



Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Psychology Specification

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ASCENTIS' MISSION STATEMENT

About Ascentis

Ascentis was originally established in 1975 as OCNW, a co-operative scheme between Universities and Colleges of Further Education. Ascentis was the first 'Open College' in the UK and served the needs of its members for over 34 years. Throughout this period, OCNW grew yet maintained its independence in order that it could continue to respond to the requirements of its customers and provide a consistently high standard of service to all centres across the country and in recent years to its increasing cohorts of overseas.

In 2009 OCNW became Ascentis - a company limited by guarantee and a registered educational charity.

Ascentis is distinctive and unusual in that it is both:

- **An Awarding Organisation** regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)

and

- **an Access Validating Agency (AVA)** for 'Access to HE Programmes' licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

Ascentis is therefore able to offer a comprehensive ladder of opportunities to centres and their learners, including Foundation Learning, vocational programmes and progressing to QAA-recognised Access to HE qualifications. The flexible and adult-friendly ethos of Ascentis has resulted in centres throughout the UK choosing to run its qualifications.

ASCENTIS CONTACT DETAILS

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ASCENTIS LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE IN PSYCHOLOGY

Introduction

The Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Psychology is designed to provide learners with an effective experience in developing study skills and the initial stages of learning about the discipline in terms of the concepts, theories and perspectives which characterise Psychology. The Certificate is intended to offer progression to higher level study in Psychology and also to a range of other Social Sciences, Humanities and Care courses.

Aims

The aims of this qualification are

- To provide a range of academic study skills in Psychology at an introductory level as the basis for a range of related progression options
- To provide a foundation of academic study skills as the basis for a range of related progression options
- To provide an introduction to a number of substantive areas, basic concepts and theories within Psychology
- To provide an introductory level of application of Psychology to a limited number of issues of direct relevance to the interests of learners

Objectives

The objectives derive from the above aims.

- To direct and promote institutional and independent use of a range of key skills in an effective, academic context
- To encourage and direct institutional and independent learning skills in an effective, academic context
- To encourage learners to acquire a range of explanatory and evaluative skills with transferable applicability in Psychology
- To encourage adult learners to apply their experience and acquired academic discipline to an appropriate number of topics of both psychological and learner interest

Target Group

The qualification is aimed at learners who wish to develop a range of skills, gain an introductory knowledge of Psychology and who wish to progress to further study in a variety of courses.

Ofqual Qualification Number: 100/4915/0

Rules of Combination

To achieve the Certificate in Psychology the learner must successfully complete both mandatory units.

Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Psychology		
Title	Level	Unit ref
Definition and illustration of psychological concepts	Level 2	K/102/9504
Application of psychological concepts	Level 2	M/102/9505

Individual unit certification is available for both units.

Recommended Guided Learning Hours

The recommended guided learning hours for this qualification is 102

Total Qualification Time

The total qualification time for this qualification is 102

Time Limit for the Process of Credit Accumulation and Exemptions

Credit accumulation is usually within the life span of the qualification.

Recommended Prior Knowledge, Attainment and / or Experience

No recommended prior learning or experience is required. However learners and centres should be aware that the assessment of this Certificate requires basic research skills and skill in formal writing. Ascentis recommends that learners have literacy skills at Level 2 or above of the Regulated Qualifications Framework.

Age Range of Qualification

This qualification is suitable for young people aged 16 – 18 and adult learners.

Opportunities for Progression

It is intended that this qualification will help learners towards the following progression routes:

- Higher level study in Psychology
- Further study in a range of Social Science, Humanities and Care courses
- Employment in a wide variety of settings

Centre Recognition

This qualification can only be offered by centres recognised by Ascentis and approved to run this qualification. Details of the centre recognition and qualification approval process are available from the Ascentis office (tel. 01524 845046) or from the website at www.ascentis.co.uk.

Qualification Approval

If your centre is already a recognised centre, you will need to complete and submit a qualification approval form to deliver this qualification. Details of the qualification approval process are available from the Ascentis office (tel. 01524 845046) or from the website at www.ascentis.co.uk.

Registration

All learners must normally be registered with Ascentis within seven weeks of commencement of a course via the Ascentis electronic registration portal.

Status in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

This qualification is available in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is only offered in English. If centres based overseas or in Scotland would like to offer this qualification, a centre representative should make an enquiry to Ascentis.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

In the development of this qualification Ascentis has made every attempt to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to achievement. For learners with particular requirements reasonable adjustments may be made in order that they can have fair assessment and demonstrate attainment. There are also arrangements for special consideration for any learner suffering illness, injury or indisposition. Full details of the reasonable adjustments and special considerations are available from the Resources/Key Documents area of the Ascentis website www.ascentis.co.uk or through contacting the Ascentis office.

Enquiries and Appeals Procedure

Ascentis has an appeals procedure in accordance with the regulatory arrangements in the Ofqual *General Conditions of Recognition*¹. Full details of this procedure, including how to make an application, are available from the Resources/Key Documents area of the Ascentis website www.ascentis.co.uk or through contacting the Ascentis office.

¹ The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has developed some high level principles that cover the same requirements as the Ofqual Conditions. These are the SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles (2014).

ASSESSMENT AND VERIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS

Assessment

Learners will be assessed on two pieces of evidence: one assignment for each unit. Please refer to pages 9 and 12 for further details. Assessors should use the mark scheme provided as Appendix 1 when assessing learners' work.

Programme Management: Maintenance of Records and Data

Tutors are required to maintain the following information:

- A register of attendance
- A record of all assessment outcomes for each learner
- A copy of assignment titles, briefs and instructions given to learners, for all assessments for both units
- (Where applicable) A record of oral questioning. This must be agreed with the External Verifier before commencement of assessment
- Records of internal verification and internal standardisation activities
- Any other information relating to the operation of this qualification, especially anything that affects the assessment outcomes or a learner's ability to demonstrate fairly their skills, knowledge and understanding in assessment activities
- Centres are required to retain all learners' work for external verification and for 4 weeks afterwards should any appeal be made.

Supervised Conditions

- The assessment of Unit 2 must be conducted under supervision in a classroom environment. All materials relating to the course or the subject of Psychology (e.g. posters) must be removed
- Learners must be clear about the time of starting the assessment and its duration
- Learners must be issued with a set of questions on the day of assessment (as well as in advance - see page 12 for further details).
- Learners must be seated such that each has sufficient space to work comfortably but without seeing or interfering with the work of another learner
- Tutors should check all learners have sufficient paper to complete the assessment
- Tutors should formally start and end the assessment session
- Tutors should ensure that learners do not behave in a manner such that they are advantaged or another learner is disadvantaged
- Learners may not use text books, notes or other such materials

Tutor Support

Tutors are permitted to support the learner in understanding the nature of the assignment set and may signpost sources of information that learners may use in completing the task. However all evidence must be the learner's own work and produced by them without assistance from the tutor. Tutors must be able to confirm the authenticity of the learner's evidence and that the work assessed was produced unaided. Learners must declare the authenticity of their work by signature.

Internal Standardisation Requirements

Where this award is delivered by more than one tutor, the centre is required to undertake regular internal standardisation activities. The External Verifier must be provided with a copy of records, notes or minutes relating to this at verification.

Internal Verification

Centres are required to carry out internal verification activities for each unit. The first internal verification activity should take place when learners have completed Unit 1. It is expected that this will be about mid-programme according to the planning of the centre. The second internal verification activity should take place when learners have completed Unit 2. It is expected that this will be towards the end of the programme.

Learners' work must have been assessed by the tutor prior to internal verification taking place. The internal verifier should put in place a sampling plan at the start of the programme, selecting the sample in accordance with the guidance in the Ascentis document *Model of Verification for Ofqual Regulated Provision*. This document is available from the Resources/Key Documents area of the Ascentis website, www.ascentis.co.uk.

External Verification

Recognised centres will be visited in accordance with a verification model that is considered most appropriate for the provision. More frequent verifications can be requested from the Ascentis Quality Assurance team, for which there is usually an additional charge. External verification will usually focus on the following areas:

- A review of the centres management of the regulated provision
- The levels of resources to support the delivery of the qualification, including both physical resources and staffing
- Ensuring the centre is using appropriate assessment methods and making appropriate assessment decisions according to Ascentis' requirements
- Ensuring the centre has appropriate internal quality assurance arrangements as outlined within the relevant qualification specification
- Checking that the centre is using appropriate administrative arrangements to support the function of delivery and assessment

External Verifiers will usually do this through discussion with the centre management team; assessment and Internal Quality Assurance staff; verifying a sample of learners' evidence; talking to learners, reviewing relevant centre documentation and systems.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit 1: Definition and Illustration of Psychological Concepts

	Learning Outcomes
The learner will be able to	1. Identify and use simple definitions of a selected range of psychological concepts
	2. Describe some of the problems and implications for measurement and proof of a range of selected definitions
	3. Demonstrate the relationship between theory and application by reference to a range of theoretical statements and appropriate studies

Assessment Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Learners must write an essay or report (1000 – 1200 words) on a theory, model or principle in Psychology.▪ The tutor will provide assignment titles and clear assignment briefs from which the learner can make a choice.▪ All assignment titles and briefs should be approved by the External Verifier before they are issued to learners.▪ Learners must describe the main principles and ideas that underlie the chosen theory or model and offer straightforward and well understood arguments for and against that idea.▪ The submission should consist of a short introduction, a main body that sets out the arguments for and against, and a short conclusion.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit 2: Application of Psychological Concepts

Introduction

The tutor should choose **at least three substantive areas** and topics to be broadly representative of the range of interests of modern Psychology. However, the selection must also be made bearing in mind the learners' own experiences, interests and areas of expertise. The list of substantive areas from which such a selection is made is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it to be regarded as a list which must be fully covered.

	Learning Outcomes
The learner will be able to	Apply basic psychological concepts to a range of issues by drawing on at least three substantive areas, such as the examples given below

1 Developmental Psychology	
Cognitive development	Piaget's stages of cognitive development
	Jerome Bruner's view
	Influence of family and environment (including play) on cognitive development
Moral development	Freud's Psychodynamic model
	Social Learning Theory
	Piaget's view
	Kohlberg's theory of moral development
Perceptual development	Definition of perception
	Pattern perception (e.g. Frantz)
	Perception of depth and distance (e.g. Gibson and Walk, visual cliff)
	Readjustment studies (e.g. Stratton, Kohler)
	Deprivation studies

2 Adult Cognitive Processes	
Memory	Early research (e.g. Ebbinghaus)
	Multistore models
	Organisation in memory
	Levels of processing models

	Forgetting and memory loss (e.g. interference, motivated, forgetting and decay models)
Attention and Performance	Definitions of attention and selective attention
	Early research (e.g. Cherry)
	Broadbent's filter model
	Treisman's attenuation model
	Deutsch and Deutsch's pertinence model
	Dynamic processing model
	Studies of divided attention

3 Social Psychology	
Leadership and group processes	Formation of norms
	Social facilitation (e.g. Triplett)
	Studies of obedience (e.g. Milgram, Hofling, Zimbardo)
	Studies of conformity (e.g. Sherif, Asch, Crutchfield)
	Power and Leadership (Trait vs. Situational theories)
Prejudice and discrimination	Definitions of prejudice and stages (e.g. Allport, 1954)
	Authoritarian personality theories (e.g. Adorno)
	Cultural explanations
	Scapegoat theories
	Prejudice and social identity
	Changing prejudice
Interpersonal attraction	Physical attractiveness (e.g. Walster)
	Similarity and complementarity
	Familiarity and proximity
	Reciprocal liking
	Perceived fallibility
	Theories of attraction

4 Individual Differences

Personality	Defining Personality
	Trait and Type Theories (e.g. Eysenck and Allport)
	Psychoanalytic model
	Social Learning Theory
	Humanist models
	Cognitive models
Intelligence	Definitions of intelligence
	Early research (e.g. Spearman and Burt)
	Information processing models
	Intelligence tests (e.g. Alfred Binet and David Weschler)
	Gender and Intelligence
	Nature – Nurture debate
Adjustment and Abnormality	Definitions of abnormality
	Models of abnormality (e.g. Psychodynamic, Behaviourist, Humanist and Medical)
	Classifying abnormality
	One mental illness: schizophrenia, depression, eating disorders (e.g. anorexia nervosa)
	Medical therapeutic approaches
	Psychological therapeutic approaches

Assessment Method

- Learners must undertake a written assessment of up to 90 minutes under supervised conditions
- Tutors will provide a set of essay titles from which learners can make a choice.
- All essay titles should be approved by the External Verifier before they are issued to learners.
- Learners must address at least one of the essay titles and must do this under supervised conditions.
- Tutors should release the titles to the learners at any time during the programme of study, but at least 15 working days (3 weeks) in advance of the scheduled date of assessment.
- Tutors may assist learners to understand the nature of the assessment and of the essay titles; however, all work produced under supervised conditions must be the learner's own work, produced unaided.
- Learners may not use text books, notes or other such materials during the assessment.
- Learners must be given the date of the planned assessment in advance and informed about the assessment process. If a learner cannot make the planned assessment date for any reason, then s/he may take the assessment at an alternative date / location provided that supervised conditions are maintained.

Mark Scheme

Grade	Assessment Criteria
Achieved	<p>Minimum criteria: Demonstrates factually accurate knowledge of the substance of the work whilst leaving scope for improvements in range or depth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Facts and ideas presented in a clear manner which can be followed without difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> Directly relevant to the title. The content and conclusions relate back to the title <p>Minimum criteria: Demonstrates some knowledge of context of area of study with limited connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Main themes readily identified; explanations may be followed without difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> Makes an effective use of thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of appropriate sources <p>Minimum criteria: Essays demonstrate some research, requiring some improvements in presentation, focus and flow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses a possibly restricted but mainly appropriate range of source materials <input type="checkbox"/> Makes clear the important issues and sets out the main arguments for and against in key debates <p>Minimum criteria: Questions are addressed at a descriptive level without commentary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shows some appreciation of the issues explored <input type="checkbox"/> Coherent and clearly structured <p>Minimum criteria: Demonstrates some understanding of the concepts involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writes clearly in a style which is broadly acceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Supports argument by reference to a suitably wide range of relevant sources <p>Minimum criteria: Experimental / project reports show some grasp of the purpose of the study and of the requirements of presentation of research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Broadly addresses the title and key issues <input type="checkbox"/> Shows some evidence of independent thought and research <p>Minimum criteria: Experimental / project report may contain a limited number of sections in need of improvement but is largely complete and to convention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to set out the key arguments, resorting on notable occasions to assertion and implication requiring further analysis and development <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates effective use of a limited range of source materials
Referred for resubmission / did not achieve	<p>Essay / project has limited relevance to title.</p> <p>Description of theories models and issues if basic, rudimentary or flawed.</p> <p>Makes reference to some key issues but fails to explore them or relate them to the title.</p> <p>Some concepts or ideas are misunderstood or rely on personal assertions.</p> <p>The submission is poorly structured and / or difficult to follow.</p> <p>Poor range of relevant source material.</p>

Learners must achieve the minimum criteria or better on both pieces of formally assessed work to achieve the Certificate. Learners may take assessor feedback and make one further formal submission if the first piece of work does not achieve the minimum standards. However, assessors must not correct the work of a learner, and all feedback given by the assessor must be included with the learner's evidence.

Guidance on the documentation required from centres at verifications of the Level 2 Certificate in Psychology

Section of EV report	Nature of documentation required	Verification activity at which documentation required	Notes
Staffing	Staff CVs	Face-to-face visit	Must include details of personal qualifications and experience relevant to the Ascentis qualification(s) being externally verified. May also include details of relevant CPD activities.
	Staff CPD records	Face-to-face visit	Must include details of CPD activities relevant to the Ascentis qualification(s) being externally verified. CPD activities can be interpreted broadly and are not restricted to attending courses/events. Staff delivering CPD activities can log these as evidence of their own CPD. Details of CPD activities may be included on a CV.
Delivery and assessment	Initial assessment records	Face-to-face visit	Must show that learners have had an initial assessment.
	Learner inductions records	Face-to-face visit	Must show that learners have been given an induction for their Ascentis qualification(s). May be included in a scheme of work.
	Assessment records	1 st postal verification 2 nd postal verification	Must include details of when each learner was assessed for each unit/assignment within the Ascentis qualification(s) being externally verified.
Internal quality assurance (IQA)	IQA sampling plan	Face-to-face visit 1 st postal verification 2 nd postal verification	Must include details of when the IQA plans to sample each unit/assignment within the Ascentis qualification(s) being externally verified. Must also demonstrate compliance with Ascentis requirements for sampling units/assignments.
	IQA records	1 st postal verification 2 nd postal verification	Must include: details of when the IQA sampled each unit/assignment within the Ascentis qualification(s) being externally verified; the IQA's confirmation that evidence is current, authentic, relevant, valid and sufficient, and the IQA's feedback to each assessor. Must also demonstrate compliance with Ascentis requirements for sampling units/assignments.

	Standardisation activities records	1 st postal verification 2 nd postal verification	Only required when there are two or more assessors and/or two or more IQAs for a qualification. Must include outcomes of standardisation activities. May be in the form of minutes of meetings.
EV sampling record	Sample of learners' work Authenticity declaration Assessor feedback to learner	1 st postal verification 2 nd postal verification	Ascentis will notify the centre of the sample of work required. If the sample identified includes a learner who has withdrawn and/or a learner whose work is not available, then the centre should provide the work for the next learner on the class list. For each assignment in the sample, an authenticity declaration, signed by the learner, and the assessor's feedback to the learner, including the assessment decision, must be provided. All assignments/evidence should be clearly labelled, and if included within a portfolio, clearly referenced and organised so that all assignments/evidence can be readily identified and located by the EV.
	Mark sheets	2 nd postal verification	Must include details of: any unit(s) to be awarded; any unit(s) for which a learner is claiming exemption(s) and/or equivalence(s), and any unit(s) for which a learner is claiming recognition of prior learning (RPL).