

The terminal rule

How it works for the KS4 Technical Awards

Version 1.2

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For external use

Document revision history

Version	Summary of change	Approval date
1.2	Removed references to the autumn series	July 2026
1.1	- References to the legacy qualifications removed. - Link to the Key Stage 4 Technical Awards Information Guide added - Examples added and reordered into categories.	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
•Dated - summer series •Externally marked	•Assessment window - summer series •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	Summer Y10	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	Summer Y10	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	Summer Y10	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	Summer Y10	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 resits

3.2.1. Resitting the synoptic assignment

Assessment	Summer Y10	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.

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

The candidate will receive two qualification results.

Assessment	Summer Y10	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.

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