HM Government

T-LEVELS

T Level Technical Qualification in Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing (8730-14)

Core Report

(Summer 2026)

Version 1.0

City & Guilds

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Foreword

Summer 2026 Results

The Technical Qualification is made up of two components (the Core and the Occupational Specialism), both of which need to be successfully achieved to attain the T Level Technical Qualification in Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing. This takes into account the best result for a specific component from the summer and autumn series. This document covers the Core component only.

We discussed the approach to standard setting/maintaining with Ofqual and the other awarding organisations before awarding this year.

Introduction

This document has been prepared to be used as a feedback tool for Providers in order to support and enhance teaching and preparation for assessment. It is advised that this document is referred to when planning delivery and when preparing candidates for the T Level Technical Qualification (TQ) in Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing Core assessments.

This report provides general commentary on candidate performance in both the examination papers and Employer-Set Project (ESP). It highlights common themes in relation to the technical aspects explored within the assessment, giving areas of strength and weakness demonstrated by the cohort of candidates who sat assessments in the Summer 2026 assessment series.

The grade boundaries (and notional boundaries where appropriate) that were used to determine candidates' final Summer 2026 results are also provided.

More information regarding T Levels TQ grading, awarding, UMS and rules for retakes can be found in the T Levels Technical Qualifications Grading Guide available on the **City & Guilds T Levels Resources and Support Hub**.

8730-031 Paper 1

This exam paper covers the following elements of the Engineering & Manufacturing core content:

- Essential mathematics for engineering and manufacturing
- Essential science for engineering and manufacturing
- Materials and their properties
- Mechanical principles
- Electrical and electronic principles
- Mechatronics

This exam paper allowed for candidates to demonstrate a broad range of subject knowledge within the Engineering and Manufacturing core element.

The exam has been split into **two** sections. Below details the types of questions and marks available for each section.

Section A is made up of **67** marks and includes **17** short answer and medium answer questions.
Section B is made up of **33** marks and includes **3** extended response questions.

The exam is designed to provide sufficient sampling across the content and consists of a mixture of short answer questions (SAQs), some of which are structured, and extended response questions (ERQs). The exam assesses across assessment objectives (AOs) to allow for the appropriate assessment and differentiation of candidates to support the reliable setting of boundaries. The assessment objectives represent the following:

- **AO1a** Demonstrate knowledge
- **AO1b** Demonstrate understanding
- **AO2** Apply knowledge and understanding to different situations and context
- **AO3** Analyse and evaluate information and issues

The paper is common to the three pathways of Engineering & Manufacturing; Design & Development (D&D), Maintenance, Installation and Repair (MIR) and Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control (EMPC).

The examination paper is designed so that it gradually increases in challenge. Questions were ramped in terms of difficulty throughout section A starting with AO1a through to AO2, this allowed for the level of demand to be increased steadily throughout the paper. The extended response questions (ERQ) in section B were scenario based and ramped with AO2 and AO3 questions.

Areas of strength include:

- Engineering calculations and mathematical techniques (Q7). Candidates generally performed well on this question, demonstrating a secure understanding of the mathematical principles required. Most were able to apply the correct methods and arrive at accurate solutions.
- Ratios (Q10). This question was answered particularly well, with candidates demonstrating strong knowledge and understanding of the mathematical principles required.
- Gas laws and engineering science (Q11). Candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of Boyle's Law and Charles's Law and were generally able to apply these principles appropriately to the given scenario.
- Quadratic equations (Q12). Performance on this question was strong. Most candidates demonstrated confidence in solving quadratic equations and were able to apply established mathematical methods correctly.
- Trigonometry (Q13a and Q13b). Candidates generally demonstrated good understanding of trigonometric principles and were able to apply their mathematical knowledge effectively when solving problems involving triangles. Performance was particularly strong in Question 13a.
- Materials (Q4). Most candidates responded well to this question and responses often showed correct application of knowledge.
- Heat transfer (Q16b). Many candidates successfully applied the correct calculation method and arrived at an appropriate solution. Where marks were not fully achieved, this was often due to not following the instructions in the question.

Areas of weakness include:

- Logarithms (Q9). Candidates found this question challenging. Although some demonstrated an awareness of the correct mathematical approach, many were unable to develop their method sufficiently to reach a correct solution. This suggested a weaker understanding of logarithmic techniques than would be expected at this level.
- Linkages and fastening methods (Q5). This was one of the weaker areas of performance. Many candidates struggled to demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of linkages and methods used to fasten components together.
- Combined circuits (Q14). Candidates often found this question challenging. Common difficulties included selecting the correct formula, applying prefixes and units correctly, and converting values accurately. These issues frequently prevented candidates from progressing through the calculation successfully.
- Mechanical principles (Q15). Many candidates struggled to apply fundamental mechanical principles appropriately. Common misconceptions included confusion between conservation of momentum and kinetic energy, as well as difficulty identifying and applying the different stages of the calculation process. Candidates also found it challenging to interpret the significance of energy losses within the system.

- Material properties (Q8). Responses indicated that many candidates found it difficult to apply their knowledge of material properties to the requirements of the question. Whilst some candidates identified relevant properties, explanations often lacked sufficient development or failed to explain how those properties influenced engineering performance.
- Application of mathematical and scientific principles. As in previous series, candidate performance suggested that understanding of some mathematical and scientific principles remains an area for development. This was particularly evident in questions requiring the application of logarithms, electrical and electronic principles, and mechanical principles within unfamiliar contexts.

Response to extended response questions (ERQs)

Performance on the extended response questions was generally stronger than in previous series, with most candidates demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding. The strongest responses showed clear application of engineering principles and were able to develop points with depth and supporting rationale.

The extended response questions produced a broad range of responses and were effective in differentiating between candidates of varying ability. Whilst many candidates were able to identify relevant engineering concepts and provide appropriate explanations, a common weakness was limited evaluation and justification. Candidates often described solutions or approaches without fully explaining why they were appropriate or considering alternative options.

Higher-scoring responses demonstrated stronger evaluative skills, providing reasoned judgements that were supported by technical knowledge and evidence from the scenario. These candidates were also more likely to apply their knowledge directly to the context provided rather than relying on generic engineering examples.

As with previous series, candidates would benefit from focusing on the application of knowledge within the context of the question. Stronger responses consistently linked technical knowledge to the scenario presented, using contextualised examples to support explanations, evaluations and conclusions.

8730-032 Paper 2

This exam paper covers the following elements of the Engineering and Manufacturing core content:

- Working in the Engineering and Manufacturing sectors
- Engineering and manufacturing past, present, and future
- Engineering representations
- Engineering and manufacturing control systems
- Quality management
- Health and Safety principles and coverage
- Business, commercial, and financial awareness
- Professional responsibilities, attitudes, and behaviours
- Stock and asset management
- Continuous improvement
- Project and programme management

This exam paper allowed for candidates to demonstrate a broad range of subject knowledge within the Engineering and Manufacturing core element.

The exam has been split into **two** sections. Below details the types of questions and marks available for each section.

Section A is made up of **67** marks and includes **13** short answer and medium answer questions.
Section B is made up of **33** marks and includes **3** extended response questions.

The exam is designed to provide sufficient sampling across the content and consists of a mixture of short answer questions (SAQs), some of which are structured, and extended response questions (ERQs). The exam assesses across assessment objectives (AOs) to allow for the appropriate assessment and differentiation of candidates to support the reliable setting of boundaries. The assessment objectives represent the following:

- **AO1a** Demonstrate knowledge
- **AO1b** Demonstrate understanding
- **AO2** Apply knowledge and understanding to different situations and context
- **AO3** Analyse and evaluate information and issues

The paper is common to the three pathways of Engineering and Manufacturing; Design & Development (D&D), Maintenance, Installation and Repair (MIR) and Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control (EMPC).

Questions were ramped in terms of difficulty throughout section A starting with AO1a through to AO2, this allowed for the level of demand to be increased steadily throughout the paper. The extended response questions ERQ questions in section B were scenario based and ramped with AO2 and AO3 questions.

Areas of strength include:

- Capacity management (Q7). Candidates generally performed well on this question and demonstrated good understanding of the benefits of capacity management. Most were able to identify operational advantages such as improving efficiency, matching resources to demand and supporting productivity. The majority of candidates secured at least two marks on this AO1b question by demonstrating appropriate understanding.
- Project planning and control, Gantt charts (Q8a). Performance was strong on this question, with most candidates demonstrating good knowledge of the purpose and visual utility of Gantt charts. Candidates were generally able to identify how Gantt charts are used to plan, schedule and monitor project activities effectively, with many achieving full marks.
- Project planning and control, Critical Path Analysis (Q8b). Candidates showed a sound understanding of Critical Path Analysis, with most achieving at least half of the available marks. Stronger responses demonstrated greater technical accuracy and understanding of critical activities, dependencies and project duration, although these responses were less common.
- Total Productive Maintenance (Q9b). Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable understanding of both the benefits and limitations of TPM. Responses were generally balanced and appropriate, with the majority of candidates achieving between two and four marks.
- Document management and version control (Q10a). Candidates typically demonstrated good knowledge of document management and version control systems. Most secured three or four marks by identifying how these systems support document control, traceability and collaboration. A common weakness within otherwise strong responses was an overemphasis on reducing human error rather than the wider benefits of document control.
- Environmental management systems, ISO 14001 (Q11c). This question was generally answered well. Candidates showed a sound understanding of the environmental and organisational benefits of ISO 14001, with most achieving between four and six marks. As an AO2 question, candidates were able to apply their knowledge effectively within the context provided.
- Anthropometric data and design considerations (Q12). Most candidates achieved marks within the middle band by identifying factors such as comfort, size, weight and material properties. Stronger responses demonstrated a more developed understanding of anthropometric data and applied this effectively to design considerations.
- Sources of finance (Q13). Candidates generally demonstrated a sound understanding of different types of finance and were able to describe them appropriately. Higher-scoring responses included more detailed discussion of loans and alternative finance sources, such as crowdfunding and investment, with clearer links to business needs.

Areas of weakness include:

- Engineering professional bodies (Q2b). Candidates often demonstrated a narrow understanding of the role of engineering professional bodies. Responses were frequently limited to setting standards, with few candidates recognising their wider roles in professional development, accreditation, registration and support for Chartered Engineers.
- Latches (Q4). A common misconception was evident in candidates' understanding of latches. Many described a latch simply as a device that changes state, rather than

explaining its ability to retain an output state until reset or changed by an external signal.

- Engineering drawing abbreviations (Q5). Few candidates correctly identified the abbreviation for a chamfer. Many responses appeared to be guesses, with incorrect abbreviations such as "CHf" and "Chamf" commonly seen. As an AO1a question, candidates were required to recall specific knowledge.
- Engineering and manufacturing control systems (Q11a). This was one of the weaker questions on the paper. Candidates were expected to demonstrate understanding of hydraulic, pneumatic and electrical control systems, but many instead focused on physical movement or mechanical components. The use of inappropriate terminology and failure to address the requirements of the question limited performance significantly.

Response to extended response questions (ERQs)

Question 14 assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of developments in materials and their applications within the healthcare sector. Most candidates achieved marks within Mark Band 2, demonstrating a reasonable awareness of materials used in healthcare applications. Responses often included relevant examples but tended to focus on common applications such as prosthetics and stents, with limited evaluation and technical depth. Some candidates confused materials with chemicals, which restricted achievement. Higher-scoring responses accurately identified specific materials, such as advanced polymers, composites and shape-memory alloys including Nitinol, and clearly explained how developments in these materials have improved healthcare applications.

Question 15 required candidates to evaluate the use of the hierarchy of control within a manufacturing context. Performance on this question was weaker overall. A common misconception was to interpret the hierarchy of control as an organisational management structure rather than a risk-control framework. Whilst a small number of candidates produced detailed and well-structured responses, most struggled to apply the hierarchy effectively to the scenario provided. In particular, few candidates considered elimination strategies, such as specifying pre-finished components or using additive manufacturing processes, which restricted access to the higher mark bands.

Question 16 asked candidates to discuss how the requirements of a design brief influence both design and manufacture. The majority of candidates achieved marks within Mark Band 2. Most recognised key requirements within the design brief but often focused primarily on product design, with limited consideration of manufacturing implications. Discussion of material selection, production methods, quality assurance and testing was frequently underdeveloped, preventing progression into the highest mark band. Stronger responses demonstrated a clear understanding of how design brief requirements, including temperature control, energy efficiency and durability, influenced both design decisions and manufacturing processes, providing a more holistic and integrated response.

8730 Sub-Component: Exam

Best practice and guidance to providers on potential areas for improving performance in assessment

Providers are advised to ensure that the full range of specification handbook content is covered to the required depth shown in the 'what learners need to learn' section of the content, and that sufficient time is given to each of these topic areas.

Candidates would benefit from understanding what different command verbs are asking of them. For example, the type of response required by an 'Explain' question requires a higher level of response than a 'State' or 'Describe' question. Candidates should be reminded of the need to ensure they fully read and understand all questions before responding.

Providers should support candidates on developing their skills in writing responses to questions that ask for basic knowledge recall, demonstration of understanding, as well as those that are set within, and require reference to, appropriate engineering contexts.

ERQ performance could be further enhanced by preparing candidates to consider in-depth explanations and analysis (including secondary implications where appropriate) on different scenarios and relating it back to the context. To achieve the higher bands candidates needed to include more detailed conclusions and justifications in their responses.

Providers should continue to support candidates in developing their ability to construct responses that demonstrate understanding, application of knowledge, analysis and evaluation. These skills are particularly important in extended response questions, where candidates are expected to provide structured responses that develop points fully, apply knowledge to the context provided, and justify conclusions with appropriate reasoning.

Mathematical knowledge and its application remains an area for development for some candidates. Providers should ensure that candidates have regular opportunities to practise applying mathematical techniques, selecting and using appropriate formulae, interpreting data and working with correct units. Greater emphasis should also be placed on the application of mathematical principles within engineering contexts, including electrical, electronic and mechanical scenarios, to help candidates develop confidence in applying their knowledge to assessment-based problems.

Some of the papers had very unclear handwriting, making it difficult for the marker to read the response. Providers should encourage candidates to ensure their handwriting is legible. Writing in block capital letters is a possible solution if a candidate's handwriting is not legible.

Support materials

Sample and Past Papers:

It is recommended that Providers utilise and deliver the sample examinations as well as past papers as formative assessment to support candidates in preparation for summative assessment.

Sample and past papers: T Level Technical Qualification in Engineering and Manufacturing (Core) qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds (cityandguilds.com)

Exam Guides:

It is also recommended that Providers utilise the exam guides which provides general tips for candidates taking these assessments, examples of different types of questions that will appear, example candidate responses with examiner commentary and examiner hints and tips.

Link: Exam Guide

Events and Webinars:

City & Guilds run free webinars and events throughout the year on preparing for and delivering the T Level exams. The below link provides details on upcoming in person events, live webinars, on-demand webinars and preparation for the core exams.

Link: Events and webinars - T Levels | City & Guilds

Grade boundaries

The table below shows the grade mark ranges for the Exam, along with the notional boundaries for Paper 1 and Paper 2 – **for the Summer 2026 series.**

Grade	Mark range	Notional boundaries	
		Paper 1 (8730-031)	Paper 2 (8730-032)
A*	167-200	83-100	83-100
A	145-166	72-82	73-82
B	123-144	61-71	62-72
C	102-122	51-60	51-61
D	81-101	41-50	40-50
E	60-80	31-40	29-39
Unclassified (U)	0-59	0-30	0-28

8730-035 Sub-Component: Employer-Set Project

The Employer-Set Project (ESP) assessment is a project comprised of a number of tasks, based on a scenario comparable to a real-life project in the industry. The assessment is designed to allow candidates to show how they can perform on a project using the core knowledge and skills. This approach to assessment emphasises to candidates the importance and applicability of the full range of their learning to industry practice.
The project is made up of a number of tasks which all relate to the same employer-set project brief and tender specification.

- Research
- Design
- Plan
- Present

The project draws on the content from the core knowledge that sits across all specialisms in Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing.

The ESP assesses across assessment objectives that will allow for the appropriate differentiation of candidates to support the reliable setting of boundaries. The assessment objectives represent the following:

- **AO1** Plan approach to meeting the brief
- **AO2** Apply core knowledge and skills
- **AO3** Select techniques and resources to meet brief
- **AO4** Use maths, English and digital skills
- **AO5** Realise project outcome and review how well the outcome meets the brief

The project is based around a brief which provides information on a Design and Development project and specific relevant details and resources. Candidates have to draw on their Core knowledge and skills and independently select the correct processes and approaches to take to provide a solution and the evidence specified in the project brief. All tasks are completed under supervised/controlled conditions.

Employer-Set Project tasks overview

Task	Task Type	Assessment Objectives covered	Max Mark	Task weighting
1	Research	AO1, AO2a, AO3 (Planning, core knowledge, selecting techniques and resource)	9	16.6%
		AO2b (Core Skills)	6	
2	Design	AO1, AO3 (Planned approach, selecting techniques)	6	26.7%
		AO2a (Core knowledge)	6	
		AO2b (Core Skills)	6	
		AO5a, AO5b (Realise outcome, review outcome)	6	
3	Plan	AO1, AO3 (Planned approach, selecting techniques)	6	20%
		AO2a (Core knowledge)	6	
		AO2b (Core Skills)	6	
4	Present	AO1, AO3 (Planned approach, selecting techniques)	6	26.7%
		AO2a (Core knowledge)	6	
		AO2b (Core Skills)	6	
		AO5a, AO5b (Realise outcome, review outcome)	6	
Maths, English and digital skills		AO4a (Maths)	3	10%
		AO4b (English)	3	
		AO4c (Digital Skills)	3	

Task 1 – Research

Candidates were required to undertake research to inform the design of a passenger seating solution and produce a design specification based on the requirements of the brief. Overall, most candidates achieved performance consistent with the middle mark band.

Many candidates produced research that addressed the basic requirements of the task and included investigation of existing products, materials and other aspects relevant to the brief. However, research often lacked breadth and depth, with some candidates focusing heavily on a limited number of sources. Referencing continued to be an area for development, with some candidates providing incomplete source information or relying on information generated through artificial intelligence without verifying its accuracy.

Candidates who achieved the lower mark bands often presented research and specification information together, making it difficult to distinguish between the two activities. In some instances, technical specifications appeared to be taken directly from sources rather than being developed from research findings. This limited candidates' ability to demonstrate their own interpretation of the brief.

Candidates who achieved the higher mark bands produced well-structured research using a range of appropriate sources. These candidates demonstrated clear links between their research findings, industry standards and the requirements of the design brief. Research was typically supported through the effective use of images and visual information, whilst design specifications were clearly justified and informed by evidence gathered during the research process.

Actions providers can take to support assessment preparation for future series:

Providers are advised to support candidates in developing effective research skills, including the use of a broad range of reliable sources and accurate referencing. Where artificial intelligence (AI) tools are used, candidates should be encouraged to verify the accuracy of information obtained and ensure that AI supports, rather than replaces, independent research activities.

Providers should encourage candidates to make clearer links between their research, industry standards and the requirements of the design brief. Greater use of images, diagrams and other visual sources would help candidates communicate research findings more effectively. Candidates would also benefit from developing concise technical writing skills and ensuring that research evidence and design specifications are presented as clearly defined and separate sections.

Task 2 – Design

Candidates were required to develop design concepts for the passenger seating solution and communicate these through sketches, CAD drawings, annotations and supporting calculations. Overall, most candidates achieved marks within the middle band, producing logical design solutions that broadly addressed the requirements of the brief.

Most candidates presented suitable design ideas and demonstrated an understanding of the task requirements. Sketches and CAD drawings were generally used effectively to communicate design intent. However, technical detail was often limited, with dimensions, cost calculations and orthographic drawings either incomplete or omitted. Annotations frequently described features of the design but did not always provide sufficient justification for design decisions.

Candidates who achieved the lower mark bands often submitted only a single design idea or provided limited evidence of development and refinement. Some responses contained basic sketches with minimal annotation and lacked the technical information required to fully communicate the design proposal. Evaluation was often descriptive and focused on whether the design met the brief rather than explaining how or why design decisions had been made.

Candidates who achieved the higher mark bands produced detailed and well-developed design proposals supported by accurate technical information. These candidates demonstrated clear justification for design decisions, made effective use of CAD and annotation, and provided evidence of iterative development throughout the design process. Evaluations were analytical in nature and showed clear links between design decisions and the requirements of the brief.

Actions providers can take to support assessment preparation for future series:

Providers are advised to ensure candidates develop design ideas in sufficient detail and communicate them using appropriate technical conventions. Particular focus should be given to the consistent use of dimensions, title blocks, annotations and cost calculations to improve technical accuracy and demonstrate understanding of industry-standard practice.

Candidates would benefit from developing stronger justification skills by clearly explaining how design decisions meet the requirements of the brief. Providers should encourage candidates to demonstrate the progression of ideas from initial concepts through to final solutions using reflective notes, evaluation and evidence of refinement throughout the design process.

Providers should also support candidates in developing CAD skills, including the production of detailed 3D models and 2D orthographic drawings. Greater emphasis should be placed on the use of technical language, logical report structures and consistent referencing to support higher achievement.

Task 3 – Plan

Candidates were required to develop a production plan detailing the activities, processes and considerations required to manufacture their final design solution. Most candidates achieved marks within the middle band and demonstrated a sound understanding of common planning tools and techniques.

Many candidates included planning documentation such as Gantt charts, Critical Path Analysis (CPA) and risk assessments. Whilst these were generally appropriate, they often lacked sufficient detail and accuracy. Project plans were frequently generic and did not always show realistic task dependencies, manufacturing processes or complete consideration of the production lifecycle. Costing, sustainability and environmental considerations were often included but lacked depth.

Candidates who achieved the lower mark bands produced incomplete or underdeveloped plans with limited evidence of sequencing, justification or critical path identification. Consideration of quality assurance, manufacturing methods and environmental impacts was often superficial or absent.

Candidates who achieved the higher mark bands produced comprehensive and well-structured plans that clearly demonstrated an understanding of industrial planning practices. These responses included accurate task sequencing, detailed manufacturing considerations, realistic costing information and thorough treatment of health and safety, sustainability and

quality assurance requirements. Clear links were made between design decisions and production activities throughout the planning documentation.

Actions providers can take to support assessment preparation for future series:

Providers are advised to support candidates in producing more detailed and comprehensive project plans that demonstrate clear consideration of all stages of manufacture and production. Candidates should be encouraged to include accurate Gantt charts, Critical Path Analysis (CPA), realistic timescales and clear task dependencies.

Candidates would benefit from further opportunities to justify manufacturing methods, resource requirements and costing decisions. Greater emphasis should also be placed on quality assurance, sustainability and environmental considerations to ensure planning activities fully reflect industry expectations.

Providers should encourage candidates to produce planning documentation that demonstrates clear links between design decisions and manufacturing processes, supported by appropriate technical reasoning and evidence.

Task 4 – Present

Candidates were required to produce and deliver a presentation, communicating their final design proposal and demonstrating how it met the requirements of the brief. Overall, most candidates produced structured presentations and achieved marks within the middle band.

Presentations generally communicated the key aspects of the project and demonstrated an understanding of the design process. However, delivery was sometimes overly reliant on presentation slides, with some candidates lacking confidence when presenting and providing limited technical explanation of design decisions. Responses to questions often demonstrated basic understanding but did not always contain sufficient detail or technical language.

Candidates who achieved the lower mark bands often relied heavily on reading from slides and provided limited evaluation of their work. Presentation materials sometimes contained excessive text or unclear visuals which reduced overall effectiveness. Reflections on project outcomes were often descriptive and lacked clear links to the design brief.

Candidates who achieved the higher mark bands delivered presentations confidently and effectively, maintaining a clear focus on the intended audience. These candidates demonstrated strong technical understanding, justified design decisions in detail and communicated information using appropriate technical language. Evaluations were analytical and identified both strengths and areas for further development, supported by clear reference to the design brief and project outcomes.

Actions providers can take to support assessment preparation for future series:

Providers are advised to provide candidates with opportunities to develop their presentation and communication skills through structured practice activities. Particular focus should be placed on building confidence, maintaining audience engagement and communicating information clearly using appropriate technical language.

Candidates should be encouraged to produce professional presentations that use images and visual content effectively to support key messages. Providers should emphasise the importance of clearly explaining and justifying design decisions rather than relying solely on presentation slides.

Candidates would also benefit from practising responses to questions and developing stronger evaluative skills. Higher-performing candidates are typically able to provide detailed reflections on project outcomes, challenges encountered and potential improvements, with clear links to the original design brief.

Maths, English and digital Skills

Evidence across all four tasks was taken into consideration when assessing maths, English and digital Skills. Overall, most candidates demonstrated performance consistent with the middle band across all three skill areas.

In mathematics, most candidates were able to apply basic numerical skills appropriately, particularly when using dimensions, scaling and simple calculations within their design work. However, calculations were often limited in scope, with some candidates providing only the minimum mathematical evidence required. Higher-performing candidates demonstrated a broader range of mathematical application through the use of accurate cost, volume and weight calculations, supported by consistent dimensioning and numerical justification of design decisions.

For English skills, most candidates communicated their ideas clearly and used technical terminology with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Written communication was generally understandable, although some reports contained lengthy sections of text with limited structure which reduced clarity. Candidates awarded the higher band marks demonstrated clear and effective communication through well-organised reports, appropriate technical language and confident verbal explanations within presentations.

Candidates generally made effective use of digital technologies throughout the assessment. CAD software, presentation packages and spreadsheets were commonly used to support design, planning and communication activities. Whilst most candidates demonstrated an appropriate level of digital competence, the application of digital tools was often basic. Higher-performing candidates integrated a wider range of digital technologies throughout their work, using detailed CAD modelling, spreadsheets and planning tools to support and communicate their design decisions effectively.

Actions providers can take to support assessment preparation for future series:

Providers are encouraged to support candidates in developing mathematical skills through the application of calculations within engineering contexts. Candidates should be provided with opportunities to complete accurate cost, volume and weight calculations, apply dimensions consistently and use numerical evidence to justify design decisions.

To strengthen English skills, candidates should be encouraged to use technical terminology accurately and present information using clear structures, headings and well-developed paragraphs. Greater emphasis should be placed on concise technical writing and the clear communication of design decisions through both written and verbal responses.

Providers should also encourage candidates to further develop their digital skills through the effective use of CAD software, spreadsheets, planning tools and presentation software. Candidates would benefit from exploring more advanced features within these applications and demonstrating how digital technologies can be integrated throughout the project to support design development, planning, communication and evaluation.

8730 Sub-Component: ESP

Best practice and guidance to providers on potential areas for improving performance in assessment

There was an issue with some file conventions for evidence making it difficult for markers to identify evidence. Providers are advised to ensure that candidate documents are uploaded correctly and contain the relevant content and labelled with the correct filename to ensure consistency and ease of access. For example: *Task_1_Research_[Registration numbers #]_[surname]_[first letter of first name]*

In some instances, providers uploaded evidence for the incorrect candidate. Providers should be aware that this could lead to a delay in results being issued. Providers are asked to check the evidence hasn't corrupted prior to upload and that any videos play and have sufficient sound. This should then be declared on the evidence checklist.

Providers are advised to ensure where separate documents or tasks are requested these and uploaded as separate files.

Providers are strongly encouraged to use evidence headers for each task, to allow for ease of identification of candidate evidence and efficiency in marking. All information within the task headers should be completed. Candidate evidence should be included within the header document and not as a separate file.

Providers should complete and submit the 'Evidence checklist' and must detail on this where evidence has not been submitted. This is designed to be a checklist of the minimum evidence that is expected for a candidate. The checklist must align to what has been uploaded to the system.

Providers are reminded that each task is marked in isolation and that each task has been weighted in relation to the assessment objectives covered. This information is detailed in the specification and sample assessments. All tasks are marked separately, so where evidence that originated in another task within the Employer Set Project is produced by a candidate, no marks will be retrospectively awarded for that evidence in previous tasks, despite the knowledge or skills that it may demonstrate. The only evidence considered for the marking of an individual task is what is listed within the 'what must be produced for marking' section within each marking grid.

Providers are advised to ensure the assessor and candidate both sign and date Declarations of Authenticity once the assessment has been completed. This confirms that the assessment has been conducted in line with the stipulated conditions and guidance. Each candidate only requires one declaration each, declarations are not required for each task. Providers only have to upload the declaration as evidence of compliance to the assessment conditions, there is no need to upload further evidence such as records of the candidates search history. If City and Guilds have concerns relating to the conduct of the assessment and require further evidence, we will contact Providers for this.

Support materials

Sample and Past ESP Assessments:
It is recommended that Providers utilise and deliver the sample ESP as well as past ESPs as formative assessment to support candidates in preparation for summative assessment.

Sample and past ESPs: T Level Technical Qualification in Engineering and Manufacturing (Core) qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds (cityandguilds.com)

Exemplar ESP Assessments:
It is also recommended that Providers utilise the exemplar ESP Assessments to help understand the standard that was required in the Summer 2025 assessment series to achieve an A and E grade.

8730-035 ESP A grade exemplar: https://www.cityandguilds.com/-/media/productdocuments/engineering/mechanical/8730/assessment-materials/employer-set-project-exemplars/design-and-development-for-engineering-and-manufacturing/8730-035-esp-a-grade-exemplar-summer-2025-v1-0-pdf.pdf

8730-035 ESP E grade exemplar: https://www.cityandguilds.com/-/media/productdocuments/engineering/mechanical/8730/assessment-materials/employer-set-project-exemplars/design-and-development-for-engineering-and-manufacturing/8730-035-esp-e-grade-exemplar-summer-2025-v1-0-pdf.pdf

TQ Employer-Set Project Assessment Process Guide:
The guide gives support to Providers in preparing for and delivering T Level Employer-Set Projects.

Link: TQ Employer-Set Project Assessment process guide (cityandguilds.com)

Events and Webinars:
City & Guilds run free webinars and events throughout the year on preparing for and delivering the T Level Employer Set Projects. The below link provides details on upcoming in person events, live webinars, on-demand webinars and preparation for the ESP assessment.

Link: Events and webinars - T Levels | City & Guilds (cityandguilds.com)

Grade boundaries

The table below shows the grade mark ranges for the Employer-Set Project – **for the Summer 2026 series.**

Grade	Mark range
A*	71-90
A	63-70
B	55-62
C	47-54
D	39-46
E	32-38
Unclassified (U)	0-31

8730-14 Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing Core

The T Levels Technical Qualification (TQ) in Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing core is made up of the below sub-components (and weightings).

- Exam (70%)
- Employer-Set Project (30%)

UMS grade boundaries

The table below shows the UMS values available for grades in the sub-components. It also shows the UMS values required to achieve each grade for the overall Core. This table will not vary across the series, the values are fixed for this TQ.

Grade boundary	Exam sub-component	ESP sub-component	Overall Core
A*	252-280	108-120	360-400
A	224-251	96-107	320-359
B	196-223	84-95	280-319
C	168-195	72-83	240-279
D	140-167	60-71	200-239
E	112-139	48-59	160-199
Unclassified (U)	0-111	0-47	0-159

Get in touch

City & Guilds Technicals Quality Team

We are here to answer any queries you may have regarding your T Level Technical Qualification delivery.

Should you require assistance, please contact us using the details below:

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