



0174-38 Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture (1080)

2024

Qualification Report

Contents

Introduction	3
Qualification Grade Distribution.....	4
Theory Exams – Year 1	5
Grade Boundaries.....	5
Chief Examiner Commentary.....	7
Theory Exams – Year 2	11
Grade Boundaries.....	11
Chief Examiner Commentary.....	13
Synoptic Assignments – Year 1	17
Grade Boundaries.....	17
Grade Boundaries.....	21
Principal Moderator Commentary.....	22

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 2024 academic year. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose.

The document provides commentary on the following assessments:

Year 1

- Pathway 1 (Forestry) and Pathway 2 (Arboriculture)
 - 0174-512 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture – Theory exam (1)
 - March 2024 (Spring)
 - June 2024 (Summer)
 - 0174-011 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture – Synoptic Assignment (1)

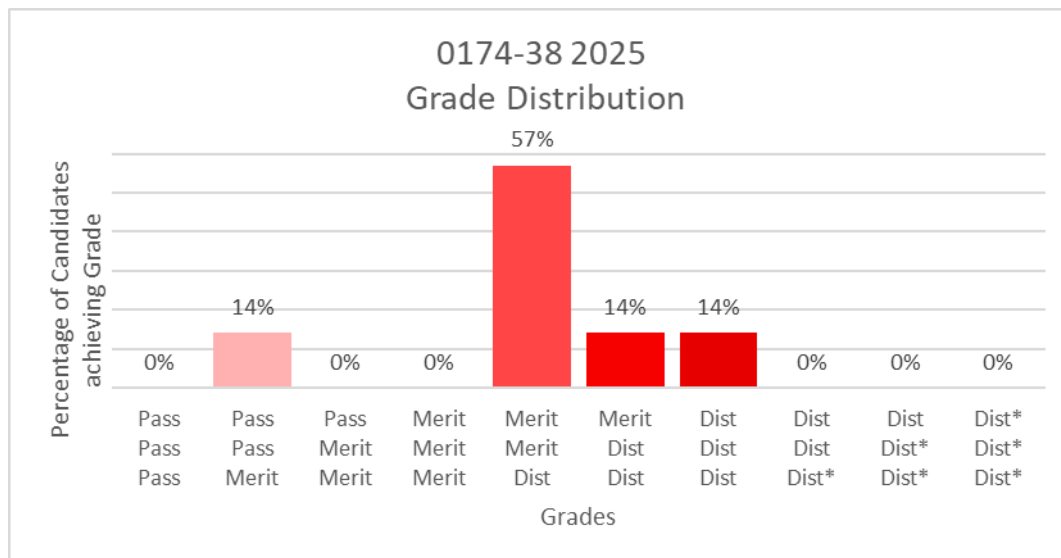
Year 2

- Pathway 1 (Forestry) and Pathway 2 (Arboriculture)
 - 0174-514 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture - Theory exam (2)
 - March 2024 (Spring)
 - June 2024 (Summer)
 - 0174-013 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture - Synoptic assignment (2)

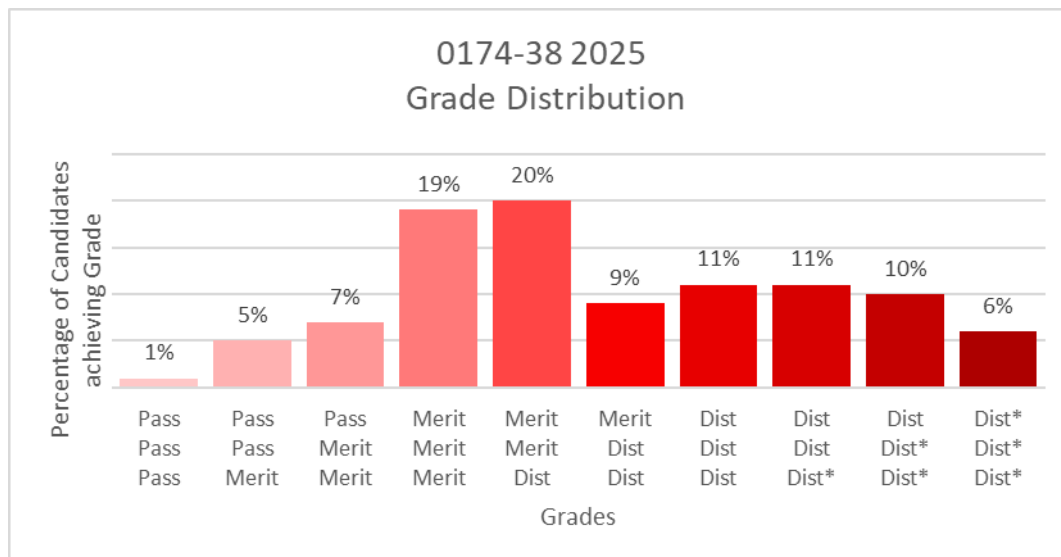
Qualification Grade Distribution

The grade distribution for this qualification is shown below:

Pathway 1 - Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture (Forestry) (1080)



Pathway 2 - Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture (Arboriculture) (1080)



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 – Year 1

Grade Boundaries

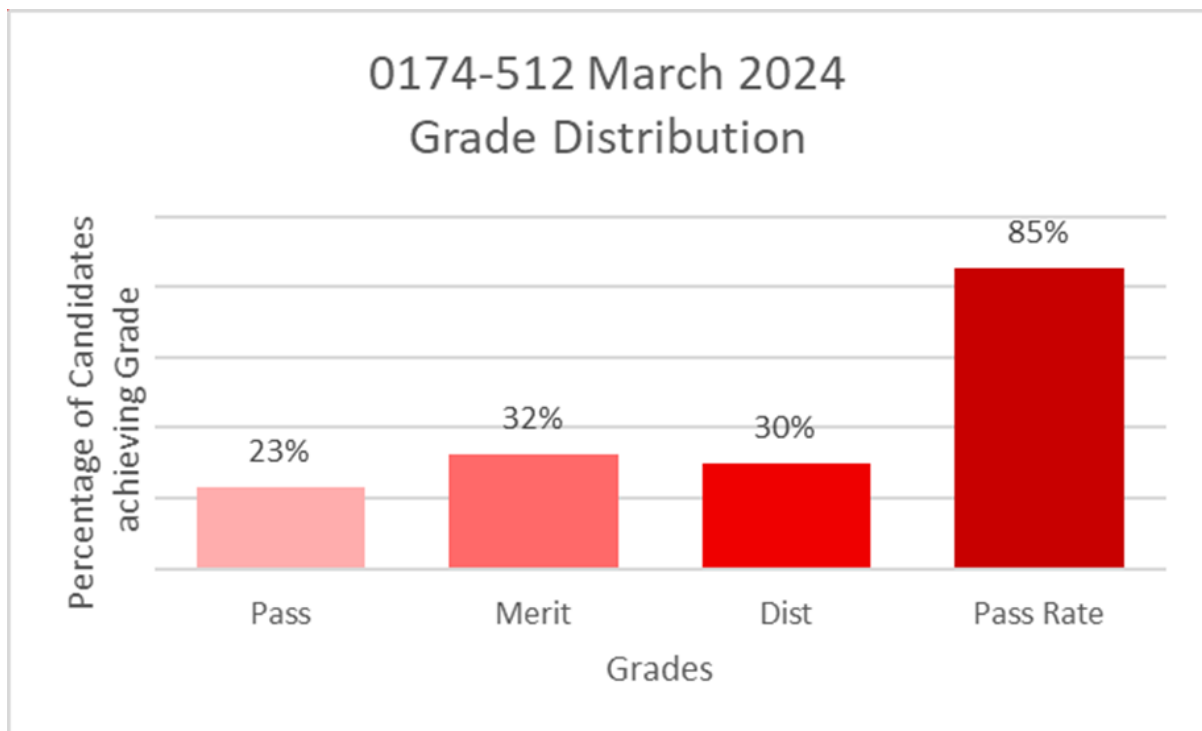
Assessment: 0174-512

Series: March 2024 (Spring)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	28
Merit mark	35
Distinction mark	42

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

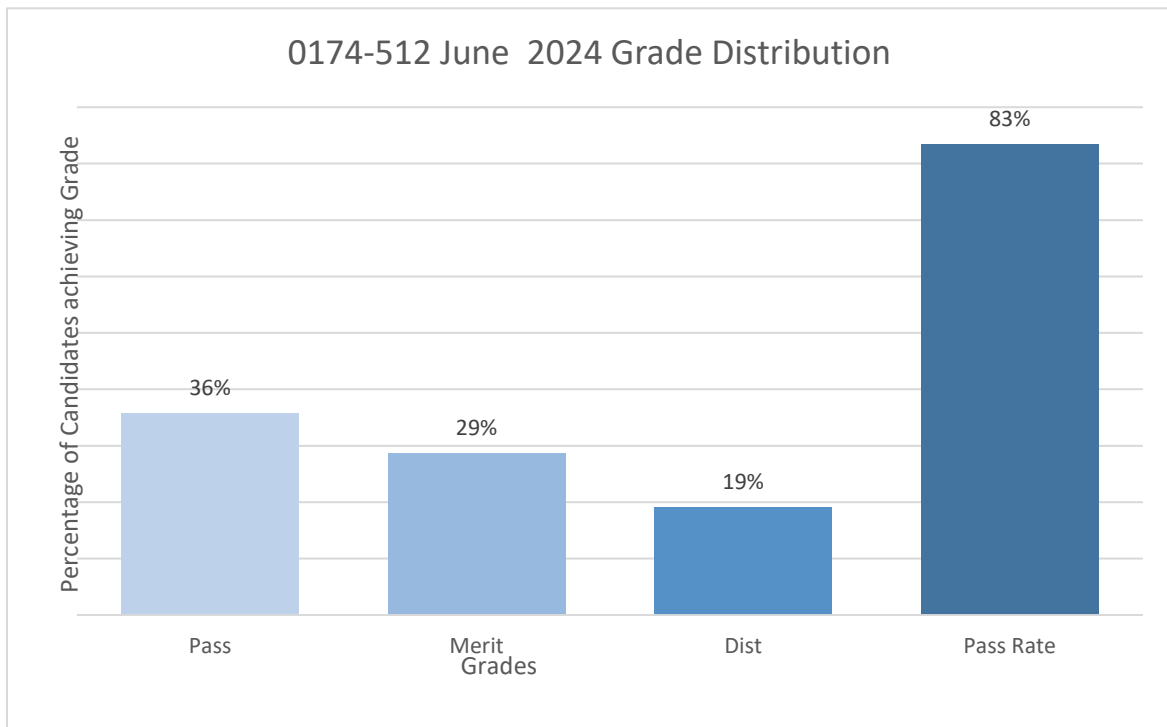


Assessment: 0174-512
Series: June 2024 (Summer)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	28
Merit mark	35
Distinction mark	42

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



Chief Examiner Commentary

0174-512 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture - Theory exam

Series 1 – March 2024

Candidates showed a good range of knowledge across the exam and produced a wide range of responses within the core units being assessed. Most questions were answered with some degree of accuracy and varying levels of depth.

Candidates scored well where questions are more related to the practical unit on the qualification, with candidates consistently scoring well when explaining how to fell problem trees, factors that make trees more difficult to fell and the function and purpose of two chainsaw safety features.

There has been a trend over previous papers that candidates overall do not answer questions relating to plant and soil science consistently well. There is an inconsistency amongst most candidates relating to plant and soil science. Candidates overall did not answer questions relating to the physical properties of sand and the differences between photosynthesis and respiration well, however, they did answer questions on how clay soils affect plant growth and development better. Many candidates did not know three underground plant organs and lost basic A01 knowledge marks.

The extended response question (ERQ) provided a scenario for candidates to write about the holistic management of veteran oak trees on a park. The question provided an appropriate level of differentiation between candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The ERQ provided a wide range of answers, with many lower-scoring candidates focusing on one management technique, in many instances this was the removal of the trees. Knowledge and understanding of the pest, the location, and different management techniques were lacking in lower-scoring answers. Higher-scoring candidates were able to provide more in-depth answers that covered the range of management techniques and used appropriate technical terminology in their answers.

Themes where most candidates did well:

- Almost all candidates scored well in questions relating to tree felling and chainsaw maintenance.
- Many candidates could name causes of ill health in trees.
- Most candidates scored well on the properties of clay soils and how the characteristics of the soil affect plant growth.

Themes where most candidates struggled:

- Few candidates could name underground plant organs or the physical characteristics of sand soils.
- Many candidates failed to score marks on structured questions, i.e. consisting of part a) and b). There was one question on this where candidates were required to name where breeding for resistance against pests and diseases has been used. Many candidates did not score part a, but did score some points for b, where they were required to give advantages of the approach. Many candidates despite not scoring for part a -which required specific information- scored b, due to the generic nature of the question.

The higher-scoring candidates performed well across all areas. They read the questions carefully and gave appropriate responses.

Centres should:

- Encourage candidates to read the questions carefully to improve their chances of scoring full marks.
- Work with candidates on exam techniques to understand the active verbs of the questions.
- Review past papers and concentrate on plant and soil science knowledge and understanding.
- Work on the development of the Extended Response Question answers so candidates provide a sufficiently detailed answer.

Centres should encourage candidates to read the questions carefully in order to improve their chances of scoring full marks.

Centres are advised to help candidates develop their use and understanding of technical terminology across the qualification.

Candidates are also strongly advised to practice examination techniques when preparing for this exam to fully understand the requirements of the question before attempting to answer, particularly those that require candidates to demonstrate reasoning. Explain type of questions require candidates to demonstrate reasons and justifications to support the statements or cause and effect.

Past papers and marking schemes are available on the City and Guilds website which should be used for exam practice.

City & Guilds also offers a technical exam guide to support the work on the exam technique.

All documents are available to download from [Technicals in Horticulture and Forestry & Arboriculture qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/Technical-qualifications-and-training-courses)

Past papers and marking schemes: Documents – Level 3 – Assessment materials – Past Papers tabs

Exam guide: Documents – Level 3 – Assessment materials

Series 2 – June 2023

Candidates were able to pick up marks across the paper, with the bulk of the marks being picked up in the more practical-based questions relating to tree felling and chainsaw use. A wide range of responses were produced across the paper, with most of the questions relating to unit 350/ 352 answered with some degree of accuracy and depth, but not in all areas.

There was a lack of knowledge shown regarding plant science, which has been a theme over a number of series. Candidates particularly struggled on the question relating to asexual reproduction. There was also a lack of understanding of osmosis and the impact of different soil conditions on the rate of osmosis. Most candidates answered this question generically, focusing on soil conditions, but not linking specifically to osmosis.

Many candidates were unable to write fully developed 'explain' responses to questions, with points lost by not writing a full answer. Candidates typically wrote cause, but not effect.

Themes where most candidates did well:

- Candidate responses to chainsaw safety features, pre- start checks and felling aids.
- Candidates answered the pests and disease questions relating to native oak trees and the consequences of pest and diseases for trees well.
- Candidates answered the questions relating to leaf parts and the benefits of roots well.

Themes where candidates struggled:

- Very few candidates could fully explain the process of osmosis and how soil conditions effect the rate of osmosis.
- Very few candidates could state three methods of asexual reproduction.
- The Extended Response Question (ERQ) was generally limited, as candidates did not include sufficient breadth of answer to access the higher marks. The consistent use of technical terminology was also limited.

Themes that discriminated between candidates:

- The stronger candidates performed well across most of the areas. They read the questions and gave appropriate responses.
- The stronger candidates performed well across questions relating to unit 307 and 352, as well as 350. The weaker candidates picked up marks in 350, but less so in 307 and 352.
- The ERQ discriminated between candidates' levels. At the lower level, there was little depth and breadth in answers. Some responses were more thorough and included a good level of depth, breadth and technical language.
- Higher performing candidates performed better where they were able to 'explain.'

Candidates are also strongly advised to practice examination techniques when preparing for this exam to fully understand the requirements of the question before attempting to answer, particularly those that require candidates to demonstrate reasoning. Explain type of questions require candidates to demonstrate reasons and justifications to support the statements or cause and effect.

Past papers and marking schemes are available on the City and Guilds website which should be used for exam practice.

City & Guilds also offers a technical exam guide to support the work on the exam technique.

All documents are available to download from [Technicals in Horticulture and Forestry & Arboriculture qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-training/courses)

Past papers and marking schemes: Documents – Level 3 – Assessment materials – Past Papers tabs

Exam guide: Documents – Level 3 – Assessment materials

Theory Exams – Year 2

Grade Boundaries

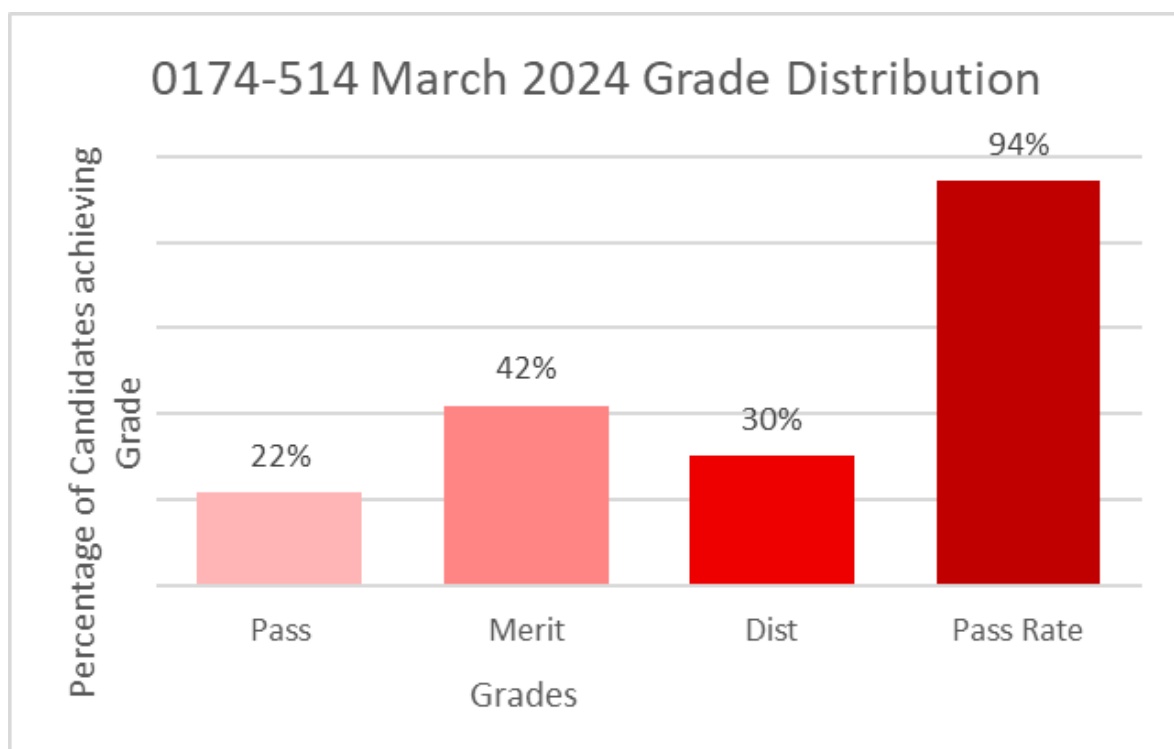
Assessment: 0174-514

Series: March 2024 (Spring)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	25
Merit mark	34
Distinction mark	44

The graph below shows the approximate distribution of grades and pass rates for this assessment:

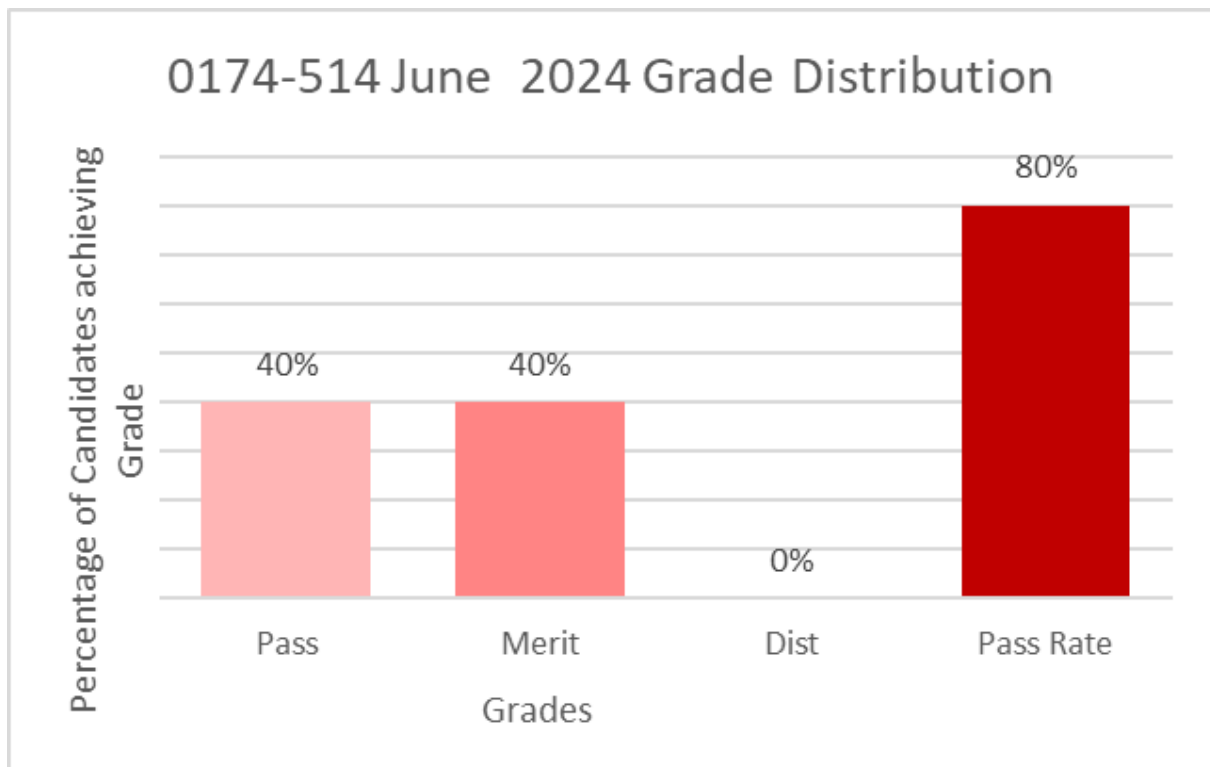


Assessment: 0174-514
Series: June 2024 (Summer)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	26
Merit mark	35
Distinction mark	44

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



Chief Examiner Commentary

0174-514 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture - Theory exam

Series 1 – March 2024

The question paper had a fair balance of questions with varied levels of demand, and it accurately sampled the knowledge and understanding required from across the qualification. There was an increased number of questions asking for the straightforward naming of commonly used equipment in forestry and arboriculture in this paper than in previous recent versions, which is the rationale for the proposed increased pass mark for this series.

The majority of candidates made an attempt at most questions, with greater success achieved in the technical knowledge-based questions or those linked to practical applications rather than those requiring more detailed explanations / descriptions.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There was a good range of knowledge and understanding shown across the units being tested in both recall and understanding questions. Areas of particular strength included fundamental knowledge of the application of items of practical equipment including: sophisticated detection equipment, bareroot planting techniques and ancient woodland features. Evident weaknesses were observed in science topics, particularly in knowledge and understanding of straightforward botanical terms, and in the deeper understanding of some biological processes.

Extended Answer Question

The extended answer question was answered extensively by a small number of candidates, but many answers lacked sufficient breadth or depth to gain marks within the top band. Some provided a reasonable amount of depth over a limited subject matter, whilst others covered a broad range of topics at a superficial level. Most candidates interpreted the image to varying degrees of detail and linked their answers to the scenario. However, some strayed off the topic into areas of ecology, which while relevant, were written about extensively to the detriment of other more relevant or important factors. Many candidates used relevant technical terminology, and a number of candidates also presented strong examples and detailed technical specifications of items of analytical equipment. However, others provided a list of basic statements, often incomplete rather than a considered, structured response covering the main factors. Legislation and safe working practices featured strongly in several of the ERQ responses with a good understanding of these important practical factors shown.

A number of candidates planned their responses, using bullet points/mind maps, although not all then proceeded to follow these plans when writing their responses.

Aspects of improving exam technique for centres to consider would include:

- Ensuring that candidates are familiar with what level of response is required based on the command word of the question, with a number of detailed responses recorded for simple “state” or “identify” questions.
- The importance of reading and understanding the question accurately would improve some of the misinterpretations found from some candidates.
- A reinforcement of basic botanical knowledge would appear to be required in some centres, and more detail on scientific principles.
- To assist learners in formulating an extended response question, an increased focus on understanding the aim of this type of question, how to structure and answer, and how to

develop an extended response answer to gain higher marks would be valuable at all centres.

Centres should be familiar with the range of sample and past papers, and the exam guide, available to support exam readiness. These are available on our website here [Technicals in Horticulture and Forestry & Arboriculture qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications/technical-qualifications/technical-qualifications-in-horticulture-and-forestry-and-arboriculture) under the 'Assessment Materials' tab.

Series 2 – June 2024

The question paper had a good balance of questions with varied levels of demand, and it accurately sampled the knowledge and understanding required from across the relevant units.

Most candidates attempted all questions, with greater success achieved in the technical knowledge-based questions; for example, Q12 or those linked to practical applications rather than those requiring more detailed understanding, where some candidates failed to provide the depth required.

Strengths and weaknesses

There was a fair range of knowledge and understanding shown across the units being tested in both recall and understanding questions. Areas of particular strength included straightforward practical applications such as post-planting aftercare, basic botanical knowledge for identifying trees in winter, reasons for tree failure and the practical limitations of VTA.

Evident weaknesses were observed in areas of applied science, particularly in knowledge and understanding of very basic botanical terms such as gymnosperm, and in the understanding of some ecological processes where it was clear that some candidates were not aware of what constitutes a habitat.

Extended answer question

The extended answer question was answered generally poorly, with only 33% of candidates gaining a mark in Band 2. Answers were in many cases brief and often in note form. Some had simple plans but failed to develop these into a broader submission. Some good ideas were evident in the better candidates but descriptions tended to be brief with little technical detail, breadth or depth.

Many candidates failed to use relevant technical terminology. Legislation and safe working practices featured in several of the ERQ responses with some understanding of these important practical factors shown in some examples but were lacking on others

A small number of candidates planned their responses, using bullet points / mind maps, although did not develop these plans when writing their responses.

Aspects of improving exam technique for centres to consider would include:

- Ensuring that candidates are familiar with what level of response is required based on the command word of the question, with a number of detailed responses recorded for simple “state” or “identify” questions and simple statements made for question which required greater input and explanation.
- Definitions of key terms such as gymnosperm and habitat would be of benefit for several candidates.
- To assist learners in formulating an extended response question an increased focus on understanding the aim of this type of question, how to structure and answer, and how to develop an extended response answer to gain higher marks would be valuable at all centres

Advice on improving exam technique for centres to consider include:

- ensuring that candidates are familiar with the command word of the question and its subsequent requirement, with a number of detailed responses recorded for simple “state” or “identify” questions.

- the importance of reading and understanding the question accurately, this was seen in the incidence of answers eg candidate had clearly had not read or understood the term “implications” fully in one question, which restricted the marks available.

Centres should be familiar with the range of sample and past papers, and the exam guide, available to support exam readiness. These are available on our website here [Technicals in Horticulture and Forestry & Arboriculture qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications/technical-qualifications) under the ‘Assessment Materials’ tab.

Synoptic Assignments – Year 1

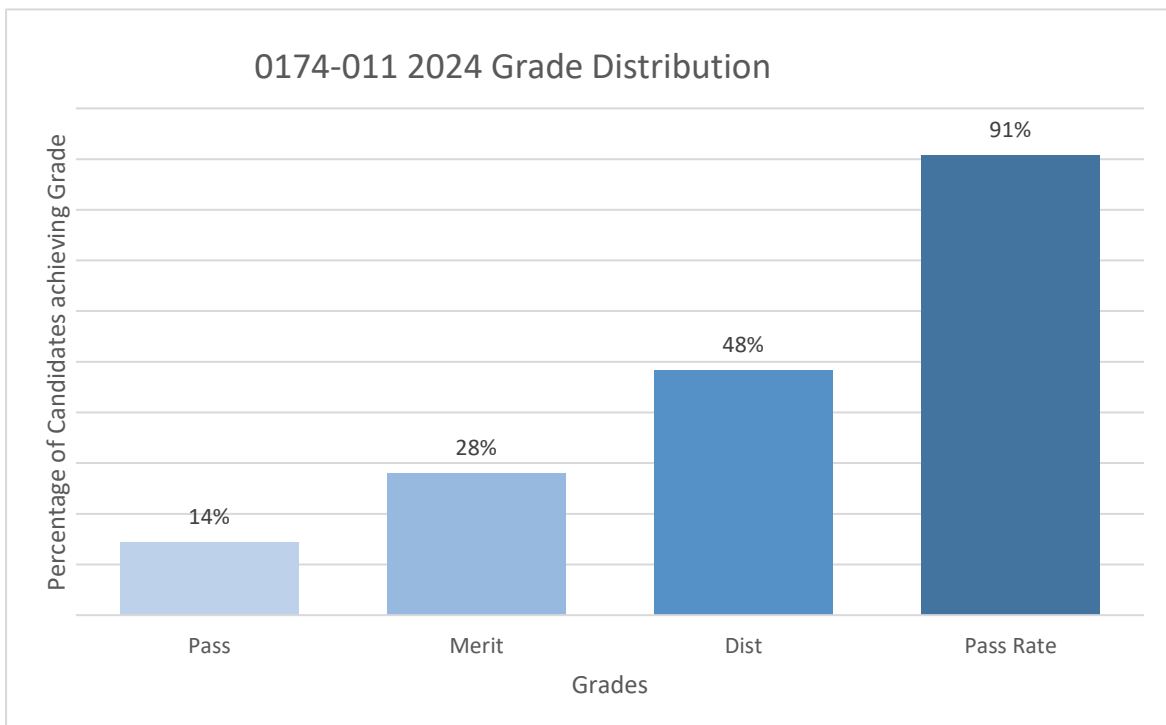
Grade Boundaries

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

Assessment: 0174-011
Series: June 2024

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	25
Merit mark	34
Distinction mark	43

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



Principal Moderator Commentary

Comments on centre administration

The majority of Centres uploaded all evidence required before the deadline, however a small number required chasing by a couple of Moderators. Calculations and grades were also inaccurate with some Centres. Equally, administration was efficient with some evidence missing and instances of declarations not being correctly completed when uploaded to the portal for a few Centres. Missing evidence however, was promptly rectified.

Accuracy of marking and quality of marking was good in most cases, however as with previous years some AOs and POFs lacked detail on the assessment observed by the marker. Important detail including Centre Name, Number, Date and names of both assessor and learner was missing from a number of A's and POFs.

This detail must be present on all assessment documentation, Centres must check this detail during all quality assurance checks. Some of the feedback forms were not easily decipherable due to either the quality of handwriting or quality of scanning.

Centre markers should also write the feedback in the Third Person, due to the feedback not being read by the learner. In a lot of examples, the feedback was written in the Second Person.

Overall performance of candidates compared to expectations

Learner's evidence was appropriate for the task and contained the expected levels of ability, suggesting they are operating at the appropriate level for some of the tasks if not all. The synoptic assignment contained an appropriate range of practical tasks enabling learners to demonstrate the range of skills required in the workplace.

Provision of evidence for moderation

Photographic evidence was not used by all Centres, however where it was used the majority were not annotated. As a result, some photographs did not provide context to the picture. Photographs must be accompanied by a brief statement confirming the activity and learner and how the activity relates to the learning outcomes. Without this detail, the photo is just an illustration.

Practical Observation Forms (POs) were used with varying degrees of accuracy. Some observers were still not providing adequate detail to the comments to support judgements on practical performance.

As with previous years, it was noted that there were cases where marks were added to the POFs, the totals from each being averaged, and the mark reflected on the CRF. This led to inaccurate grades, and lacked detail on the learner's ability.

Where a learner was expected to devise their own forms, some Centres provided a proforma, which was not in the spirit of the assessment. This action put learners at a disadvantage due to potential marks being lost as the work was not the learner's own.

Some observers stated how the learners met the learning objectives, however they did not qualify these comments effectively. Some of the stronger evidence provided accurate commentary in the Third Person, clearly linked to the Learning Objectives provided justifications of the decision, rather than providing feedback to the learner.

General overview of assessor alignment

As with the 2023 series, the Moderation process demonstrated that most Centres and Markers are in alignment with national standards, apart from AO4 where in some cases it was noted they not in line with comments on the CRF. This was partially as a result of marks being the average of those placed incorrectly on the POF.

Performance of against Assessment Outcomes (AOs)

AO1 Recall of knowledge related to the qualification LOs

Learners in general provided evidence of a standard enabling judgements to be made against this outcome. The recall knowledge being demonstrated through Tasks 1 & 3, enabled the demonstration of knowledge within a written framework of research and reports. Verbal recall was evidenced via comments made on the POF. Task 3 (Tree Felling) allowed Markers to comment on the learner's recall whilst observing a task of a more technical nature.

AO2 Understanding of concepts theories and processes relating to the LOs

The majority of marks available for this AO2 were from Tasks 1 and 4, which allowed learners to demonstrate their level of understanding. Learners of a higher level ability were able to make causal links between recall and understanding, including the provision of accurate and relevant justifications. Most learners were able to provide a good level of understanding for Task 3 whilst demonstrating practice felling skills.

AO3 Application of practical/technical skills

The AO was correctly marked in the majority of cases, comments made on the CRF were on the whole, aligned with information on the Practical Observation Forms (POFs). However, as with 2023, AO3 was marked lower in some cases than comments on the POF would suggest. Task 3 required candidates to demonstrate practical skills relating to felling techniques. Some of the evidence also included photographic evidence, however a significant proportion merely relied on the markers notes on the Practical Observation Form.

Invariably, where photos were included very little, if any annotation was provided to confirm what was being illustrated, it rarely linked to assessed outcomes or learning outcomes. Examples of this being carried out well, included photographs of felling cuts and the end result, with names and dates clearly presented.

Marker comments regarding the lack of natural ability was notable again among some learners. This suggested not all were experienced in the practical task being carried out. While this is understandable with certain learners, it is recommended that more time is allocated to practical skills.

AO4 Bringing it all together- coherence of the whole subject

The application of bringing theories into practice was sound with stronger candidates, who performed well through Tasks 1 and 4. Task 1 again providing the best opportunity for bringing the whole subject together as all aspects have an impact on tree health and management. Lower banding learners did not cover some areas relating to tree care and management in depth, with some not describing how the tree would respond. There were many instances of candidates misinterpreting some questions, suggesting learners did not read the questions correctly or misinterpreted them.

AO5 Attending to detail/perfecting

It was noted that learners in a higher band continually reviewed and corrected work during practical activities, with the AO was being marked correctly in general by centres. Methodical learners were able to gain additional marks through this.

Synoptic Assignments – Year 2

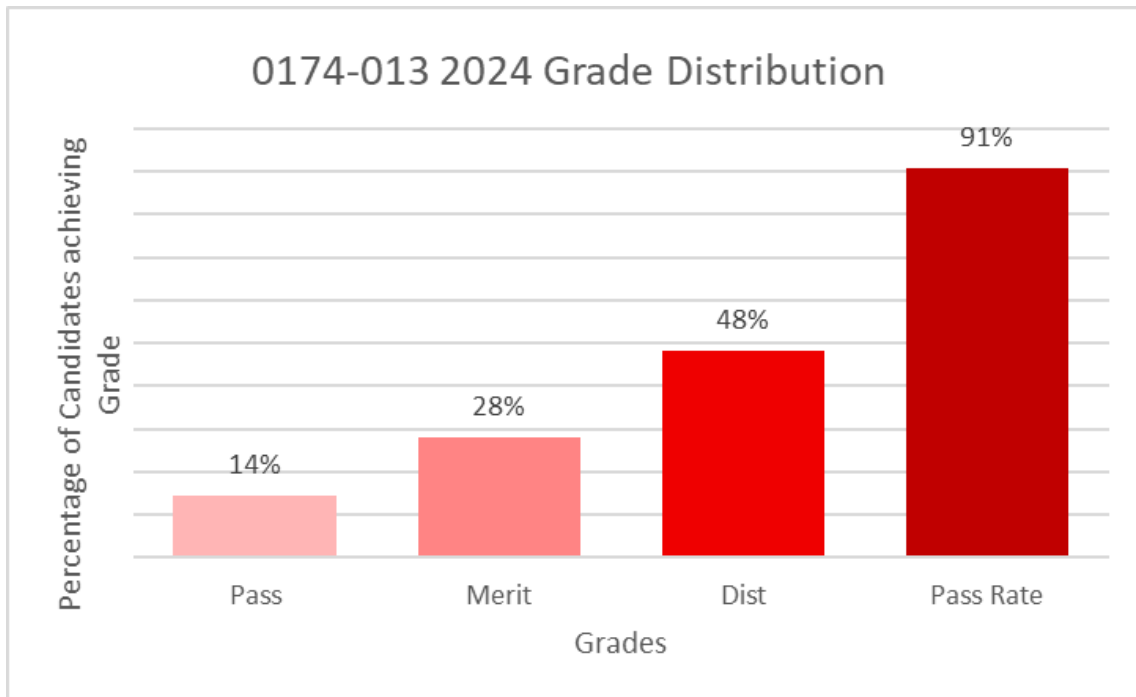
Grade Boundaries

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

Assessment: 0174-013
Series: June 2024

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	24
Merit mark	32
Distinction mark	41

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



Principal Moderator Commentary

Comments on centre administration

All moderators reported that centre administration was good, however some centre documents had to be requested as they were either missing or the quality of scanned evidence was poor, making it hard to decipher, particularly practical evidence.

The standard of marking was wide-ranging, whilst some was exemplary, some of the AOs and POFs lacked compulsory detail on the assessment observed, this included the Centre Name, Centre Number, date of the assessment, names of both assessor and learner as well as the Centres Enrolment number for learners rather than the City & Guilds registration number. Confusion was also compounded where incorrect assessment numbers were also used. Quality assurance checks by Centres would address these issues.

Centre markers should also write the feedback in the Third Person, due to the feedback not being read by the learner. In a lot of examples, the feedback was written in the Second Person. The majority of centre documents and candidate evidence was uploaded to the portal by the Deadline.

Overall performance of candidates compared to expectations

Candidate performance overall was good, with evidence from each candidate mostly meeting expectations across an expected range of ability. The quality of work for the site survey and proposal was generally of a high standard with the practical evidence demonstrating the learner's ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical skills learnt in year one.

Provision of evidence for moderation

Some POFs contained terminology not aligning to the relevant banding, this making moderation of forms difficult. Photographic evidence used to support the candidates work was not always fully annotated which did not match the written evidence. To avoid this type of evidence being little more than a collection of photographs and therefore being disregarded, a brief commentary must be provided for each photo confirming the activity and learners work, along with how it relates to each assessment or learning outcomes.

General overview of assessor alignment

Assessor/moderator alignment was within tolerance in most cases with the exception of AO4 which was, in some cases, marked down within the CRF.

Performance against Assessment Outcomes (AOs)

AO1 Recall of knowledge related to the qualification LOs

A range of written recall knowledge was available through Task 1 (Site Survey), while verbal recall was demonstrated through comments made on the POF within the practical assessments for Tasks 2 and 3. This allowed candidates to demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge and recall by selecting appropriate tools and equipment for the practical task.

AO2 Understanding of concepts theories and processes relating to the LOs

Evidence of the learner's ability to apply concepts and theories was embedded in Task 1 enabling learners to provide causal links between theoretical knowledge and understanding, justification of choices made, and the consideration of relevant alternatives.

Learners at the lower marks within the marking band grid were able to make straightforward links and provide some basic explanations and justifications, whereas those at the upper end of

the marking band demonstrated a more in-depth knowledge and understanding, consolidation and applying theory to practice.

AO3 Application of practical/technical skills

Marked correctly in most cases, the AO included accurate marker comments on the CRF which aligned with information in the Practical Observation Forms. There were few incidents for AO3 where comments did not correspond with the mark, and were lower than the POF would suggest.

The majority of candidates did not show natural practical abilities, indicating they were not experienced in the activities they were undertaking. However, some comments were noted within Band 3 learners, relating to industry speed; while this is to be expected as in previous year's, it is strongly recommended that more time is allocated to practical skills where possible. If photographs are used, they must be accompanied by adequate annotation, captions or direct links within the markers notes to outline what each of the photographs are showing, and how that provides evidence for the associated outcomes.

Without any effective commentary, moderators will not be able to assess the value of the photos against the outcomes being assessed. In future assessments, Centres are required to address this issue if providing photographs as supporting evidence of a learner's performance against the outcomes.

AO4 Bringing it all together- coherence of the whole subject

Task 1 provided the best opportunities for AO4 as it gave the learners the opportunity to comment on a wide range of considerations, features, community needs, establishment challenges of a given site and the ability to research, review and provide evidence of the feasibility to change the site and any implications.

AO5 Attending to detail/perfecting

Markers noted that higher-level learners were able to continually review their work and make any adjustments during practical activities. This AO was generally marked correctly by markers within all Centres.

Attention to detail was generally evidenced in Tasks 1 and 2 by comments made by Markers on POFs referring to the quality of finish and necessary adjustments made to working techniques in response to changing conditions or unforeseen problems. Candidates provided valuable evidence for this outcome in their proposals to a woodland area within Task 1 and through the Markers notes on the POFs.