6002-22 Level 2 Technical Certificate for Cutting and Styling Services (360)

2023

Qualification Report

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Introduction

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

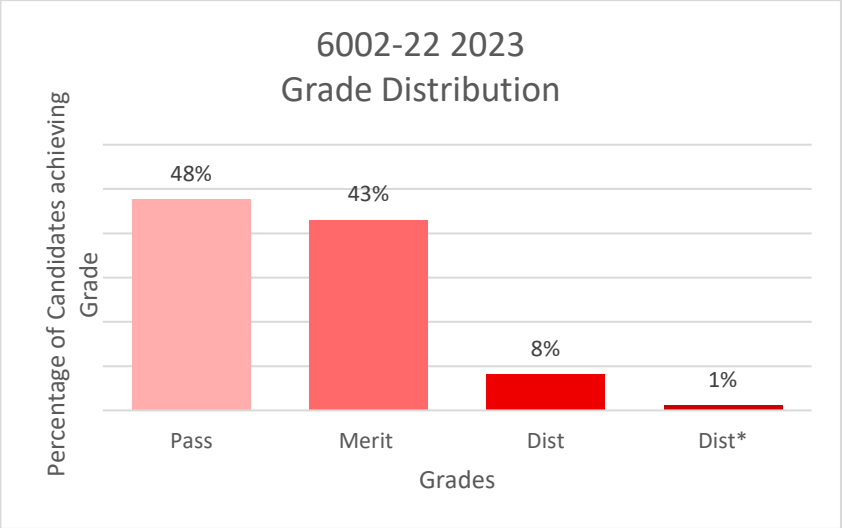
This report provides general commentary on candidate performance in both the synoptic assignment and theory exam. It highlights common themes in relation to the technical aspects explored within the assessment, giving areas of strengths and weakness demonstrated by the cohort of candidates who sat assessments in the 2023 academic year. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose.

The document provides commentary on the following assessments:

- 6002-009/509 Level 2 Cutting and Styling Services – Theory exam
    - March 2023 (Spring)
    - June 2023 (Summer)
- 6002-010 Level 2 Cutting and Styling Services – Synoptic Assignment

Qualification Grade Distribution

The approximate grade distribution for this qualification is shown below:



This data is based on the distribution as of 23/08/2023.

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

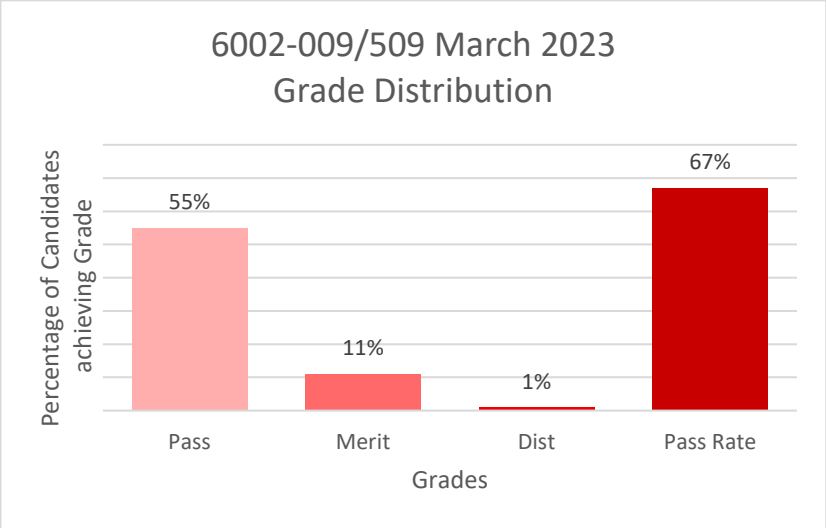
Grade Boundaries

Assessment: 6002-009/509
Series: March 2023 (Spring)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	24
Merit mark	33
Distinction mark	42

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

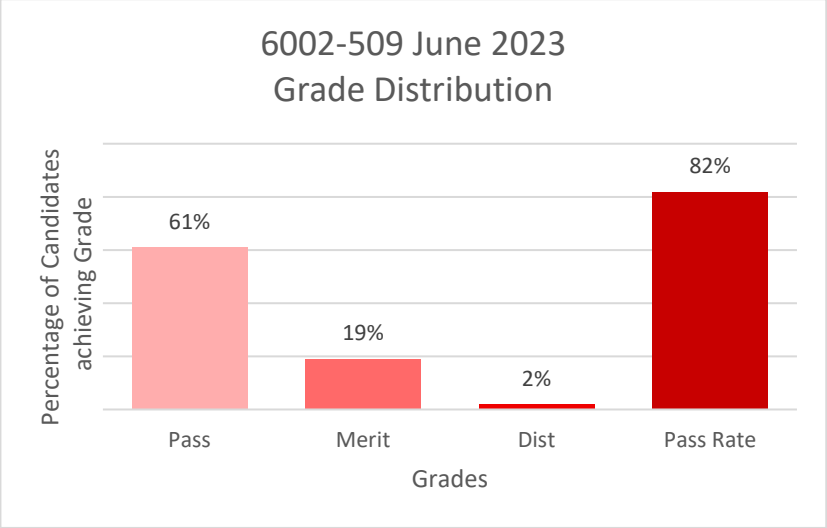


Assessment: 6002-509
Series: June 2023 (Summer)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	24
Merit mark	33
Distinction mark	42

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



Chief Examiner Commentary

6002-009/509 Level 2 Cutting and Styling Services - Theory exam

Series 1 – March 2023

This exam paper tested knowledge and understanding across a range of learning outcomes within the qualification syllabus. The cohort generally demonstrated good knowledge recall and showed a good use and understanding of technical terminology. Some candidates lacked the ability to explain their understanding to access higher marks. Overall, the March 2023 cohort's performance was broadly comparable to previous exam series.

The cohort demonstrated a strength in knowledge recall, accessing higher marks on questions relating to personal protective equipment, cutting techniques used to create a style and the effects of using a razor during a cutting service. However, some candidates seemed to confuse a razor with clippers or a cutthroat razor. Many candidates also showed good knowledge recall where they were required to name the legislation that must be followed for a specific scenario. Candidates demonstrated a good level of understanding when discussing adaptations required during a cutting service for different hair growth patterns. Candidates who gained higher marks on questions testing their understanding across the paper were able to consider a range of factors and justify their responses with explanations.

Candidates struggled to show their breadth of knowledge when asked to recall a range of effects of cool water on the hair and scalp and the same was seen when they needed to recall techniques used to dress hair up. Candidates missed opportunities to gain higher marks when asked to describe the steps to take to disinfect a cutting tool effectively. This question required candidates to describe the specific steps with accuracy, but many struggled to answer with the correct sequence or the full range of steps necessary. Candidates were also challenged when they needed to provide more depth to their responses, this was seen on questions testing understanding around ways to promote retail opportunities in the salon.

A portion of the cohort did not seem to read some questions fully before providing a response and this was seen on a question testing the impact of a skin structure on styling services. Whilst candidates were able to recognise technical terminology used, they sometimes provided a response which explained the effect on the shampoo service. A further example of this was seen around a question requiring candidates to explain the purpose of a drying technique. Candidates often explained how to create a look which was not a response to the question. Candidates would benefit from ensuring they read the full question to ensure they provide a response focussed to the requirements of the stem, which will allow them to access higher marks.

Within the Extended Response Question (ERQ), candidates who achieved higher marks showed their ability to consider the main influencing factors and provide feasible adaptations to the service. These candidates were able to correctly identify the hair growth pattern specified and make suitable recommendations for adjustments to ensure the look created would suit the client requirements. Candidates who did not perform as well on this question tended to focus their discussion heavily around the consultation process and providing a step-by-step example of the service they would conduct with little justification for the choices made.

Candidates should be reminded that this question is an opportunity for them to demonstrate their breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding within the context provided and they should consider feasible solutions to the problems presented through critical thinking. Candidates would also benefit from considering the need to adapt and personalise their behaviours and communication techniques when presented with a scenario where the client's needs vary.

Series 2 – June 2023

This exam paper tested knowledge and understanding across a range of learning outcomes within the qualification syllabus. Candidate performance was generally comparable to previous exam series', where candidates were able to pick up marks easily for AO1 knowledge questions but in some cases struggled to expand in greater depth in AO2 understanding. Technical terminology was understanding was, however, good on this exam series and use of this was evident within candidates' responses. Candidates were able to pick up a range of marks across the paper between both knowledge and understanding style questions but were weaker on higher-mark questions.

Questions relating to shampooing and conditioning services saw candidates gaining good marks this series, with knowledge evidenced around; the effects of hot water, reasons for ensuring thorough removal of conditioning products from the hair, and ways to remove excess water following a shampooing service. Many candidates also showed good knowledge recall on legislation relating to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) order, although in some cases failed to show greater depth of understanding in this area. A fairly good level of understanding was evident when candidates discussed the behaviours a stylist should demonstrate to ensure clients receive a positive impression of them and the salon. Candidates who gained higher marks overall were able to justify points made and add some greater expansion.

In some higher mark questions, candidates had the opportunity to provide and discuss a variety of information, e.g., recalling the name of specific cuts, angles used to create these and a description of the look, however, they often struggled to answer with sufficient detail to gain full marks. Candidates also struggled to identify styling products used to hold a set in place, with some instead discussing finishing products. Many candidates demonstrated some understanding of scientific principles during a styling service and were able to use technical terminology correctly when explaining the effects of humidity, however, they were unable to stretch much further to give full explanations in their responses. Many candidates showed a particular weakness in breadth of understanding when explaining the importance of completing client record cards.

Within the Extended Response Question (ERQ), candidates were able to access marks across Band 1 and Band 2, however, most did not provide full justification for their suggestions around cutting, which limited the number of marks that could be gained. Higher achievers were able to discuss adaptations needed to the service to meet the client's requirements. They could also show sufficient knowledge on how to create the look, including specific cutting techniques, tools and angles used to create the desired effect. Candidates would benefit from demonstrating their knowledge and understanding by providing a wider range of recommendations and exploring various options when evaluating a scenario-based question.

Candidates need to focus on reading the full question before answering as responses did not always relate in full to the question at hand. An example of this is when asked for factors that would influence product selection, candidates often listed any influencing factors that would not necessarily impact the choice of product used. Centres would benefit from providing candidates with exam preparation sessions, with focus on command verbs so that they understand the requirements for both knowledge and understanding-based questions. This would avoid candidates wasting time 'explaining' their responses where only factual recall is required, and ensure they provide greater breadth and depth of justification on the understanding-style questions. It would be beneficial for centres to review the specific Level 2 cuts in greater detail so that candidates understand in full the effect each look creates. Centres have prepared candidates well in regard to the shampooing and conditioning element of the specification and should continue to maintain this standard of delivery.

Synoptic Assignment

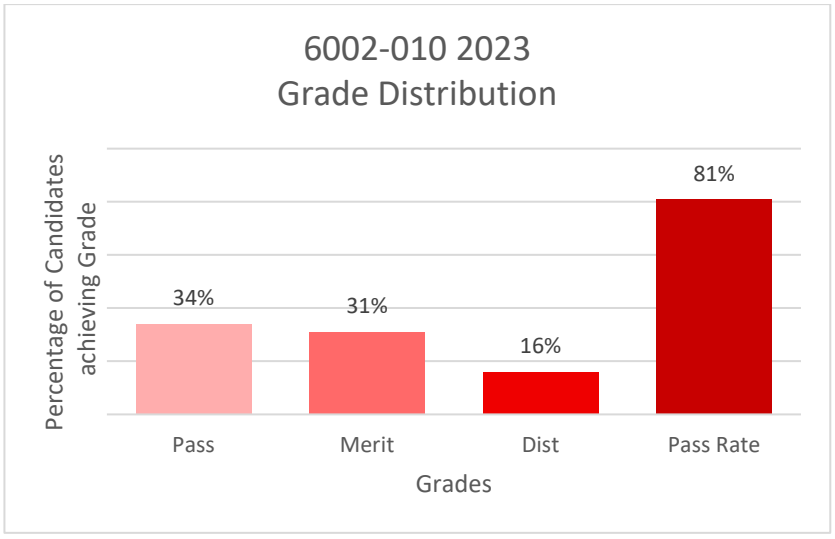
Grade Boundaries

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

Assessment: 6002-010
Series: 2023

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	29
Merit mark	39
Distinction mark	50

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



Principal Moderator Commentary

Task 1

The templates provided for Task 1 were used successfully to record consultations. The stronger consultation plans seen had fully documented skin and scalp analysis, identifying specific influencing factors, hair characteristics and any contra-indications observed during their consultation. They went on to discuss how these may impact upon the service e.g., choice of tools, techniques, products, and angles. The excellent consultation plans demonstrated greater depth of understanding by providing alternative options and showing comparison as part of their decision-making. Weaker plans were mostly recall of facts around service procedures with limited adaptation or personalisation to the client e.g., accurate identification of face shape but no justification of which cutting technique to best use for this.

A significant number of submissions did not provide images of their planned outcomes on the Task 1 templates. Centres are reminded to check the requirements laid out in the Synoptic Assessment Pack and reinforce these before commencement of Task 1 to best support candidates. The visual representation of the outcomes they are aspiring to create aids the accuracy of marking when judging how the performance has been brought together in AO4.

This year, inaccuracies were observed around knowledge and understanding of cutting and styling techniques, and use of technical terminology. For example, candidates advised they would texturise to remove cutting lines and errors, rather than referring to the removal of bulk, production of different lengths to add texture/dimension or enabling increased movement. On occasion it was mentioned that freehand was being used, but commentary indicated that tension had been applied with hands or a comb whilst cutting.

Task 2

In some cases, the Task 2 proforma for aftercare was used to good effect by candidates. However, there were instances where these had been completed prior to Task 2, during Task 1, and as a result recorded *planned* aftercare rather than evidencing what was given during the practical. In some other instances, they were completed retrospectively with Task 3, which does not ensure evidence produced is authentic.

As with last year, we continued to see a greater range of cut looks, ranging from short to long, which is encouraging. The minimal requirement of hair to be removed (2cm) was, in the main, well adhered to, with some candidates cutting enough to make significant changes to client looks, which again was positive. However, this year's cohort showed an increase in cases where the outside guidelines/baselines of haircuts were not considered, and one-length cuts were not above the shoulders in order to meet the assessment requirement. Shaping of the front hairline for a client had been wrongly classed as a graduated haircut. Centres must ensure candidates are clear on the requirements of the brief and encourage candidates to follow this.

This year we saw the positive return of more movement in finished outcomes, and this is encouraged. This would have been strengthened if evidenced through a wider range of styling techniques and across different hair characteristics and classifications. In most cases there was over-reliance on heated equipment to provide movement and curl. Wands were mostly used, leaving significant lengths of hair uncurled and ends not secured with skill. Candidates at times rough-dried until fully dry, rather than implementing blow-drying technique to gain lift, volume, and movement.

Dry-setting techniques used prior to putting the hair up often did not enhance the hair lengths appropriately for the planned look. For example, creating curls when the hair was then tightly placed in a roll/pleat/chignon. Nevertheless, more of the looks that were produced adhered to the assessment requirements for the amount of hair to be secured up, showed commerciality and creativity in their design.

Cuts produced by higher scoring candidates showed accuracy and balance, with greater attention given to the front hairline area to ensure this complimented the client's features. Styling and dressing skills were stronger and demonstrated a level of dexterity that led to 'polished' work-ready outcomes. These candidates were better able to use and adapt a wider range of techniques, considering more fully the influencing factors. Aftercare was imbedded throughout the service and interaction with the client showed good care, ease and confidence.

Best practice was observed when well-lit areas or ring-lights were used to provide extra light against plain background, with darker gowns, capes or towels used for lighter hair and vice versa when taking images. There were more cases this year of images being missing for key points of services, and instances when photographs were dark, taken on an angle or without consideration to client positioning and hair length. In some cases, clients were holding candidate details up in front of them and consequently shoulders were hunched, distorting the image of outcome. This makes it more challenging during moderation to agree the levels of accuracy, especially where there were contradictory judgements on the PO forms.

Task 3

In most evaluations, candidates were able to discuss, with honesty, the main strengths and weaknesses of their performance. The higher-scoring candidates were able to discuss further improvements that could be used next time. Where clients had changed since planning, candidates were able to discuss this here and, in some cases, provide justification for adaptations made.

Candidate performance against each AO – strengths and weaknesses

AO1 – Recall of knowledge

Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of safe working practices, consultation procedures and working patterns in their plans. Across hair & scalp analysis there was reasonable application of knowledge to individual circumstance. Products for shampooing, conditioning, and styling were normally identified accurately. The higher scoring candidates showed greater breadth and accuracy in their factual recall across cutting angles, cutting techniques, and the tailoring of aftercare. However, across the cohort, candidates were less informed on the use of styling and dressing techniques.

AO2 – Understanding

Generally, understanding was slightly weaker, with candidates less likely to reason or justify their choices. Where adaptation had been suggested, this was sometimes disjointed and not fully accurate. In the best samples, candidates could comprehend the scientific principles of styling with accuracy, giving clear explanation. Generally, aftercare advice was tailored to demonstrate some understanding, however, this was not always implemented at the same level during the practical performance.

AO3 – Application of practical/technical skills

Higher achieving candidates fully met the requirements of the brief. They used a range of products, tools, equipment, and technique to achieve their planned looks with accuracy and within commercial timings. There were, however, more instances this year when one-length cuts did not clear the shoulders, and inaccuracies such as describing the shaping of the front hairline as a graduation. A very limited range of dry-setting was observed in the submission, with most candidates using wands and winding the hair up in to pin-curls to cool. Centres are encouraged to ensure candidates are familiar with a breadth of dry-setting techniques and that these are fully considered when choosing a method to best prepare an individual's hair.

AO4 – Bringing it all together

A lack of imagery in Task 1 made marking and moderation in this AO more challenging at times. It was often unclear to internal and external markers how well actual outcomes matched up to

planned looks. Higher scoring candidates in this AO were able to show that they could work within commercially realistic timeframes and in-line with industry working patterns. They were able to demonstrate that they had considered most individual influencing factors fully and had tailored aftercare to the client. These candidates were able to perform in a fluid manner, with good levels of customer service that accurately aligned to the client requirements. They showed consistent Health & Safety practices and salon behaviours and had an awareness for the environment as a whole, rather than only being able to focus on their own activity.

AO5 – Attention to detail

There were instances in the submission where good levels of attention to detail were demonstrated in services and customer care. Looks were tailored somewhat to enhance individual client characteristics, and attention was paid to the front hairline area and/or nape to smooth stray hairs. Services were cross-checked thoroughly to ensure accuracy and a good level of polish. However, there were instances when students, having struggled to get accuracy when cutting, appeared to lose momentum and this affected not only outcomes but also levels of client care.

Examples of Best practice

- Templates provided by City & Guilds were used for each task and had not been adapted.
- Images of chosen looks in Task 1 were re-used during Task 2 to discuss the client requirements, minimising the need for questioning.
- Back up models were on stand-by in case of no-show clients for Task 2.
- Band descriptors, and appropriate language that differentiated performance level, were used to describe how well the service/activity had been carried out.
- The PO forms recorded the performance of Task 2 only.
- The CRF's recorded descriptive judgements on the level of performance and corresponding marks. They pin-pointed where in the evidence these judgements where substantiated and were not a duplication of the PO form.
- The accuracy of haircuts had been checked and this was fully documented in the PO form.
- Evidence was uploaded in one PDF or PowerPoint with a clear file name.
- Candidates were prepared with 'mock' assessments which did not mirror the requirements of the synoptic brief and had been actively encouraged to showcase a full range of services without being guided to produce particular looks.
- Any changes to clients on the day were discussed in Task 3 as part of the evaluation.
- Feedback was not provided to candidates after they have completed their Tasks 1 and 2, to ensure Task 3 was a true self-reflection.
- Standardisation was carried out during Task 2 or the marking processes, then later sampled again across departments.
- The observer had documented any oral questions asked during the practical Task 2 and included these with the PO form.
- Clocks were clearly visible, and a staff member advised candidates on how much time was left until the end of the assessment.
- Candidates were reminded to take photographs and check them to ensure they were clear.
- The Standardisation Declaration Form was completed and submitted on to the moderation platform, in the document section, when uploading candidate work.
- All forms were completed fully, dated and signed to authenticate the evidence uploaded.
- Candidate Declaration of Authenticity indicates level of support given/not given.