview: Units, GLH, TQT and Credit Value

The structure of this qualification is as follows:

GA Level 7 Diploma in Psychology (610/7550/4)					
Mandatory Units	Unit Reference	Level	Credits	GLH*	Study Time
1. Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations of Psychology	T/652/1920	7	20	60	140
2. Biological, Cognitive and Affective Psychology	Y/652/1921	7	20	60	140
3. Social, Cultural and Developmental Psychology	A/652/1922	7	20	60	140
4. Psychopathology, Mental Health and Psychological Intervention	D/652/1923	7	20	60	140
5. Individual Differences and Principles of Applied Psychology	F/652/1924	7	20	60	140

6. Research Methods in Psychology	H/652/1925	7	20	60	140
			Total Credits 120	Total GLH* 360	TQT** (GLH + ST) 1200

**\*Guided Learning Hours (GLH): Definition**

The activity of a learner in being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

**\*\*Total Qualification Time (TQT): Definition**

The number of Guided Learning Hours assigned, plus an estimate of the number of study hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

The number of study hours a learner is expected to undertake in order to complete each unit is expressed in the ‘Study Time’ above. This, including the GLH, provides the Total Qualification Time, or TQT, and represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification.

The estimates for Guided Learning Hours and Total Qualification Time above have been produced with due regard to information gathered from those with experience in education and training and are in line with guidance published by Ofqual on the allocation and expression of Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning Hours.

**Level**

The qualification within this specification is designated at Level 7 on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) according to the Level Descriptors for knowledge and understanding, which build on those used within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This means that the qualifications are considered by GA to lead to the outcome as follows:

Achievement at Level 7 reflects the ability to reformulate and use practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors, and critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and theories to produce modified conceptions. It reflects an ability to understand the wider contexts in which the area of study or work is located, current developments in the area of study or work and different theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the area of study or work. It also reflects the ability to use specialised skills to conceptualise and address problematic situations that involve many interacting factors, and to determine and use appropriate methodologies and approaches. The learner will also have the ability to design and undertake research, development or strategic activities to inform or produce change in the area of work or study, and critically evaluate actions, methods and results and their short- and long-term implications.

### 1.5 Rules of Combination

In order to meet the rules of combination for the GA Level 7 Diploma in Psychology qualification, the learner must achieve all 6 mandatory units. The learner must achieve 120 credits.

Learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes and meet all qualification requirements in order to achieve the qualification.

There are no further rules of combination.

### 1.6 Intended Audience

This qualification is intended for learners who wish to develop advanced knowledge and critical understanding of psychology in preparation for postgraduate study, professional development or progression into psychology related fields.

It is suitable for individuals seeking to build a broad and integrated understanding of psychological theory, research and application, including those progressing from related or non-psychology backgrounds who wish to develop a robust academic foundation in psychology.

It is also suitable for learners who wish to develop their ability to analyse behaviour and mental processes, evaluate competing explanations, engage critically with contemporary psychological issues, and apply psychological understanding across a range of contexts.

The qualification is also appropriate for learners who wish to prepare for further postgraduate study in psychology or related disciplines, or to pursue further study and development in specialist areas of psychology.

## 1.7 Age and Entry Requirements

This qualification is intended for learners aged 21 and above.

Learners should hold

- a degree (undergraduate honours degree)

or

- a Level 6 qualification

Applicants who do not meet the formal qualification requirements may be considered on an individual basis where they can demonstrate substantial relevant experience or prior study that indicates readiness for Level 7 academic work. This may include experience in areas such as education, health, social care, business, or other fields where understanding of behaviour, cognition or human interaction is relevant.

The centre must maintain a robust process for evaluating applicants entering via relevant professional experience. This may include:

- a detailed CV or professional portfolio evidencing relevant academic or professional experience
- a formal interview or professional discussion to assess the learner's readiness for Level 7 study
- evidence of continuing professional development and reflective engagement in learning
- written references from appropriate academic or professional sources
- completion of a diagnostic assessment or written task to demonstrate academic capability at Level 7

In addition to the above, if English is not the learner's first language, an English language level of minimum International English B2 (CEFR) is required.

Centre recruitment and enrolment processes must be carried out by suitably qualified and experienced centre staff.

It is recommended that prior to commencing a programme of study leading to this qualification, learners receive detailed advice and guidance from the training provider in order to ensure the programme and qualification will meet their needs.

## 1.8 Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer of Credits

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessing whether a learner's previous experience and achievements meet the standard requirements of a GA qualification, prior to the learner taking the assessment for the qualification, or part of the qualification, they are registered for.

Any prior learning must be relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and GA will subsequently amend the requirements which a learner must have satisfied before they are assessed as eligible to be awarded the qualification.

Where there is evidence that the learner's knowledge and skills are current, valid and sufficient, the use of RPL may be acceptable for recognising achievement of assessment criteria, learning outcome or unit(s), as applicable. The requirement for RPL in such instances must also include a consideration of the currency of the knowledge gained by the learner at the time they undertook the prior learning.

RPL cannot be guaranteed in instances where industry practice or legislation has significantly changed in the time since the prior learning was undertaken / a previous award was issued.

All RPL decisions and processes are subject to External Quality Assurance (EQA) scrutiny and must be documented in line with GA's quality assurance requirements.

No transfer of credits is permitted.

## 1.9 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Assessment for this qualification is designed to be accessible and inclusive. The assessment methodology is appropriate and rigorous for individuals or groups of learners.

Please refer to the GA Candidate Access Policy, available on the GA website, which contains information about Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. This policy document provides centre staff with clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the achievement of the qualification.

## 1.10 Relationship to Other Qualifications and Progression Opportunities

Learners typically progress to this qualification from Level 6 qualifications such as undergraduate degrees in psychology, social sciences, health, education, or related disciplines, or professional qualifications at an equivalent level.

Upon successful completion, learners may progress to:

- Full Master's degree programmes (MSc/MA in Psychology, Applied Psychology, Health Psychology, Organisational Psychology, Counselling, or related postgraduate awards), including programmes with a dissertation or research component, subject to the receiving university's entry requirements and individual recognition decisions
- Senior roles in psychology-adjacent fields such as education, health and social care, human resources, organisational development, coaching, and research, where psychological knowledge informs professional practice
- Level 8 professional qualifications or postgraduate doctorate level study, including professional doctorates in psychology or related disciplines

Please note that this qualification does not confer eligibility to practise as a psychologist, use protected psychological titles, or conduct psychological interventions. Learners wishing to pursue a career as a registered practitioner psychologist should refer to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) requirements and the BPS accredited training pathways.

## 1.11 Language of Assessment

This qualification is offered in English.

Further information concerning the provision of qualification and assessment materials in other languages may be obtained from GA.

## 1.12 Qualification Availability

This qualification is available in the UK and internationally.

If you would like further information on offering this qualification, please contact us. Our contact details appear on our website, [www.gatehouseawards.org](http://www.gatehouseawards.org)

## Section 2: Qualification Delivery: Assessment, Quality Assurance Model and Administration

### 2.1 Teaching and Learning Requirements

Courses leading to this qualification may consist of e-learning courses or classroom-based courses, or a blended option.

Learners can therefore undertake learning and assessment on a flexible basis.

Learners must have suitable access to teaching and assessment staff as well as technical support. It is essential that the centre provides specialist staff, high quality learning materials and access to assessment opportunities.

### 2.2 Assessment & Quality Assurance Model

This qualification is a centre-assessed qualification. This means that it is internally assessed and internally moderated by centre staff who must clearly show where learners have achieved the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and qualification requirements.

Detailed Assessment Instructions for each component unit of this qualification is provided in Section 4 *Unit Specifications* below.

Prior to use, assessment materials devised by the centre must be submitted to GA for 'sign-off' and authorisation. The centre must therefore also:

- review the materials carefully against the sign-off criteria before submission (refer to the *GA External Quality Assurance of Centre-Devised Materials* form).

The centre should contact their dedicated Centre Administrator for full instructions on how to submit their materials and the timescale required for sign-off.

Assessment, internal moderation and quality assurance activities are subject to external moderation and quality assurance conducted by GA.

This qualification is subject to the GA Centre Assessment and Standards Scrutiny (CASS) and General Moderation Policy.

## 2.3 Assessment of Learners and Portfolio Requirements

All learners must complete assessment for all six mandatory units.

Assessment will enable learners to demonstrate advanced psychological understanding, critical analytical capability and research-informed evaluation across all units. Assessment will address philosophical and theoretical foundations of psychology, biological, cognitive and affective processes, social, cultural and developmental psychology, psychopathology and mental health, individual differences, and the design and critical evaluation of psychological research.

Learners will be assessed through a range of written, analytical and evaluative assignments that require critical engagement with psychological evidence and the application of theoretical frameworks to complex psychological questions and real-world contexts. Assessment tasks may include critical literature reviews, theoretical analyses, case-based evaluations and research proposal development, appropriate to postgraduate level study.

Please note that assessment does not include clinical practice, psychological intervention or any activity requiring registration as a practitioner psychologist.

Learners are expected to build a portfolio of evidence, clearly demonstrating where they have met the learning outcomes and qualification requirements, typically via the successful completion of the centre-devised assessment materials.

To meet the assessment requirements, learners must:

- follow a suitable programme of learning.
- maintain and submit a portfolio of all coursework incorporating all materials related to assessment.

All evidence must be mapped against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, reflecting the type of evidence supplied and indicating its location. Using portfolio reference numbers will enable the learner, assessor, IQA and EQA to quickly locate the evidence submitted.

Suitable sources of evidence may include the following:

- essays/assignments
- short questions and answers
- professional discussions
- workbooks
- reflective accounts
- records of questioning

- case studies

The centre must ensure that the learner's work is authentic.

Assurances that learner work is authentic can be gained via:

1. oral questioning to confirm knowledge and understanding.
2. written questions answered under controlled supervised conditions to compare the learner's writing style against their other work.

All knowledge and understanding evidence must be marked and assessed by centre assessors in line with the GA CRAVES requirement, clearly indicating where the learner has achieved the requisite knowledge and understanding. Assessors are responsible for providing feedback and instructions for re-submission, where applicable.

All assessment decisions and internal moderation are externally quality assured by GA.

## 2.4 CRAVES Requirements

Assessors must ensure that all evidence within the learner's portfolio judged to meet GA's 'CRAVES' requirements is:

- **current:** the work is relevant at the time of the assessment
- **reliable:** the work is consistent with that produced by other learners
- **authentic:** the work is the learner's own work
- **valid:** the work is relevant and appropriate to the subject being assessed and is at the required level
- **evaluated:** where the learner has not been assessed as competent, the deficiencies have been clearly and accurately identified via feedback to the learner
- **sufficient:** the work covers the expected learning outcomes and any range statements as specified in the criteria or requirements in the assessment strategy

## 2.5 Resubmissions

GA recommends that the centre operates a policy of allowing learners to resubmit assessed work a maximum of two times. However, the acceptance and management of resubmissions of assessed work is at the discretion of the centre.

The decision regarding whether to permit a learner to resubmit work and/or attempt an assessment again will be based on an evaluation of how closely their previous attempts met

the passing criteria. This evaluation will consider the extent to which the learner's work demonstrated progress towards meeting the required standards.

Resubmitted work will be assessed with the same rigour and adherence to standards as the initial submission.

If a learner does not pass after three attempts at submitting assessed work, the centre must consider the following course of action:

- Additional support – consider whether the learner could benefit from additional support, remedial guidance, or additional resources to help them understand the material better. This could involve providing extra teaching sessions, study materials, or one-on-one tutoring to address specific areas of difficulty. Sometimes, extending deadlines or providing additional time can alleviate pressure and allow for better comprehension and performance.
- Review and feedback - consider whether sufficient detailed feedback, which highlights areas that need improvement and provides specific guidance on how the learner can enhance their work, has been provided after each attempt.
- Alternative assessment methods - consider whether an alternative assessment method, such as the use of professional discussion, may provide opportunities for the learner to demonstrate their understanding. The centre should refer to the GA Candidate Access Policy for further information.
- Reconsideration of participation - assess whether the learner might need to take a break from the programme or whether, despite supportive measures and multiple attempts, the learner's progress is not indicative that they will meet the qualification requirements. They may be issued with a final 'Fail' grade or withdraw from the programme.

The centre must ensure that their policies and procedures regarding learner dismissal or failure are communicated clearly to learners to maintain fairness and transparency.

## 2.6 Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

Internal Moderators (also known as Internal Quality Assurers or IQAs) ensure that assessors are assessing to the same standards, i.e., consistently and reliably, and that assessment decisions are correct. IQA activities will include:

- ensuring assessors are suitably experienced and qualified in line with the qualification requirements
- sampling assessments and assessment decisions
- ensuring that assessment decisions meet the GA 'CRAVES' requirements (Current, Reliable, Authentic, Valid, Evaluated and Sufficient)
- conducting standardisation and moderation of assessment decisions
- providing assessors with clear and constructive feedback
- supporting assessors and providing training and development where appropriate
- ensuring any stimulus or materials used for the purposes of assessment are fit for purpose.

Sampling of assessment will be planned and carried out in line with a clear IQA and moderation strategy, which takes into account the number of learners, number of assessors, and the experience and competency of assessors.

Centre IQAs may wish to refer to the guidance documents provided by GA to approved centres (available on the Ark) in order to formulate an appropriate Sampling Strategy.

## 2.7 Grading and Recording Achievement

All learning outcomes and assessment requirements must be met before a learner can be considered as having achieved the qualification.

This qualification is not graded on a scale. Learners are assessed as Pass or Fail.

The centre must ensure that regulations relating to the resubmission of work are adhered to.

## 2.8 Unit and Portfolio Sign Off

Upon completion, each unit must be signed off by the assessor and IQA to confirm the learner's achievement.

The content of the portfolio that contains all units the learners has achieved is subject to final portfolio sign off by the assessor and IQA to confirm that the specific qualification requirements and rules of combination have been met.

The learner is also required to sign an authenticity declaration, stating that the work contained in their portfolio is their own.

## 2.9 External Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

Assessment and internal moderation and quality assurance activities are subject to external moderation and wider scrutiny and centre controls as per GA's quality assurance arrangements for centre-assessed qualifications.

All GA Approved Centres are entitled to two EQA visits per year. Additional visits can be requested, for which there may be an additional charge.

EQA activities will focus on the centre's continuing adherence to and maintenance of the GA *Centre Approval Criteria* and the criteria and requirements for the specific qualifications for which it holds approval. This will include:

- checking that the management of the centre and the management arrangements relating to the qualification are sufficient
- checking that resources to support the delivery of the qualification, including physical resources and staffing, are in place and sufficient
- ensuring that the centre has appropriate policies and procedures in place relevant to the organisation and to the delivery and quality assurance of the qualification
- the use of assessment materials and the arrangements in place to ensure that evidence for assessment is 'CRAVES' (Current, Reliable, Authentic, Valid, Evaluated and Sufficient)
- sampling assessment decisions against the qualification requirements across the range of levels, number of assessors and assessment sites, according to the number of learners
- the internal moderation and quality assurance arrangements
- sampling internal moderation records against the qualification requirements across the range of levels, number of assessors and assessment sites, according to the number of learners
- administrative arrangements
- ensuring that any actions from moderation and wider quality assurance activities have been carried out by the centre
- confirming any claims for RPL, reasonable adjustments or special considerations

Through discussions with centre staff, examining learner work, moderation of assessment, talking to learners and reviewing documentation and systems, the GA EQA will provide the centre with full support, advice and guidance as necessary.

## 2.10 Registering Learners and Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs)

Learners must be registered through the Ark, the GA online Learner Management System.

Owing to the Total Qualification Time of this qualification, the validity period of registrations made will be three years. Should a learner not have achieved in the timescale, a new registration is required.

Each approved GA centre is provided with a user account to allow approved staff access to the online system.

Where the Unique Learner Number (ULN) of a learners is known, this should be provided at the point of registration in order for GA to issue updates to the Learner Record Service.

### 2.11 ID Requirements

It is the responsibility of the centre to have systems in place to confirm each learner's identity.

Learners are required to declare that all work submitted for assessment is their own work.

### 2.12 Record Keeping

Records of learner details, their work and any records of Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations and records containing learners' personal details must be kept by the centre in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (including GDPR and all relevant privacy regulations) for a minimum of 2 years.

The centre must operate a safe and effective system of care and comply with information governance requirements, with appropriate policies and procedures in place to maintain confidentiality, related to staff and learners.

All records must be easily retrievable and made available to GA or the Regulator upon request.

Portfolios must be retained until the following External Quality Assurance visit to allow them to be sampled. Following external moderation and the award of a qualification by GA, the centre may return portfolios to learners.

Records of all internal quality assurance and moderation activity undertaken must be kept and made available to GA upon request.

## 2.13 Results and Certification

Centres may make claims for certification via the Ark when learners complete and the assessor and IQA have confirmed achievement. Claims for certification are subject to successful external quality assurance (EQA).

Following the EQA's confirmation of a learner's achievement, GA will authorise claims for the certification of learners, details of which will be visible to the centre in the centre's Ark account. Certificates are usually issued within 10 working days of the award of the qualification.

The qualification certificate will indicate both the title and the level at which the qualification is achieved.

The qualification certificate will also indicate the Pathway taken by the learner (i.e. the optional specialist unit completed).

Certificates will only be issued to learners who have achieved sufficient credits and met the rules of combination for the qualification they are registered for. If a learner has not achieved sufficient credits or failed to meet the rules of combination, the qualification certificate will not be issued.

Replacement certificates are available upon request.

Amendments to certificates are available upon request but may require the centre to provide evidence of the need for any amendment (e.g., learner proof of identification) and will involve the return of the original certificate. Replacements and amendments may incur an additional charge.

## 2.14 Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct Claim Status is not available for this qualification.

## 2.15 Appeals and Enquiries

GA has an appeals procedure in accordance with the arrangements for regulated qualifications.

General enquiries can be made at any time and should be directed to a GA Centre Administrator.

## Section 3: Staff and Resource Requirements for Centres

In order to deliver this qualification, the centre must ensure that they meet the following requirements for staff and physical resources.

### 3.1 General Staff Requirements

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all staff involved in the delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance of this qualification are suitably qualified in line with the stipulations for teachers, assessors and Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) detailed below.

The centre must ensure that they hold up-to-date and detailed information about the staff involved with the delivery and quality assurance of this qualification and must make records available to GA upon request. The information GA expects the course provider to hold for each member of staff includes, as a minimum:

- a current up to date CV
- copies of relevant qualification certificates
- relevant and up to date CPD (Continuous Professional Development) records

Centre staff must be familiar with the qualification requirements prior to offering the qualification or unit and planning the centre's assessment and moderation strategy.

The centre must also ensure that they have the management and administrative staffing arrangements in place which are suitable to support the registration of learners and the receipt of results and certificates.

The knowledge and experience of all staff involved in the teaching, assessment and internal quality assurance of this qualification will be considered during the approval and re-approval process and at External Quality Assurance Visits.

### 3.2 Requirements for Teachers and Assessors

Teaching staff include those who deliver teaching and learning content for knowledge and understanding elements and those who are involved in practical teaching and learning.

The primary responsibility of an assessor is to assess a learner's performance and ensure that the evidence submitted by the learner meets the requirements of the qualification.

All teachers and assessors must be occupationally competent in educational leadership and management and hold appropriate qualifications to make valid and reliable assessment decisions at Level 7.

It is the centre's responsibility to select and appoint suitably qualified and experienced teachers and assessors.

All teachers must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in psychology or relevant professional practice

Teachers must also hold recognised teaching qualification or evidence of effective teaching practice at postgraduate level (desirable).

All assessors must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in psychology or relevant professional practice

Assessors must also have an understanding of assessment principles and quality assurance processes appropriate to Level 7 study.

All teachers and assessors must also:

- be able to evidence relevant and up to date teaching/assessing experience.
- understand the qualification structure, unit learning outcomes and criteria related to the teaching and learning being delivered.
- have access to appropriate guidance and support.
- participate in continuing professional development in the specific subject they are teaching and/or assessing.

### 3.3 Requirements for IQA (Internal Quality Assurers, also referred to as Internal Moderators).

IQAs are responsible for internal moderation and quality assurance of the qualification to ensure standardisation, reliability, validity and sufficiency of the assessor's assessment decisions.

It is the centre's responsibility to select and appoint IQAs.

All IQAs must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in psychology or relevant professional practice

IQAs must also have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices, as well as sufficient technical understanding related to the qualifications that they are internally quality assuring.

Each assessor may have one or several appointed IQAs.

Staff may undertake more than one role within the centre, e.g., teacher, assessor and IQA. However, members of staff must NOT IQA their own assessment decisions.

### 3.4 CPD Requirements

All staff must ensure their role and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and competence is current and therefore must keep up to date with sector changes and developments.

Participation in continuing professional development in order to evidence contemporaneous proficiency must take place regularly. Centre staff in teaching, assessment or IQA roles must ensure that they complete and document a minimum of 30 CPD hours per year.

Records of CPD activities (both planned and those that have taken place) must be made available to GA at EQA visits or upon request.

### 3.5 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Resources

When devising teaching, learning and assessment materials for this qualification, the centre must:

- ensure teaching and learning materials directly address the learning outcomes and sufficiently prepare learners for assessment.
- structure materials to be accessible and engaging.
- use clear, unambiguous language appropriate for the level.
- align materials to the specific topics and content.
- pitch the level and depth of materials accurately based on the content to be delivered.
- ensure materials can be clearly attributed back to the centre.

- offer opportunities and resources for additional research and study, where appropriate.
- offer opportunity for learners to relate teaching and learning content to their own experience.
- ensure materials provide any relevant guidance to staff on consistent delivery.

Course programmes must be designed using the assessment requirements and unit specifications content below.

Teaching and learning resources must be relevant, up-to-date and of industry standard, in order to allow learners to adequately prepare for assessment. This will be considered at approval and during the on-going monitoring of the centre.

All delivery and assessment resources should be inclusive of the principles of equality and diversity and the safeguarding of learners.

### 3.6 Venue and Equipment Requirements

When training premises are used in the delivery of teaching and assessment of this qualification, centres should, wherever possible, provide suitable access in line with Disability Discrimination, Diversity & Equality law and regulations and any other regulations which apply.

The centre must ensure that all products and equipment used in the delivery and assessment of this qualification are confirmed as fit for purpose and compliant with current Health and Safety legislation and any other relevant regulations. This will be considered at approval and during the on-going monitoring of the centre.

Where specific products and equipment are required for the delivery and assessment of a GA qualification, the suitability of the products and equipment at the centre will be considered during the centre and qualification approval process and at External Quality Assurance Visits.

For this qualification, suitable equipment includes:

- access to library resources, academic journals, and relevant educational leadership and management literature
- IT facilities and systems to support research, presentations, and access to online learning materials
- case study materials, simulations, or scenario-based resources relevant to psychology contexts
- a suitable environment for assessment activities, including facilities for presentations, examinations, or viva voce assessments where applicable

- a virtual learning environment (VLE) or online platforms to support blended or distance learning delivery models

### 3.7 Ongoing Support

There are a number of documents on the GA website that centres and learners may find useful: [www.gatehouseawards.org](http://www.gatehouseawards.org). The website is updated regularly with news, information about GA qualifications, sample materials, updates on regulations and other important notices.

Within the centre, a named Examinations Officer is responsible for ensuring that all information and documents provided to centre staff and learners are correct and up to date.

GA must be kept up to date with contact details of all changes of personnel so the centre can be provided with the best level of support and guidance.

At the time of approval, the centre is assigned a designated Centre Administrator who is their primary point of contact for all aspects of service or support.

Learners should always speak to a member of staff at the centre for information relating to GA and our qualifications prior to approaching GA directly.

Contact details for GA can be found on the GA website [www.gatehouseawards.org](http://www.gatehouseawards.org).

## Section 4: Unit Specifications

### 4.1 Mandatory Unit 1: Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations of Psychology

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
1	Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations of Psychology	60	20	7	T/652/1920
<p>In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate the philosophical and theoretical foundations underpinning psychology as a discipline and examine how these influence the development of psychological knowledge, research and applied understanding.</p> <p>Learners will explore key epistemological and ontological assumptions, major psychological paradigms and the development of theoretical perspectives. The unit develops the ability to analyse how differing philosophical positions shape research design, interpretation and application, and how theoretical frameworks are constructed, challenged and refined within psychology.</p> <p>The unit emphasises psychology as a complex and evolving discipline, requiring learners to synthesise perspectives, evaluate competing explanations and apply integrated theoretical understanding to complex psychological contexts.</p>					
<p><b>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</b></p> <p>Learners may be assessed through analytical assignments, critical evaluations, case-based analysis and the application of theoretical frameworks to complex psychological scenarios.</p> <p>Evidence may be drawn from academic literature, published research, theoretical debate or realistic applied contexts.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with philosophical and theoretical perspectives, the ability to evaluate competing approaches, and the application of integrated understanding to psychological issues using appropriate evidence.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the philosophical foundations of psychology	1.1 Explain key philosophical assumptions underpinning psychological inquiry, including different ways of understanding knowledge and reality
	<i>IC: Epistemological assumptions including empiricism, rationalism and constructivism; ontological positions relating to the nature of reality and behaviour; distinctions between objectivity and subjectivity in psychological inquiry; assumptions underpinning scientific and interpretive approaches; role of evidence, observation and interpretation in knowledge generation; implications of differing assumptions for defining behaviour and mental processes; influence of philosophical positions on research questions and methodological choices.</i>
	1.2 Evaluate the influence of philosophical perspectives on the development of psychological knowledge
	<i>IC: Influence of empiricism and rationalism on early psychological theory; development of scientific approaches to studying behaviour and mental processes; development and shifts between behaviourist, cognitive and humanistic perspectives; impact of interpretivist approaches on understanding subjective experience; role of philosophical debate in shaping research priorities and theoretical frameworks; influence of differing perspectives on what is considered valid knowledge; tensions between objective and subjective approaches in psychology; contribution of philosophical perspectives to the development and scope of psychological knowledge; influence of contemporary debates on the validity of psychological knowledge, including replication crisis, open science movement and challenges to traditional research practices; impact of digital data, big data and interdisciplinary approaches on the development of psychological theory.</i>
	1.3 Assess the implications of different philosophical positions for research design, theoretical development and applied psychological contexts
<i>IC: Implications of epistemological positions for research design and evidence selection; influence of ontological assumptions on defining behaviour and mental processes; impact of philosophical positions on the choice of methodology, including quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches; role of philosophical perspectives in</i>	

	<p><i>shaping theoretical frameworks and explanations; implications for interpretation of data and research findings; influence on the application of psychology in clinical, social and organisational contexts; strengths and limitations of differing philosophical approaches in applied contexts; challenges in reconciling competing positions when informing research and academic judgement; multi-level explanations of behaviour, including biological, cognitive and social perspectives.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand paradigms and theoretical perspectives in psychology</p>	<p>2.1 Explain major psychological paradigms and their underlying assumptions</p>
	<p><i>IC: Major psychological approaches including behaviourist, cognitive, biological, humanistic and sociocultural perspectives; core assumptions about behaviour and mental processes within each paradigm; views on the role of environment, cognition and biology in shaping behaviour; deterministic and free will perspectives; reductionist and holistic approaches to explanation; differences in focus on observable behaviour versus internal processes; assumptions about the nature of scientific inquiry in psychology; implications of paradigm assumptions for research and interpretation of findings.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate the strengths, limitations and contributions of different theoretical perspectives</p>
	<p><i>IC: Strengths of theoretical perspectives in explaining behaviour and mental processes; empirical support and evidence base underpinning different approaches; contributions to psychological knowledge and theory development; applicability across different contexts and populations; limitations in scope, reductionism or overgeneralisation; challenges in explaining complex or real world behaviour; comparison of explanatory power across perspectives; role of theoretical diversity in advancing psychological understanding.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Assess how paradigms influence the interpretation of behaviour and mental processes</p>
<p><i>IC: Influence of theoretical frameworks on explaining behaviour and mental processes; role of underlying assumptions in shaping interpretation of data; differences in how behaviour is conceptualised across paradigms; impact on the selection and use of evidence in analysis; influence of researcher perspective and bias on interpretation; contrasting explanations of the same phenomena across approaches; implications for the validity and reliability of</i></p>	

	<p><i>conclusions; limitations of single-paradigm interpretations in understanding complex behaviour.</i></p>
<p>3. Understand the synthesis of theoretical perspectives in psychology</p>	<p>3.1 Analyse convergence and divergence between psychological theories and paradigms</p>
	<p><i>IC: Areas of overlap between psychological theories in explaining behaviour and mental processes; shared concepts across biological, cognitive and social perspectives; points of divergence in underlying assumptions and explanatory focus; differences in emphasis on internal processes versus external influences; contrasting views on determinism and free will; variation in levels of analysis from reductionist to holistic approaches; implications of convergence and divergence for theory development; challenges in reconciling conflicting perspectives.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Explain the contribution of different perspectives to understanding psychological phenomena</p>
	<p><i>IC: Contribution of biological perspectives to understanding brain function and behaviour; role of cognitive approaches in explaining mental processes and information processing; influence of behavioural perspectives in understanding learned behaviour; contribution of humanistic approaches in emphasising individual experience and meaning; role of social and cultural perspectives in explaining group behaviour and context; complementary contribution of different perspectives in addressing complexity; value and limitations of multidisciplinary approaches in psychological understanding; limitations of relying on a single perspective.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Assess the value and limitations of theoretical integration in explaining behaviour and mental processes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Integration of biological, cognitive and social approaches in explaining behaviour; use of integrated and multi-perspective frameworks to combine explanations; compatibility and conflict between theoretical models; strengths of integrated explanations in addressing complexity; limitations and challenges in combining perspectives; role of evidence in supporting integrated approaches; application of integrated models to real world psychological issues; implications for developing coherent and comprehensive explanations; relevance of integrated approaches in addressing contemporary psychological issues such as digital behaviour, mental health trends</i></p>

	<i>and complex social challenges; limitations of traditional theoretical frameworks in explaining rapidly evolving real world contexts.</i>
4. Be able to apply integrated theoretical understanding to complex psychological contexts	4.1 Apply multiple theoretical perspectives to interpret complex human behaviour
	<i>IC: Application of biological, cognitive and social perspectives to behaviour; interpretation of complex psychological scenarios using multiple theories; integration of internal and external factors influencing behaviour; consideration of individual variation and contextual influences; use of theoretical frameworks to explain real world behaviour; strengths of multi-perspective analysis in understanding complexity; limitations of applying theory to dynamic contexts; implications for balanced and well supported interpretation.</i>
	4.2 Evaluate the implications of integrated theoretical approaches for research and applied psychology
	<i>IC: Implications of integrated approaches for research design and methodology; influence on the selection of data sources and methods; impact on interpretation and generalisability of findings; application to clinical, educational and organisational contexts; benefits of multidisciplinary perspectives in addressing complex issues; challenges in operationalising integrated models; limitations in consistency and coherence across approaches; role of integrated frameworks in informing evidence informed approaches.</i>
	4.3 Justify the use of synthesised theoretical frameworks in analysing complex psychological issues
	<i>IC: Justification for integrating multiple theoretical perspectives in analysis; use of evidence to support the selection of frameworks; comparison of alternative theoretical approaches; alignment of frameworks with context and the nature of the issue; consideration of the strengths and limitations of synthesised models; role of critical judgement in selecting approaches; implications for depth and accuracy of analysis; contribution of integrated frameworks to a comprehensive understanding of complex psychological issues.</i>

## 4.2 Mandatory Unit 2: Biological, Cognitive and Affective Psychology

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
2	Biological, Cognitive and Affective Psychology	60	20	7	Y/652/1921

In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate biological, cognitive and affective processes that underpin human behaviour and mental functioning.

Learners will explore neurobiological systems, genetic and neurophysiological influences, and cognitive mechanisms including perception, memory, attention and decision making. The unit develops the ability to analyse how cognitive processes interact with emotional and affective systems to shape behaviour and experience.

The unit emphasises the integration of biological, cognitive and emotional perspectives, requiring learners to evaluate theoretical models, assess their explanatory power and apply them to real world psychological contexts.

### Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Learners may be assessed through analytical assignments, critical evaluations, case based analysis and interpretation of psychological theory in applied contexts.

Evidence may be drawn from academic literature, empirical research, applied psychological contexts or realistic simulated scenarios.

Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with biological, cognitive and affective theories, the ability to evaluate competing explanations, and the application of integrated understanding to behaviour and psychological processes using appropriate evidence.

Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
	1.1 Explain the role of neurobiological systems in shaping behaviour and cognition

<p>1. Understand biological foundations of behaviour</p>	<p><i>IC: Structure and function of the central and peripheral nervous systems; role of key brain regions including cortex, limbic system and brainstem; neural communication through neurotransmitters and synaptic processes; influence of neurobiological systems on perception, memory and behaviour; interaction between brain activity and cognitive functioning; role of neuroplasticity in learning and adaptation; impact of biological systems on emotional and behavioural responses; limitations of biological explanations in accounting for complex behaviour.</i></p>
	<p>1.2 Evaluate the contribution of genetics and neurophysiology to psychological processes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Genetic influences on behaviour including heritability and genetic predisposition; role of gene–environment interaction in shaping psychological outcomes; contribution of neurophysiological processes to cognition and behaviour; influence of brain structure and function on psychological processes; role of hormones and neurotransmitters in regulating behaviour; strengths of biological explanations supported by empirical evidence; limitations of genetic and neurophysiological approaches including reductionism; ethical considerations in genetic and neuroscientific research; contemporary developments in neuroscience including neuroimaging technologies and their contribution to understanding behaviour; ethical implications of advances in brain research and neurotechnology.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Assess biological explanations of behaviour and mental health</p>
	<p><i>IC: Biological explanations of behaviour including brain structure, neurotransmission and hormonal influences; role of genetics and neurochemistry in mental health conditions; application of biological models to disorders such as depression, anxiety and schizophrenia; neglect of environmental factors; challenges in establishing causation versus correlation; implications for understanding biologically informed treatment approaches such as medication; explanatory power of biological approaches supported by scientific evidence; conceptual and methodological limitations including reductionism; consideration of ethical and practical issues in the study and use of biological interventions.</i></p>
	<p>2.1 Evaluate theories of perception, memory, attention and decision making</p>

<p>2. Understand cognitive processes and mechanisms</p>	<p><i>IC: Accounts of perception including top-down and bottom-up processing; models of memory such as the multi-store model and the working memory model; theories of attention including selective and divided attention; decision making models including normative and dual process approaches; extent to which models account for structured cognitive processes; limitations in capturing variability and real world complexity; relevance for learning, decision making and performance; theories of learning including behavioural and cognitive approaches to learning; application of cognitive theories to contemporary contexts including decision making in digital environments, information overload and online behaviour; influence of technology on attention, memory and cognitive processing.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Analyse cognitive biases and their impact on judgement and behaviour</p>
	<p><i>IC: Common cognitive biases including confirmation bias, availability heuristic and anchoring; role of heuristics in simplifying decision making; influence of bias on perception, memory and judgement; impact on everyday decision making and behaviour; effects in professional and organisational contexts; interaction between bias and emotional processes; variation in susceptibility to bias across individuals and contexts; implications for improving decision making and reducing error; role of cognitive bias in digital contexts including social media, misinformation and algorithm-driven content; implications for decision making in modern information environments.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Assess models of information processing and cognition including differences in how individuals process information</p>
<p>3. Understand the interaction and</p>	<p>3.1 Explain theoretical models of emotion and affective processes</p>

<p>integration of cognition, emotion and behaviour</p>	<p><i>IC: Theoretical models of emotion including James–Lange theory, Cannon–Bard theory and Schachter–Singer two-factor theory of emotion; cognitive appraisal theories of emotion; role of physiological arousal and neural processes in emotional experience; interaction between cognition and emotional interpretation; affective processes including mood, emotion regulation and expression; influence of emotion on perception, memory and behaviour; comparative explanatory power of different models; conceptual limitations in explaining emotional responses; applied implications for understanding behaviour in real world contexts.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Evaluate how cognition and emotion interact in shaping behaviour and experience</p>
	<p><i>IC: Interaction between cognitive processes and emotional responses in behaviour; influence of emotion on attention, memory and decision making; role of cognitive appraisal in shaping emotional experience; impact of emotional states on judgement and perception; reciprocal relationship between thought and affect; influence of context and individual differences on cognition–emotion interaction; value of integrated explanations in accounting for behaviour; limitations in predicting complex responses across contexts; influence of digital environments and constant connectivity on emotional regulation, stress and cognitive processing; contemporary patterns of affective response in online and offline contexts.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Apply cognitive and affective theories to real world contexts</p>
	<p><i>IC: Application of cognitive and affective theories to everyday behaviour and decision making; use of perception, memory and emotion models to interpret real world scenarios; analysis of behaviour in organisational, social and mental health related contexts; integration of cognition and emotion in explaining responses to situations; consideration of contextual and individual variation in presentation; strengths of theory based application in understanding behaviour; limitations of applying controlled models to dynamic environments; implications for interpreting and evaluating outcomes in practical settings; application of cognitive and affective theories to contemporary issues such as digital wellbeing, behavioural addiction and technology-mediated interaction.</i></p>

### 4.3 Mandatory Unit 3: Social, Cultural and Developmental Psychology

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
3	Social, Cultural and Developmental Psychology	60	20	7	A/652/1922

In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate social, cultural and developmental influences on human behaviour across the lifespan.

Learners will explore how behaviour is shaped by cultural values, social systems, group processes and identity, alongside key developmental theories explaining change and continuity across the lifespan. The unit develops the ability to analyse how biological, psychological and social factors interact to influence development and behaviour in diverse contexts.

The unit emphasises the integration of social, cultural and developmental perspectives, requiring learners to evaluate theoretical approaches, assess their explanatory power and apply them analytically to contemporary real-world issues, including education, policy and wellbeing.

#### Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Learners may be assessed through analytical assignments, critical evaluations, case based analysis and the application of theory to contemporary social and developmental contexts.

Evidence may be drawn from academic literature, policy and practice contexts, empirical research or realistic simulated scenarios.

Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with social, cultural and developmental theory, the ability to evaluate competing explanations, and the application of integrated understanding to real world issues using appropriate evidence.

Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
	1.1 Explain the role of culture, norms and social systems in shaping behaviour

<p>1. Understand social and cultural influences on behaviour</p>	<p><i>IC: Role of cultural values and beliefs in influencing behaviour and cognition; social norms and expectations guiding individual and group behaviour; influence of socialisation processes including family, education and media; impact of social systems and structures on behaviour; cultural variation in attitudes, behaviours and interpretations; role of conformity and social expectations in shaping actions; interaction between individual identity and cultural context; limitations of universal explanations of behaviour across cultures; impact of globalisation, migration and digital communication on cultural norms and behaviour; influence of online communities and digital culture on identity and social interaction.</i></p>
	<p>1.2 Evaluate theories of social cognition, identity and group processes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Theories of social cognition including attribution theory and schema theory; social identity theory and concepts of in group and out group behaviour; role of self-concept and identity formation; theories of group processes including social facilitation, social loafing and groupthink; contribution of theories to understanding social behaviour; limitations in explaining culturally variable and complex behaviour; relevance for understanding group dynamics and interaction; contemporary debates relating to identity, including intersectionality, gender and cultural identity; influence of media and digital environments on self-concept and group identity.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Assess the impact of social influence, prejudice and stereotyping on behaviour</p>
	<p><i>IC: Forms of social influence including conformity, obedience and persuasion; mechanisms underpinning influence such as normative and informational processes; development of prejudice and stereotyping through social learning and categorisation; impact on individual and group behaviour including attitudes and decision making; effects such as discrimination, bias and social exclusion; role of cultural and societal factors in reinforcing behavioural patterns; limitations of simplified explanations of prejudice; applied implications for understanding and addressing bias and influencing behaviour positively; manifestation of prejudice and discrimination in online environments; role of social media in reinforcing or challenging stereotypes; contemporary approaches to reducing bias and promoting inclusion.</i></p>

<p>2. Understand developmental processes across the human lifespan</p>	<p>2.1 Analyse major developmental theories and their underlying assumptions</p>
	<p><i>IC: Major developmental theories including psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioural and sociocultural perspectives; underlying assumptions about stages and continuity of development; differing views on nature versus nurture in development; role of biological maturation and environmental influence; theories of attachment and early development; extent to which developmental theories account for change across the lifespan; conceptual limitations in explaining diversity and variability.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate biological, psychological and social factors shaping development</p>
	<p><i>IC: Biological factors including genetics, brain development and maturation; psychological factors such as cognition, emotion and personality; social influences including family, education and peer relationships; interaction between biological, psychological and social factors; influence of environment and experience on developmental outcomes; value of holistic approaches in explaining development; challenges in isolating individual influences within complex systems; implications for understanding variation in developmental trajectories; role of learning processes in development across the lifespan; influence of digital environments, social media and technology on developmental processes; impact of changing social structures and cultural expectations on development across the lifespan.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Assess the role of risk, resilience and environmental factors</p>
	<p><i>IC: Risk factors including poverty, trauma and adverse childhood experiences; protective and resilience factors such as supportive relationships and coping strategies; influence of family, community and wider environmental context; interaction between risk and resilience in shaping developmental outcomes; variability in individual responses to similar environments; long term impact of early experiences on development; limitations in predicting outcomes based on risk factors alone; implications for supporting positive development and wellbeing; contemporary risk factors including digital exposure, social isolation and changing family dynamics; role of modern support systems and interventions in promoting resilience.</i></p>

<p>3. Be able to apply social, cultural and developmental theory to contemporary contexts</p>	<p>3.1 Analyse social and developmental influences on behaviour in real world contexts</p>
	<p><i>IC: Social and developmental frameworks used to interpret real world behaviour; influence of social context and developmental stage on behaviour and outcomes; interaction between cultural, social and developmental factors; application of theory to issues such as identity, inequality and wellbeing; role of socialisation and life stage in shaping behaviour; integration of multiple perspectives in analysing complex issues; usefulness of theoretical frameworks in interpreting behaviour; limitations in applying theory across diverse and changing contexts.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Evaluate the implications of theory for policy, education and wellbeing across the lifespan and within educational and social contexts</p>
	<p><i>IC: Implications of social and developmental theory for policy formation and implementation; influence of developmental and educational psychology on learning, educational practice and learner support; application of developmental understanding to wellbeing across the lifespan; role of theory in shaping interventions within educational and social settings; consideration of cultural and contextual factors in policy and practice; strengths of theory informed approaches in supporting development and wellbeing; limitations in translating theory into practice across diverse contexts; impact of theoretical perspectives on decision making in education and wider developmental environments; application of psychological theory to contemporary policy issues including mental health provision, education systems and social inequality; influence of evidence-based policy in addressing current societal challenges.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Justify psychologically informed approaches to social and developmental issues</p>
	<p><i>IC: Types of psychologically informed approaches to social and developmental issues including educational, behavioural and community based approaches; use of theory to inform the analysis, design and selection of appropriate approaches; role of evidence in supporting psychologically informed approaches; consideration of developmental stage and social context in intervention planning; comparison of alternative approaches and their effectiveness; strengths of theory informed approaches in addressing behavioural and developmental needs; limitations and challenges in</i></p>

	<p><i>implementation across diverse contexts; considerations affecting the effectiveness and appropriateness of approaches across applied contexts.</i></p>
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#### 4.4 Mandatory Unit 4: Psychopathology, Mental Health and Psychological Intervention

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
4	Psychopathology, Mental Health and Psychological Intervention	60	20	7	D/652/1923

In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate models of psychopathology and the theoretical frameworks used to understand mental health and psychological distress. The unit focuses on the academic analysis of psychological interventions from an evidence-based perspective, examining how different approaches conceptualise, explain and respond to mental health conditions.

Learners will explore biological, psychological and social explanations of mental health, alongside classification systems and diagnostic frameworks. The unit develops the ability to analyse therapeutic approaches, evaluate their effectiveness and consider ethical and professional issues associated with the study of psychological intervention.

The unit emphasises critical engagement with theory, research and applied case material, requiring learners to synthesise evidence, evaluate competing approaches and justify psychologically informed interpretations of complex mental health presentations.

#### Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Learners may be assessed through analytical assignments, case-based evaluations, critical reviews of intervention approaches and the analysis of complex psychological scenarios.

Evidence may be drawn from academic literature, published research, diagnostic and therapeutic frameworks, or realistic simulated case material.

Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with models of psychopathology and psychological intervention, the ability to evaluate competing explanations and approaches, and the application of integrated psychological understanding to complex mental health contexts using appropriate evidence.

Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand models of psychopathology	1.1 Explain biological, psychological and social models relevant to mental health and psychological distress, with reference to individual differences and neurodivergence

	<p><i>IC: Biological, psychological and social models of mental health and psychological distress including the biopsychosocial approach; role of brain function, genetics and neurochemistry in mental health; psychological factors including cognition, emotion regulation and behaviour; social influences such as environment, relationships and culture; individual differences in experience and presentation; neurodivergence as variation in cognitive and neurodevelopmental functioning, including the distinction between difference and disorder; value of integrated models in explaining mental health needs; limitations of single perspective approaches in capturing complexity; contemporary perspectives on mental health including neurodiversity and dimensional approaches to psychological difference; shifting societal understanding of mental health and wellbeing.</i></p>
	<p>1.2 Evaluate competing explanations of psychological disorders</p>
	<p><i>IC: Competing explanations of psychological disorders including biological, psychological and social perspectives; comparison of medical, cognitive, behavioural and psychodynamic approaches; differing assumptions about causes and development of disorders; role of genetic, cognitive and environmental factors in explanation; strengths of different approaches supported by empirical evidence; limitations in explaining complexity and individual variation; challenges in integrating competing explanations; relevance for understanding, classification and response to mental health needs.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Assess classification systems and diagnostic frameworks</p>
	<p><i>IC: Classification systems including DSM-5-TR and ICD-11 and their diagnostic criteria; purpose of classification in identifying and categorising psychological disorders; issues of reliability and consistency in diagnosis; validity of diagnostic categories and constructs; cultural and contextual influences on classification; risks of labelling, stigma and misdiagnosis; strengths of structured frameworks in supporting understanding and communication; limitations in capturing complexity and individual variation in presentation; ongoing debates regarding the validity and relevance of diagnostic categories; influence of cultural and societal change on definitions of mental health and disorder.</i></p>

<p>2. Understand psychological approaches to intervention</p>	<p>2.1 Analyse major therapeutic approaches including psychodynamic, cognitive and behavioural models</p>
	<p><i>IC: Major therapeutic approaches including psychodynamic, cognitive and behavioural models; underlying assumptions about causes of psychological distress; mechanisms of change such as insight, cognitive restructuring and behaviour modification; role of the therapeutic relationship in different approaches; techniques associated with each model including free association, cognitive behavioural approaches and behavioural interventions; contribution of approaches to psychological understanding; limitations in addressing complex or diverse needs; implications for theoretical understanding of psychological intervention.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of different intervention strategies</p>
	<p><i>IC: Effectiveness of intervention strategies including psychodynamic, cognitive and behavioural therapies; use of evidence informed approaches and outcome measures; comparison of short term and long term outcomes; variation in effectiveness across individuals and conditions; limitations including relapse, accessibility and suitability; role of engagement and contextual factors in influencing outcomes; challenges in measuring effectiveness in real world settings; considerations in evaluating intervention approaches; contemporary developments in psychological intervention including digital therapies and remote delivery; challenges in access to mental health support in modern contexts.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Assess ethical considerations in psychological intervention</p>
	<p><i>IC: Ethical principles including confidentiality, informed consent and professional boundaries; professional ethical frameworks such as the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct; safeguarding and duty of care in intervention contexts; management of risk and potential harm; issues of autonomy and capacity in decision making; cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity; ethical challenges in complex or high risk scenarios; limitations and dilemmas in applying ethical principles in complex contexts; ethical considerations in the use of digital interventions and online mental health support; challenges in maintaining confidentiality and safeguarding in technology-mediated contexts.</i></p>

<p>3. Be able to apply theoretical models to complex mental health contexts</p>	<p>3.1 Analyse complex mental health presentations using psychological theory</p>
	<p><i>IC: Use of psychological theory to interpret behaviour and mental health presentations; application of biological, cognitive and social models to complex case material; analysis of symptoms, behaviours and underlying processes; consideration of individual differences and contextual influences; integration of multiple perspectives in understanding cases; value of theory based analysis in explaining complex presentations; limitations in applying theoretical models; implications for developing informed interpretations.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Evaluate the evidence base and suitability of intervention approaches for different psychological presentations</p>
	<p><i>IC: Evaluation of intervention approaches in relation to type and severity of psychological presentations; comparison of psychodynamic, cognitive and behavioural strategies across different presentations; consideration of individual differences, preferences and contextual factors; evaluation of effectiveness and suitability based on evidence; role of evidence informed approaches in informing understanding of interventions; limitations of standardised approaches across diverse cases; ethical and practical considerations in evaluating intervention approaches; consideration of contemporary factors including accessibility, cultural relevance and technological delivery when evaluating intervention approaches.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Justify psychologically informed interpretations of complex mental health presentations</p>
	<p><i>IC: Justification of interpretations using psychological theory and evidence; integration of biological, cognitive and social perspectives; consideration of individual differences, context and presenting issues; evaluation of alternative approaches and their implications; role of critical judgement in selecting appropriate frameworks; ethical considerations in interpreting complex needs; strengths of theory informed approaches in supporting understanding; limitations and challenges in applying theory to real world contexts.</i></p>

#### 4.5 Mandatory Unit 5: Individual Differences and Principles of Applied Psychology

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
5	Individual Differences and Principles of Applied Psychology	60	20	7	F/652/1924
<p>In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate individual differences in human behaviour, cognition and psychological functioning, and examine how these differences are measured, interpreted and applied across psychological contexts.</p> <p>Learners will explore key domains of individual differences, including personality, intelligence and psychological diversity, alongside the theoretical frameworks and empirical methods used to understand variation between individuals and groups. The unit develops the ability to analyse how psychological measurement is constructed and applied, including the strengths, limitations and ethical considerations associated with psychometric assessment.</p> <p>The unit emphasises the role of individual differences in shaping behaviour and experience, requiring learners to evaluate competing theoretical approaches, critically assess methods of measurement, and apply understanding analytically to real world contexts including organisational, educational and health-related settings.</p>					
<p><b>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</b></p>					
<p>Learners may be assessed through analytical assignments, critical evaluations of theory and measurement, case-based analysis and the application of individual differences to applied contexts.</p> <p>Evidence may be drawn from academic literature, empirical research, applied psychological contexts or realistic simulated scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with theories of individual differences, the ability to evaluate measurement approaches and psychometric tools, and the application of psychological understanding to variation in behaviour and experience using appropriate evidence.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand key theories of individual differences in psychology	1.1 Analyse major theories of personality, intelligence and individual variation
	<i>IC: Theories of personality including trait theories, biological approaches and social-cognitive perspectives; models of intelligence including psychometric, multiple intelligences and contemporary cognitive approaches; concepts of individual variation in behaviour, cognition and emotional functioning; theoretical assumptions underpinning stability and change in individual differences; interaction between biological, psychological and environmental influences; strengths and limitations of major theories in explaining variation between individuals and groups; contemporary approaches to understanding personality and intelligence in diverse and changing contexts; influence of digital environments on the expression of individual differences.</i>
	1.2 Evaluate the contribution of individual differences to understanding behaviour and mental processes
	<i>IC: Role of individual differences in shaping perception, cognition, emotion and behaviour; influence of personality and cognitive ability on decision making, performance and interaction; variation in responses to similar environments and experiences; contribution of individual differences research to psychological theory development; relevance for understanding diversity and complexity in behaviour; limitations of generalised explanations that neglect individual variation.</i>
	1.3 Assess the role of biological, cognitive and social factors in shaping individual differences
<i>IC: Genetic and neurobiological influences on personality, cognition and behaviour; cognitive factors including information processing and learning differences; social and environmental influences including culture, education and life experience; interaction between nature and nurture in shaping individual variation; developmental influences on individual differences across the lifespan; complexity and variability in psychological functioning; limitations in isolating individual factors within dynamic systems.</i>	

2. Understand psychological measurement and psychometrics	2.1 Analyse principles of psychological measurement and assessment
	<i>IC: Concepts of measurement in psychology including constructs, operationalisation and scale development; types of psychological measures including self-report, behavioural and performance-based assessments; role of standardisation and norm-referenced interpretation; measurement of personality, intelligence and other psychological constructs; challenges in capturing complex and abstract constructs; influence of context and response bias on measurement outcomes; use of digital tools and data in psychological measurement; emerging approaches to assessment using technology and large-scale data.</i>
	2.2 Evaluate the reliability and validity of psychometric instruments
	<i>IC: Types of reliability including internal consistency, test-retest and inter-rater reliability; forms of validity including construct, content and criterion validity; relationship between reliability and validity; evaluation of psychometric tools used in personality and intelligence assessment; strengths of standardised measures in supporting comparison and prediction; limitations including cultural bias, reductionism and measurement error; implications for interpreting psychological data; challenges in maintaining validity and fairness in culturally diverse and technologically mediated assessment contexts.</i>
	2.3 Assess the ethical and practical considerations in psychological measurement
	<i>IC: Ethical issues in psychological assessment including informed consent, confidentiality and appropriate use of data; risks of misinterpretation and misuse of psychometric results; cultural sensitivity and fairness in testing; implications of labelling and categorisation; ethical responsibilities in the interpretation and use of psychological measures; limitations of standardised assessment in diverse populations; challenges in ensuring equitable and responsible application of measurement tools.</i>
3. Understand the application of individual differences in psychological contexts	3.1 Analyse the role of individual differences in applied psychological settings
	<i>IC: Application of individual differences in organisational, educational and health contexts; influence of personality, ability and cognitive</i>

	<p><i>variation on performance and behaviour; role in selection, development and support strategies; impact of individual variation on learning, wellbeing and interaction; use of psychological profiling and assessment in applied settings; strengths of individualised approaches in addressing variability; limitations in predicting behaviour across contexts; application of individual differences in contemporary contexts including digital work environments, remote learning and online interaction; implications for performance and wellbeing.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Evaluate the use of psychometric and individual differences approaches in applied contexts</p>
	<p><i>IC: Use of psychometric tools in recruitment, education and health assessment; evaluation of effectiveness and limitations in applied contexts; interpretation of test results in relation to individual and contextual factors; role of evidence-informed approaches in selecting assessment methods; challenges in generalising findings across populations; ethical considerations in applied assessment; implications for fairness, bias and decision making.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Assess the contribution of individual differences to understanding diversity and inclusion</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of individual differences in shaping diverse experiences and outcomes; consideration of neurodivergence and variation in cognitive functioning; influence of social and cultural context on individual expression; contribution of psychological understanding to inclusion and accessibility; limitations of deficit-based models of difference; implications for promoting equitable and inclusive approaches in psychological research and applied settings; contemporary emphasis on inclusion, accessibility and recognition of neurodiversity; evolving perspectives on difference in psychological theory and applied contexts.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to apply understanding of individual differences to complex contexts</p>	<p>4.1 Apply theories of individual differences to interpret behaviour in real world scenarios</p>
	<p><i>IC: Application of personality, intelligence and cognitive theories to explain behaviour; interpretation of individual variation in applied contexts; integration of biological, cognitive and social influences; consideration of contextual and situational factors; use of theory to explain differences in performance, behaviour and interaction; strengths and limitations of theoretical application in dynamic environments.</i></p>

	<p>4.2 Evaluate the implications of individual differences for psychological research and applied psychology</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of individual variability on research design and interpretation; implications for sampling, generalisability and validity; role of individual differences in shaping research outcomes; application to evidence-informed analysis and the design of psychologically informed approaches; strengths of incorporating individual variation in psychological analysis; limitations in managing complexity and variability in research and applied contexts; implications of individual variability for interpreting behaviour in rapidly changing social and technological environments.</i></p>
	<p>4.3 Justify psychologically informed interpretations of individual variation using evidence</p>
	<p><i>IC: Justification of interpretations using theoretical and empirical evidence; evaluation of alternative explanations of individual differences; integration of measurement, theory and context in analysis; consideration of strengths and limitations of approaches used; role of critical judgement in interpreting psychological data; implications for developing balanced and evidence-informed conclusions.</i></p>

#### 4.6 Mandatory Unit 6: Research Methods in Psychology

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
6	Research Methods in Psychology	60	20	7	H/652/1925

In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate research methods and their application within psychological contexts.

Learners will examine research philosophies, methodological approaches and ethical considerations, and analyse how research informs psychological understanding, theory development and evidence informed analysis.

The unit develops the ability to design, justify and evaluate research approaches suitable for investigating complex psychological phenomena across a range of contexts.

The unit emphasises research as a core psychological capability, requiring learners to synthesise theory, methodology and critical understanding to develop a robust and feasible research proposal.

This unit prepares learners for independent research at postgraduate level, including progression to dissertation or thesis-based study.

#### Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Learners may be assessed through analytical assignments, methodological evaluations and the development of a research proposal.

Evidence may draw on academic literature, published research, secondary datasets or realistic simulated research scenarios.

Assessment must demonstrate critical evaluation, methodological justification and academic judgement appropriate to Level 7.

Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
	1.1 Evaluate the purpose of research in informing psychological theory and application

1. Understand the role of research in psychology	<i>IC: Research as a foundation for psychological knowledge; relationship between research, theory and application; evidence informed psychological knowledge; informing understanding of behaviour and mental processes; application in clinical, social and organisational contexts; limitations of research in explaining complex human behaviour.</i>
	1.2 Synthesise different types of research used in psychology
	<i>IC: Exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research; experimental and non-experimental research; qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches; laboratory and real-world research contexts; applied and theoretical research contexts; strengths and limitations of different research types in psychology.</i>
	1.3 Critically assess the limitations and challenges of using research to understand behaviour and mental processes
	<i>IC: Complexity of human behaviour; contextual and individual variability; ethical constraints; issues of bias and interpretation; replicability challenges; generalisability; reductionism versus holism; limitations of controlled research environments; contemporary challenges including replication crisis, publication bias and issues of transparency in psychological research.</i>
2. Understand research philosophies, approaches and design	2.1 Evaluate research philosophies and their implications for psychological research
	<i>IC: Ontology and epistemology in psychology; positivist, interpretivist and critical realist perspectives; reductionist and holistic approaches; determinism versus free will; nature versus nurture; implications for research design; alignment between philosophy, methodology and research questions.</i>
	2.2 Analyse research approaches and strategies relevant to psychology
	<i>IC: Deductive, inductive and abductive approaches; experimental design, quasi-experiments and correlational studies; case studies and longitudinal research; observational research; use of secondary data; methodological coherence in psychological research; use of digital data sources including online behaviour and large datasets; opportunities and limitations of contemporary research environments.</i>

	<p>2.3 Critically assess strengths, limitations and risks associated with different research designs</p> <p><i>IC: Validity and reliability; internal and external validity; ecological validity; researcher bias and demand characteristics; ethical considerations; feasibility and access; generalisability; managing complexity in psychological research design; ethical and methodological challenges in researching behaviour in digital and real-world settings; issues of data privacy and consent.</i></p>
<p>3. Be able to evaluate data sources, methods and analysis</p>	<p>3.1 Evaluate data sources used in psychological research</p> <p><i>IC: Primary and secondary data; experimental data, self-report measures and observational data; published datasets; data quality and limitations; ethical and legal considerations; data protection and confidentiality; reliability and bias in psychological data.</i></p> <p>3.2 Analyse qualitative and quantitative data collection methods</p> <p><i>IC: Interviews, focus groups and questionnaires; psychometric testing; behavioural observation; experimental tasks; sampling strategies; strengths and limitations of methods; digital and online data collection; ensuring methodological rigour; online data collection methods including surveys, behavioural tracking and digital observation; strengths and limitations of remote research methods.</i></p> <p>3.3 Evaluate analytical techniques used to interpret research data</p> <p><i>IC: Thematic analysis and content analysis; quantitative analysis and interpretation of psychological data, including descriptive and inferential statistics; use of software tools; integrating qualitative and quantitative findings; limitations of analysis; transparency and reproducibility; use of contemporary analytical tools and software; challenges in interpreting complex datasets and ensuring reproducibility.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to design and justify a psychological research proposal</p>	<p>4.1 Formulate a coherent and researchable question relevant to psychology</p> <p><i>IC: Identifying psychological research problems; linking theory and research; refining research questions and hypotheses; relevance to behaviour, cognition or mental health; feasibility and ethical considerations in psychological research.</i></p>

	<p>4.2 Develop a structured research proposal aligned to research aims and methodology</p>
	<p><i>IC: Research aims and objectives; literature positioning; methodological justification; research design and data collection methods; analysis plan; ethical considerations; participant considerations; project planning and timelines.</i></p>
	<p>4.3 Justify methodological and ethical choices within a research proposal</p>
	<p><i>IC: Justification of research design; evaluation of alternative approaches; ethical approval and professional standards; informed consent; confidentiality and participant welfare; limitations and risks; researcher reflexivity; readiness for independent research; consideration of contemporary research challenges including ethics, data protection and methodological transparency; alignment with current standards in psychological research.</i></p>

Document Specification:					
Purpose:	To detail the specification of the GA Level 7 Diploma in Psychology (610/7550/4) qualification.				
Accountability:	GA Governance Committee		Responsibility:	GA Compliance Manager	
Version:	1	Effective From:	June 2026	Indicative Review Date:	June 2031
Links to Ofqual GCR:	E3; G6; G7; H2	Other relevant documents:	GA Centre Handbook GA Candidate Access Policy GA Malpractice & Maladministration Policy GA CASS Strategy and General Moderation Policy GA Quality Assurance policy		