

# **0174-20 Level 2 Technical Certificate in Horticulture**

**2025**

**Qualification Report**

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# Introduction

This document has been prepared by the Principal 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 2025 academic year. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose.

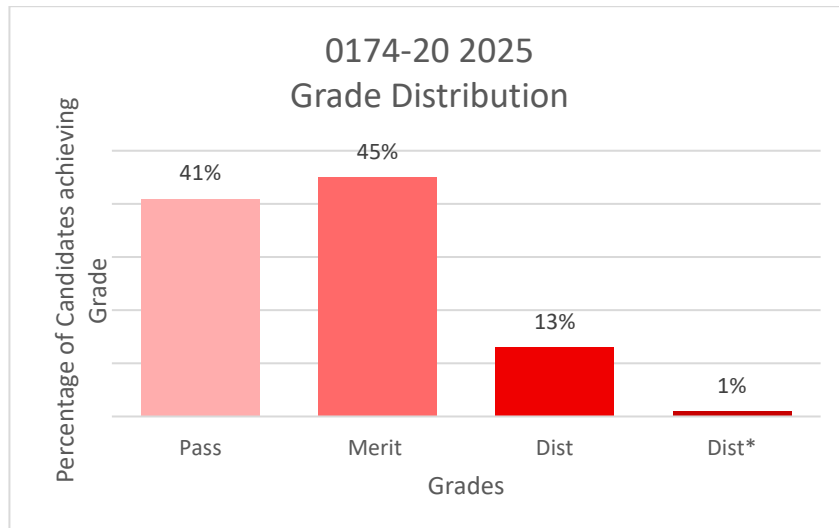
The document provides commentary on the following assessments:

- 0174-521 Level 2 Horticulture – Theory Exam
  - March 2025 (Spring)
  - June 2025 (Summer)
- 0174-020 Level 2 Horticulture – Synoptic Assignment

# Qualification Grade Distribution

## 0174-20 Level 2 Technical Certificate in Horticulture

The approximate grade distribution for this qualification is shown below:



The data is based on the distribution as of 19/08/25.

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 Exams

## 0174-521 Level 2 Technical Certificate in Horticulture

### Grade Boundaries

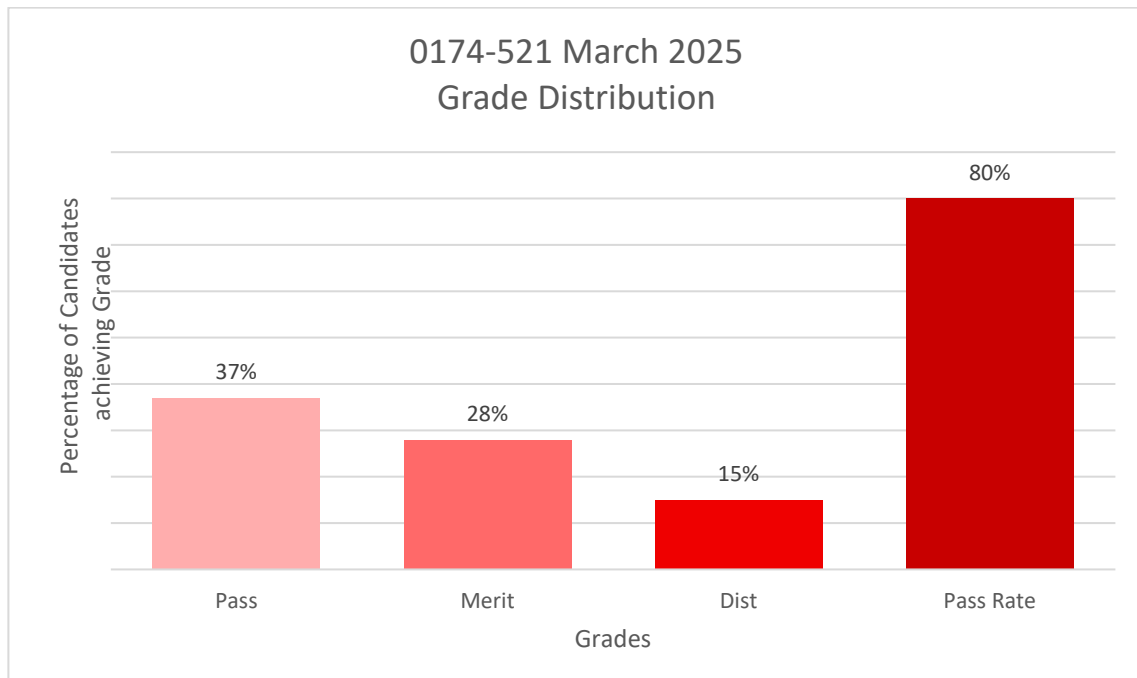
Assessment: 0174-521

Series: March 2025 (Spring)

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

<b>Total marks available</b>	<b>40</b>
Pass mark	16
Merit mark	21
Distinction mark	27

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

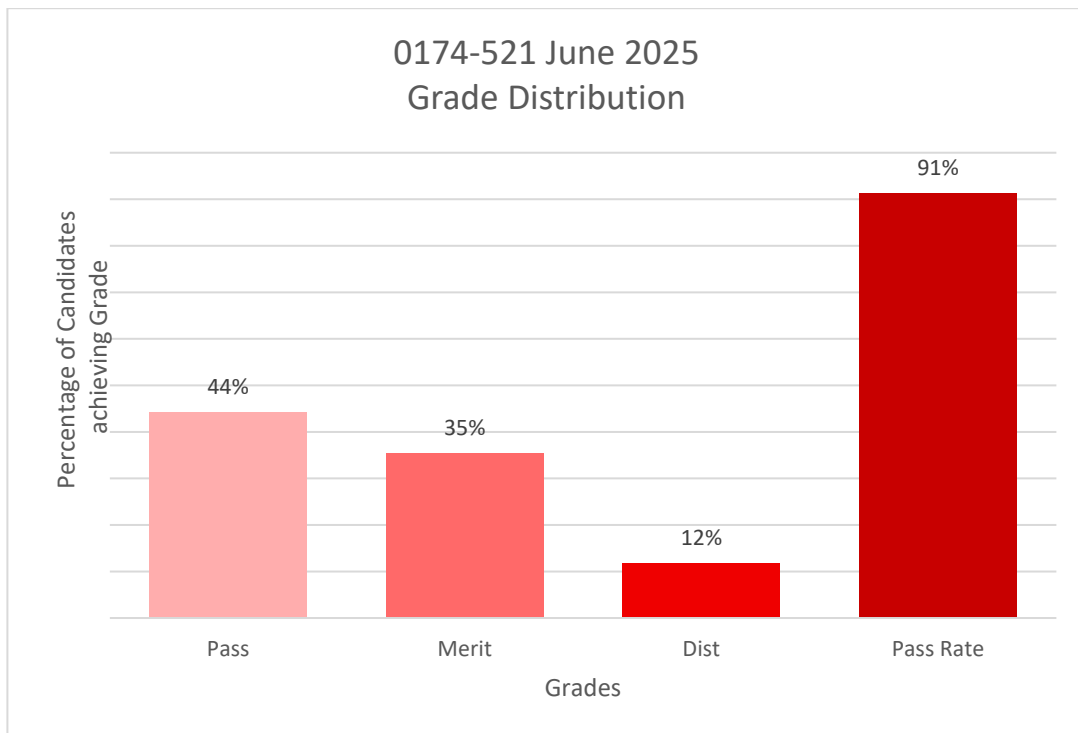


Assessment: 0174-521  
Series: June 2025 (Summer)

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

<b>Total marks available</b>	<b>40</b>
Pass mark	16
Merit mark	21
Distinction mark	27

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



# Principal Examiner Commentary

## 0174-521 Level 2 Horticulture- Theory exam

### Series 1 – March 2025

The performance of the March 2025 cohort showed similarities to last year, with candidates answering AO1 knowledge recall questions well, with strengths observed in practical and taxonomy-based areas. Soil science, details of types of nursery stock and aspects of the control of fungal diseases were areas where some of the candidates struggled. Overall candidates performed similarly in this series to past series.

Candidates demonstrated a depth of knowledge in the following topic areas: Unit 202, which covers working in the horticulture industry, and Unit 204, which focuses on the preparation, planting, and maintenance of plants.

Candidates demonstrated some gaps in knowledge in the following topic areas: Unit 203, which covers plant naming, identification, selection, and science, and Unit 206, which focuses on horticultural business practices.

The scenario-based questions were more of a challenge for candidates, as seen within previous series, though the sections on site-specific hazards and employee rights were still answered well. An area of weakness throughout was in specific plant knowledge and application, with some poor understanding of the functions of some plants evident.

Consideration should be given to greater focus on the plant, site and botanical aspects of the qualification, as these are fundamental skills and knowledge underpinning all horticulture. An awareness of the importance of exam technique should also be considered in effectively preparing candidates. Candidates need to be reminded to take care and read the questions carefully.

Centres are reminded of the City & Guilds Technical 'Exam Guides' available here:

[Horticulture qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds](#)

## 0174-521 Level 2 Horticulture- Theory exam

### Series 2 – June 2025

Candidates performed better in this series than in past versions, continuing to show improved understanding in Unit 202 Working in the horticulture industry. This series has also seen improvements in Unit 206 Horticultural Business Practices with candidates answering questions on career development and horticultural practices generally well.

Overall candidates have demonstrated depth and knowledge in the following areas:

- Unit 202 (Working in the Horticulture Industry) which was answered generally very well at both A01 and A02.
- Unit 203 (Plant naming, identification, selection and science) where questions on site analysis and land preparation were answered generally well, indicative of applying good practical knowledge.
- Unit 206 (Horticultural Business Practices) career development questions were answered well, and horticultural business practice knowledge was good, which has not always been the case in the past, perhaps indicating that learners are developing more interest in these areas.

The cohort demonstrated some gaps in knowledge in the following areas:

- Unit 203 (Plant naming, identification, selection and science) where botanical naming knowledge was generally poor, and knowledge of the characteristics of plant species lacking in many candidates.
- Unit 204 (Preparing, planting and maintenance of plants) where knowledge of plant structures and areas of basic soil science showed very limited understanding across the cohort. Questions on weed, pest and disease control were answered variably, with a generally poor knowledge of lawn fungi and control measures.

Both scenario questions required careful reading and reference back to the stem when responding to the questions. Some work on exam technique when answering these questions would be useful, as candidates missed opportunities for obtaining more marks by not checking back to the scenario or interpreting it correctly

Consideration should be given to a greater focus on the plant identification and botanical aspects of the qualification, as these are fundamental skills and knowledge underpinning all horticulture. An awareness of the importance of exam technique should also be considered in effectively preparing candidates. Candidates need to be reminded to take care and read the questions carefully.

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# Synoptic Assignment

## 0174-020 Level 2 Technical Certificate in Horticulture

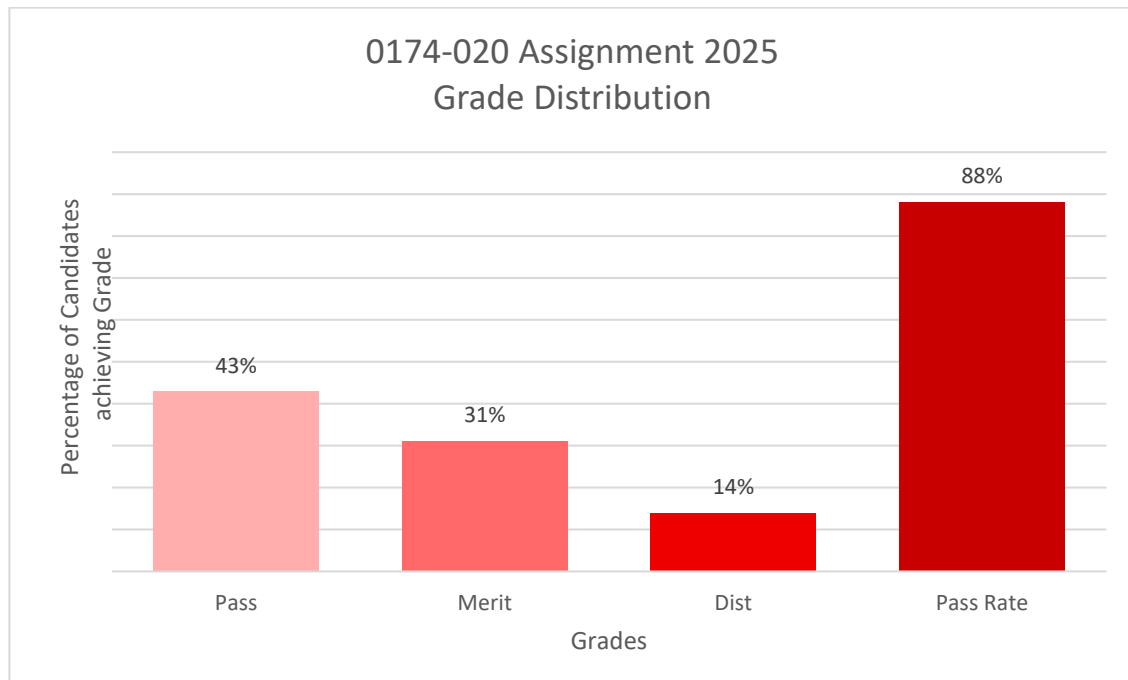
### Grade Boundaries

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

Assessment: 0174-020  
Series: 2025

<b>Total marks available</b>	<b>60</b>
Pass mark	24
Merit mark	33
Distinction mark	42

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



## Principal Moderator Commentary

The synoptic assignment for 2025 maintained the usual balance of one theoretical task, which spanned several units within the qualification, and three practical activities, each testing specific skill areas, from fine motor skills to proficient use of horticultural machinery.

Task 1 included minor amendments to the format used in previous years. Candidates were required to justify plant choices to meet a specific set of site conditions and to practically assess soil texture, profile, pH, and infiltration rate. Higher-performing candidates recommended suitable plants and demonstrated accuracy and consistency in botanical formatting. The context of the site—a school garden—should have been central to plant selections. Where this was evident, high marks were achieved. A positive aspect of the task was that soil sampling was, in general, described well and with accuracy. However, marking was inconsistent across centres in checking the accuracy of plant names and their suitability to the context and site conditions provided.

Task 2, practical soil cultivation prior to planting, allowed candidates to choose a method appropriate to the site conditions. Good performance was typically noted by markers as being to industry standard and completed within a reasonable timeframe. Where photographic evidence was provided, it did not always support the marker descriptions. One area lacking consistency was the clarity of evidence that a 'planting tilth' had been created. Commentary often described repeated raking to achieve a fine tilth. Lower-achieving candidates did not sequence the task well, with consolidation occurring before the site had been levelled.

Task 3 saw most candidates provide appropriate risk assessments, although in several cases, only the initial site check before mowing was mentioned. Where photographs of candidates mowing were uploaded, they often supported the written descriptions, though in some cases, they contradicted them. Marking across centres was inconsistent in the assessment of this task.

Task 4 showed significant variance between high-performing and other candidates, particularly where strong photographic evidence was included. An image of the site following final raking often showed an even and level surface, raked with a suitable tool. This was sometimes accompanied by an image of the candidate sowing seed (various methods were observed, some inappropriate), but more often by an image of the completed work prior to 'raking in'. This enabled moderation to align marker commentary with the photographic evidence.

Centres are asked to:

- Include areas where candidate performance could have been improved on the Candidate Record Form (CRF), unless the mark awarded is in the excellent band.
- Carefully check the addition of total marks on the CRF.
- Annotate candidates' written work to highlight incorrect statements and comment on the quality of the work, e.g. areas that are strong or lacking in detail.
- When using dictation software, carefully check what has been typed.
- Avoid the use of cut-and-paste commentary.
- Upload all forms and evidence as a single document (i.e. one PDF, not a ZIP file).