

Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Plastering (7908- 001/7908-501)

November 2017 Version 1.1

Guide to the examination

Version and Date	Change Detail	Section
June 2019 v1.1	Amendment to number of resit opportunities	1. Details of the exam

Who is this document for?

This document has been produced for centres who offer **City & Guilds Level 3 Advanced Diploma in Plastering (Solid)**. It gives all of the essential details of the qualification's external assessment (exam) arrangements and has been produced to support the preparation of candidates to take the exam/s.

The document comprises four sections:

1. **Details of the exam.** This section gives details of the structure, length and timing of the exam.
2. **Content assessed by the exam.** This section gives a summary of the content that will be covered in each exam and information of how marks are allocated to the content.
3. **Guidance.** This section gives guidance on the language of the exam, the types of questions included and examples of these, and links to further resources to support teaching and exam preparation.
4. **Further information.** This section lists other sources of information about this qualification and City & Guilds Technical Qualifications.

1. Details of the exam

External assessment

City & Guilds Technical qualifications have been developed to meet national policy changes designed to raise the rigour and robustness of vocational qualifications. These changes are being made to ensure our qualifications can meet the needs of employers and Higher Education. One of these changes is for the qualifications to have an increased emphasis on external assessment this is why you will see an external exam in each of our Technical qualifications.

An external assessment is an assessment that is set and/or marked by the awarding organisation (ie externally). All City and Guilds Technical qualifications include an externally set and marked exam. This must be taken at the same time by all candidates who are registered on a particular qualification. We produce an exam timetable each year. This specifies the date and time of the exam so you can plan your delivery, revision and room bookings/PC allocation in plenty of time.

The purpose of this exam is to provide assurance that all candidates achieving the qualification have gained sufficient knowledge and understanding from their programme of study and that they can independently recall and draw their knowledge and understanding together in an integrated way. Whilst this may not be new to you, it is essential that your learners are well prepared and that they have time to revise, reflect and prepare for these exams. We have produced a Teaching, Learning, and Assessment guide that is you should refer to alongside the present document ([Teaching, Learning and Assessment Guide](#)). If a learner does not pass the exam at their first attempt, there is only one opportunity to resit the exam, so preparation is essential.

Exam requirements of this qualification

Plastering (Solid) – Theory exam (2 hours and 30 minutes).

The exam is graded and a candidate must achieve at least a Pass grade in order to be awarded the qualification. (In addition to the exam, a synoptic assignment must also be completed and passed). You can find full details of the synoptic assignment in the *Qualification Handbook* and the *Synoptic Assessment Guide* -please see the link to the qualification page at the end of this document).

When does the exam take place?

This qualification involves a one year programme of study. The exam is offered on two fixed dates in March or June. The exact dates will be published at the start of the academic year in the *Assessments and Exam Timetable* <http://www.cityandguilds.com/delivering-our-qualifications/exams-and-admin>.

In order to effectively plan teaching and exam preparation, centres should know when the exam will be taking place and allocate teaching time accordingly. Section 2 of this document gives a summary of the content that needs to be covered in order to prepare learners for the exam and full details of this are given in the *Qualification Handbook*.

Form of exam

The exam for this qualification can be taken either on paper (7908-501) or online (7908-001).

Can candidates resit the exam?

Candidates who have failed an exam or wish to retake it in an attempt to improve their grade, can do so **twice**. The third and final retake opportunity applies to Level 3 only. The best result will count towards the final qualification. If the candidate fails the exam three times then they will fail the qualification.

How the exam is structured

Each exam has a total of 70 marks available.

Each exam is made up of:

- 10 multiple choice questions
- approximately 12 -16 short answer questions
- 1 extended response question.

Multiple choice and short answer questions are used to confirm **breadth of knowledge and understanding**.

The extended response question is to allow candidates to demonstrate **higher level and integrated understanding** through written discussion, analysis and evaluation. This question also ensures the exam can differentiate between those learners who are 'just able' and those who are higher achieving.

More details about and examples of question types are given in Section 3 of this document.

Assessment Objectives

The exams are based on the following set of assessment objectives (AOs). These are designed to allow the candidate's responses to be assessed across the following three categories of performance:

- **Recollection** of knowledge.
- **Understanding** of concepts, theories and processes.
- **Integrated application** of knowledge and understanding.

In full, the assessment objectives covered by the exam for this qualification are:

Assessment objective	Mark allocation (approx %)
<i>The candidate..</i>	
AO1 Recalls knowledge from across the breadth of the qualification	47%
AO2 Demonstrates understanding of concepts, theories and processes from a range of learning outcomes.	36%
AO4 Applies knowledge, understanding and skills from across the breadth of the qualification in an integrated and holistic way to achieve specified purposes.	17%

Booking and taking the exam

All assessments for City & Guilds Technical Exams must be booked through Walled Garden. There is a deadline for booking exams, synoptic assessments and any other centre marked assessments, please refer to the time line to check these dates.

The exam must be taken under the supervision of an invigilator who is responsible for ensuring that it is conducted under controlled conditions. Full details of the conditions under which the exam must be taken can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document, [Instructions for Conducting Examinations \(ICE\)](#).

Special consideration

Candidates who are unable to sit the exam owing to temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the scheduled time may qualify for special consideration. This is a post-examination adjustment that can, in certain circumstances, be made to a candidate's final grade. The Joint Council for Qualifications' guide to the special consideration process can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

To make a request for special consideration, please contact: policy@cityandguilds.com

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are arrangements that allow candidates with particular requirements, disabilities or temporary illness to take assessments, where appropriate, using their normal way of working. The Joint Council for Qualifications document, *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* gives full details and can be downloaded [here](#).

For further information and to apply for access arrangements please see:

[Access arrangements - When and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds](#)
[Applying for access arrangements on the Walled Garden](#)

2. Content assessed by the exam

Plastering (Solid)

The exam assesses:

- **Unit 301: Principles of organising, planning and pricing construction work**
- **Unit 302: Applying plastering materials to interiors**

Each exam assesses a sample of the content of these units. This means that a single exam will **not** cover 100% of the unit content. The full range of content will be assessed over a number of examination series. Details of the coverage of a particular exam paper will **not** be released in advance of the exam itself. Centres should **not** make assumptions about what will be assessed by a particular exam based on what has been covered on previous occasions. In order to be fully prepared for the exam, learners **must** be ready to answer questions on **any** of the content outlined below.

The table below provides an overview of how the qualification's Learning Outcomes are covered by each exam and the number of **marks** available per Learning Outcome (ie **not** the number of *questions* per Learning Outcome). In preparing candidates for the exam, we recommend that centres take note of the number of marks allocated to Learning Outcomes and to assign teaching and preparation time accordingly.

In preparing candidates for the exam, centres should refer to the Qualification Handbook which gives full details of each Learning Outcome.

The following is a summary of only that qualification content which is assessed by the exam and **not** a summary of the full content of the qualification.

Unit	Learning outcome	Topics	MC Questions	Number of marks
301 Principles of organising, planning and pricing construction work.	LO1 Understand the way the construction industry is regulated	1.1 Health and Safety regulations 1.2 Planning permission and building control	2	18
	LO2 Understand energy efficiency and sustainable materials for construction	2.1 Sustainable development 2.2 Thermally insulated materials 2.3 Construction methods for insulation 2.4 Energy saving measures		
	LO3 Understand how to estimate quantities and price work for construction	3.1 Tendering process 3.2 Estimate quantities of building materials 3.3 Prepare a quote	3	
	LO4 Understand how to plan work activities for construction	4.1 Planning construction works 4.2 Risk assessments and method statements		
	LO5 Understand how to communicate effectively in the workplace	5.1 Written and oral communication		
	LO6 Understand and use drawings and associated software	6.1 Manual drafting 6.2 Computer Aided Design (CAD) 6.3 Building Information Modelling (BIM)		
303 Applying plastering materials to interiors	LO1 Be able to identify and prepare the surface for plastering	1.1: Backgrounds		

		1.2: Tools and equipment 1.3 Information sources 1.4 Applying materials	3	30
	LO2 Understand and be able to apply backing coat plasters	2.1 Product suitability 2.2 Information sources 2.3 Materials 2.4 Tools and equipment 2.5 Applying backing plasters		
	LO3 Understand and be able to apply finishing coat plasters	3.1 Product suitability 3.2 Information sources 3.3 Tools and equipment 3.4 Applying finishing plasters	2	
		Total marks for sections:	10	58 marks
		Integration across units*:		12 marks
		Total marks for exam:		70 Marks

* *Integration across units*. These marks relate to Assessment Objective 4). These marks are awarded to differentiate between levels of performance by candidates taking the exam. The marks are given for how well a candidate has applied their knowledge, understanding and skills from across the units that make up the qualification in an integrated way to meet the requirements of the exam questions.

3. Guidance

Vocabulary of the exam: use of 'command' verbs

The exam questions are written using 'command' verbs. These are used to communicate to the candidate the type of answer required. Candidates should be familiarised with these as part of their exam preparation.

The following guidance has been produced on the main command verbs used in City & Guilds Technicals exams.

A more detailed version of this table, which also includes the command verbs used in the assignments is published in *City & Guilds Technical Qualifications Teaching, Learning and Assessment* guide.

Command verb	Explanation and guidance
Analyse	Study or examine a complex issue, subject, event, etc in detail to explain and interpret, elements, causes, characteristics etc
Calculate	Work out the answer to a problem using mathematical operations
Compare (... and contrast) (or describe the similarities/differences)	Consider and describe the similarities (and differences) between two or more features, systems, ideas, etc
Define	Give the meaning of, technical vocabulary, terms, etc.
Describe	Give a detailed written account of a system, feature, etc (..the effect of...on...) the impact, change that has resulted from a cause, event, etc (..the process..) give the steps, stages, etc
Differentiate between	Establish and relate the characteristic differences between two or more things, concepts, etc
Discuss	Talk/write about a topic in detail, considering the different issues, ideas, opinions related to it
Distinguish between	Recognise and describe the characteristic differences between two things, or make one thing seem different from another
Evaluate	Analyse and describe the success, quality, benefits, value, etc (of an end product, outcome, etc)
Explain	Make (a situation, idea, process, etc) clear or easier to understand by giving details, (..how..) Give the stages or steps, etc in a process, including relationships, connections, etc between these and causes and effects.
Give example(s) illustrate/	Use examples or images to support, clarify or demonstrate, an explanation, argument, theory, etc

Give a rationale	Provide a reason/reasons/basis for actions, decisions, beliefs, etc
Identify	Recognise a feature, usually from a document, image, etc and state what it is
Justify	Give reasons for, make a case for, account for, etc decisions, actions, conclusions, etc, in order to demonstrate why they suitable for or correct or meet the particular circumstances, context
Label	Add names or descriptions, indicating their positions, on an image, drawing, diagram, etc
List	Give as many answers, examples, etc as the question indicates (candidates are not required to write in full sentences)
Name	Give the (technical) name of something
Propose	Present a plan, strategy, etc (for consideration, discussion, acceptance, action, etc).
Select	choose the best, most suitable, etc, by making careful decisions
State	Give the answer, clearly and definitely
Summarise	Give a brief statement of the main points (of something)

Question types

The following explains, and gives examples of, types of questions used in City & Guilds Technical exams. In preparing candidates to take the exam, it is recommended that you familiarise them with the requirements of each question type so that they can be effective and make best use of the time available when sitting the exam.

- An effective candidate will gauge the type and length of response required from the question and the number of marks available (which is given for each question on the exam paper).
- Short answer questions may not require candidates to write in complete sentences. Extended response questions will require a more developed response.
- Candidates should read the exam paper before attempting to answer the questions and should allocate time proportionate to the number of marks available for each question or section.

Question type:	Example question	Mark Scheme:
<p>Multiple Choice questions These are objective questions with a predetermined answer. These consist of a question (or stem) and four options. The candidate should select the correct option (the key). The other 3 options (the distractors) will be plausible but incorrect in some significant respect so that the candidate is required to consider and reject these in order to identify the correct option.</p>	<p>What must be checked by a building control officer when constructing a new extension?</p> <p>a) Height of existing slab. b) Depth of foundation. c) Type of block work. d) Texture of render.</p>	<p>B</p>
<p>Short answer questions (restricted response) These are questions which require candidates to give a brief and concise written response. The number of marks available will correspond to the number of pieces of information/examples and the length of response required by the question.</p>	<p>AO1 Knowledge State the areas an internal solid floating coat on a plain wall should be checked with a straight edge prior to tiling.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(4 marks)</p>	<p>Answers should include the four answers below, one mark for each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Along the skirting lines. • Along the ceiling lines. • Vertical at edges/internal angles/external angles. • Diagonally from each corner of the wall.

AO2 Understanding

A plasterer is required to fix standard angle beads to a window wall that contains a window board. Describe how to accurately fix the beads ensuring equal margins.

(5 marks)

Measure equal dimensions on window jambs/frame (1 mark), set out dimensions using a square on window board (1 mark), check straightness of wall on window board with straight edge and mark appropriate floating coat thickness (intersecting) (1 mark), fix and bed both vertical standard angle beads with plaster dabs from the fixed mark on the window board and ensure they are plumb (1 mark), fix and bed bead level with plaster dabs at soffit/head in line ensuring no steps (1 mark).

Extended response questions

Extended response questions are those that require the candidate to write a longer written response using sentences and paragraphs. These usually require candidates to discuss, explain, etc. a topic in some detail. The question is often based on a short case study, scenario or other prompt. The level of detail should be gauged from the question and the number of marks available.

Example question

The internal outer plastered walls of a terrace house has been stripped and needs renovating. The walls are constructed in a lightweight aerated block which also consist of a timber wall plate and there is no insulation within the cavity. The client has specified that they require a suitable solid, float and set plastering system to be used on the internal walls and require your advice of insulating the cavity.

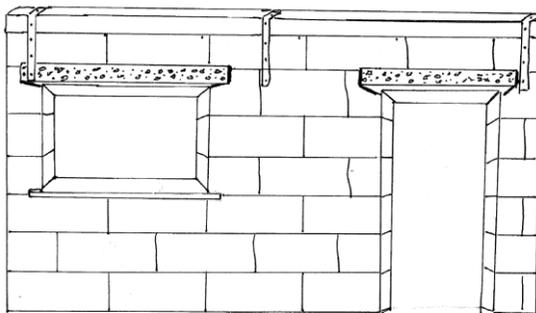


Figure 1

Referring to the scenario and Figure 1 above. Discuss the plastering and insulating works required to improve the energy efficiency rating of the building. (12 marks)

Mark scheme

Answer

Indicative content

- sequence of work
- types of insulating method and materials
- preparation of background
- types of backing, finishing plasters and beads
- benefits of using specific products and systems.
- waste disposal/work area.

Band 1 (1 – 4 marks)

Basic discussion, providing a limited description of materials and methods used for preparing and plastering background surfaces. No references to pre-planning. No recommendations made to specific materials. No discussion of installation processes. To access higher end of this band candidates give an explanation made to specific materials and methods but without support/justification towards energy efficiency rating. Basic references to pre-planning of work.

Example band 1 response

The plastering system I have chosen has good thermal values compared to traditional sand and cement backing plaster.

I would recommend using the following materials for carrying out the work:

- Angle beads
- Expanded Metal Lath
- Lightweight bonding backing plaster
- Multi finish setting plaster.

The method I would use to carry out the work involves fixing EML to prepare the timber wall plate, fixing angle beads to openings, mix and apply a lightweight floating coat and then rule and key. Once it has set I would apply the setting coat using two passes and trowel to a finish for decoration. I would then clean the work area and dispose of any waste.

Band 2 (5 – 8 marks)

Fair discussion, providing a basic description of materials and methods used for preparing and plastering background surfaces. Some links to energy saving, but did not recommend a specific system. To access higher end of this band candidates give limited discussion on the processes to install various energy saving systems. Limited justification of pre-planning.

Example band 2 response

To carry out the work I would discuss with the client various types of insulation materials that could be used within the cavity. In order to carry out the work I would first protect furniture and floors in the property and establish a mixing area and storage for materials. The next stage would be to insulate the cavity because this will improve the thermal performance of the property.

I would use the following materials for carrying out the plastering work:

- PVA to seal the background
- Coil EML fixed on to timber wall plate
- Standard angle beads around openings
- Thistle bonding because of its good adhesion and thermal properties
- Multi finish setting plaster.

The method of work adopted would include preparing the background with PVA to seal the dusty surface after stripping. I would then the fix angle beads around the openings plumb and level to form the guide. Once the beads are set in place I would mix the backing plaster and apply the floating coat ensuring the surface has been ruled for straightness and the keyed with a devil float to receive the finish coat. The next stage would be to mix the setting plaster and apply to the backing plaster using two passes ensuring the second coat is applied after the first coat has pulled in, I would then polish the surface ready for decoration. Once the plastering is complete I would clean all work areas and dispose of any waste.

Band 3 (9 – 12 marks)

Comprehensive and clear discussion, providing an in-depth description of materials, methods and processes. Detailed justification of pre-planning. In-depth comparison of various background surfaces, products and systems. Valid recommendations made, using discussion as support for decisions.

Comprehensive justification of energy efficiency rating. To access higher end of this band candidates must give logical discussion of planning the sequence of work. Justification made for protecting and cleaning surrounding area and surfaces.

Example band 3 response

In order to carry out the work I would select and agree to use a suitable blown cavity insulation to meet current building regulation. I would also ensure that this is done before the plastering commences to avoid causing any defect to the new plaster work.

The plastering system I have chosen also contains lightweight aggregate which has added thermal values and increased adhesion which can be applied on a range of low and high suction backgrounds. The first stage is to schedule the work in a logical sequence to ensure smooth running. I would begin the work by removing furniture and protecting the work areas from damage. Then I would establish a mixing area containing water and electricity, a room for storing materials and an area or method for disposing of any waste.

I would use the following materials for carrying out the plastering work:

- 1 part PVA mixed with 3 part water to seal the dusty background surface.
- Coil EML fixed on to timber wall plate with galvanised nails to reinforce and form a key.
- Standard angle beads around openings fixed with dabs of plaster plumb and level.
- Thistle bonding because of its good adhesion and thermal properties due to it containing lightweight vermiculite aggregate.
- Multi finish setting plaster as it can be applied to various background.

The method of work adopted would include preparing the background with PVA to seal the dusty surface after stripping. I would then the fix angle beads around the openings plumb and level to appropriate thickness to form the floating guide. Whilst waiting for the beads to set I would apply a pricking up coat to the EML in preparation for the floating coat. Once the beads and pricking up coat are set I would mix the backing plaster and apply the floating coat ensuring the surface has been ruled for straightness, squared at returns the keyed with a devil float to receive the finish coat. I would also cut back the floating coat at beads and remove any snots before applying the setting plaster. The next stage would be to mix the setting plaster and apply to the backing plaster at the correct thickness using two passes ensuring the second coat is applied after the first coat has pulled in. I would then polish the surface ensuring all internal corners, beads and frames are clean and sharp ready for decoration. Once the plastering is complete I would clean all work areas, dispose of any waste ensuring the property is left clean.

Examination technique

Candidates with a good understanding of the subject being assessed can often lose marks in exams because they lack experience or confidence in exams or awareness of how to maximise the time available to get the most out of the exam. Here is some suggested guidance for areas that could be covered in advance to help learners improve exam performance.

Before the exam

Although candidates cannot plan the answers they will give in advance, exams for Technical qualifications do follow a common structure and format. In advance of taking the exam, candidates should:

- be familiar with the structure of the exam (ie number and type of questions).
- be aware of the amount of time they have in total to complete the exam.
- have a plan, based on the exam start and finish time for how long to spend on each question/section of the exam.
- be aware of how many marks are available for each question, how much they should expect to write for each question and allow most time for those questions which have the most marks available.

At the start of the exam session

At the start of the exam, candidates:

- should carefully read through the exam paper before answering any questions.
- may find it helpful, where possible, to mark or highlight key information such as command words and number of marks available on the question paper.
- identify questions which require an extended written answer and those questions where all or part of the question may be answered by giving bullets, lists etc rather than full sentences.

Answering the questions

Candidates do not have to answer exam questions in any particular order. They may find it helpful to consider, for example:

- tackling first those questions which they find easiest. This should help them get into the 'flow' of the exam and help confidence by building up marks quickly and at the start of the exam.
- tackling the extended answer question at an early stage of the exam to make sure they spend sufficient time on it and do not run out of time at the end of the exam.

Candidates should avoid wasting time by repeating the question either in full or in part in their answer.

Candidates should **always** attempt every question, even questions where they may be less confident about the answer they are giving. Candidates should be discouraged however, from spending too long on any answer they are less sure about and providing answers that are longer and give more detail than should be necessary in the hope of picking up marks. This may mean they have less time to answer questions that they are better prepared to answer.

Extended answer questions

Before writing out in full their answer to extended questions, candidates may find it helpful to identify the key requirements of the question and jot down a brief plan or outline of how they will answer it. This will help clarify their thinking and make sure that they don't get 'bogged down' or provide too much detail for one part of the question at the expense of others.

Towards the end of the exam

Candidates should always set aside time at the end of the exam to read back through and review what they have written in order to make sure this is legible, makes sense and answers the question in full.

If a candidate finds they are running out of time to finish an answer towards the end of the exam, they should attempt to complete the answer in abbreviated or note form. Provided the content is clear and relevant, examiners will consider such answers and award marks where merited.

Further guidance on preparing candidates to take the exam is given in the City & Guilds publication, [Technical Qualifications, Teaching, Learning and Assessment](#) which can be downloaded free of charge from City & Guilds website.

4. Further information

For further information to support delivery and exam preparation for this qualification, centres should see:

City & Guilds

Qualification homepage: <https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/construction/construction/7908-plastering#tab=information> which includes:

- *Qualification handbook*
- *Synoptic assignment*
- *Sample assessments*

Technical Qualifications, Resources and Support: www.cityandguilds.com/techbac/technical-qualifications/resources-and-support

Joint Council for Qualifications

Instructions for Conducting Examinations: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice--instructions-for-conducting-examinations>