

0174-35 Level 3 Advanced Technical Certificate in Forestry and Arboriculture

2019

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 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.

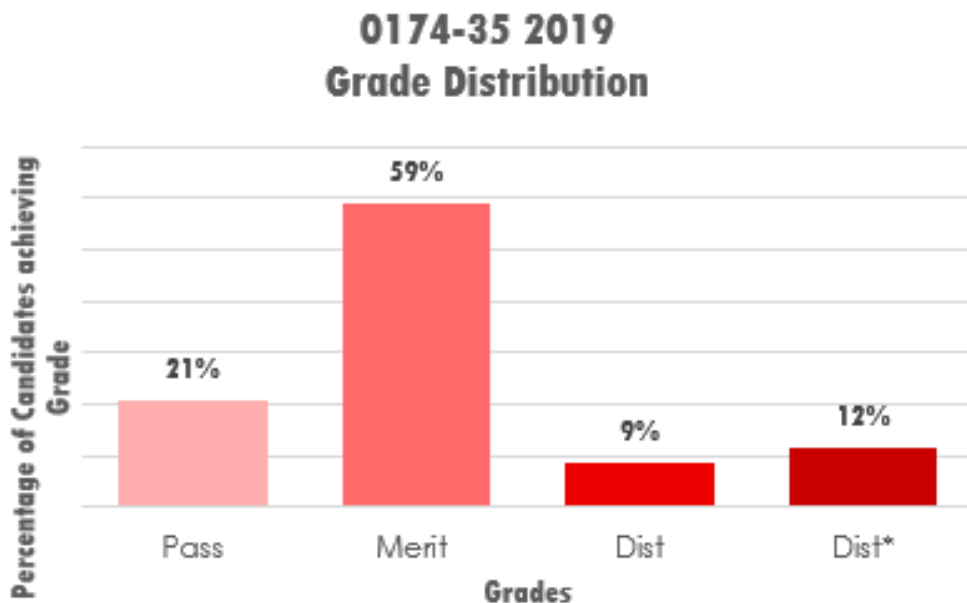
This report provides general commentary on candidate performance in both the synoptic assignment and theory exam. It highlights common themes in relation to the technical aspects explored within the assessment, giving areas of strengths and weakness demonstrated by the cohort of candidates who sat assessments in the 2019 academic year. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose.

The document provides commentary on the following assessments:

- 0174-012/512 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture – Theory exam (1)
 - March 2019 (Spring)
 - June 2019 (Summer)
- 0174-011 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture – Synoptic Assignment (1)

Qualification Grade Distribution

The approximate grade distribution for this qualification is shown below:



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 Exam

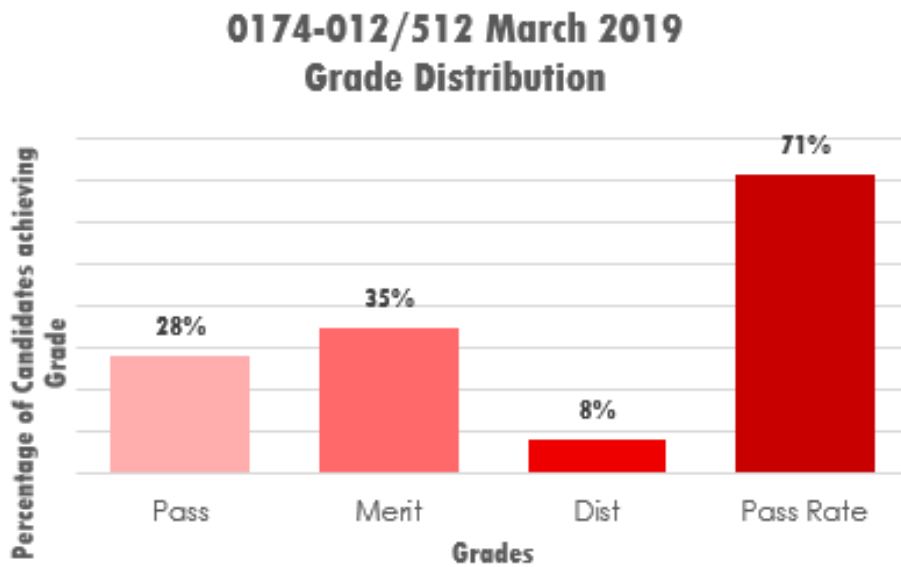
Grade Boundaries

Assessment: 0174-512/012
Series: March 2019 (Spring)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	29
Merit mark	36
Distinction mark	44

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

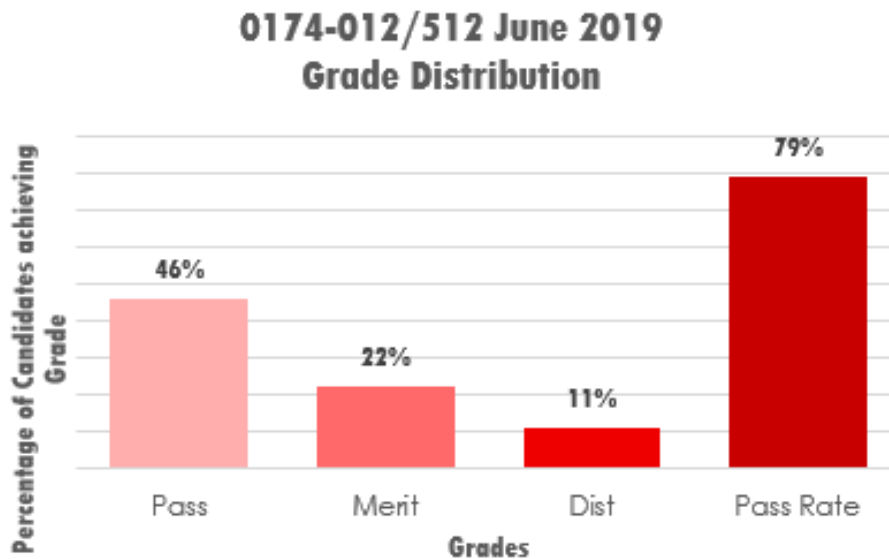


Assessment: 0174-512/012
Series: June 2019 (Summer)

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

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	26
Merit mark	34
Distinction mark	42

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



Chief Examiner Commentary

0174-512 Level 3 Forestry and Arboriculture - Theory exam

Series 1 – March 2019

Most candidates performed well in the exam and showed a good range of knowledge across the units being assessed. Questions were answered with a varying degree of accuracy and depth, but this is to be expected. Most candidates scored well where questions were more practical in nature but there was a lack of knowledge regarding the plant life cycles.

In general, recall was good with several candidates showing higher level understanding and displayed good use of descriptions and explanations. However, fewer responses showed an appreciation of linkages. For example, how given abiotic disorders affect trees. Many responses stated the obvious rather than explaining the effects.

There was evidence of understanding the fundamentals of ill health in trees. However, applying this information to a bigger picture seemed beyond many candidates. This was also true of decay detection equipment where some candidates had no knowledge of the equipment in the question this made many responses to question 9 rather weak.

Overall, candidates showed strength in the following areas:

- Factor to consider when felling trees.
- Issues that can occur with a guide bar.
- Abiotic disorders

The areas of weakness were:

- Definitions and examples of annual and ephemeral plants.
- Decay detection equipment and the outputs they produce.

There were mixed responses to questions about the plant passport system, soil improvement and factors influencing rates of photosynthesis.

Several candidates showed that they were not fully familiar with the written examination technique. Candidates must read the questions carefully and keep the responses relevant to the question. An example of this was the misreading of post start checks which lead to several wrong answers to a relatively simple question.

The lack of understanding of the difference between state, describe, explain and verbs used in the extended response question requiring the candidates to employ higher cognitive skills, in this case 'discuss' and 'justify', is a common theme across all scripts.

Extended response question

The extended response question was, for the most part, well answered. Candidates showed a good range of knowledge and linked ideas together in a coherent way. Where this was not the case the rest of the paper was also weak.

Those candidates that scored highest referred to legislation, discussed the practicalities of managing OPM and justified their recommendations with well-considered points. Those who did not score as highly, made good recommendations but did not make links to the wider context.

Series 2 – June 2019

The exam paper had an appropriate balance of questions that tested knowledge and understanding from across the units.

Most candidates attempted all questions. There was a wide variety in the range of answers, knowledge-based questions were answered best especially where the question was testing AO1 or of a practical nature e.g. chainsaw faults / sharpening or predisposition to ill health.

As with previous years, there was a lack of understanding around plant biology; in this case plant life cycles were examined but few candidates offered answers that displayed much knowledge of the topic.

Some marks were dropped when candidates misinterpreted the question and gave inappropriate answers as a result. For example, when asked about clutch spring, some candidates went on to discuss the clutch in a car. More marks could have been awarded if candidates expanded their answers through explanation when asked to do so.

Overall, candidates showed strength in:

- Seed dispersal
- Chainsaw faults
- Felling aids
- Impacts of frost

Candidates appear to require further support in:

- Pests and diseases
- Management options for fungi on trees
- Plant life cycles
- Answering extended response questions

Candidates must read the questions carefully, particularly the command verbs and the allocated marks. This will give them an indication of the level of demand and focus their attention on the correct information to present.

Extended response question

Many candidates did not provide the depth of detail required of the AO4 question. Only a few candidates achieved marks in the high band, the remaining in the lower bands had insufficient considerations of the wider context (legal, environmental or practical issues). Some elements were generally well understood (sanitation of tools and clothing) but the discussion of the broader context was too brief to award higher marks.

Many candidates concentrated on the practical consideration of dealing with honey fungus rather than the wider context which resulted in few achieving the higher band.

The extended response question gives the opportunity to show an understanding of the qualification and to apply this knowledge and understanding in a situation. The better answers did this to a certain extent, but some responses were simply a list of statements rather than a structured, well considered discussion.

Centres need to focus on how to approach these questions for future candidates to answer them well. Thorough preparation for this type of question is essential if higher marks are to be awarded in future.

Synoptic Assignment

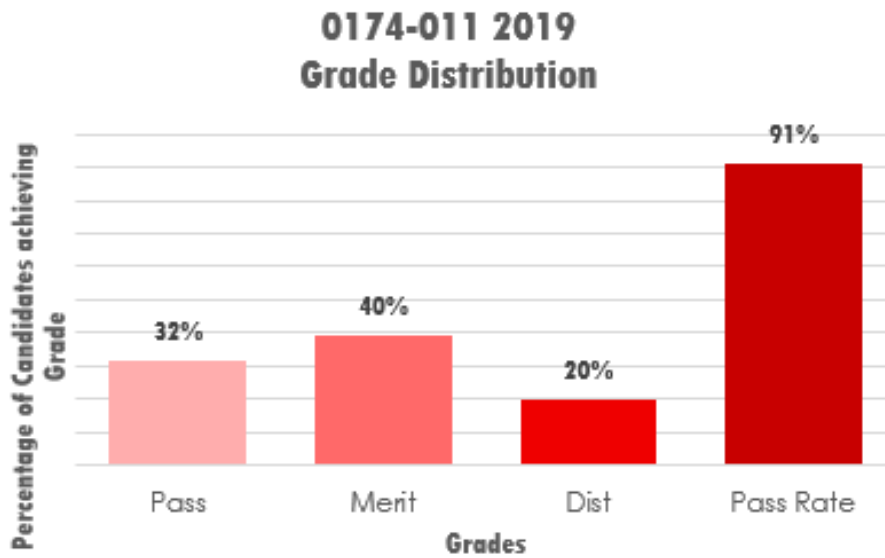
Grade Boundaries

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

Assessment: 0174-011
Series: 2019

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	26
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

Moderators noted that administration for most centres was good with occasional pieces of evidence missing and instances of declarations not being correctly completed when uploaded to the portal. Missing evidence however was quickly rectified by centres.

Overall performance of candidates compared to expectations

Candidates provided evidence that was fit for purpose and contained the expected range of ability that suggests they are operating at the appropriate level for some of the tasks if not all.

The synoptic assignment contained a good range of practical tasks allowing candidates to demonstrate a range of skills required in the work-place.

Provision of evidence for moderation

Photographic evidence was not used in all centres and in those that did, was not annotated effectively and added little enrichment to evidence. All of these can be improved by using captions or short narrative statements for each photo to say what is going on and how it relates to assessment or learning outcomes. Without a caption a photo is just an illustration.

Practical observation forms were used by tutors with varying degrees of success. Some observers are still not providing an adequate narrative to support judgements on practical performance. Some observers stated what the candidates did but did not qualify the performance by saying how or why the performance was good or very good.

There was a range of different risk assessment templates used which limited the candidates' ability to demonstrate a higher level of evidence. Some centres did not include emergency procedures within the template and some risk assessments were over complicated.

General overview of assessor alignment

Moderation showed that most centres and markers are in alignment with national standards, with the exception of AO3 which was, in some cases, noted as disproportionately marked either down or up within the CRF.

Performance of against Assessment Outcomes (AOs)

AO1 Recall of knowledge related to the qualification LOs

Candidates produced very good evidence to enable judgements to be made against this outcome. A range of written recall knowledge was available through task 1 (report on site conditions and pathology) and task 4 (Soil investigations) as this was candidate-created and enabled the demonstration of knowledge within a written framework of studies and reports. While verbal recall was demonstrated through comments made on the POF. Task 3 (felling and stump removal) allowed observers to comment on candidates' recall during a technical practical exercise.

AO2 Understanding of concepts theories and processes relating to the LOs

The majority of marks available for this AO2 were from task 1 and task 4 and provided a good platform for the demonstration of understanding. Higher level candidates were able to make connections between recall and understanding and provided justifications.

Most candidates were credited with good understanding for task 3 during their practical demonstration of felling skills and dealing with arisings.

AO3 Application of practical/technical skills

This was mostly marked correctly and comments on the CRF mostly aligned with information in the practical observation forms. There were some instances where AO3 was disproportionately marked lower than comments within AO3 on the POF would suggest.

Task 3 required candidates to demonstrate practical skills for felling, stump removal and brush removal. Many candidates provided photographs although a significant proportion did not and relied on the tutor notes and observer comments on the Practical observation form. Where photos were included in the evidence there was very little in the way of meaningful captions or descriptions of what was going on and how that linked to assessed outcomes or learning outcomes.

The majority of candidates were not fluid and practiced indicating they were not experienced in the practical activities they were undertaking. While this is to be expected, it is a recommendation that more time is allocated to practical skills where possible.

AO4 Bringing it all together- coherence of the whole subject

Overall there was good application of bringing theories into practice and stronger candidates demonstrated through task 1 and task 4 a higher-level ability to do so.

Task 1 (site investigations) provided the best opportunity for bringing the whole subject together as all aspects have an impact on tree health and management. Some candidates did not provide any control measures and or remedial actions and some did not describe how the tree would be affected.

For task 4 (soil investigations) there were many instances of candidates misinterpreting the question. Candidates did not produce a report in some cases on the affects of growth and development based on the investigations they undertook. Instead, detailed information was provided on a range of soil characteristics and the methodologies used to collect this information. This did not demonstrate an understanding of how these characteristics affect growth and development.

AO5 Attending to detail/perfecting

Markers noted that higher-level learners were able to continually check and correct during practical activities. This AO was generally marked correctly by centres. Conscientious candidates were able to gain additional marks through this.