POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY FUNDAMENTALS

LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE
COURSE SPECIFICATION

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Psychology Guild

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United Kingdom

Additional Note

This course serves as "Module 1" on the following joint certifications:

- Level 5 Diploma Positive Psychology Coaching Practice
- Level 5 Diploma Positive Psychology Training Practice
- Level 5 Diploma Positive Organisational Psychology
- Level 7 Diploma Applied Positive Psychology Research

For further details on these certifications, please click on the above hyperlinks.

COURSE SPECIFICATION

LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE (PPQS-01)
POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY FUNDAMENTALS

Course Design

This course was designed by **Positive Psychology Education Specialists**. It consists of online academic learning (research, theory, and application) with links to personal development and growth. The course level is set at 5. This level is equivalent to a university or college foundation degree in the UK.

Course Purpose

The purpose of the course is to develop learner knowledge and understanding of the science and philosophy of **Positive Psychology**. It integrates knowledge-based links to other schools of thought in Psychology and introduces aspects of Philosophy. It also references links to Society & Culture where relevant for insight and application.

Course Accreditation

This course is accredited by the **Positive Psychology Guild** which is a Not for Profit Organisation and a government registered learning provider with a UK Provider Reference Number: 10067939. PPG is also a CPD Group Certified Provider dedicated to raising the standards of training and continuing professional development.

Delivery Format

The course content is delivered online in a user-friendly format and a group tutor is assigned at the start of the course. Learners access their course materials through an online learning platform, the **Positive Psychology Academy**, where they may create a personal profile and connect virtually with other students. Tutor support is provided via email and video calls. Learners are also placed in online unit support groups in the Academy to strengthen their learning through peer exchange.

Programme Outline

The course learning covers the following elements:

- Character Strengths & Virtues
- Authenticity, Self & Identity
- Resilience, Wellbeing & Positive Growth
- Positive & Negative Emotions
- Motivation, Needs & Goals

All elements are mandatory areas of study and assessment.

Assessment Matrix

Students completing this qualification are assessed formatively and summatively according to the following three Key Competencies:

- Key Competency 1
- Key Competency 2
- Key Competency 3

They learn how to read academic sources (e.g. journal articles), how to think critically about, discuss, and synthesise their arguments, how to reflect critically on self in relation to subject, and how to present their findings orally (e.g. via class discussion or formal presentation) and in written format (e.g. literature review, reflective log). For further information on the Assessment Matrix, please see Appendix 1.

Total Completion Time

The **Total Completion Time** is 180 hours. This consists of taught and guided learning hours (120 hours) and independent research and assignments (60 hours).

Typically, each unit consists of 6 hours of group tutoring and 16 hours of further reading, reflective practice, and completion of an online quiz. Each assignment is allocated 20 hours for completion; this includes background reading, research, drafting, and completion of the assignment for formal submission.

The course is designed to be completed within 12 months. Students may progress through the course from Unit 1 to Unit 5 in linear fashion. They may also join the course at any unit and complete the units in any order. They may take a maximum of 24 months to complete the course and submit their final assignments.

Course Credits

This qualification consists of **18 credits.** One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning. The credits are distributed as follows:

- Psychology of Strengths (2 credits)
- Psychology of Authenticity (2 credits)
- Psychology of Resilience (2 credits)
- Psychology of Positive Emotions (2 credits)
- Psychology of Motivation (2 credits)
- Reflective Practice (2 credits)
- Course Assignments (6 credits)

Entry Requirements

Learners must be 18 years or over, hold a Level 3 certification or above (or the equivalent, e.g. A-levels plus relevant work experience) and be willing to engage in Level 5 academic studies with personal development components in an online learning environment in the English Language.

Student Profiles

This course is ideal for someone who has been introduced to **Positive Psychology** through reading books and engaging in shorter online courses. They will have a basic understanding that Positive Psychology is the scientific and philosophical study of wellbeing and flourishing, and will be looking to deepen their knowledge in this regard through academic studies and personal growth.

Students may also be considering the possibility of further training as a Positive Psychology Practitioner and/or seeking to apply to a Level 7 research qualification or a Masters degree in Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP).

Learner Differentiation

The Academy has a **learner differentiation process** in place for exceptional assessments based on individual student needs. For example, a student who cannot complete a written assignment for various reasons (e.g. dyslexia) may be assessed orally in a way that demonstrate the required key competencies for that assignment.

Advanced students (e.g. those with a strong background in academic research) may be given more autonomy in their assignment design and presentation format. Autistic students' communication needs may be taken into account (e.g. if oral communication causes too much anxiety, tutor exchange may be in writing instead).

Learner Wellbeing

The Academy encourages an appropriate balance for each student between academic performance (e.g. assignments, class participation) and wellbeing. Beyond formal assessment, students are invited to explore and apply at a personal level through **self-reflection and self-interventions** relevant concepts and theories of Positive Psychology and its related disciplines of Psychology, Philosophy, and Sociology, throughout their course learning. They may share their insights, findings, and questions within a group learning environment (e.g. during class or via the online Academy social group discussion threads) and with their tutor.

Course Outline

Course Induction

This preliminary prepares students for academic learning and engagement in the online course learning materials. Students also introduced to research skills, reflective practice, and Positive Psychology values that may inform wellbeing-centred learning.

Unit 1: The Psychology of Strengths

This unit introduces Character, Personality, Strengths & Virtues, Skills & Talents, and Mindful Engagement of Strengths & Virtues as pathways to eudaimonic and subjective wellbeing and flourishing for individuals, groups, and communities.

Unit 2: The Psychology of Authenticity

This unit introduces Authenticity, Self & Identity, Social & Group Influence, Humanistic Approaches to Self-Development, and the Fully Functioning or "Whole" Person as pathways to eudaimonic and subjective wellbeing and flourishing.

Unit 3: The Psychology of Resilience

This unit introduces Resilience & Stress, Trauma & Post Adversarial Growth, Acceptance & Compassion, and Developmental Perspectives on Self & Relationships as pathways to eudaimonic and subjective wellbeing and flourishing.

Unit 4: The Psychology of Positive Emotions

This unit introduces Emotions & Emotional Intelligence, Negative Emotions & States, Positive Emotions & States, and various Positive Psychology Interventions as pathways to eudaimonic and subjective wellbeing and flourishing.

Unit 5: The Psychology of Motivation

This unit introduces Motivation & Human Needs, Motivation & Emotion, Motivation & Behaviour, Change Management, Hope, Fear & Courage, and Confidence as pathways to eudaimonic and subjective wellbeing and flourishing.

Assignment Types

Students will complete 3 of the following assignments:

- Literature Review (2,500 words +/- 10%)
- Reflective Log (2,500 words +/- 10%)
- Self-Intervention (2,500 words +/- 10%)
- Oral Presentation (10-15 minutes, recorded)

Certification

On successful completion of this course, students will receive a certificate titled **Level 5 Certificate Positive Psychology Fundamentals**. They may apply what they have learned to themselves and within an existing professional role (e.g. teaching, counselling, management) and use PPGCert as letters after their name.

Learner Progression

To become a **Certified Positive Psychology Practitioner or Researcher**, a student may progress from this course to any of the following courses:

Practitioner Qualifications

- Level 5 Diploma Positive Psychology Coaching Practice
- Level 5 Diploma Positive Psychology Training Practice
- Level 5 Diploma Positive Organisational Psychology

Research Qualifications

- Level 5 Diploma Positive Psychology Fundamentals (Accelerated Route 5)
- Level 7 Certificate Applied Positive Psychology Research

A student may also progress to further studies in Positive Psychology with another qualifying body (e.g. Masters degree in Applied Positive Psychology, or MAPP). Entry criteria is set by that institution. A student set of transcripts and Academy reference is available to support such applications on request.

Cultural Diversity, Neurodiversity & Inclusion

PPG welcomes cultural diversity, neurodiversity, and inclusion in the workplace and amongst its student base. Students are expected to follow the **Academy Community Engagement Guidelines**, which request them to abide by the following:

- Communicate with care and respect for others;
- Be open to opinions and beliefs that may differ from your own;
- Respect diversity, neurodiversity, and differences (e.g. age, faith, gender);

Students are introduced to the Community Engagement Guidelines during the Academy orientation and induction session, and are reminded of them throughout their online learning process (e.g. within the online study groups).

Funding

PPG offers **payment plans** to students who cannot make a single course fee payment during enrolment to help make learning more accessible. These payment plans include a deposit during enrolment followed by monthly instalments and are mentioned on the course website page and during the application process.

Integrity

PPG strives to match **course applicants** to courses for which they are best suited. To do this, it offers course enquirers the opportunity to speak with a member of the Academy team prior to submitting a formal application. The team member will provide relevant course information in an impartial manner and allow the enquirer to make their own decision on whether to apply to the course.

On welcoming a student onto their course, PPG is making a commitment to support that individual in the completion of the course. Adult learning can raise challenges given the multiple demands people are facing today. We encourage learners to choose the **optimal timing** for their course engagement and set aside sufficient time and energy to engage in their learning process to protect their wellbeing.

Appendix 1

Key Competency 1

This Key Competency assesses three main strands of competence and relates to the technical side of academic writing in selecting, ordering and presenting material and demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of academic theories within Positive Psychology. It includes:

1. **The ability to select, organise and present research, evidenced by:**
    a. effective time management and planning as evidenced by the overall academic and professional presentation, structure and content of the assignment;
    b. evidence of extensive reading evidenced by the appropriate reference of key academic scientific papers and literature and an extensive bibliography.
2. **The ability to demonstrate the appropriate academic research techniques and processes, evidenced by:**
    a. the compilation of research and efficient selection of materials gleaned from appropriate academic scientific papers and literature;
    b. effective distribution and use of research available to support explanation of key concepts in Positive Psychology.
3. **The ability to demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of Positive Psychology, evidenced by:**
    a. an engagement with academic scientific papers and literature through an appropriate and relevant use of evidence and examples drawn from the literature to demonstrate depth of understanding;
    b. an engagement with and use of academic scientific papers and literature to explore and enhance key concepts in Positive Psychology.

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Key Competency 2

This Key Competency assesses a different academic ability that requires an ability to critically assess and evaluate the knowledge and understanding of academic theories within Positive Psychology in an impartial, objective manner that reflect an academic standard of professional engagement with the materials studied. It includes:

1. **The ability to differentiate between, and identify:**
    a. key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches of scholars;
    b. summarise the precise details of arguments presented.
2. **The ability to appreciate the practical implications of the application and outcomes of key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches evidenced by:**
    a. an understanding of how the key methodologies, theories and approaches studied align with, and fall within the overall structure of Positive Psychology;
    b. an understanding of the impact of the key methodologies, theories and approaches studied in relation to Positive Psychology practice.
3. **The ability to critically analyse, reflect upon and evaluate through:**
    a. the ability to question, challenge and evaluate the key methodologies, theories and approaches studied;
    b. demonstrating evidence, through critical reflection, of independent thoughts, arguments and synthesis of the key methodologies, theories and approaches studied and identify any gaps in research and/or possible ways forward.

Key Competency 3

This Key Competency is exclusively for assessment of the Reflective Log and Self-intervention assessments and are combined with KC2. It looks towards a more practical application of Positive Psychology and requires the ability to critically assess and evaluate the knowledge and understanding of academic theories within Positive Psychology in relation to the personal and practical context of Positive Psychology develop these skills of reflection and introspection to a professional standard.

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In general, this competency involves three key areas:

1. **Reflect:** a commentary on how an analysis of personal experience(s) may validate / verify / reflect or relate to research findings and observations – this is an objective, critical and academic (not subjective) 'step back' with an 'open mind' to reflect upon on oneself in relation to the subject focus.
2. **Introspect:** what does this mean in relation to me? what does it tell me about myself? – this is a 'step within' that generates insight into how things are currently working through 'objective' investigation. There is also a vital element of reflexivity (the skill of being able to identify or reveal any personal bias); when applied, this skill reveals, questions and may challenge any pre-existing personal values and assumptions held by the student.
3. **Inform/direct:** this includes 'synthesis' and also an identification of how this informs the student about gaps in research and a possible 'way forward', trying to identify the best (optimum) interventions to develop/fulfil/self-actualise towards a place of flow and flourishing in terms of our well-being etc. in a practical way.

This is assessed accordingly by three strands…

1. **Engagement with a Reflective Practice by:**
    a. demonstrating sustained, focused and insightful reflections on a specific aspect of Positive Psychology;
    b. developing an understanding of self over a period of time through introspection, assessing the significance of this for further development (1) and (2).
2. **Appreciating the links between theories within Positive Psychology and the practical context to which they can be applied by:**
    a. evaluating the complexities that can arise in translating research into practice;
    b. for example, making sense of emotional, cognitive, somatic and behavioural processes (2) and (3).
3. **Critically analyse and synthesise personal reflections:**
    a. through an identification the effectiveness of interventions, self-interventions and other approaches within Positive Psychology (3);
    b. to uncover any subjective pre-existing assumptions through the skill of reflexivity (2).

A Glossary of Some Key Terms

Select, organise and present research (KC1)	This means keeping to the word count and being efficient with language whilst still being effective. It also means presenting research in a coherent manner that is logical, reasoned, and decisive.
Effective distribution and use of research (KC1)	This means judging how much research is included - not too much but not too little - and that it is grouped thematically rather than lots of separate points (e.g. grouping scholarly evidence together).
Summarise (KC2)	This is the ability to be economical with words whilst not losing the key aspects of research or argument being presented. Attention is paid to the length of the assignment (words or time limit).
Critical Analysis (KC1&2)	This means to inspect the details of an argument very carefully, making pertinent observations, drawing comparisons, identifying uncertainties, raising questions that may challenge evidence presented.
Critical Reflection (KC3)	Critical reflection is a bit like engagement or commentary but more challenging. Questions may be raised or positions taken. E.g. however, in observing this, does this mean that? Or, this signals a gap in...

Independent thought (KC2&3)	This is where engagement in critical analysis and critical reflection provide the basis on which to suggest a solution, argument, or further ideas. This is typically expressed in third person.
Synthesis (KC2&3)	This means the subtle ability to consider a range of evidence, sometimes conflicting, and draw out positive consistencies or provide a more focused solution as a way forwards.
Reflexivity (KC3)	This means the ability to identify and check for any personal assumptions, values, views or biases, and bracket these so that evidence may be considered from a state of "epoche" or suspension of judgment.

Key Competency 1 Band Descriptors

Distinction (70%+)	**You have distinguished yourself, demonstrating full competence by excelling in the ability to:** • select a wide range of materials through extensive reading that demonstrates highly effective use of time management in the time available to you • organise and access the full range of materials available to you by gathering, planning and compiling research efficiently • present a concise and highly precise overview of the appropriate scientific papers and literature with great accuracy
Merit (55-69%)	**You demonstrate a high level of competence in being able to:** • select from a range of the materials available through a sufficient breadth of reading that demonstrates an effective level of time management in the time available to you • organise and access a variety of materials available to you by gathering, planning and compiling your research to a competent standard • present an accurate overview of the appropriate science and literature
Pass (40-54%)	**You have successfully met the benchmark criteria by demonstrating the ability to:** • select from some of the materials available through a selection of readings that demonstrates competence in time management in the time available to you • organise and access some of the materials available to you by gathering, planning and compiling your research to the threshold standard • presented a general overview of the appropriate scientific papers and literature
Further Development (0-39%)	**Your work requires some further development in order to successfully meet the benchmark criteria by:** • select from further materials available through a selection of additional readings to demonstrate competence by investing more time in research • organise and access more of the materials available to you by gathering from further sources, planning carefully and compiling your research to the threshold standard • present a less general and more specific overview of the appropriate scientific papers and literature available

Key Competency 2 Band Descriptors

Distinction (70%+)	**You have distinguished yourself, demonstrating full competence by excelling in the ability to:** • make a highly accurate differentiation between, and a thorough, clear and precise identification of, key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches of scholars and can summarise the precise details of arguments presented • to fully appreciate the practical implications for the application and outcomes of key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches and identify accurately any research gaps • to critically analyse and reflect upon the materials studied through clear independent thoughts, arguments and synthesis and/or through questions, challenges and evaluation
Merit (55-69%)	**You demonstrate a high level of competence in being able to:** • make some accurate differentiation between, and make a clear and precise identification of, key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches of scholars and can summarise some key details of arguments presented • to appreciate some key aspects of the practical implications for the application and outcomes of key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches and be generally aware of research gaps • to critically analyse and reflect upon the materials studied through some evidence of clear independent thoughts, arguments and synthesis and through questions, challenges and evaluation
Pass (40-54%)	**You have successfully met the benchmark criteria by demonstrating the ability to:** • make a general differentiation between, and identification of, key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches of scholars and can provide a general summary of some details of arguments presented • to appreciate some aspects of the practical implications for the application and outcomes of key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches and may be aware of some research gaps • to critically analyse and reflect upon the materials studied with occasional evidence of clear independent thoughts, arguments and synthesis and through questions, challenges and evaluation
Further Development (0-39%)	**Your work requires some further development in order to successfully meet the benchmark criteria by:** • separating the Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches of scholars and individually summarising them • to raise questions about what key Positive Psychology methodologies, theories and approaches mean in practice and identify any gaps you can find in the research you have drawn upon • to use the theories to respond to and create your own arguments and think of questions you want to ask about the materials studied

Key Competency 3 Band Descriptors

Distinction (70%+)	**You have distinguished yourself, demonstrating full competence by excelling in the ability to:** • engage fully in a sustained, focused and insightful self-reflection throughout your work in relation to the specific Positive Psychology concepts that are the focus of study • fully appreciate the link between the theories studied, your personal research conclusions, and the practical context to which they can be applied, whilst being able to effectively identify any potential or pre-existing personal bias • critically analyse and synthesize your personal reflections that assess comprehensively the significance of these in relation to your personal research conclusions and/or independent/original theories/views
Merit (55-69%)	**You demonstrate a high level of competence in being able to:** • engage in regular and effective self-reflection and insights into some key aspects of your work in relation to the specific Positive Psychology concepts that are the focus of study • appreciate some clear links between the theories studied, your personal research conclusions and the practical context to which they can be applied, whilst attempting to identify any potential or pre-existing personal bias • apply some critical analysis and synthesis of your personal reflections and make some attempt to assess the significance of these in relation to your personal research conclusions
Pass (40-54%)	**You have successfully met the benchmark criteria by demonstrating the ability to:** • partially engage in some key self-reflection within your work in relation to the specific Positive Psychology concepts that are the focus of study • have a general appreciation of the overall link between the theories studied, your personal research conclusions and the practical context to which they can be applied, taking some account of any potential or pre-existing personal bias • demonstrate some basic, or implied, critical analysis and/or synthesis of your personal reflections beyond narration or description and try to make an overall assessment of the significance of these in relation to your personal research conclusions
Further Development (0-39%)	**Your work requires some further development in order to successfully meet the benchmark criteria to:** • move beyond narration and description to 'step back' and demonstrate a process of self-reflection in relation to the specific Positive Psychology concepts that are the focus of study • link theories of Positive Psychology to their practical context and to consider any potential or pre-existing personal bias • develop the skills of critically analysis and synthesis of your personal reflections through questions, identifying practical challenges and evaluating the impact of these challenges

"The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times... the best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limit in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile."

MIHALYI CSIKSZENTMIHALYI