

6720-21 Level 2 Technical Award in Constructing and Maintaining the Built Environment

Qualification Report 2019

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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.

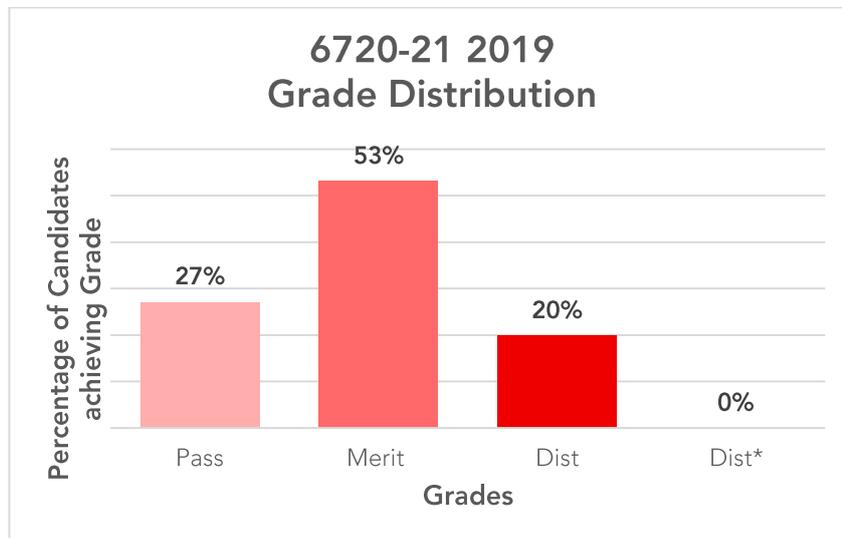
This report provides general commentary on candidate performance in both the synoptic assignment and theory exam. It highlights common themes in relation to the technical aspects explored within the assessment, giving areas of strengths and weakness demonstrated by the cohort of candidates who sat assessments in the 2019 academic year. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose.

The document provides commentary on the following assessments:

- 6720-002/502 Level 2 Technical Award in Constructing and Maintaining the Built Environment – Theory exam
 - March 2019 (Spring)
 - June 2019 (Summer)
- 6720-001 Level 2 Technical Award in Constructing and Maintaining the Built Environment – Synoptic Assignment

Qualification Grade Distribution

The approximate grade distribution for this qualification is shown below:



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

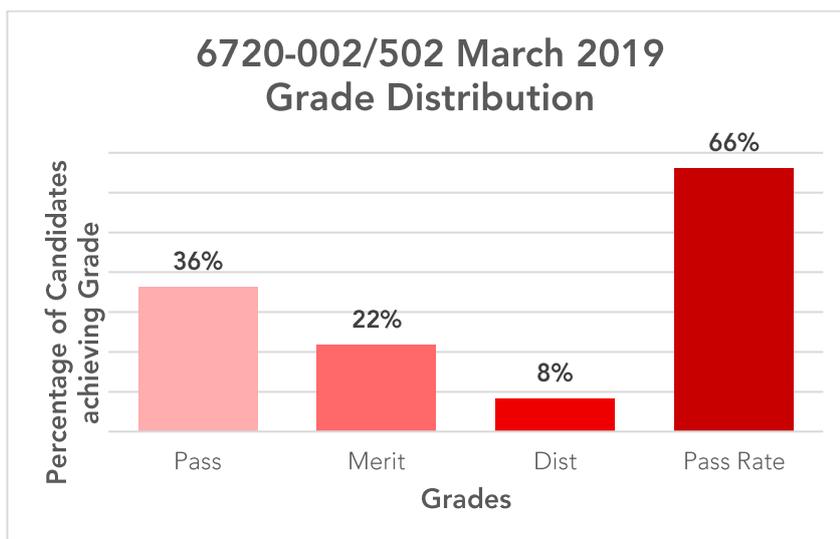
Grade Boundaries

Assessment: 6720-002/502
Series: March 2019 (Spring)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	23
Merit mark	31
Distinction mark	39

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

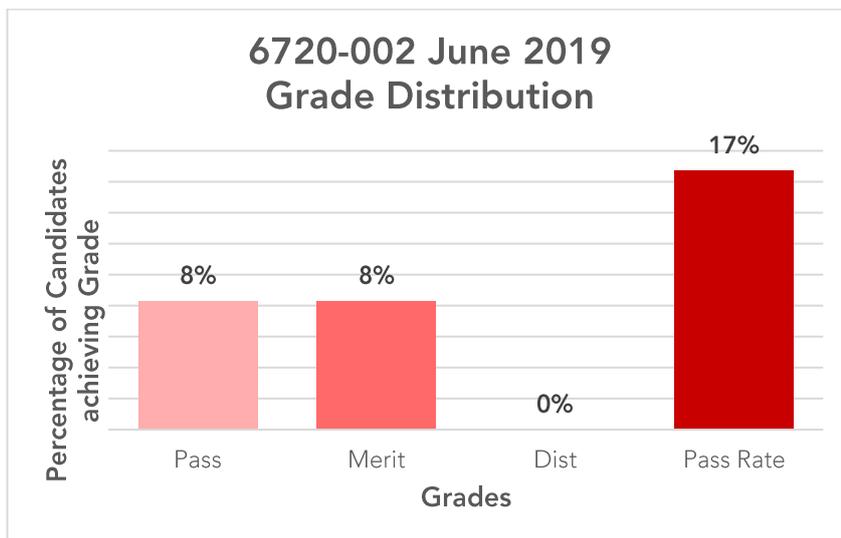


Assessment: 6720-002
Series: June 2019 (Summer)

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

Total marks available	57
Pass mark	21
Merit mark	30
Distinction mark	39

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

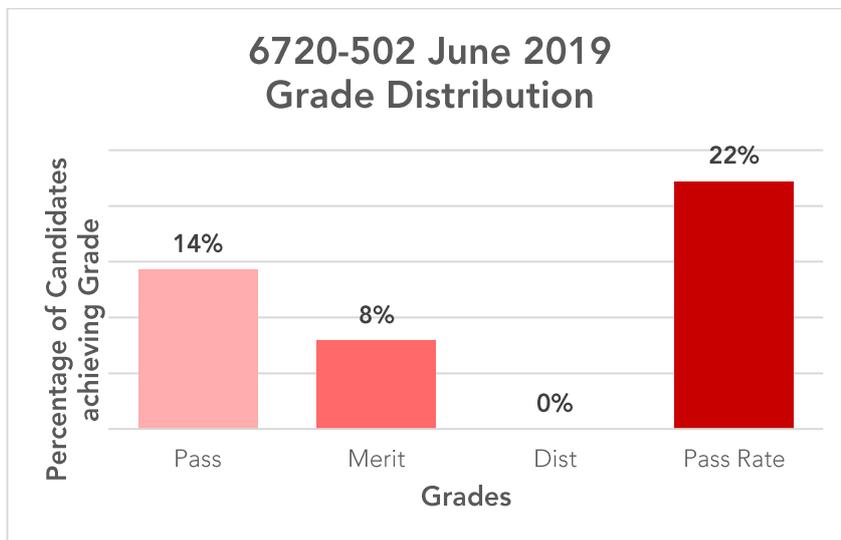


Assessment: 6720-502
Series: June 2019 (Summer)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	23
Merit mark	32
Distinction mark	41

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



Chief Examiner Commentary

Level 2 Technical Award in Constructing and Maintaining the Built Environment - Theory exam

Series 1 – March 2019

The paper covered the syllabus well and at the appropriate level. Candidates were able to demonstrate simple recall of fact and knowledge, more so than demonstrating any real depth or breadth of understanding. However, it was pleasing to see a more resilient attitude from candidates across the mark range compared with previous series papers.

Candidates responded very well to the first question about the Building Life Cycle, with most being able to achieve full marks. Responses were spread across the full range of stages, showing good depth of understanding.

Good knowledge was also demonstrated around communication methods used on site but a number of candidates referred to a walkie talkie/radio, which is often the least private means of 'communicating concerns' in a site environment. When asked the question 'how can one communicate concerns', candidates need to respond with the most appropriate methods available.

Generally, candidates performed reasonably well when recalling factors to consider in a typical construction site set-up. However, too many candidates failed to access full marks as they focused on factors relating to a typical construction site, failing to acknowledge the key part of the question, which was 'site set-up'. More focus needs to be given on ensuring candidates understand the site set-up checklist and the importance of each aspect.

Candidates demonstrated good knowledge and understanding when describing the advantages of dry finishes, with many recognising the impact dry finishes have on production/progress due to not having to wait for materials to dry and allowing other trades to progress. However, they were not so strong when having to identify dry finishes and were only able to recall plasterboard, tiles and laminate flooring etc. Candidates need to be exposed to a wide range of wet and dry finishes and understand the benefits and shortcomings of each.

Candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding in relation to material properties, illustrated by candidates being able to only recall strength and durability for choosing concrete blocks for a partition wall. The question on this topic also highlighted gaps in superstructure forms, as many were referring to external cavity walls rather than the stipulated partition wall.

The majority of candidates performed poorly on question six, with most not achieving more than one mark, mostly for simple recall. Candidates should have demonstrated their recall when first faced with the 3D labelled sketches, showing the marker that they know the two roofing systems. Every time this topic comes up, it invariably evokes the same poor response, showing a real lack of knowledge around this particular subject area. It is recommended that centres spend more time teaching this topic to avoid a repeat in future papers.

Candidates performed better than previously when confronted with the question on types of maintenance, with most scoring at least 2 out of 3 marks. However, there is still a little confusion over the fundamental differences between preventive and planned maintenance schedules and the function/purpose of each.

A number of candidates struggled with the question which simply asked for three building elements that should be checked in a condition survey. Understanding of condition surveys has clearly improved since previous series papers, but too many candidates could not provide more

than two elements and some clearly did not understand the term. It is imperative that candidates are aware of key terminology to allow them to access simple questions like these. It was pleasing to see a maths question perform well after a poor response in more recent papers. Most candidates were able to access full marks for the question on this topic.

Candidates demonstrated a confidence when discussing health and safety in the workplace and the use of risk assessments, PPE and training etc to inform safe ways of working. However, when candidates were asked what should happen if site rules are not followed, most candidates considered the worst case scenario and recommended sacking them or giving a warning. This was acceptable, but no candidate considered the expected response and links to RIDDOR and accident reporting. Candidates struggled somewhat when asked to explain the responsibility of the employer under HASAWA 1974. Many arrived at a couple of marks through guessing, but many did not refer to key health and safety language such as risk assessments, welfare facilities or method statements.

The extended response question was very disappointing, with the majority of candidates only meeting the requirements for mark band 1 or 2. Most candidates ignored or failed to read the key indicators/issues in the brief and the full range of remediation work required. To access the middle to higher bands, candidates need to show more depth of their knowledge, rather than trying to demonstrate the breadth of their knowledge, as well as taking time to consider the scenario given within the question and ensure their responses are relevant. Many candidates would identify work without explaining the process, tools/equipment and safe systems of work and many failed to address the potential issues surrounding planning, design and construction or discuss and compare the virtues of a range of modern sub and superstructure options. Candidates should practise extended response questions and know what is expected from 'discussion' questions so that they can confidently respond in a systematic way and without confusion. When faced with this type of question, candidates should take time to think through what the key discussion points are, regardless of the scenario or phrasing.

Series 2 – June 2019

The paper performed well and was clearly consistent with the level, content and difficulty to the previous exam series. The language was at the appropriate level and there was no evidence of ambiguity which could have led to problems for the candidates in understanding the questions.

This assessment window is often used by centres as a resit opportunity for those candidates who were unsuccessful in the March 2019 series. It is evident that this was the case for this series, with the mean mark much lower and far fewer higher performing candidates. It is also clear that the majority of candidates were not sufficiently prepared to sit the assessment.

Some centres may use the opportunity to enter candidates in the first year (when completing the course over two years) as a sort of 'mock' examination and to give them a sight of the paper. Candidates should never be entered until they have been fully prepared, as mock conditions can be created using the various past papers which are freely available to download from the City and Guilds website. Lack of preparation and insufficient depth and breadth of knowledge has resulted in a number of candidates using generic answers in the vain hope of securing the odd mark. Poor responses to the same questions often followed the same pattern or poor use of terminology for a range of candidates from the same centre, with only a small number choosing to think outside the box. Regardless of the choice made by many candidates, the responses invariably lacked the basic knowledge and understanding of topic areas and the confidence in recall needed to succeed at this level. Centres should dissuade candidates from using this approach and can often eliminate such practices with regular testing and full delivery of all syllabus content.

Candidates struggled to show any recall with regards to the organisations working on a housing development, with far too many responding with 'carpenter and bricklayer'. Candidates failed to recall any client type other than 'council' or 'local council', showing a lack of depth to their knowledge and understanding. When trying to explain the correct communication lines a carpenter should use to convey their concerns regarding a drawing, most said the carpenter should contact the architect directly. Whilst hierarchical systems are a complex topic area to teach, guest speakers and site visits, when planned correctly, can help candidates to understand the lines of communication much better.

It was disappointing to see so many candidates respond with either strip and pad or raft and pad, when recalling foundations most commonly used for low rise domestic construction. As the focus of this paper is largely low rise domestic housing, candidates should be taught that pad foundations are most commonly used to support either steel or concrete framed commercial buildings.

Candidates were unable to gain more than one or two marks for the higher scoring AO2 questions, showing little confidence in both recall and breadth of knowledge. The language used by candidates was far too generic and they struggled to reference key terminologies. Recognition of key language and terminology is the key to accessing all questions. Once candidates have secured this, it is down to centres to prepare candidates by teaching them sound exam technique and exposing candidates to model answers and demonstrating how to scaffold their responses to achieve the higher mark ranges. Candidates struggled to recall basic construction terminology in relation to properties of materials of key building elements and components. When candidates were asked to justify the choice of a trussed roof over a purlin roof structure or the virtues of using modern engineered floor joists over traditional joists, candidates clearly had little concept of these systems in the context of a construction development.

Throughout the paper it was evident that candidates struggled to interpret the level of response required of them by the command verbs.

Another weakness was an inability to provide clear explanations of impact or considerations with many responses merely identifying what the question was asking but failing to demonstrate any further understanding beyond this.

It is vitally important that all content within the syllabus is covered in detail and that candidates have the opportunity to visit builder's merchants and modern and traditional housing developments, rather than learning through desk top research and images. Whilst this places additional pressures on centres, it is a fundamental requirement for candidates, if they are to succeed at this level.

In relation to the extended response question, most candidates tended to score marks in the first mark band, which is consistent with the poor knowledge and understanding demonstrated throughout the paper. Nearly every candidate failed to demonstrate enough indicative content and missed important elements such as the required human resources or the justification of material choices and modern methods to be employed. As with the previous series report, centres must focus on this area of delivery and fully prepare candidates for the ERQ questions.

Synoptic Assignment

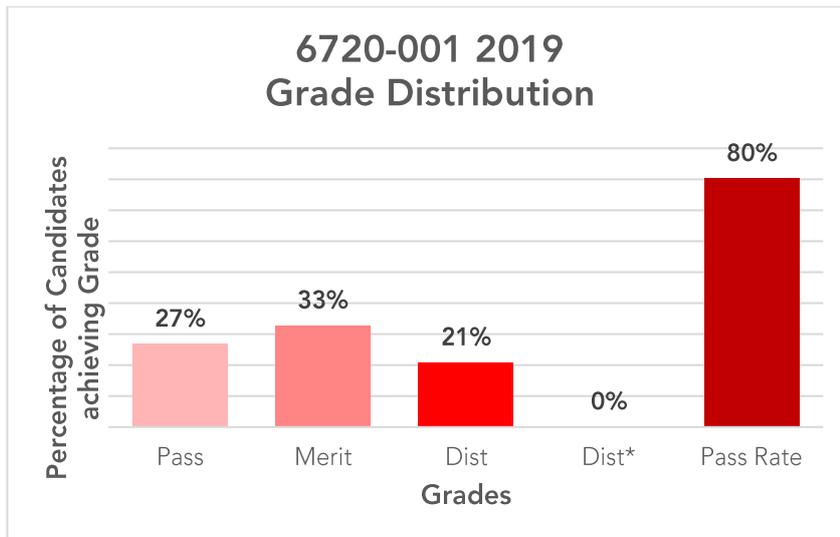
Grade Boundaries

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

Assessment: 6720-001
Series: 2019

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	25
Merit mark	33
Distinction mark	41

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



Principal Moderator Commentary

This is a well-established qualification having been in the very first group of Technicals and the assignments used this year will be the fifth in a long series including the pilot phase. A standard style has evolved for the writing of the assignments and those used this year are comparable in style and depth of challenge to previous assignments, but with continually improving guidance and advice.

In general, candidate performance has improved in all AOs, as the centres gain experience and pass that experience on to their learners. Broadly, candidates demonstrated a good grasp of construction methods and materials and health and safety principles. Also, the practical construction tasks were completed in most cases to a good standard.

AO1 Recall of knowledge

AO1 Recall of knowledge has improved and this was illustrated in the presentations for the local authority which included Gantt charts and the use of terminology was generally consistent.

AO2 Understanding

Generally, candidates provided satisfactory explanations of the principles that underpinned their knowledge and a grasp of the main concepts and themes across the industry. Candidates achieving higher marks showed a breadth and depth in their understanding.

AO3 Application of practical/technical skills

There are twelve marks available for AO3 at Level 2 and there were clear opportunities to display skills in the two practical construction craft tasks that comprise Task 4 e.g. construct a small brick right angle corner. The marks achieved remain proportionally high. In general, candidates tended to do the painting and decorating and joinery tasks due to the availability of these facilities in centres. Better candidates were more conspicuous in the practical tasks.

AO4 Bringing it all together

Many candidates were able to draw conclusions based on the evidence available and make connections between tasks and theory, although though some lacked depth of detail. Generally there was a good level of knowledge, skills and understanding that was linked holistically.

AO5 Attending to detail

AO5 Many candidates' work demonstrated a full range of checks throughout the practical tasks and the site layout plan and section drawing. However, some were less meticulous and were not as thorough in their checking.

Best practice

It was clear from the evidence submitted that centres have interpreted the assignments appropriately and the majority of candidates have approached each task fully and followed the assignment briefs.

Centres are reminded that the information given within the assignment brief is designed largely to assess the candidates' ability to research, balance arguments, make decisions and specify actions to be taken.

There were no issues within the assignment that made it difficult for the candidates to complete or for the moderators to moderate. Centres have risen to the challenge of marking holistically, and are improving on a year-by-year basis. CRFs and authenticity statements are rarely missing or incomplete and employer involvement issues are now well-understood. Also, there are far fewer examples of where a centre has been 'over-optimistic' in their assessment and moderators have found that centres are less likely to be assessing out of tolerance.

Centres are reminded that all evidence must be uploaded to the Moderation Portal in a format that can be accessed by all, for example Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint or PDF. Any CAD drawings must be converted to PDF before being uploaded.