

# **0174-006/506 Level 3 Horticulture- Theory exam (2)**

**March 2020**

## **Examiner Report**

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## Introduction

This document has been prepared by the Chief Examiner, it is designed to be used as a feedback tool for centres to use in order to enhance teaching and preparation for assessment. It is advised that this document be referred to when preparing to teach and then again when candidates are preparing to sit examinations for City & Guilds Technical qualifications.

This report provides general commentary on candidate performance and 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 the **March 2020** examination series. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose, whether it was caused by a lack of knowledge, incorrect examination technique or responses that failed to demonstrate the required depth of understanding.

The document provides commentary on the following assessment;  
**0174-006/506 Level 3 Horticulture - Theory exam (2)**

# Theory Exam – March 2020

## Grade Boundaries and distribution

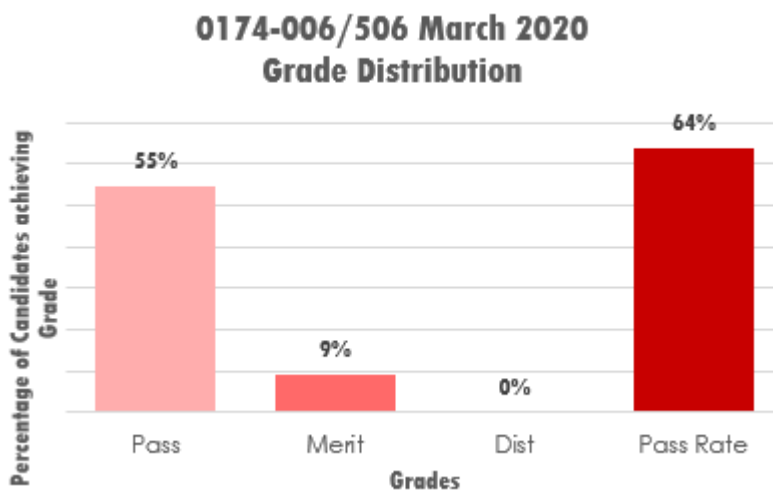
Assessment: **0174-006/506**

Series: **March 2020**

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

<b>Total marks available</b>	<b>60</b>
Pass mark	23
Merit mark	32
Distinction mark	42

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



# Chief Examiner Commentary

## General Comments on Candidate Performance

**Assessment component: 0174-006/506**

### Series 1 (March)

The question paper was generally balanced and covered a good level of knowledge and understanding from across the qualification. Overall candidates' performance on the paper was not as good as last year's. The paper was pitched at the correct level, with a range of questions from across the assessed content.

Questions were answered with a varying degree of accuracy and depth, but generally the standard of response was lower than would be expected at this level. It is felt this is down to poor knowledge as well as issues with some of the questions being misinterpreted by learners. Many candidates showed breadth (AO1) but not much depth (AO2) across all topics.

The particular areas of weakness in general candidate performance relate to:

- Unit 307 Plant and soil science.
- Unit 304 Maintain turf in parks and gardens.

For unit 307, this is specifically in relation to plant terminology and functions with limited knowledge and understanding shown for this topic across all scripts. For unit 304, this is in relation to the maintenance of wildflower meadows. Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the functions of roots and lawn drainage maintenance operations. Candidates need to focus on reading the questions carefully as responses in some areas did not relate to what was being asked, e.g. candidates giving disadvantages instead of the required advantages.

Some of the responses to the AO2 questions on pruning were limited and basic. A number of candidates did not attempt all questions in the paper. Centres should ensure that technical terminology is utilised throughout training and emphasise on the importance of the correct exam technique.

### **Extended Response Question:**

Candidates were asked to discuss how heavy usage of a public park by visitors could affect the maintenance of turf, trees and shrubs, giving examples of how maintenance would have to be tailored to deal with issues caused by large numbers of visitors, for example, soil compaction. In the main, this question was answered quite poorly compared to last year's series, with the majority of candidates only accessing the marks in Band 1. Candidates tended to include lots of information that did not answer the question. Many candidates identified a limited number of maintenance issues and focused on how the day to day operations of staff would be affected by having visitors in the park rather than what operations staff would need to carry out.

Higher achieving candidates showed wider considerations of the topics and detailed explanations demonstrating depth of subject knowledge and understanding. They enhanced their explanations referring to relevant elements of Unit 307 plant and soil science. Candidates scoring the lower end of marks provided limited responses and lacked breadth and depth within answers.

Candidates should be encouraged to avoid giving answers that overlap, particularly where a question requires them to state several things in their response. One example of this is where many candidates, when asked to give methods of ameliorating soil structure and listed various forms of organic matter, but essentially all were organic matter, no more than one mark would be awarded for responses such as these.

Centres are encouraged to help students develop knowledge and understanding of the main plant science terminology and processes. City & Guilds has produced a technical exam guide to support the work on exam technique, which is available to download from <https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/land-based-services/horticulture/0174-technical-in-horticulture-and-forestry-arboriculture#tab=documents>

Centres may also refer to the past papers available to download from the same webpage under the past papers tab.