

3038-24 Level 2 Technical Award in Hair & Beauty Studies

2025

Qualification Report

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Introduction

This document has been prepared by the Chief Examiner and Principal Moderator; it is designed to be used as a feedback tool for centres in order to enhance teaching and preparation for assessment. It is advised that this document is referred to when planning delivery and when preparing candidates for City & Guilds Technical assessments.

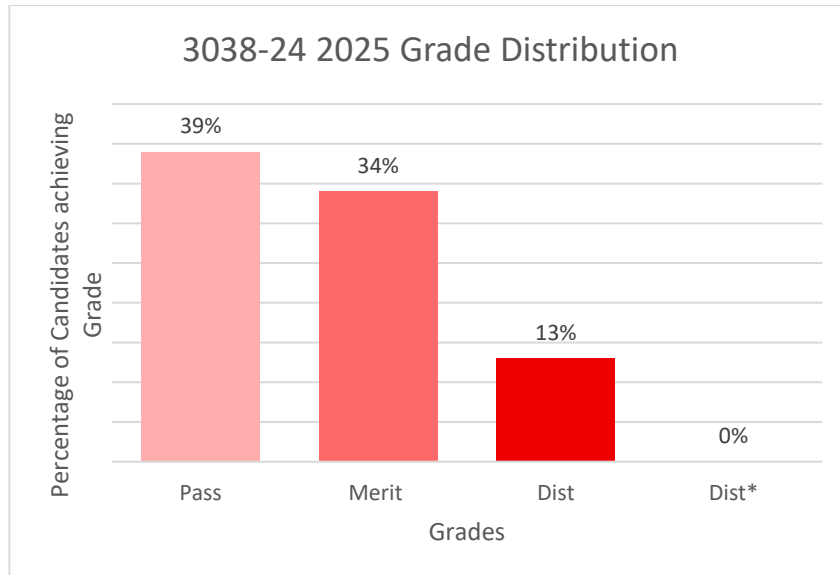
This report provides general commentary on candidate performance in both the synoptic assignment and theory exam. It highlights common themes in relation to the technical aspects explored within the assessment, giving areas of strengths and weakness demonstrated by the cohort of candidates who sat assessments in the 2025 academic year. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose.

The document provides commentary on the following assessments:

- 3038-505 - Level 2 Hair and Beauty Studies – Theory exam
 - June 2025 (Summer)
- 3038-005 - Level 2 Hair and Beauty Studies – Synoptic Assignment

Qualification Grade Distribution

The approximate grade distribution for this qualification is shown below:



This data is based on the distribution as of **20 August 2025**.

Please note City & Guilds will only report qualification grades for candidates who have achieved all of the required assessment components, including Employer Involvement, optional units and any other centre assessed components as indicated within the Qualification Handbook. The grade distribution shown above could include performance from previous years.

Theory Exam

Grade Boundaries

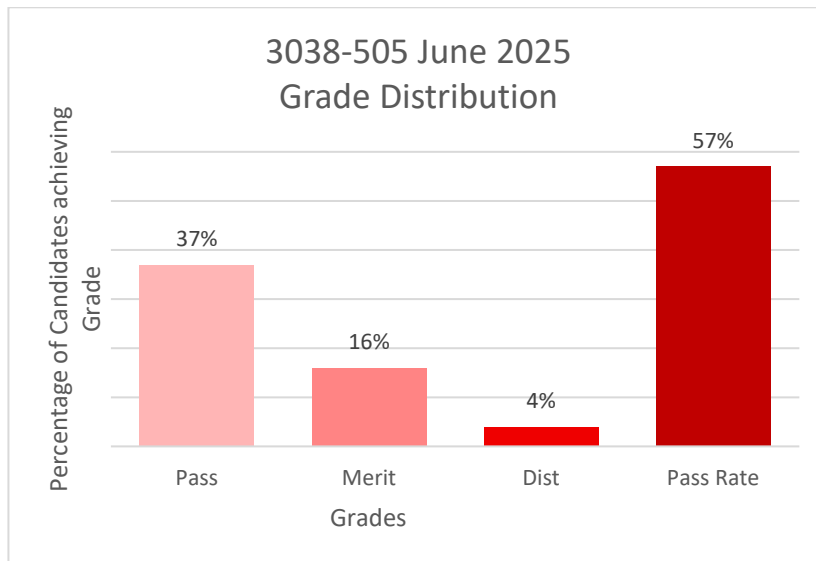
Assessment: 3038-505

Series: June 2025 (Summer)

Below identifies the final grade boundaries for this assessment, as agreed by the awarding panel:

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	23
Merit mark	33
Distinction mark	43

The graphs below show the approximate distributions of grades and pass rate for this assessment:



Chief Examiner Commentary

3038-505 - Level 2 Hair and Beauty Studies – Theory exam

June 2025 (Summer)

This examination covered a broad range of topics from the content in the handbook. The paper was comparable to the first series in 2024 in terms of the level, range of topics covered, and accessibility. Some candidates were able to achieve full marks in questions across the paper, with the exception of the Extended Response Question (ERQ), on which some candidates were able to achieve band 3 marks.

Most candidates achieved high marks in recall of knowledge questions linked to nail services and the structure of the nail, although incorrect responses often included non-industry terminology. Many candidates showed good knowledge of hairstyles worn in Ancient Greece. Candidates also showed good knowledge of alkaline products and were also able to show some understanding of how a strong alkaline product can affect the hair structure. Some learners missed out on higher marks because they did not fully explain the reason for the effects stated in their responses.

Candidates struggled with topics related to legislation and the shampoo molecule. Some responses to a question focused on legislation were unrelated to the named legislation, while some responses to a question targeting scientific principles instead described the practical process. However, candidates who performed well in these two areas generally demonstrated consistent knowledge and understanding throughout the paper.

Candidates' knowledge and understanding of ingredients found in products and their effects was a noted area of lower performance. Many candidates were unfamiliar with the types of ingredients used for adding pigments in hair and beauty products, and in some cases, were unfamiliar with what constitutes an ingredient; some candidates, for example, named a product instead. Similarly, many candidates were unfamiliar with the effects of an astringent and left a question targeting this area unanswered.

In the Extended Response Question (ERQ), the scenario related to the design and creation of advertising material for beauty services. This scenario differentiated well across the cohort, with marks achieved across the range available. Most candidates were able to discuss a range of design factors that linked directly to the scenario, and they gained some marks for this; however, some candidates did not go further than the design itself, and marks awarded were limited. Candidates who achieved higher marks planned well, provided justifications for their ideas, and were able to introduce and discuss a wider range of factors encompassing legislation, financial, and ethical issues.

While some candidates used planning acronyms to aid with structuring their ERQ responses, these sometimes did not always cover elements that were relevant to the scenario and demands of the question, and limited some candidates from achieving marks in higher bands.

Candidates will benefit from practicing the examination techniques required to answer questions using a range of command verbs. To access higher marks on questions testing understanding, candidates should ensure they demonstrate clear understanding by supporting their responses with justification and reasoning.

Centres are reminded of the City and Guilds KS4 Technical Award resources for information and guidance of delivery, assessment and administration: [Resource Hub - Technical Qualifications | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/uk/qualifications/ks4-technical-award)

Synoptic Assignment

Grade Boundaries

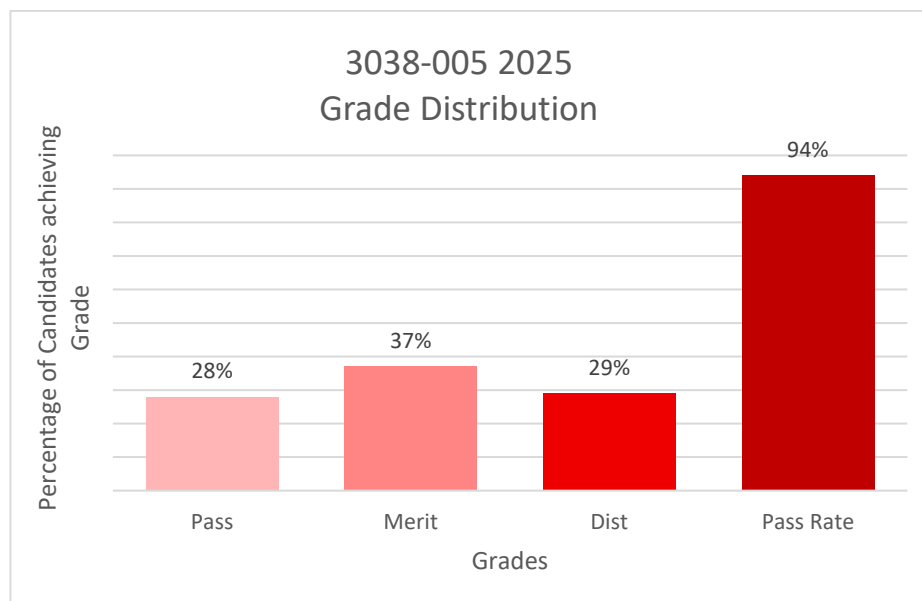
Assessment: 3038-005

Series: June 2025

Below identifies the final grade boundaries for this assessment, as agreed by the awarding panel:

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	25
Merit mark	35
Distinction mark	46

The graph below shows the approximate distributions of grades and pass rate for this assessment:



Principal Moderator Commentary

The theme for this year's assignment was the 1980s pop era, and candidates responded well to the challenge. The assignment tasks were designed to give all candidates the opportunity to access marks across the knowledge, understanding, and skills elements of the assessment by showcasing their interpretation of the era across hair, make-up, and nail looks.

The internet was the main source of research of 1980s hair, make-up and nails, and how the looks were created. Some candidates worked closely with the brief, comparing the hair, make-up, and nails of 1980s pop icons to those of today. Bibliographies used in Task 1 were often comprehensive; however, there were occasions where this assessment requirement was missed, affecting the marks given. Most candidates referred to the images in their written reports as required in the assignment, while candidates that selected a mood-board or a collage of pictures for Task 1 often included limited annotations to show their knowledge and understanding of the looks presented, and this was reflected in the marks awarded.

Candidates generally included explanations of how 1980s looks were created in the era, but many missed the opportunity to show how technological advancements in products, tools, and equipment would be used to recreate looks of the 1980s in a contemporary context. Many candidates used their research and Task 1 write-up effectively to design and create their themed 1980s hair, make-up, and nail looks, which resulted in good marks in AO4 (bringing it all together).

Of the 1980s-themed hair looks created, candidates generally opted for curly styles for women's hair, but some candidates created looks that reflected such male pop icons as David Bowie and Boy George. Most candidates used a model to create the hair look; however, there were some candidates who used the option of styling a mannequin head. Both options are permitted for this qualification.

The 1980s-themed nail looks were predominately recreated with each nail being a painted a different colour; a few candidates also produced nude-coloured nails. In some photographs of the nails, it was clear that nail polish had bled onto the skin/cuticle. Candidates should be encouraged to acknowledge this type of issue in their reflections on the service to reduce the risk of attention to detail marks being affected (AO5).

For the make-up look, many candidates used Madonna as their inspiration and applied bright blue eyeshadow and rosy cheeks. Few candidates used the opportunity to showcase their creativity and gain these marks by recreating facial art as worn by some glam rock/pop icons of the 1980s such as Toyah Willcox, David Bowie, Yes, or Boy George.

Many candidates' social media adverts were more representative of a poster and missed the inclusion of social media icons, expressions, or clear identification of the social media platform they were mimicking. Some candidates did not include the key information to promote the themed pop concert – such as location, time, date, and price – required in the scenario. Candidates should be given clear guidance during the delivery of the qualification on the key characteristics of each promotional material listed in the handbook.

This year, many candidates' questionnaires and evaluations in Task 3 focused on the advertisement and showed significant improvement compared to the previous year.

In Task 2, the Practical Observation (PO) forms completed by Centre Observers were generally used effectively, featuring individualised written commentaries that were clearly aligned with the grade descriptors for each Assessment Outcome (AO). Best practice included specific examples of how the candidate deserved the marks given, which was particularly evident in higher marked candidates. Equally, this practice could further enhance the reasons for giving lower band marks to other candidates. The refinement of PO forms after the event is not essential, as these are an account of what was seen at the time and are used to inform the Candidate Record Form (CRF).

It is considered good practice to award marks holistically across the three tasks on the Candidate Record Form (CRF), although some Centres successfully provide justification comments for each individual task.

For Task 2, it is expected that the four required photographs are pasted into the Practical Record Activity document and authenticated in the designated area beneath the images by both the tutor/observer and the candidate. A small number of Centres submitted more than the required four photographs. While this is not prohibited by the guidance in the synoptic assignment, it may lead to delays in evidence submission due to excessively large file sizes.

Breakdown of performance against each AO – strengths & weaknesses

AO1: Recall of knowledge

Most candidates were able to identify the key characteristics of hair and beauty looks of the 1980s and compared them to looks of today. Many were able recall the products, tools, and equipment used in the 1980s to create the looks. Evidence for this AO was frequently found in the written accounts in Task 1 and Task 2. Lower-achieving candidates tended to state facts or use lists, often with gaps or inaccuracies. Higher-achieving candidates were able to show their recall of the taught content, and their responses were mainly accurate. Many candidates in this cohort omitted to include porosity and elasticity tests required as a minimum for the hair service in Task 2.

AO2: Understanding

Many candidates made a strong attempt to compare hair and beauty looks of the 1980s to those worn today, with some demonstrating a great depth of understanding. Marks were impacted where candidates used mood-boards or picture collages with limited annotations rather than the suggested written report with images in Task 1. Many candidates were able to identify technological developments in products, tools, and equipment; however, only a few candidates were able to follow this through and explain how they would use these developments to recreate the 1980s looks today. In Task 2, higher-achieving candidates were able to give in-depth descriptions of products and techniques used, and why they were used, to create their looks. These candidates could often evidence the ability to analyse the feedback received from their evaluation in Task 3. Most candidates used a questionnaire to gain feedback in Task 3, with many attempting to evaluate the responses.

AO3: Application of practical/technical skills

Candidates generally demonstrated a good range of hair and beauty technical skills across hair, make-up, and nails in Task 2. Most candidates produced at least two recognisable 1980s-themed looks across the hair, make-up, and nail requirements. The hair look was the most creative across the three skill areas, with many curling/crimping the hair to recreate the permed looks, replicating their research from Task 1. A few candidates explained how and why they had carried out porosity and elasticity tests before creating their hairstyle, which demonstrated good health and safety practices. Observer comments on the Practical observation forms were mainly positive, describing how well the candidates had done in producing their hair and beauty looks. Where candidates are given band 1 or band 3 marks, it is good practice to reinforce why the marker has given these particular marks. Higher-achieving candidates used their skills with dexterity and coordination, while some lower-achieving candidates either did not complete all three practical services, or their looks did not reflect the 1980s era.

AO4: Bringing it all together

Many candidates were able to successfully use their research of the 1980s era to create some or all of the looks in Task 2 that reflected the 1980s era. Most candidates attempted to create a social

media advert in Task 3; however, many appeared to resemble a poster more than a social media advert. Few candidates included social media icons, expressions, or identification of the social media platform they were mimicking. Higher-achieving candidates were able to produce detailed evaluations of their social media advert design, and included self-evaluation and peer feedback.

AO5 Attending to detail

Candidates generally embraced the assignment brief and produced good written accounts that were logically sequenced, and practical elements of the assignment showed some planning and practice. A limited number of candidates did not incorporate their research on the 1980s era into their responses to Task 2, instead attempting to produce contemporary commercial looks. As a result, marks were lost for this assessment objective. Higher-achieving candidates provided clear and consistent responses across all assessment tasks with limited spelling or grammatical errors, and demonstrated a good range of skills; both written and practical, and attention to detail could be seen across all three tasks.

Examples of best practice:

- Where one concurrent word document was uploaded as a PDF, the file size was reduced, making it easier to upload for the Centre and easier to view for the Moderator.
- An uploaded file, per candidate, that is suitably named and includes CRF, Declaration form, evidence of tasks in a logical order (including 4 images), Practical Observation form (PO) rather than many multiple files.
- Clear evidence of standardisation with written commentary showing where there are any changes in the marks, given by the marker.
- Photographs and images were mainly clear, and most were in line with the assessment requirements; a few centres, however, uploaded more than the required 4 photographs of the practical tasks, which can affect the uploading due to the size of the files.
- Most centre markers and candidates filled in electronic versions of City & Guilds paperwork which helped moderation, as some handwriting can be illegible, particularly when scanned.
- Most candidates' work was free from plagiarism, with relevant lists of sources of research material given.
- Inclusion of specific details by observers of how health and safety was met on the recording form.
- CRFs and Declaration forms were generally authenticated with wet or electronic signatures by the marker and the candidate.
- Observation notes on practical observation forms were individualised with good descriptive details that mimic the images seen and candidates' personal write-ups in Task 2, enabling the moderator to mainly agree the marks given.
- The comments made on CRFs generally gave an appropriate indication as to where or why the marks had been awarded in each AO.