0170-24 Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies

2026

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 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 strength and weakness demonstrated by the cohort of candidates who sat assessments in the academic year. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose.

The document provides commentary on the following assessments:

- 0170-505 Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies – Theory exam
    - Summer 2026
- 0170-005 Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies – Synoptic Assignment.

The approximate distribution of grades, pass rates and grade boundaries for assessments are now available as a single easy-to-view resource on the Technicals Resources pages of our website Resource Hub - Technical Qualifications | City & Guilds under the 'Post-results services' drop-down tab.

Theory Exam

Chief Examiner Commentary

0170-505 Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies - Theory exam

Series 1 – Summer 2026

Overall, candidates engaged positively with this series and demonstrated a sound level of knowledge and understanding across much of the paper. Many responses showed good preparation and a secure grasp of key concepts, allowing candidates to access marks across a range of question types. However, there was some variation in performance, with some candidates providing limited responses or leaving questions incomplete, suggesting gaps in subject knowledge and understanding, as well as poorer exam technique.

Performance was generally strongest in the shorter recall-based questions (AO1), where candidates were often able to accurately identify facts, terms and concepts. These responses demonstrated good knowledge of core subject content.

The application-based questions (AO2) proved more demanding. While many candidates could identify relevant points, they were not always able to develop these sufficiently through description or explanation to access the higher mark bands. Greater focus on understanding command words such as describe, explain and discuss would help candidates provide the depth of response required and maximise available marks.

Candidates performed particularly well on questions relating to tools and equipment, health of animals and anatomy. Better candidate responses included a range of relevant examples and demonstrated an ability to apply knowledge to practical scenarios.

The Extended Response Question (ERQ)

This question required candidates to demonstrate their understanding of how technology can be used to enhance biodiversity on farms. Candidates who addressed both biodiversity and the role of technology generally performed well, while those who focused solely on technology or biodiversity limited the marks available to them.

Candidates achieving the highest marks provided detailed, well-structured responses that used accurate technical terminology and included a range of relevant examples, such as drones, GPS mapping, sensors, precision farming, and wildlife monitoring systems. These responses clearly explained how technology could support habitat management, species monitoring, and environmental conservation.

Lower-scoring responses often demonstrated a misunderstanding of the term biodiversity, with some candidates confusing it with biosecurity. Others focused on increasing livestock variety rather than improving wider farm ecosystems or described technology without linking it to biodiversity outcomes. In some cases, candidates addressed an entirely different topic, resulting in limited credit against the assessment criteria.
Candidates would benefit from carefully reading questions to ensure they address all aspects of the task and from developing their points through clear discussion and application to the context given.

Centres are reminded of the City & Guilds Technicals ‘Exam Guides’ available here:
https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/land-basedservices/agriculture/0170-technical-award-in-land-based-studies#tab=information

Synoptic Assignment

Principal Moderator Commentary

0170-005 Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies - Synoptic assignment

Series: June 2026

The synoptic assignment contained a very wide range of tasks both theoretical and practical which allowed candidates every opportunity to achieve their full potential across a range of skills and knowledge across a wide spectrum of the land-based sector. Practical activities ranged from the care of a range of mammals or birds to the fundamentals of soil and environmental management. Candidates are expected to carry out risk assessments for practical activities which is a vital skill to learn before entering the world of work especially in the land-based industries.

The main written task allows the candidate to draw on the full range of the knowledge they have learnt and experienced in planning the use of an area of land to the benefit of a community and the environment.

Candidates have shown a wide range of abilities throughout all Assessment Outcomes (AOs).

AO1
Candidates showed a wide range of knowledge across the qualification both in practical and theoretical activities. Comments have ranged from excellent to limited. The evidence produced showed accuracy and thought with some misunderstandings in places. Candidates showed good breadth of knowledge but in many cases, it did lack depth to gain the higher marks within this area.
Candidates were able to gain AO1 marks from across the synoptic through both written and practical activities. Centres continue to be encouraged to identify this in all areas to allow candidates to perform to their best.

AO2
Candidates showed the full range of understanding across the qualification from fair to excellent. Explanations were mostly fair to good but in some cases were very detailed.
Candidates were able to link the needs of a local community from social to educational and to that of the environment. Overall, their understanding of legislative requirements has shown a lot of improvement with candidates making some very appropriate suggestions.

AO3
Overall candidates were able to demonstrate a good range of practical abilities across a wide range of large and small mammals and birds. In some cases, it was obvious that candidates had limited experience with the type of animal they were being assessed on. It is important that centres give candidates every chance to build these skills and experiences prior to the assessment process and to ensure sufficient animals are available. Some good comments demonstrated how candidates were able to adapt previously learnt skills with animals to new situations. It must be remembered that a lot of evidence from this area can be used in other AOs enabling candidates to receive a holistic approach to the assessment.

AO4
Candidate performance varied when bringing it all together. On the whole candidates showed some good evidence of this, using their knowledge, understanding and skills during tasks to bring together information from across the whole subject. In some cases, candidates were able to use experience outside the programme which was very effectively in this area.

AO5
Candidate performance was varied. The performance varied from showing very limited attention to detail to being highly focused on the assessment outcomes. Candidates gained marks across all the bandings on the assessment objective marking grid.

General Comments
In conclusion, a good and in some cases an excellent attempt has been made on the written elements of the synoptic assignment with a wide range of quality within the work shown. Candidates must be congratulated on the continued realistic approach that has been made to the scenario, particularly Task 3. In some cases, there was excellent reasoning given for the choices made.

Practical tasks were completed to a good standard with a very varied range of animals and birds used. Risk assessments showed some improvement but there is still room for wider thinking around what potential hazards and risks are. In some cases, there was a misunderstanding of what the difference is between a hazard and a risk. Health checks were completed well in most cases but could contain more breadth and better details e.g. what was fed, how much, when, and how. This should be fully detailed within tutor comments made on the PO form.

Soil testing has shown a wide range of methods used to carry this out. Whilst it is not a requirement of the synoptic for candidates to collect the samples this is considered good practice where centres are able to carry this out. A good range of appropriate crops were identified.

- Centres are asked to continue to ensure that all documents are uploaded in a timely fashion and ensure that all candidate details are accurate and that all evidence is there.
- Centres are asked to include areas for improvement on the Candidate Record Form (CRF) unless the mark awarded is in the excellent band.
- Centres are asked to fully annotate candidates' work, identifying incorrect statements and commenting on the quality of work e.g. areas which are good or lacking detail and note where certain AO characteristics have been identified.
- Centres are asked to ensure all practical activities are referenced on the PO form, and this includes identification of what was carried out.