

0174-37 Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Horticulture (1080)

2025

Qualification Report

Version and date	Change detail	Section
V2.0 14/08/2025	Qualification achievement data updated	Qualification grade distribution

Contents

Introduction.....	4
Qualification Grade Distribution	5
0174-37 Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Horticulture (1080) Professional Horticulture pathway	5
Theory Exams – Year 1.....	6
0174-36 Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Horticulture (540)	6
Grade Boundaries	6
Principal Examiner Commentary.....	8
Theory Exams – Year 2.....	9
0174-37 Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Horticulture (1080) Professional Horticulture pathway	9
Grade Boundaries	9
Principal Examiner Commentary.....	11
Synoptic Assignments – Year 1	12
0174-36 Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Horticulture (540)	12
Grade Boundaries	12
Principal Moderator Commentary	13
Synoptic Assignments – Year 2	14
0174-37 Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Horticulture (1080) Professional Horticulture pathway	14
Grade Boundaries	14
Principal Moderator Commentary	15

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:

Year 1

- Pathway 1 (Professional Horticulture)
 - 0174-502 Level 3 Horticulture – Theory exam (1)
 - March 2025 (Spring)
 - June 2025 (Summer)
 - 0174-003 Level 3 Horticulture – Synoptic Assignment

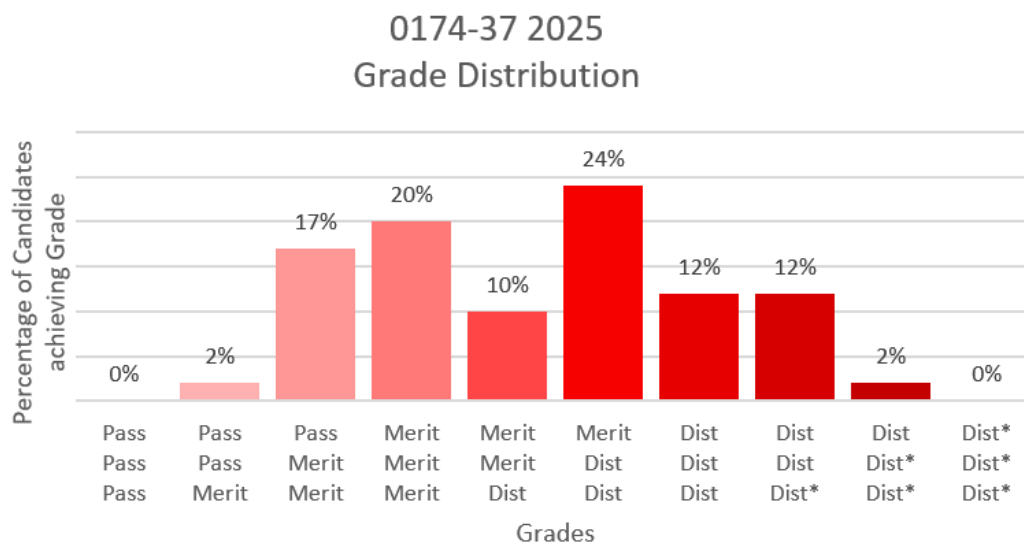
Year 2

- Pathway 1 (Professional Horticulture)
 - 0174-508 Level 3 Horticulture – Theory exam (2)
 - March 2025 (Spring)
 - June 2025 (Summer)
 - 0174-007 Level 3 Horticulture – Synoptic Assignment (2)

Qualification Grade Distribution

0174-37 Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Horticulture (1080) Professional Horticulture pathway

The grade distribution for this qualification is shown below:



The data is based on the distribution as of 12/08/2025.

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

0174-36 Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Horticulture (540)

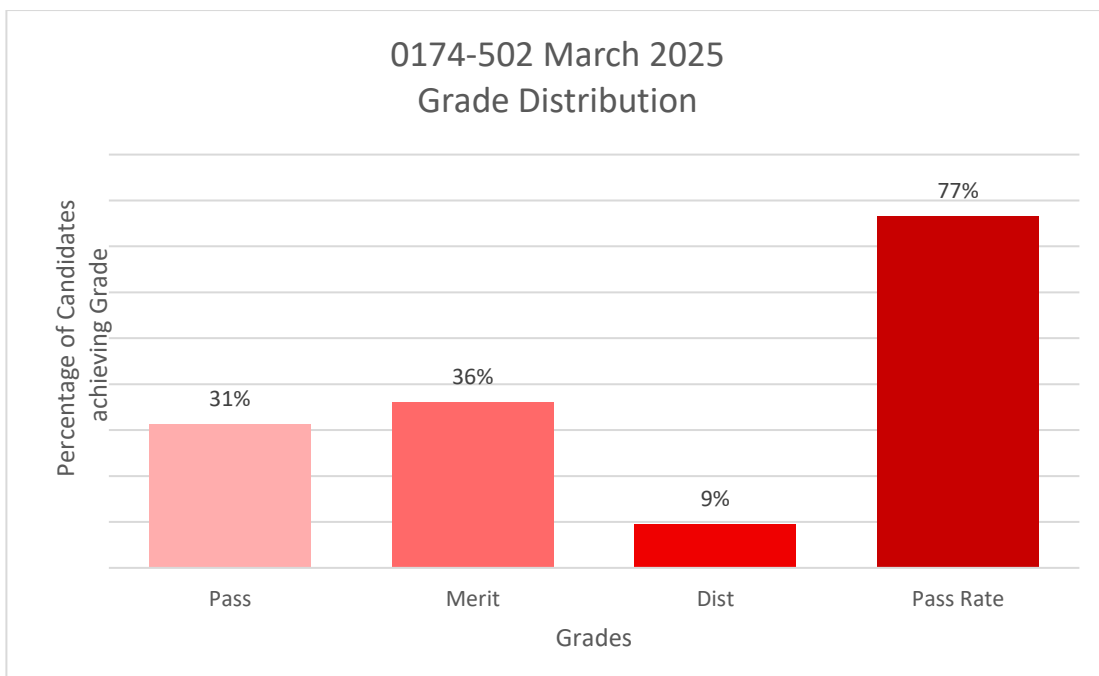
Grade Boundaries

Assessment: 0174-502
Series: March 2025 (Spring)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	27
Merit mark	36
Distinction mark	45

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



Assessment: 0174-502
Series: June 2025 (Summer)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	27
Merit mark	36
Distinction mark	45

Data and commentary for this assessment have been omitted by City & Guilds due to a very low number of candidate submissions.

Principal Examiner Commentary

0174-502 Level 3 Horticulture - Theory exam (1)

Series 1 – March 2025

The question paper was balanced and covered a good level of knowledge and understanding from across the qualification. Candidates answered questions with varying degrees of accuracy and depth and, overall, the candidates' performance on the paper was comparable to last year. The use of technical terms relevant to industry was not as prevalent when compared to previous cohorts.

Candidates demonstrated a good recall of knowledge, gaining marks in topics such as tree roots, leaf adaptations, mulching and frost protection. Candidates showed strength in areas of plants and their care and some aspects of pest and disease management. Higher-achieving candidates showed evidence of reasoning and justification as well as the recall of knowledge required across all the units.

Many candidates demonstrated weaknesses in both the recall and understanding questions that related to machinery, chemical usage and Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Candidates who achieved in the lower mark range tended to also use basic language with poor use of technical terms, misread the questions or had only basic understanding of the topics, such as chemicals. There were clear gaps in knowledge with questions often not attempted. Their performance was stronger on the recall questions compared to higher order questions as would be expected.

The Extended Response Question provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of selecting appropriate plant stock and aftercare requirements to a given scenario. Most candidates provided a range of suitable answers for the first part of the question. At the lower mark range, answers to the second part were limited to listing a range of aftercare tasks and there was little explanation of the pros and cons of the methods selected. The depth of the answers in the mid/high mark range was good, with adequate explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of weed control, however, some candidates strayed into plant selection and other topics not related to the question in their answers. There was a lack of technical terminology, with many candidates not stating the type of herbicide they would use. Some candidates suggested manual weed controls that would not be practical. Candidates often missed technical issues such as the biology of perennial weeds and how this affects the choice of control. Health and Safety was generally not raised as an issue and most candidates did not refer to legislation.

A number of candidates showed that they were not fully familiar with the written examination technique, examples of this include providing information that is not directly relevant to the question, poorly structured responses and limited explanations that did not show a depth of knowledge. Candidates are urged to read the questions carefully and provide answers relevant to them.

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

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

Theory Exams – Year 2

0174-37 Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Horticulture (1080) Professional Horticulture pathway

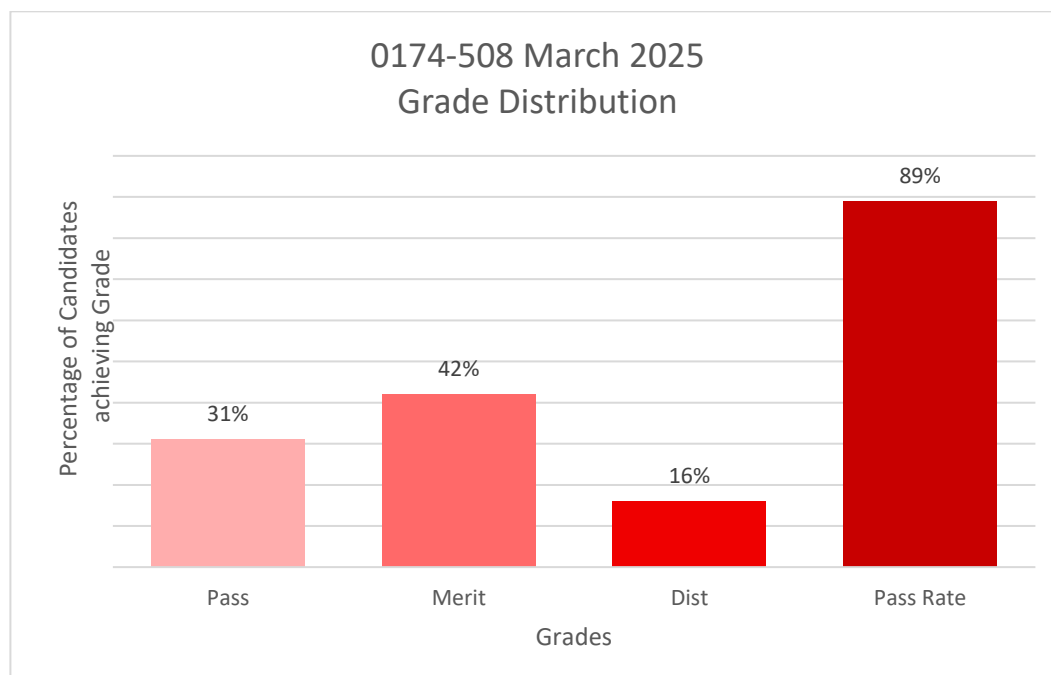
Grade Boundaries

Assessment: 0174-508
Series: March 2025 (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	33
Distinction mark	42

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



Assessment: 0174-508
Series: June 2025 (Summer)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	25
Merit mark	33
Distinction mark	42

Data and commentary for this assessment have been omitted by City & Guilds due to a very low number of candidate submissions.

Principal Examiner Commentary

0174-508 Level 3 Horticulture - Theory exam (2)

Series 1 – March 2025

The candidates who achieved higher marks were able to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge, backed up by relevant examples and including explanation and justification where needed. This is reflective of trends seen last year. Lower-achieving candidates tended to give brief and listed answers. There was evidence of candidates not fully reading questions, which meant they missed out on marks by not responding in the way needed or providing the level of detail required to access the full range of marks available. Candidates did not always engage with the command verbs, for example simply stating rather than explaining, this meant that candidates did not always provide enough detail when asked for explanations or descriptions.

Overall, candidates showed strength in the following areas:

- The implications of wildlife legislation
- Technique of pruning trees by crown lifting
- Understanding the ways in which a tree could suffer an injury
- The detrimental effects of trees on cultivated areas
- Legal rights of an employee in work
- Benefits and limitations of partnerships when compared to a sole trader
- Characteristics of a customer base
- Ways to enhance customer loyalty
- Use of geo-membranes in hard landscaping
- Maintenance requirements for a natural stone patio

Candidates appear to require further support in:

- Naming Acts of Parliament
- Partnership agreements and changing business structures
- The structure and purpose of the balance sheet

The Extended Response Question provided candidates with the opportunity to use a named example to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the topic area and discuss continuity of work. Those that used a garden centre as an example often had more breadth and depth in their answers than those that used a landscaper. Weaker candidates provided answers that gave general information with few links to relevant ways of ensuring continuity of work throughout the year. The stronger candidates discussed relevant methods and applied it to the question. Some suggestions were quite innovative, covering diversification, technology, and novel working practices.

Some candidates misinterpreted the question as requiring methods to ensure employees were able to work throughout the year, however, in many cases the answers provided were still relevant and gained marks.

Candidates are strongly advised to be familiar with the command verbs they may encounter during examinations and to read each question carefully, responding with the depth required. Centres are advised to revisit current handbooks, test specifications and previous papers, to prepare candidates for exams. In addition to paying attention to the command verbs, candidates should also ensure that the correct number of responses are given to any question.

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

[Technicals in Horticulture and Forestry & Arboriculture qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications/0174-508)

Synoptic Assignments – Year 1

0174-36 Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Horticulture (540)

Grade Boundaries

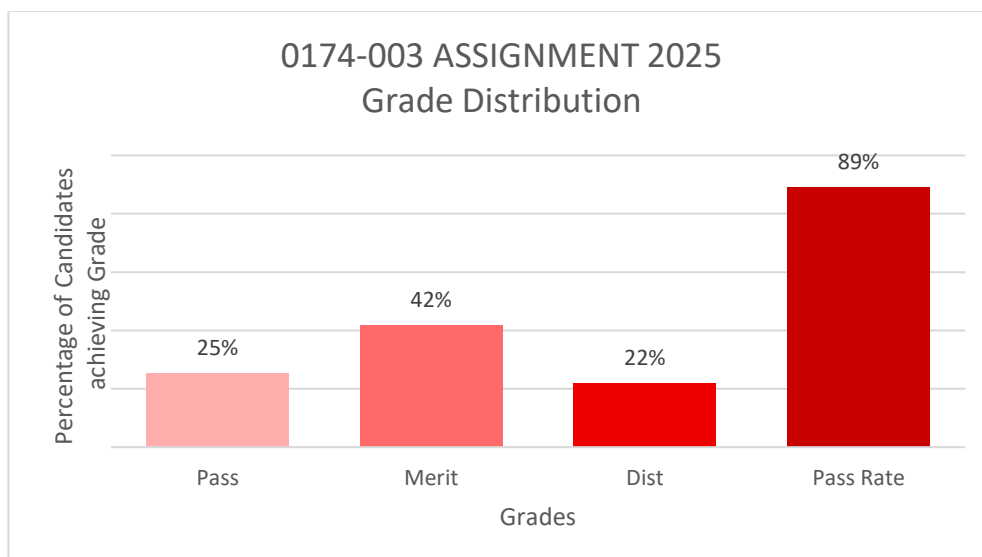
Below identifies the final grade boundaries for this assessment, as agreed by the awarding panel:

Assessment: 0174-003

Series: 2025

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	27
Merit mark	35
Distinction mark	44

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



Principal Moderator Commentary

Performance across practical tasks continues to be consistent and to an acceptable standard. The context provided in the 'Assignment Brief' was integral to Tasks 1 and 4, helping to frame candidate responses. Where this context was fully embedded, plant selection was generally relevant. However, there was noticeable confusion between the theoretical rationale for plant choice and the practical task of matching plants to the surveyed site. Overall achievement aligned with recent series, which was to be expected given the structural similarities in the assignment.

Candidate performance in Task 1 varied across centres. Soil sampling and identification of known plants were generally carried out successfully, with strong outcomes. However, site analysis and identification of 'not taught' plants showed inconsistency, which impacted the accuracy of plant naming conventions. Centres with strong site analysis and plant identification typically produced higher-performing candidates. Task 1 was not consistently implemented, and supporting evidence, such as site plans, comprehensive soil sampling details, and identification sources for unknown plants, was often missing or incomplete.

Tasks 2 and 3 were, in most cases, undertaken appropriately and represented areas where candidates performed well. However, photographic evidence revealed significant differences in planting and support methods between centres.

Task 4 was found to be the most challenging, requiring candidates to assess the use of garden chemicals within a community setting. Although the task encompassed a broad range, including herbicides, pesticides, fungicides, fertilisers, preservatives, and cleaning agents, most candidates focused narrowly on herbicides and pesticides. Health and safety considerations were typically included but often lacked depth and contextual relevance. High-achieving submissions demonstrated a good understanding of site-specific requirements and made appropriate references to legislation and professional codes of practice. Assessment inconsistencies were evident, with markers not always reliably evaluating the suitability and licensing of recommended treatments or addressing inaccuracies. A focus on rigour and consistency when marking should be made.

Centres are asked to:

- Include areas where candidate work could be 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' work to highlight incorrect statements and comment on the quality of the work, e.g. areas that are strong or lacking in detail.
- Ensure that source materials are always considered, and that recommendations for the use of specific products are always checked by markers.
- Carefully check what has been typed when using dictation software.
- **Upload all forms and evidence as a single document (i.e. one PDF, not a ZIP file).**

Synoptic Assignments – Year 2

0174-37 Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Horticulture (1080) Professional Horticulture pathway

Grade Boundaries

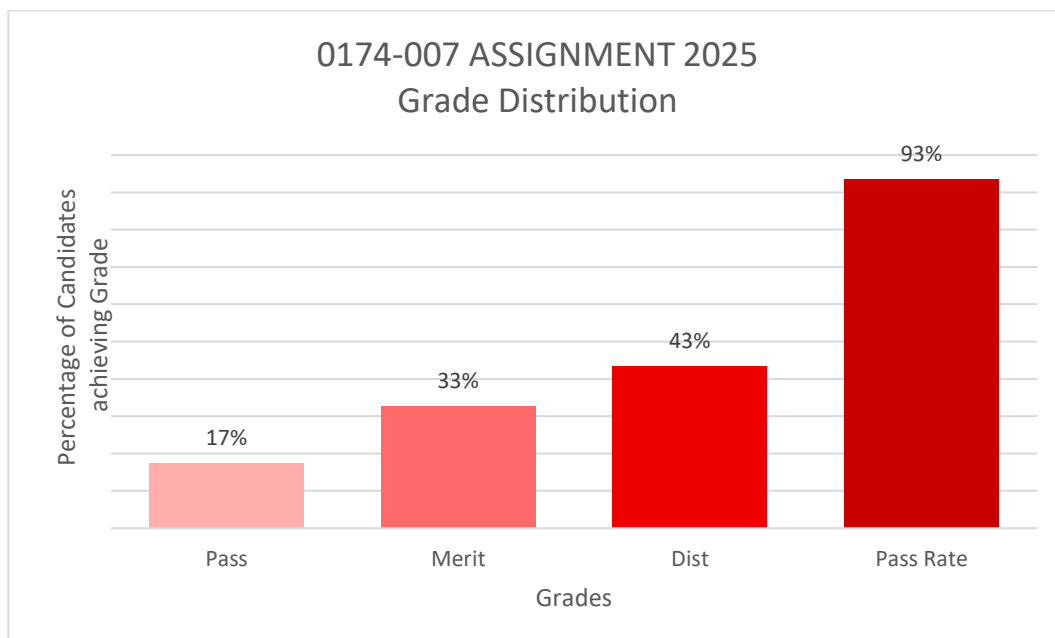
Below identifies the final grade boundaries for this assessment, as agreed by the awarding panel:

Assessment: 0174-007

Series: 2025

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:



Principal Moderator Commentary

Task 1 required candidates to select four distinct career paths within horticulture and create a single A4 information sheet to promote each career to either a school leaver or an adult career-changer. Careers chosen often failed to reflect appropriate contexts (e.g. including arboriculture and floristry as part of horticulture), did not differentiate between career-changers and new entrants, and omitted key aspects such as salaries and career progression. Higher-performing candidates did include these required details.

Task 2 focused on site setting-out. Evidence required included assessor notes on candidate performance, supported by a clear photograph of the fully marked-out site, clearly indicating which candidate completed the task. In most cases, photographs lacked clarity and did not show the entire site. Additionally, instances of multiple candidates working together were reported without commentary from the assessor explaining the rationale. Candidate performance was inconsistent, with photographic evidence sometimes contradicting assessor commentary and leaving the accuracy of work unclear.

Task 3 involved diagnosing plant problems through the identification of 12 examples, covering weeds, pests, diseases, and disorders, along with descriptions of damage, control measures, and preventative or alternative solutions. Some inconsistency when following task requirements was seen, for example, omitting disorders or diseases entirely. Accurate marking was an area for improvement here.

Task 4 required seasonally appropriate pruning of shrubs or trees, supported by assessor marking and photographic evidence. Photographs often revealed breaches of safe working practices (such as lack of gloves or eye protection). Assessor commentary was often contradicted by the submitted photographic evidence.

Centres are asked to:

- Include areas where the candidate's 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' work to highlight incorrect statements and comment on the quality of the work, e.g. areas that are strong or lacking in detail.
- Carefully check what has been typed when using dictation software.
- **Upload all forms and evidence as a single document (i.e. one PDF, not a ZIP file).**