Technical Qualifications

Key Stage 4 Technical Awards Information Guide

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City & Guilds Technical Awards Key Stage 4

City & Guilds Level 2 Technical Awards give students an opportunity to explore specific industries, experience hands-on practical learning and develop related technical skills.

City & Guilds Technical Awards* have been approved by the Department for Education (DfE) to count in Key Stage 4 performance tables. These qualifications are for key stage 4 students aged 14-16 (in the last two / three years of secondary education, in years 9, 10, 11). At 120 GLH, they are equivalent to one GCSE and can be studied over one, two or three academic years. Up to three Technical Awards count in Progress 8 and Attainment 8 performance measures as part of the 'open' group of subjects.

Discounting codes

Technical Awards are given a discounting code by DfE if they have significant overlap with the content of other GCSEs and/ or Technical Awards. This means that two qualifications with the same discounting codes cannot both count in the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 performance measures.

Learn more about Key Stage 4 discount codes on the government website.

*City & Guilds Technical Awards are available at Level 2 only.

Key Stage 4 performance tables

Up to three Technical Awards count alongside GCSEs in school performance tables in the 'open' bucket/group (see note on discounting below).

The open bucket can include Technical Awards and other GCSEs such as drama, dance, PE, art and design etc. 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 and languages).

Progress 8 is a performance measure which measures the progress made Discounting codes by the learner across 8 subjects from the end of Key Stage 2 (the end of primary school) to the end of Key Stage 4.

Further information can be found on the government's website.

Attainment 8 is a performance measure which measures the learners' attainment across 8 subjects (the eight best grades in the qualifications taken at the end of Key Stage 4) at Level 2 (GCSE Grade 4 and above).

What's available?

City & Guilds has three Level 2 Technical Awards approved to count in 14-16 performance tables.

Qualification title	QAN	C&G code	Approved for 2024 performance tables	Approved for 2025 performance tables	Approved for 2026 performance tables
City & Guilds Level 2 Technical Award in Constructing and Maintaining the Built Environment	610/0657/9	6720-24	√	√	√
City & Guilds Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies	610/0652/X	0170-24	√	√	√
City & Guilds Level 2 Technical Award in Hair and Beauty Studies	610/0656/7	3038-24	√	√	√

Grading and performance points

The government has allocated performance table points for all KS4 qualifications including Technical Awards and GCSEs.

The table to the right shows the City & Guilds Level 2 Technical Award grades, GCSE grades and performance table points for comparison.

The overall qualification grade will be calculated based on the aggregation of the points awarded for the student's achievement in the theory exam and the synoptic assessment which are converted into grades. Technical Awards will be reported on a four grade scale: Pass, Merit, Distinction, Distinction*.

A full list of approved KS4 qualifications can be found on the Department for Education website.

City & Guilds Grade	GCSE performance points
D*	8.5
D	7
M	5.5
P	4

This table shows how the grades awarded for Technical Awards compare to those of GCSEs.

Ofqual may alter these grades in line with GCSE grading 9-1 where a formula may be applied to allocate the percentage of learners who can be awarded a Distinction*.
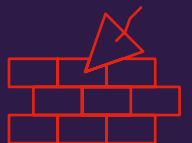
Level 2 Technical Award in Constructing & Maintaining the Built Environment

(6720-24)

This qualification allows learners to explore the construction and built environment industry. It's particularly suitable for learners who enjoy practical, hands-on tasks, but also want to discover how buildings are constructed and what happens when they require repair, maintenance or refurbishment. As part of the course, learners will look at the structure of the construction and built environment industry and how different job roles work together to deliver construction projects. Learners will develop an understanding of what makes a building and how the selection of different materials affects the overall look and feel. Learners will have opportunities to carry out a selection of realistic practical construction tasks related to the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of a building.

This qualification has four units:

- Working in the built environment
- Construction methods and materials
- Maintenance, repair and refurbishment of buildings
- Using tools to construct and maintain buildings.

Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies

(0170-24)

This qualification allows learners to explore how land is used for the purposes of housing, infrastructure, energy production, forestry production, farming and leisure, field and adventure sports. Learners will explore the changing trends and developments in land use, as well as enhancements in technology. Learners will have opportunities to develop plant and animal husbandry skills. As part of the course, learners will explore how historical land use and management has changed from a greater emphasis on food production to an emphasis on sustainability, environmental management and public access. In addition, learners will understand how science plays a major role in the modern land-based sector by investigating different parts of the industry, roles of plants/crops and animals, whilst considering the importance of biosecurity.

This qualification has three units:

- Exploring the use of land
- Application of science in the land based sector
- Application of technology in the land based sector.
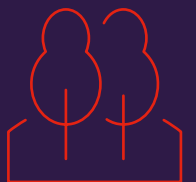
Level 2 Technical Award in Hair & Beauty Studies

(3038-24)

This qualification allows learners to explore the exciting world of hair and beauty and the environment in which its industries operate. Learners will explore historical trends and developments and how hair and beauty has developed from ancient times to the present day. The qualification gives learners an opportunity to investigate how science is used to create products, the ethics of product testing, effects of ingredients on hair and skin and how disorders of the hair and skin can impact services. In addition, learners will understand the importance of images for business use and develop hair styling, make-up and manicure technical skills to produce their own photographic images.

This qualification has three units:

- Exploring the world of hair and beauty
- Science of hair and beauty
- Design in the hair and beauty sector.

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

If your centre is already an approved City & Guilds centre, you will need to submit a qualification approval form to City & Guilds via Walled Garden.

If your centre isn't an approved City & Guilds centre, you will need to read the information on how to become a City & Guilds centre to ensure you meet the criteria.

The next step is to submit a Customer Application Form and then a **Centre Approval form**. There is a cost for applying for centre and qualification approval, but schools and charities are exempt from the minimum spend threshold and student numbers.

Centres may have an External Quality Assurance (EQA) visit to assess the centre's suitability to offer the qualification(s) and support the centre in preparing for delivery.

Who can deliver City & Guilds Technical Awards?

Approved centres can be schools (academies, free schools, studio schools etc.), University Technical Colleges (UTCs), private training providers and colleges.

How are City & Guilds Technical Awards assessed?

City & Guilds Technical Awards are assessed through one externally set and externally marked theory exam and a synoptic assessment.

The theory exam is a paper-based dated examination taken on a set date and time either within a summer series or autumn series. This exam is mandatory, and contributes 40% of the overall grade.

The synoptic assignment is a controlled assessment which is a mandatory component and contributes to 60% of the overall grade. Students have to complete a piece of work independently which is marked by tutors and externally moderated by City & Guilds. The synoptic assignment is available to be viewed by centre staff in the autumn term but students are only permitted to see this from January. There is a 12-week window during the spring and summer terms when students have to complete the assessment.

Grading

A candidate must complete both the theory exam and the synoptic assignment, but it is possible for a candidate to achieve their Technical Award without passing both components. The overall qualification grade is calculated based on the aggregation of the marks awarded for the theory exam and the synoptic assessment. These marks are converted into grades - Pass, Merit, Distinction, and Distinction*.

Theory Exam

The exam is designed to assess a student's depth and breadth of understanding across content in the qualification at the end of the period of learning, using a range of question types. The exam contributes to 40% of the overall mark.

Exams are all paper-based and dated entry. They are scheduled in a summer series and an autumn series.

The dates and times of the exams are published in an exam timetable which is available on the Technicals Resource Hub. Exam papers are dispatched to centres two weeks before the exam date.

Centres must comply with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) requirements for keeping question papers and other exam materials secure, and must be conducted under invigilated examination conditions. See the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations for details.

The terminal assessment rule applies to Technical Awards where an assessment by examination must be taken at the end of a pupil's course of study.

Synoptic assignment

The synoptic assignment is a controlled assessment that is set by City & Guilds.

The assignment includes written and practical tasks and has to be undertaken within a set window (February to May). The synoptic assignment material is uploaded onto the relevant qualification page of the City & Guilds website in the autumn term. The assignment is password protected, with the password available in Walled Garden.

There is only one opportunity in each academic year for students to complete the synoptic assignment. Students who fail the synoptic assignment will have one opportunity to resit. The resit opportunity will be in the next academic year. The assignment will be different to the assignment set for the previous year. T

he synoptic assignment is marked by the centre's tutors and subject to internal standardisation prior to being externally moderated by City & Guilds. Learners will be assessed against the assessment objectives.

Students must complete a substantial piece of work which they carry out independently. Tutors cannot provide feedback to students during the summative assessments for the assignment, as it is learners' independent performance that is being assessed. Students may only be supported in understanding what they have to do and given general pointers, without specific feedback on their actions or the quality of work.

Any support provided must be recorded on the tutor's assessment forms.

Time allowed for the synoptic assessment is given in the synoptic assignment pack which is produced each year. The time allowed gives students time to plan, prepare, complete the tasks and produce the evidence. Students do not have to complete the assignment in one day. Centres can plan the schedule for the synoptic assignment according to the number of students within the cohort, the physical resources and tutor availability.

A different version of the synoptic 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.

Internal standardisation must be carried out on the centre's marking of the synoptic assignment to make sure 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.

External moderation of the synoptic assignment

City & Guilds uses external moderators to carry out sample remarking of the synoptic assignment to determine how closely the centre's marking aligns with the common standard implemented by the moderators.

Their marks act as a benchmark to inform City & Guilds whether the 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.

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 the synoptic assignment.

City & Guilds Moderation Portal

Marks and evidence for the synoptic assignment must be submitted via the City & Guilds Moderation Portal.

The Moderation Portal is an online platform which supports the moderation process. Centres are given logins and passwords to access the platform. The Moderation Portal allows centres to:

• Enter marks for students' synoptic assignments

• Upload samples of evidence, including students' evidence and tutor's assessment forms, as per the requirements of the assessment.

City & Guilds moderators then access the Moderation Portal to view the centre's marks for each student and a sample of their evidence, in order to remark a proportion of the students' work.

Information on quality assurance procedures and a guide to using the Moderation Portal can be found on the Technical Qualifications Resource Hub on the City & Guilds website.

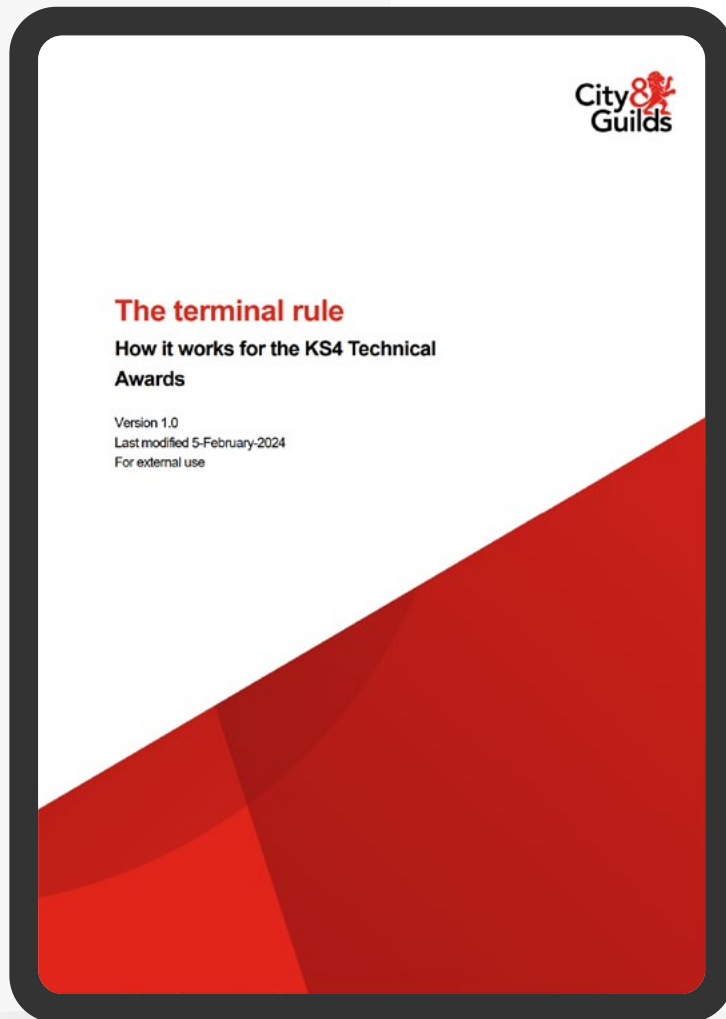## Technical Awards and the terminal rule

What is the terminal rule?

A 'terminal rule' applies to the examination component of KS4 Technical Awards which specifies:

An assessment by examination must be taken at the end of a student's course of study ('terminal assessment') and this must contribute at least 40% of the total marks available for the qualification. Ofqual's QLCs require that students must use towards their final overall grade the result of the assessment by examination sat in the series in which they are completing the course. This should typically lead to students sitting the assessment by examination at the end of year 11.

The terminal rule

How it works for the KS4 Technical Awards

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This means that the exam must be taken in the student's final assessment series of a City & Guilds Technical Award. Students may attempt the synoptic assignment within the same series and submit marks and evidence (or they may do this within an earlier series), but the exam must be taken in the final series when they intend to complete the qualification.

Centres must notify City & Guilds that it is the student's final assessment series through a process known as 'cashing in'. The cash-in acts as a termtime checkpoint and lets City & Guilds know that the student needs an overall qualification result in that series to be able to progress.

If a student takes the exam in a series before the synoptic assignment is submitted, this would be considered as a practice attempt and would not contribute to their final qualification result. The student must take the exam again in their final assessment series, the centre must 'cash-in', and that exam result would be used towards the student's final qualification result.

For more information on the terminal rule, please refer to our detailed guidance available within the KS4 area of the Technicals Resource Hub, 'The Terminal Rule - how it works for the KS4 Technical Awards'.

The cash-in approach (for certification)

Where a student has decided to certificate, and for the terminal rule to be applied correctly, centres must inform City & Guilds they wish to claim the certification for a student. This is often referred to as a 'cash in' or 'claim'.

In order to cash-in a student's qualification result, centres must accurately submit data as part of the VTQ Timely Delivery of Results checkpoint activity. Data must be submitted for all students who have active registrations ahead of published deadlines which are communicated to all centres delivering Technical Qualifications.

Within the data submission, centres must identify their students who are due to finish / complete the qualification within the upcoming series and to submit data for the student as 'Y' (Yes) – due to complete or claim certification, or 'N' (No) – not due to complete or claim certification. Remember that the student must take the exam component within this final series as part of the terminal assessment rule.

City & Guilds will use this checkpoint data as a centre's request to cash-in a qualification result for Key Stage 4 Technical Awards. Full information regarding the submission process for this checkpoint activity, and the timelines involved, can be found on the City & Guilds VTQ Information Hub.

VTQ Timely Delivery of Results

It is vital that City & Guilds is able to release results on time.

Full information can be found on our VTQ Information Hub, including:

- Qualifications in scope of the Ofqual VTQ measures

- Responsibilities and actions for centres

- Key dates and deadlines for the checkpoints

- Information and guidance on our processes, including data submission, updating contact information, and timelines of the checkpoint activity

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring their centre has made the relevant registrations, assessment entries and has submitted all required information to City & Guilds on time.

Once centres have submitted the checkpoint data for students who are registered on a qualification, you can identify whether there are any students who do not have all required assessment entries and do not currently meet the full rules of combination based on entries and/or results.

This helps to ensure no student is disadvantaged and has the opportunity to achieve their qualification on time.

Let us know who to contact

We want to ensure we get the right information to the right people.

We've simplified the way centres provide and maintain key contact information for Technical Qualifications. You can now provide and update this information within Walled Garden.

You can independently maintain the contact details for your designated contacts, qualification leads and all key centre staff in one simple to use contact management page. Centres must ensure that the information for Senior Designated Contacts, Qualification Leads and key Centre Staff is kept up to date throughout the academic year. Our teams will use the contacts provided to communicate with centres delivering Technical Qualifications, as well as for the distribution of email updates throughout the year.

In order for us to reach the right people, it is vital therefore that you maintain your contact details on Walled Garden. Details on how to do this, and further information regarding the types of contact information needed, can be found within the Manage Your Centre Contacts page on our VTQ Information Hub.

Contact us

For further information relating to Technical Qualifications, please refer to the relevant qualification page and qualification handbook for further information. Alternatively, you can contact the relevant Technical Advisor for qualification specific queries, or your Business Manager.

- E: customersupport@cityandguilds.com
- T: 0300 303 5352
- W: cityandguilds.com/technical

About City & Guilds

Since 1878, City & Guilds has been dedicated to advancing the skills that people, organisations and societies need to thrive, both now and in the future.

As the global skills partner, we empower organisations to grow by creating and delivering comprehensive end-to-end solutions. These include high-quality skills training and credentials designed to meet the evolving needs of industries and workforces. Through our trusted network of colleges and training provider partners, learners across the globe develop skills and competencies that lead to employment and career progression.

Each year, over 5.1 million learners of all ages and backgrounds benefit from City & Guilds learning programmes, which have contributed £15.3bn to society in the UK alone. We champion workforce development and technical training routes that drive social mobility, prosperity, and success. By working closely with industries and governments, we also advocate for improvements across the global skills landscape.

Our City & Guilds Foundation amplifies this purpose by focusing on high-impact social investment, recognition, and advocacy programmes. These initiatives aim to remove barriers to employment, celebrate best practice on the job, and advocate for jobs of the future.

City & Guilds Training, Gen2, Intertrain, ILM, Kineo and The Oxford Group brands are all a part of City & Guilds.

For further information please visit cityandguilds.com/about-us

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