



May 2026

Chief Examiner Report – Level 3

Design, Engineer, Construct



Introduction

This report covers TQUK's Level 3 Diploma in Design Engineer Construct! The Digital Built Environment. It is designed to help you understand the overall learner performance in the exam. For each question, there is a brief feedback of learner responses.

The May 2026 exam series addressed both Level 2 and 3 qualifications with centres taking advantage of entering their learners for this exam series to then focus upon the completion of the portfolio element of the qualification.

It has been very encouraging to see so many centres positively embracing the examination aspect of the qualifications across Level 3, to allow their learners to demonstrate their knowledge across the assessment criteria.

The Level 3 exam paper comprised of 10 questions, with no changes to the structure from previous years. In addition, the exam was accompanied with a resource document.

Administration

All centres are thanked for submitting exam scripts and associated evidence promptly to support the assessment process. There were no delays in the submission of the exam scripts.

Resource document

It was evident learners were able to positively engage with all aspects of the scenario and brief content with differing outcomes. It is apparent centres have prepared their learners using previous examinations and the associated resource documentation.

Learner engagement

Positive learner engagement was demonstrated with a high majority of learners attempting all questions. This demonstrated learner confidence and also evidenced the centres' ability to address the whole of the specification, rather than focusing less attention on certain areas due to a lack of subject specific knowledge. This had been apparent in previous exams. Both learners and teachers are praised for their continual development and improvement.

Highlights at Level 3 - learners demonstrated clear knowledge and understanding when answering questions regarding structural forces, the benefits of timber as a material and as a specific structural form. In addition, the role BIM can play in conjunction with a Facilities Manager was also very well answered. This was to be expected from many learners as BIM is an essential component of this qualification. Furthermore, questions involving calculations were very well answered, as well as the benefits of specific materials such as

slate tiles in this instance. Finally, learners engaged well when questions were linked to the resource document.

Learner performance

Learners should be familiar with the full range of content from the specification and should be able to apply these concepts to different scenarios. In addition, the ability to recognise the demands of a question is also important. Learners should understand the different responses required for different command words. For example, identify, explain, discuss and evaluate.

At Level 3, the grade boundaries remained proportionally equivalent. There was slight increment in grade boundaries which is deemed appropriate with regards to the challenge of the paper this series. Regarding learner performance, there was a percentage increase at all grade boundaries with an exception at grade D. The increase at grades A* through to C slightly outweighed the decrease at grade D. Although the cohort was slightly less than the comparative series, the increase in learner outcomes is very encouraging to see. (Comparative series May 2025).

Areas to work on

With all subject content there is a need to be aware of specific technical language. To access more marks, especially at the lower grades, learners are encouraged to demonstrate their understanding of the technical language to support their ability to improve their attainment. Furthermore, learners should be careful not to give more responses than requested. This happens rarely, but in a scenario where a learner is asked for two responses but offers three or more, only the first two responses are assessed. Further responses, even if correct will not be awarded any marks as the question explicitly asked for a specific number of answers. For example, 'Identify four responsibilities of a ...'.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper provided questions that presented learners the opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge across the qualification specification via a range of different context-based questions. The paper offered a range of differentiated questions and a full range of marks were observed.

Commentary on individual questions

Question 1

This question was designed to assess learners' understanding of material strengths, composite materials, and architectural precedents. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 3.1.2 and 3.1.1 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by identifying materials with high compressive and tensile strengths. They also had to explain a sustainability benefit of composite materials, and identify the key research factors used when looking into architectural precedents.

Learner Performance - Learners showed a secure understanding of material properties across the first three parts of the question. In these sections, above two-thirds achieved full marks, and nearly all learners scored one mark or more. Performance was slightly lower on the final part regarding architectural precedents, where just under two-thirds of the cohort gained half marks or above.

Question 2

This question was designed to assess learners' understanding of topographical data, surveying equipment, and site analysis during the pre-design phase. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 1.3.2 and 1.3.1 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by stating the types of data collected by a surveyor. They also had to identify the specific equipment used for this data collection, and explain the benefits of conducting a site analysis during the pre-design phase.

Learner Performance - Learners performed very well across this question. Two-thirds of the learners achieved full marks, and nearly all learners gained above half marks. This strong result matches previous exam series, where similar question content regarding different survey types has always returned high levels of learner performance.

Question 3

This question was designed to assess learners' understanding of structural compression, the benefits of timber, and how to calculate air exchange rates and lumen requirements. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 3.2.2, 3.2.5, and 3.3.3 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by defining the force of compression and giving two ways a structure resists it. They also had to explain three benefits of using

timber, and calculate both the total air exchange rate and the total required lumens for the open-plan living area using the provided Resource Document and formulas.

Learner Performance - Learners demonstrated strong subject knowledge across these areas of the course. In the two parts of the question addressing structural forces and the benefits of timber, nearly all learners gained full marks. In addition, two-thirds and above of learners achieved full marks for the questions related to air exchange and lumens, with nearly all learners gaining above half marks.

Question 4

This question was designed to assess learners' ability to calculate the cost of a roofing material change and to evaluate the benefits of slate tiles. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 6.1.2 and 6.1.4 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by calculating the total cost of using slate to cover the roof, using the provided Resource Document. They also had to explain two benefits of slate tiles with explicit reference to endurance or reliability.

Learner Performance - Learners performed very well across both parts of this question. Nearly four-fifths of learners achieved full marks, and with the exception of a single learner, the entire cohort gained above half marks. Mathematical skills were strong, and a clear understanding of materials was evident throughout the responses.

Question 5

This question was designed to assess learners' understanding of local community impacts, water reduction strategies, material waste minimisation, sustainability data monitoring, and the roles of a Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE). This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, and 1.2.5 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by identifying four community-focused developer commitments, and explaining two technology strategies used to reduce water consumption. They also had to state four waste minimisation methods, identify three sustainability monitoring data types, and state three roles of a Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) beyond reporting sustainability success.

Learner Performance - This five-part question was answered well by the cohort. On average, learners were able to access half marks or above across the question as a whole. The specific sections addressing local community impacts, water reduction, and waste minimisation were handled particularly well, with above four-fifths of the learners gaining three to four marks.

Question 6

This question was designed to assess learners' ability to calculate annual bungalow running costs, apply variable cost increases, and determine overall project profit percentages. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 5.3.2, 5.3.3, and 6.1.2 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by calculating the annual running cost of one bungalow using the provided Resource Document. They also had to calculate the updated cost following a 10% annual recurrent variable cost increase, and calculate the overall percentage profit ensuring all working was shown.

Learner Performance - This calculation question was answered very well overall. In the first two tasks, between half and just short of four-fifths of the learners gained full marks. When calculating the overall percentage profit, performance was more mixed; above a quarter of the cohort achieved above half marks, with one-fifth scoring full marks.

Question 7

This question was designed to assess learners' understanding of design briefs, client compliance roles, feasibility studies, physical site constraints, and their impacts on financial planning. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 2.1.2, 2.1.1, 2.2.1, and 2.2.2 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by explaining one purpose of an early-stage design brief, and identifying two client compliance roles. They also had to identify four reasons for conducting a feasibility study, explain one physical site constraint using the provided Resource Document, and identify two resulting impacts on financial planning.

Learner Performance - Learners demonstrated a very clear understanding of design briefs, client compliance roles, and feasibility studies. Across these aspects of the question, nearly all learners scored above half marks, with a very high proportion gaining full marks. In addition, when explaining site constraints and their impacts on financial planning, learners performed well again; between one-third and two-thirds gained full marks, and above half recorded one mark or more from the two available.

Question 8

This question was designed to assess learners' understanding of lifecycle costing for construction materials and the maintenance benefits of an Asset Information Model (AIM) within Building Information Modelling (BIM) software. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 6.1.3 and 5.1.1 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by explaining four reasons why choosing expensive construction materials initially can lower long-term building lifecycle costs. They

also had to explain one way an Asset Information Model (AIM) within BIM software benefits a Facilities Manager during maintenance planning.

Learner Performance - Learners performed very well across both parts of this question. With regard to materials, nearly all learners scored above half marks, with a quarter accessing the highest mark available. When addressing the benefits of an AIM within BIM for the Facilities Manager, performance remained strong; nearly all learners achieved above half marks, and two-thirds gained full marks

Question 9

This question was designed to assess learners' understanding of how feasibility studies support environmental factors, the application of 'undesirable precedent', and how planning policy influences design changes. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 2.3.3, 2.3.4, and 2.3.2 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by explaining two ways feasibility study results support environmental considerations using the provided Resource Document. They also had to explain one way 'undesirable precedent' applies to the Etton Project, and explain two ways a planning policy can influence design changes.

Learner Performance - Learners recorded strong marks when explaining undesirable precedents linked to the scenario and the relationship between planning policy and design changes. For these tasks, from one-third to two-thirds of the cohort respectively accessed full marks, with nearly all learners gaining half marks or above across the question parts.

Question 10

This question was designed to assess learners' ability to evaluate the sustainability benefits of different construction methods and to compare the aesthetic impacts of concrete and steel. This covered the requirements for Subject Content Coverage 6.1.3 and 6.1.1 respectively.

Learners were required to show their knowledge by evaluating two sustainability benefits of using a masonry construction method, and evaluating two sustainability benefits of a timber frame construction method. They also had to compare two advantages and two disadvantages of both concrete and steel regarding the aesthetic appeal of the project, using the provided Resource Document.

Learner Performance - This question was divided into three parts, and overall, learners performed well, with the majority able to access three-fifths or above of the marks available for each section. In addition, for the specific questions regarding the evaluation of sustainability benefits for different construction methods, one-fifth of the cohort successfully achieved full marks

