

The terminal rule

How it works for the KS4 Technical Awards

Version 1.1

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For external use

Document revision history

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1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• References to the legacy qualifications removed.• Link to the Key Stage 4 Technical Awards Information Guide added• Examples added and reordered into categories.	28 February 2025
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1. Introduction

This is a guide for the KS4 Technicals Awards, which are approved for performance tables from 2024. The qualifications are:

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

Each qualification has two components:

Theory exam	Synoptic assignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dated - summer and autumn series• Externally marked	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment window - summer series only• Internally marked, externally moderated

For Technical Awards, candidates don't need to pass each assessment to achieve the qualification. However, the terminal rule places restrictions on when the exam can be taken. This document outlines the purpose and principles of the terminal rule. It also includes examples of how it operates for City & Guilds qualifications.

For more information on claim certification, please see the [Key Stage 4 Technical Awards Information Guide](#).

2. Overview of the terminal rule

2.1. Background and purpose

The terminal rule is designed to prevent malpractice and minimise any unfairness to learners. It applies to all Technical Awards, for all awarding organisations. As the qualifications are on performance tables, there could be an incentive for some centres to achieve certain grades. The terminal rule was introduced to minimise this risk and give awarding organisations more control around standard setting at qualification level.

2.2. The terminal rule

This is specified in the [assessment requirements](#) within the Ofqual qualification conditions for [Performance table qualifications](#). The rule is:

An awarding organisation must ensure that –

- a) each Learner takes an Assessment by Examination through which at least 40% of the total marks for the qualification are available in the final assessment series, that being the assessment series in which the Learner requests certification for the qualification; and
 - b) the result achieved by the Learner in the Assessment by Examination in that series is used towards their overall qualification grade.
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2.3. Principles

The key principles are:

- Candidates must take the theory exam in the series in which they certificate.
- Only the result for the theory exam taken in that final series can contribute to the overall qualification result.
- If a candidate takes the theory exam in a series before they certificate, those results cannot contribute to the qualification – even if they got a higher grade in the previous sitting.
- For school performance table points, it is always the first qualification result which counts, irrespective of whether a candidate re-certificates at a later date.

3. Terminal Rule Scenarios

3.1. Examples with a single attempt at each assessment

3.1.1. Linear

This is how the qualifications were intended to be delivered.

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam				✓
Synoptic assignment				✓

Qualification result can be claimed – Summer Year 11

3.1.2. Synoptic assignment in year 10

This is also possible within the rules.

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam				✓
Synoptic assignment		✓		

Qualification result can be claimed – Summer Year 11

3.1.3. Sitting the exam in Year 10, before the synoptic assignment

If the exam is not sat in the candidate's final series, the candidate **cannot** achieve the qualification, as shown below:

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam		✓		
Synoptic assignment				✓

No qualification result

Action required: the candidate will need to resit the exam in the Summer of Year 11 to receive a qualification result.

3.1.4. Certification in Year 10

It is possible to achieve the qualification in Year 10, as shown below:

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam		✓		
Synoptic assignment		✓		

Qualification result can be claimed – Summer Year 10

Warning: the result will **not** count towards performance tables in England, if the qualification is completed in Year 10.

3.2. Examples with the Autumn series

3.2.1. Synoptic assignment in year 10 (with autumn series)

This is permitted, however, it may reduce the amount of time available for teaching so centres should consider this when planning their programmes.

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam			✓	
Synoptic assignment		✓		

Qualification result can be claimed – Autumn Year 11

3.2.2. Sitting the exam before the synoptic assignment

If the exam is not sat in the candidate's final series, the candidate **cannot** achieve the qualification, as shown below:

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam			✓	
Synoptic assignment				✓

No qualification result

Action required: the candidate will need to resit the exam in the Summer of Year 11 to receive a qualification result.

3.3. Examples with resits

3.3.1. Resitting the synoptic assignment

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam				✓
Synoptic assignment		✓		✓

Qualification result can be claimed – Summer Year 11

In this scenario, whichever is the highest result out of the two attempts at the synoptic assignment will be used towards the qualification grade. However, centres should bear in mind that it is possible to pass the qualification without passing the synoptic assignment.

3.3.2. Resitting the exam and the synoptic assignment (summer series)

The candidate will receive two qualification results.

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam		✓		✓
Synoptic assignment		✓		✓

Qualification result can be claimed – Summer Year 10 and Summer Year 11

The second qualification will be based on:

- the exam result from the final series (Summer in Year 11),
- the best of the two results for the synoptic assignment.

Warning: neither qualification result will count towards performance tables.

3.4. Examples with resitting the exam in Autumn series

3.4.1. Sitting the exam twice in Year 11

The candidate will receive two qualification results, each based on the exam result for that series. However, only the first result counts towards performance tables.

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam			✓	✓
Synoptic assignment		✓		

Qualification result can be claimed – Autumn Year 11 and Summer Year 11

3.4.2. Resitting the exam in the Autumn series

The candidate will receive two qualification results, each based on the exam result for that series.

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam		✓	✓	
Synoptic assignment		✓		

Qualification result can be claimed – Summer Year 10 and Autumn Year 11

Warning: neither qualification result will count towards performance tables.

3.4.3. Resitting the exam and the synoptic assignment (summer series)

The candidate will receive two qualification results.

Assessment	Autumn Y10	Summer Y10	Autumn Y11	Summer Y11
Theory exam		✓	✓	✓
Synoptic assignment		✓		✓

Qualification result can be claimed – Summer Year 10 and Summer Year 11

The second qualification will be based on:

- the exam result from the final series (Summer Year 11),
- the best of the two results for the synoptic assignment.

The Autumn Year 11 exam result cannot be used towards a qualification result.

Warning: neither qualification result will count towards performance tables.

Contact us

Giltspur House 5-6 Giltspur Street London EC1A 9DE

general.enquiries@cityandguilds.com

01924 930 801

www.cityandguilds.com

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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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