



Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in
Psychology
Specification

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Version and Date	Change Detail	Section
V2 November 2025	Updated Review Date	Front Cover

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 learners.

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, England), Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA, Northern Ireland) and Qualifications Wales

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 students, 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.

There are several features of this qualification that make it very appropriate for its target learners:

- Unit certification is available for each of the units
- Verification and certification can be offered throughout the year, allowing maximum flexibility for centres
- Can be delivered either as a classroom-based course or as a blended learning programme
- Evidence can be generated within a wide range of organisational contexts allowing the qualification to meet the specific occupational requirements of the learners.

Aims

The aims of the qualification are to enable learners:

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

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.

Regulation Codes

Qualification Number (Ofqual): Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Psychology **100/4915/0**

Rules of Combination

To achieve the Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Psychology the learner must successfully complete both mandatory units.

Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Psychology				
Title	Level	Credit Value	GLH	Unit Code
Application of psychological concepts	Level 2	5	51	M/102/9505
Definition and illustration of psychological concepts	Level 2	5	51	K/102/9504

Unit certification is available for all units.

Guided Learning Hours

The recommended guided learning hours for this qualification is 102

Total Qualification Time

The total qualification time is 102

Time Limit for the Process of Credit Accumulation and Exemptions

Credit accumulation is usually within the life span of the qualification. Exemptions may have been achieved previous to the qualification start date; each case will be considered separately.

Recommended Prior Knowledge, Attainment and/or Experience

No recommended prior learning or experience is required.

Age Range of Qualification

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

Opportunities for Progression

This qualification is intended to provide a progression route into a range of Social Science courses at Level 3.

Resources to Support the Delivery of the Qualification

Ascentis has devised a learner workbook and tutor presentation resource for each unit in this qualification. The workbooks should support the delivery of the qualification but may not represent all learning material within the respective unit. They have been carefully designed and mapped to most assessment criteria; however, due to the nature of some assessment criteria, additional evidence may be required and tutors should always ensure this. The tasks may be contextualised for learners.

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 Customer Centre on 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 Customer Centre on 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 and Northern Ireland. It is only offered in English. If a centre based overseas (including Scotland) would like to offer this qualification, they 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 Customer Centre on the 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 Customer Centre on the website www.ascentis.co.uk or through contacting the Ascentis office.

¹In Northern Ireland it is the CCEA General Conditions of Recognition.

ASSESSMENT AND VERIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS

Assessment

All units are internally assessed through the learner building up a portfolio of evidence that covers the relevant assessment criteria, internally assessed and verified by the centre and then externally verified by Ascentis.

On completion of the learners' evidence for either the individual units or the certificate, the assessor is required to complete the Summary Record of Achievement for each learner. The Summary Record of Achievement asks assessors and the internal verifier to confirm that the rules of combination have been followed. The Summary Record of Achievement form is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

Centres are required to retain all evidence from all learners for external verification and for 4 weeks afterwards should any appeal be made.

Internal Assessment

Evidence for each unit is through building up a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that all the assessment criteria within the unit have been achieved. The evidence will be assessed by the assessor at the centre, who may or may not be the tutor teaching the course.

Portfolios of evidence should include a variety of evidence to demonstrate that the assessment criteria for each unit have been met. Examples of evidence that could be included are:

- Observation record
- Questions and discussions
- Photographs
- Video
- Worksheets
- Audio recordings
- Self-assessments
- Workbook activities
- Multiple choice tests

If the learner fails to meet the assessment criteria on the first attempt at an activity, they may redraft the work following feedback given by the tutor. However, tutors must not correct the work of the learner, and all feedback given by the tutor must be included within the learner's evidence.

Learners' portfolio work should include a tracking sheet to show where the evidence for each assessment criterion is to be found. Some activities could produce evidence for more than one unit, which is acceptable as long as there is clear reference to this on the tracking sheet. Examples of tracking sheets are found in [Appendix 2](#).

The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessments

There are potential risks associated with the use of AI in assessments, such as the possibility of bias and the potential for cheating.

Centres are expected to detect and monitor the use of AI tools in assessments. Centres must be satisfied that the work provided is that of the learner. All learners must be aware that they are responsible for ensuring they are not cheating in assessments by using AI tools. All learners must cite the use of AI in their assessments where this is allowed.

Verification

Internal Verification

Internal verification is the process of ensuring that everyone who assesses a particular unit in a centre is assessing to the same standards i.e. consistently and reliably. Internal verification activities will include: ensuring any stimulus or materials used for the purposes of assessment are fit for purpose; sampling assessments; standardisation of assessment decisions; standardisation of internal verification decisions. Internal Verifiers are also responsible for supporting assessors by providing constructive advice and guidance in relation to the qualification delivered.

Ascentis offer free refresher training in support of this role through an Ascentis Internal Quality Assurance course. The purpose of the course is to provide staff in centres with knowledge and understanding of Ascentis IQA processes and procedures, which will enable them to carry out their role more effectively. To book your place on a course or request further information, please contact the Ascentis Quality Assurance Team (qualityassurance@ascentis.co.uk).

Further information is available from the Resources/Key Documents section 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 Quality Assurers 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.

Knowledge, Understanding and Skills required of Assessors and Internal Verifiers

Centres must ensure that those delivering and assessing Ascentis qualifications are knowledgeable and competent within the relevant subject area.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all staff involved in the delivery of the qualification are appropriately qualified. Ascentis will not be held responsible for any issues that relate to centre staffing which could impact on the successful delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance of our qualifications.

Those delivering the qualification should preferably hold or be working towards a recognised teaching qualification. Assessors must be able to make appropriate assessment decisions. Internal Quality Assurers need to have knowledge and experience of the internal quality assurance processes.

Centres are required to ensure that appropriate training and support is in place for staff involved in the delivery, assessment and internal verification of Ascentis qualifications.

Ascentis offers free support for centres. Further information on the support that is available can be found on the Ascentis electronic portal or the Ascentis website.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Definition and illustration of Psychological Concepts

Credit Value of Unit: 5

GLH of Unit: 51

Level of Unit: 2

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will be able to	The learner can
1. Understand some key concepts in psychology	1.1 Define a selected range of psychological concepts from at least three of the following substantive areas of psychology: • Developmental psychology • Cognitive psychology • Social psychology • Individual differences
2. Understand some debates and studies relating to key concepts in psychology	2.1 Outline challenges in measuring and defining the selected range of psychological concepts making reference to relevant studies

Assessment Method

- Learners should produce a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates coverage of each of the learning outcomes and all of the assessment criteria identified above.
- Teachers must provide learners with clear assessment tasks that direct learners explicitly to addressing and meeting all of the relevant assessment criteria
- Assessment tasks may include one or more short answer type tasks and/or one or more essays

Indicative Content

Please note that the indicative content supplied below is intended as a suggested guide only.

1. Understand some key concepts in psychology

1.1 Define a selected range of psychological concepts from at least three of the following substantive areas of psychology:

- Developmental psychology
 - The development of attachments
 - Seeking proximity
 - Separation distress
 - Behaviour towards primary caregiver
 - Purposes of attachment
 - Safety
 - Prevention of anxiety
 - Promotion of emotional development
 - Stages of attachment
 - Stages in cognitive development
 - Child's active construction of knowledge
 - Social construction of knowledge
 - Guidance of experts
 - Scaffolding

- Cognitive psychology
 - Mental processes including:
 - Unconscious mental structures
 - Reconstructive memory
 - Different kinds of intelligence, including musical, interpersonal, spatial, visual and linguistic.
 - Short term and long-term memory, episodic and semantic memory.
- Social psychology
 - Social Learning
 - Observational Learning
 - Conformity
 - Obedience
- Individual differences
 - Culture, development, gender or personality.
 - Personality Concepts including types.
 - Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism.
 - Psychodynamic theories including Id, ego, superego and defence mechanisms

2. Understand some debates and studies relating to key concepts in psychology

2.1 Outline challenges in measuring and defining the selected range of psychological concepts making reference to relevant studies

Challenges in measuring and defining concepts:

- Ethical issues
- Methodological issues
- Access to participants
- Historical issues
- Competing definitions
- Nature of the concept

Debates arising from studies, including:

Loftus & Palmer Eyewitness Testimony (1974)

- Lack of ecological validity
- Degree of control

Asch' Conformity Experiment (1951)

- Lack of informed consent
- Bias of sample

Bandura's Bobo doll Experiment (1961)

- Ethical issues including harm and wellbeing of participants
- Confidentiality of participants

Milgram's Obedience Experiment (1974)

- Deception of participants
- Right of participants to withdraw

Zimbardo et al. Stanford prison experiment (1973)

- Lack of informed consent
- Leading of participants

Understanding the Application and Use Psychological Concepts

Credit Value of Unit: 5

GLH of Unit: 51

Level of Unit: 2

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will be able to	The learner can
1. Understand how different psychologists have applied and used psychological concepts in theories and studies	1.1 Describe competing theories relating to a range of selected psychological concepts from at least three of the following substantive areas: • Developmental psychology • Cognitive psychology • Social psychology • Individual differences
	1.2 Describe key studies relating to the selected psychological concepts
2. Understand strengths and limitations of theories and studies relating to psychological concepts	2.1 Outline strengths and limitations of theories relating to the selected range of psychological concepts
	2.2 Outline strengths and limitations of studies relating to the selected range of psychological concepts.

Assessment Method
• Learners should produce a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates coverage of each of the learning outcomes and all of the assessment criteria identified above. • Teachers must provide learners with clear assessment tasks that direct learners explicitly to addressing and meeting all of the relevant assessment criteria • Assessment tasks may include one or more short answer type tasks and/or one or more essays

Indicative Content
Please note that the indicative content supplied below is intended as a suggested guide only. 1. Understand how different psychologists have applied and used psychological concepts in theories and studies 1.1 Describe competing theories relating to a range of selected psychological concepts from at least three of the following substantive areas. • Developmental psychology ○ Bowlby's Theory of Attachment (1969, 1988) ○ Vygotsky's Theory of Cognitive Development (1934) ○ Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development (1936) • Cognitive psychology ○ Barlett's Theory of Reconstructive memory (1932) ○ Gardner & Gardner Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1969) • Social psychology ○ Asch's Conformity Theories (1951) ○ Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1961, 1963) ○ Milgram's Agency Theory (1963) ○ Zimbardo et al. Social Situation Theory (1973)

- Individual differences

- Eysenck's model of personality (1970)
- Freud's psychodynamic theory (1915)

1.2 Describe key studies relating to the selected psychological concepts

- Developmental psychology

- Bowlby 44 Juvenile Thieves (1944)
- Piaget's Conservation Tasks (1936)

- Cognitive psychology

- Loftus & Palmer Eyewitness Testimony (1974)
- Teaching Sign Language to a Chimpanzee, Gardner & Gardner (1969)
- Miller's Magic Number 7 (1956)
- Bahrick very long term memory experiment (1975)

- Social psychology

- Asch's Conformity Experiment (1951)
- Bandura's Bobo doll Experiment (1961)
- Milgram's Obedience Experiment (1974)
- Zimbardo et al. Stanford prison experiment (1973)

- Individual differences

- Eysenck's Personality Test (1970)

2. Understand strengths and limitations of theories and studies relating to psychological concepts

2.1 Outline strengths and limitations of theories relating to the selected range of psychological concepts

Developmental psychology

Positive

- Enables us to understand development at different ages
- Takes a holistic approach by considering nature and nurture

Negative

- Relies heavily on studies involving children
- Stages of development can be too rigid; children develop at different ages

Cognitive psychology

Positive

- Has led to developments in a variety of practical situations e.g. eye-witness testimony
- Regular use of lab-based experiments to back up theories

Negative

- Based on abstract concepts which reduces validity
- Does not take into account biological influences despite being a study of the brain.

Social psychology

Positive

- Helps us to understand and therefore manage social situations
- Experiments are carried out in naturalistic settings, which increases validity

Negative

- Often ethical issues with the studies involved
- Fails to take into account the concept of free will

Individual differences

Positive

- Provides a good insight into treating mental disorder
- Considered more holistic than other theories

Negative

- Sample sizes are not representative of the population at large
- Measures used to obtain data can be biased

- Developmental psychology
 - Bowlby's Theory of Attachment (1969, 1988)
 - Vygotsky's Theory of Cognitive Development (1934)
 - Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development (1936)
- Cognitive psychology
 - Barlett's Schema Theory (1932)
 - Gardner & Gardner Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1969)
 - Miller's Magic Number 7 (1956)
 - Bahrick very long term memory experiment (1975)
- Social psychology
 - Ash' Conformity Theories (1951)
 - Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1961, 1963)
 - Milgram's Agency Theory (1963)
 - Zimbardo et al. Social Situation Theory (1973)
- Individual differences
 - Eysenck's model of personality (1970)
 - Freud's psychodynamic theory (1915)

2.2 Outline strengths and limitations of studies relating to the selected range of psychological concepts:

- Developmental psychology
 - Bowlby 44 Juvenile Thieves (1944)
 - Piaget's Conservation Tasks (1936)
- Cognitive psychology
 - Loftus & Palmer Eyewitness Testimony (1974)
 - Teaching Sign Language to a Chimpanzee, Gardner & Gardner (1969)
- Social psychology
 - Asch' Conformity Experiment (1951)
 - Bandura's Bobo doll Experiment (1961)
 - Milgram's Obedience Experiment (1974)
 - Zimbardo et al. Stanford prison experiment (1973)
- Individual differences
 - Eysenck's Personality Test (1970)

APPENDIX 1

Summary Record of Achievement Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Psychology

Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Date completed	Assessor Signature	Internal Verifier Signature (if sampled)
Definition and Illustration of Psychological Concepts	Level 2	5			
Application of Psychological Concepts	Level 2	5			

Learner Name _____

Minimum Credit Value of Qualification 10

I confirm that the minimum number of credits at the appropriate level have been achieved in order for a claim for certification to be made. I can confirm that the credit has been achieved from the correct combination of mandatory and optional units as specified within the Rules of Combination.

Assessor Signature _____

Internal Verifier Signature (if sampled) _____

APPENDIX 2

Tracking Sheet

Definition and Illustration of Psychological Concepts

Criteria	Assessment Method	Evidence Details	Portfolio Reference	Completion Date
1.1 Define a selected range of psychological concepts from at least three of the following substantive areas of psychology: • Developmental psychology • Cognitive psychology • Social psychology • Individual differences				
2.1 Outline challenges in measuring and defining the selected range of psychological concepts making reference to relevant studies				

The above evidence has been assessed against the standards and has been judged for validity, authenticity, currency, reliability and sufficiency.

Learner Signature _____ Date _____

Assessor Signature _____ Date _____

Internal Verifier (if sampled) _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 2

Tracking Sheet

Application of Psychological Concepts

Criteria	Assessment Method	Evidence Details	Portfolio Reference	Completion Date
1.1 Describe competing theories relating to a range of selected psychological concepts from at least three of the following substantive areas: • Developmental psychology • Cognitive psychology • Social psychology • Individual differences				
1.2 Describe key studies relating to the selected psychological concepts				
2.1 Outline strengths and limitations of theories relating to the selected range of psychological concepts				
2.2 Outline strengths and limitations of studies relating to the selected range of psychological concepts.				

The above evidence has been assessed against the standards and has been judged for validity, authenticity, currency, reliability and sufficiency.

Learner Signature _____ Date _____

Assessor Signature _____ Date _____

Internal Verifier (if sampled) _____ Date _____