

Technical Qualifications

Key Stage 4 Technical Awards FAQs

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City & Guilds Technical Awards FAQs

Technical Awards are part of a suite of Technical Qualifications for 14-19 year olds which the Department for Education (DfE) approves annually for the following categories:

1. Technical Awards – level 1 & 2 qualifications for key stage 4 students (14-16 year olds)
2. Technical Certificates – level 2 qualifications for key stage 5 students (16-19 year olds)
3. Tech Levels – level 3 qualifications for key stage 5 students (16-19 year olds)

General Questions

Q. What is a Technical Award?

A. Technical Awards are vocational or technical qualifications at levels 1 or 2. They don't focus on a particular occupation or job (e.g. bricklayer/bricklaying) and therefore don't limit a 16 year olds progression opportunities by being too narrow. They can be taken by key stage 4 students as part of a broad and balanced key stage 4 curriculum.

All City & Guilds Technical Awards are Level 2 qualifications and have been approved for funding for 14-16 year olds under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act.

Q. How are Technical Awards approved?

A. The Department for Education (DfE) set out requirements for Technical Awards in the technical guidance for awarding organisations. Each year AOs submit their qualifications to DfE for approval. The qualifications which are approved are included in DfE's list of Technical Awards which is published on the gov.uk website.

Q. Who are Technical Awards for?

A. Technical Awards are for key stage 4 students aged 14-16 (last 2/3 years of secondary education, in years 9, 10, 11). They can be studied over one, two or three academic years. City & Guilds' three newly approved Technical Awards will first count in the 2024 performance tables.

Q. What are Technical Awards for?

A. City & Guilds Technical Awards are high-quality level 2 qualifications that offer breadth and depth of study and equip students with applied knowledge and associated practical skills. Technical Awards give students an opportunity to study an industry sector or occupational group, and/or to develop some practical and technical skills. They are not designed to focus on a particular occupation or to prepare a student for a particular job, or to develop competency or specific skills for a particular job role.

Q. What is a Purpose Statement?

A. For each Technical Award. A purpose statement sets out the aims and objectives of the qualification, what the student will study, and the knowledge and skills that a student will develop through this qualifications. City & Guilds purpose statements can be used by centres to promote the qualifications to students and can be found under the document section of each Technical Award.

Q. Who can deliver City & Guilds Technical Awards?

A. Schools (academies, free schools, studio schools etc.) university technical colleges (UTCs), private training providers, colleges (students attending college part-time, or colleges with a full-time 14-16 offer). All types of providers will need approval from City & Guilds to offer a Technical Award.

City & Guilds Technical Awards

Q. Does City & Guilds have any Technical Awards approved for key stage 4 students?

A. Yes. City & Guilds currently has three Technical Awards approved for teaching from September 2022 that will count in school performance tables from 2024.

- Level 2 Technical Award in Constructing and Maintaining the Built Environment 6720-24 QAN 610/0657/9
- Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies 0170-24 QAN 610/0652/X
- Level 2 Technical Award in Hair and Beauty Studies 3038-24 QAN 610/0656/7

Key Stage 4 (14-16) performance tables

Q. Do Technical Awards count in school performance tables?

A. Yes. Up to three technical awards count alongside GCSEs in school performance tables in the "open" category/group (see note on discounting below). The open category can include Technical Awards and other GCSEs such as drama, dance, PE, art and design etc. City & Guilds' three approved Technical Awards will count in school performance tables from 2024.

Q. Do City & Guilds Technical Awards count in Progress 8 and Attainment 8 (performance measures for schools)?

A. Yes. From 2016, the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 performance measures will count up to three Technical Awards as part of the "open" group of subjects. The other five slots are reserved for English, Maths and other EBacc subjects (history, geography, science, computer science, languages).

Progress 8 is a performance measure which measures the progress made by the student across 8 subjects from the end of key stage 2 (the end of primary school) to the end of key stage 4. Further information about Progress 8 can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Attainment 8 is a performance measure which measures the students' attainment across 8 subjects (the eight best grades in the qualifications taken at the end of key stage 4).

Discounting codes

Q. Do any of City & Guilds Technical Awards have Discounting Codes?

DfE assigns discount codes for Technical Awards where a qualification is judged to have significant overlap in terms of content and learning with another qualifications e.g. GCSE in Art & Design and a Technical Award in Art & Creative Design and therefore cannot count twice in the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 performance measures.

Information about discount codes can be found [here](#).

DfE requirements	City & Guilds design principles
Size - minimum 120 Guided Learning Hours GLH	All City & Guilds' Technical Awards are 120 GLH
Declared Purpose – awarding organisations have to publish a purpose statement for each Technical Award	All City & Guilds' Technical Awards have a purpose statement which sets out the aims, objectives and intended purpose for each Technical Award. They can be found under the document tab under purpose and recognition.
Content – must focus on an applied study of an industry sector, offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating core knowledge and the opportunity to acquire small number of practical and technical skills	All City & Guilds' Technical Awards have met this requirement. Achievement of a Technical Award does not signify occupational competence.
External assessment – Technical Awards must include an end assessment set by the awarding body and this must contribute to the overall grade. For these updated Technical Awards, due to their assessment structure, this means that both the examination and synoptic assessment must take place at the end of the programme.	All City & Guilds' Technical Awards have an externally marked exam which is set (and marked) by CITY & GUILDS to test knowledge and understanding. This contributes 40% to the overall mark/grade. To allow candidates to certificate within the KS4 year if they fail the examination on their first attempt, we have amended the grading arrangements (see Grading section in the qualification handbook); removing the requirement to pass the assessments for certification
Synoptic assessment – Technical Awards must include synoptic assessment. This means that the assessment requires a student to use skills, techniques, theories and knowledge from across the whole of the qualification.	All City & Guilds' Technical Awards include a synoptic assignment which is set by City & Guilds and contributes 60% to the overall mark/grade. This requires students to use knowledge and skills acquired from all units in the Technical Award.
Grading – Technical Awards must be graded.	All City & Guilds' Technical Awards are graded Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*.

Q. Do City & Guilds key stage 5 qualifications at levels 2 and 3 follow a similar format to key stage 4?

A. No. Key stage 5 qualifications have to follow DfE's requirements for Technical Certificates and Tech Levels, which are different to the requirements for key stage 4. All technical qualifications have to include external assessment and synoptic assessment and have a one resit restriction for Level 2 and two resit restriction for Level 3. However, technical qualifications at key stage 5 are competency and skills based, so students develop the skills required for a particular job role and employer involvement is required in the delivery and/or assessment of the qualification.

DfE's requirements can be found [here](#).

Assessment

Q. How are City & Guilds Technical Awards assessed?

A. All City & Guilds Technical Awards are assessed through an externally set and externally marked exam, and a synoptic assessment.

The exam is taken on a set date and time, via a paper-based version of the exam. The exam contributes 40% of the overall mark. The dates of the exam are set each year (see question on exam dates below).

The exam is designed to assess the student's depth and breadth of understanding across content of the qualification, using a range of question types. The exam must be sat under invigilated examination conditions. See [JCQ requirements](#) for details.

Q. When are the exams?

A. City & Guilds publishes an exam timetable in the autumn term each year, setting out the exam dates for that academic year. This year's timetable can be found on the Technicals resources and support page.

Q. What is a synoptic assessment?

A. Synoptic assessment is a form of assessment which requires a student to demonstrate that s/he can identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from across the whole vocational area, which are relevant to a key task.

A synoptic assessment requires students to identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from across the content area.

Q. Who sets the synoptic assessment/assignment?

A. The synoptic assignment is set by City & Guilds. It is marked by the centre's tutors and externally moderated (by City & Guilds). The assignment will include written and practical tasks. Students will be assessed against the assessment objectives.

Q. Can tutors give feedback to students on their synoptic assignment?

A. No. The assignment is a substantial piece of work which has to be carried out independently and there will be no opportunity for tutors to provide feedback to students during the summative assessments for the assignment, as it is students' independent performance that is being assessed. Students can only be supported in understanding what they have to do and given general pointers, without specific feedback on actions to take or quality of work. Any level of this support provided must be recorded.

Q. How much time is allocated for the synoptic assessment/assignment for Technical Awards?

Assignments will typically take between 6-15 hours depending on the Technical Award. Centres should distribute and manage the time available based on the nature of the assignment. The assignments usually take the form of a briefing for the students. The brief will typically give a detailed account of a scenario, so that the student can use this to draw on both the theory and skills they have learned, to identify and develop an end product or outcome that can be judged as to its fitness for purpose in relation to the client scenario. The time allocated should give students time to plan, prepare, complete the tasks and produce the evidence.

Q. When are the synoptic assignments available?

A. Centres have a window of opportunity open until 30 October to ask for any clarification on the synoptic assignment tasks. Further information is available on the website. This will allow centres time to plan and prepare for the assessments and obtain the resources required. Centres are required to maintain the security of all live assessment materials. Assignments will be password protected and released to centres through a secure method.

Q. When can students complete the synoptic assessment?

A. The synoptic assessment can be completed by students at any time between the release of the synoptic assignment in the spring term and the date set by City & Guilds when marks and evidence has to be submitted.

Q. When do centres have to submit the marks for the synoptic assignment to City & Guilds?

A. Please refer to website and key dates checklist for confirmation of 2024 dates. Centres will be required to maintain the security of all live assessment materials. Assignments will be password protected and released to centres through a secure method..

Q. Can a student retake the exam?

A. Yes. However, the terminal rule means that only the exam result from their final series is used towards their qualification result.

Q. Can a student retake the synoptic assessment?

A. Yes. However, it is possible to fail the synoptic assignment and still achieve the qualification. The re-sit opportunity will be in the next academic year, and the assignment will be different to the assignment set for the previous year.

Q. Who marks the synoptic assessment/assignment?

A. The synoptic assessment is set and externally moderated by City & Guilds. The assignments are internally marked by tutors who have been internally standardised and are available in a set window at the end of the learning period. A different version of the assignment will be provided each year, but the evidence produced will be internally marked using the same marking grid each year, in order to support comparability across versions.

Q. What is internal standardisation?

A. Internal standardisation must be carried out on the centre's internal marking of the synoptic assignment to ensure that all assignments at the centre have been marked to the same standard. It is the Internal Quality Assurer's (IQA's) responsibility to ensure that internal standardisation has taken place, and that tutors receive training including the use of sample synoptic assignments and marking grids.

Q. How is the synoptic assessment for the Technical Award moderated?

A. City & Guilds uses external moderators to carry out sample remarking of centre-marked work to determine how closely the centre's marking aligns with the common standard implemented by moderators. Their marks act as a benchmark to inform City & Guilds whether the centre's marking is in line with the national standard. The outcome of this exercise dictates whether, and by how much, a centre's marks should be adjusted in order to bring them into alignment with the set standard.

Q. How is a student's work authenticated?

A. The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that internal assessments are conducted in accordance with City & Guilds' requirements.

City & Guilds requires both tutors and students to sign declarations of authenticity. If the tutor is unable to sign the authenticity statement for a particular student, then the student's work cannot be accepted for assessment.

Q. How is the overall grade decided for the Technical Award?

A. The overall qualification grade will be calculated based on aggregation of the student's achievement in each of the assessments, taking into account the assessments' weighting. Technical Awards will be reported on a four grade scale: Pass, Merit, Distinction, Distinction*.

Both assessments (the external exam and the synoptic assignment) must be achieved at a minimum of Pass for the qualification to be awarded. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for the Pass grade for an assessment will not have a qualification grade awarded and will not receive a certificate. The contribution of assessments towards the overall qualification grade is set out in each Qualification Handbook. Please see [here](#) GCSE equivalent grades.

Q. Can a student be awarded a level 1 if he/she doesn't achieve the pass grade for the level 2 Technical Award?

A. No. City & Guilds Technical Awards are Level 2 qualifications and a student who does not achieve a pass grade at level 2 cannot be awarded a level 1 grade.

Q. Do students have to complete work placement/experience as part of a Technical Award?

A. No. City & Guilds Technical Awards do not require students to complete a work placement/experience.

Q. Is employer involvement a requirement of City & Guilds Technical Awards?

A. No, employer involvement is not a requirement of City & Guilds Technical Awards. Employer involvement is a requirement for Level 2 Technical Certificates and Level 3 Tech Levels for students over the age of 16.

Resources

Q. What resources does City & Guilds have for the Technical Awards?

A. City & Guilds has qualification handbooks, sample assessment materials and resources lists which can be found in the documents tab under each qualification.

City and Guilds has produced key stage 4 guidance for centres on the resources and support page.

Q. What resources will I need to deliver the Technical Awards?

A. City & Guilds has produced resource lists to indicate the physical and consumable resources that are required to deliver each Technical Award. These can be found on the City & Guilds website alongside the Qualification Handbook for each Technical Award.

Student Registrations

Q. If I register students for a Technical Award in year 1 of a two-year programme, does the registration carry over to the second year?

A. Yes.

Tutor qualifications

Q. Which qualifications do tutors need to hold to deliver the Technical Awards?

A. Tutor requirements are set out in the qualification handbook for each Technical Award.

Q. Do tutors/internal moderators need to have an IQA qualification?

A. No. The requirements for staff carrying out internal standardisation are set out in the qualification handbook for each Technical Award.

Centre and Qualification Approval

Q. How do I get approval to offer a Technical Award at my centre?

A. If your centre is already an approved City & Guilds centre, you will need to submit a qualification approval form to City & Guilds. If your centre isn't an approved City & Guilds centre, you will have to submit a Centre Approval and Qualification approval form.

For further information on how to become a City & Guilds centre, please visit our website.

Q. I have just submitted a centre approval form. How long will it take to process my application?

A. City & Guilds will contact your centre within 30 days to arrange for an approval visit by an external quality assurer.

Q. If we seek and gain approval for a Technical Award, will we automatically get approval to offer the Technical Certificate or Tech Level in the same subject area?

A. No. You will need to apply for approval for individual qualifications. However you can submit one approval form for a Technical Award/Level 2 Technical Certificate/Level 3 Advanced Technical in the same subject area.

Q. If we seek and gain approval for a Technical Certificate or Tech Level, will we automatically get approval to offer the Technical Award in the same subject area?

A. Yes.

Q. Can my centre have direct claims status for Technical Awards?

A. No. As the marking of the end exam and external moderation of the synoptic assignment is undertaken by City & Guilds, the grades are awarded by City & Guilds.

Q. If a student wants to do a Level 3 Tech Level at the age of 16/17, do they need to have done a Technical Award beforehand?

A. No. As Technical Awards are not focussed on developing the skills and competencies for a particular job, a Technical Award is not a requirement for progressing to a Technical Qualification at level 2 or 3 qualification at the age of 16/17. At key stage 5, the entry requirements for level 2 Technical Qualifications and level 3 tech levels are set by providers. In some cases, a level 2 Technical Certificate is required to allow students to develop the necessary competencies and skills before progressing to a level 3 Tech Level.

Q. We will be starting to deliver City & Guilds Technical Awards in September over a two year programme of study. When will we need to register our students?

A. You will need to register your students by the end of October in the first year of delivery.

Q. Who can I contact if I have any further questions?

A. If you have any further questions please contact directsales@cityandguilds.com



About City & Guilds

Since 1878 we have worked with people, organisations and economies to help them identify and develop the skills they need to thrive. We understand the life changing link between skills development, social mobility, prosperity and success. Everything we do is focused on developing and delivering high-quality training, qualifications, assessments and credentials that lead to jobs and meet the changing needs of industry.

We work with governments, organisations and industry stakeholders to help shape future skills needs across industries. We are known for setting industry-wide standards for technical, behavioural and commercial skills to improve performance and productivity. We train teams, assure learning, assess cohorts and certify with digital credentials. Our solutions help to build skilled and compliant workforces.

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